II. Multiliteracies and the Construction of Plurilingual Identities in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

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1 Introduction

‘Plurilingualism’ and ‘multiliteracies’ – the two central concepts of this volume – have common ground in that they reflect the wide-ranging transformations of public, private and professional life in the age of globalisation. In the academic discourse, we find them used both in a descriptive and in a normative way. In descriptive terms, plurilingualism is considered a reality not only in traditionally multilingual areas, but also a result of growing linguistic and cultural heterogeneity in societies with strong migrational influences. Likewise, the term

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1 We would like to thank Claudia Schmidt and José Medina for their helpful comments on a previous version of this article. However, we remain fully responsible for any inconsistencies and errors.
'multiliteracies’ comprises communicative practices we use daily in dealing with multimodal information, for example on the internet. In normative terms, both concepts describe educational aims: In order to cope with the plurality and complexity of communicative codes and situations, young people will need qualifications different from those taught to former generations. Hence, concepts of language education will need to look beyond teaching single languages individually, and a much broader perspective will be required on multilingual education, integrated into a wide-ranging system of ‘language across the curriculum’. Such concepts will have to recast the traditional dichotomy between the oral and the written while also taking into account the variety and hybridity of texts and communication.

In this chapter, we will look at some key concepts we consider to be elements of a pedagogical framework, which could equally inform classroom practices for plurilingualism and multiliteracies and empirical research in the field of second/further language education. However, our argument will be tentative and preliminary in the way that we will try to assess the potential offered by Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and Dynamic Systems Theory (DST) for theorising notions such as Bildung, multiliteracies and identity, all of which have some currency in language education at the moment. Our aim is neither to provide an in-depth analysis of each theoretical discourse and concept we will refer to in the following, nor a pedagogical blueprint, but rather to point out directions for further foundational work and future empirical research.

In the following, our argument will be developed in eight sections. After a short prelude, in which we will reflect on the significance of context in language education and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, we will continue with two brief and arguably selective readings of SCT and DST approaches. In the following three sections, we will put the focus subsequently on the concepts of Bildung, multiliteracies and identity. We will then propose elements taken from these concepts as analytical tools in an exemplary discussion of narrative data from a language learner, and finally highlight some issues for further research.

2 Prelude: The significance of ‘context’

To start with, we would like to address the significance of ‘context’ which has become a central concern in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research. Taking a sociocultural perspective, we consider learning not as a purely mental and individual activity, but also as a social one, based on interpersonal interaction. Language in the words of Bonny Norton “is not conceived of as a neutral medium of communication, but is understood with reference to its social meaning” (Norton 2000: 5). Starting from here, language use and language
learning are in our understanding closely linked to processes of negotiation of meaning, but also to meaning-making in a broader, Humboldtian sense: Language is not just a means of communicating pre-existing ideas; it is to no lesser degree a means of constructing knowledge in search for personal orientation. In Wilhelm von Humboldt’s terminology, this search is a process of Bildung, which mainly consists in clarifying one’s own relationship to the world and to the self (Selbst- und Weltverhältnis). Hence, language learning can, of course, be considered in a technical sense as the expansion of available communication tools, but also in a more holistic way as the transformation of one’s concept of self and one’s position in and towards the world.

When we focus on Bildung, multiliteracies or identity and extend our perspective by discussing these concepts vis-à-vis some of the main tenets of Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and Dynamic Systems Theories (DST), we will do so for the following reasons. As far as we can see, SLA-studies based on DST mainly take into view the mental processes of language acquisition, whereas in SCT a perspective on the social framing of language acquisition and use prevails. Still, for both theoretical approaches, dealing with what in SCT terminology is ‘context’ (in DST terms: complexity) is a major concern. In DST, complexity refers to the supposition that language acquisition relies on a multitude of interrelating factors, whose interaction can neither be fully described nor can the outcome of such interaction precisely be predicted. In SCT, context refers to the (Vygotskian) notion that humans are culturally “mediated beings” (Lantolf 2006: 69). While contemporary conceptualisations of Bildung or multiliteracies explicitly draw on SCT, emergentist approaches can be found in recent studies on motivation, learner autonomy and identity (cf. Dörnyei 2010; Murray et al. 2011). Against this common division, we assume that theorising Bildung, multiliteracies and identity from both SCT and DST perspectives may indeed be fruitful.

3 A brief look at socioculturalist approaches in SLA-research

Vygotsky’s understanding of language acquisition as an internalization of social interaction may be considered the baseline of all sociocultural approaches. Learning a language relates to communication with others and to acting by speaking in specific communicative situations, while the language is gradually embodied by the learner (cf. Kramsch 2000; Küster 2012; Lantolf/Thorne 2006). Based on the activity theory put forth by Vygotsky and Leontiev, it was assumed that mental development cannot evolve as separated from active interaction with one’s material and symbolic environment, but rather emerges from this
negotiation. At the same time, an evolving self guides one’s own acting by providing personal aims. Accordingly, theoretical interdependencies between identity constructions and learner motivation on the one hand, and the course of communicative interaction and language learning on the other hand, can be found (cf. Lantolf/Thorne 2006: 209-262; Pavlenko/Lantolf 2000: 171-174).

The concept of ‘communities of practice’ introduced by Lave/Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) is based on the general idea that all learning is to be understood within the context of interpersonal experiences. What proved to be a leading concept in particular is that of ‘legitimate peripheral participation’: Learning, and especially second language learning, is seen as a process of individual experience, in which the learner is gradually involved and integrated in the speech community. Starting as a marginally integrated novice s/he, by increasingly participating in social interaction, expands her/his competences. In the wake of Lave and Wenger’s work, specific learning contexts, mainly those related to non-directed language acquisition, came to the fore in research (cf. Block 2007: 865; Norton 2001). Positioning theory, for example, made it possible to understand the contingent nature of identity constructions made by individuals through their own active positioning within communicative situations (cf. Norton/Toohey 2011: 418). In terms of context dependency, connections can be drawn to the concept of ‘situated identities’ (cf. Ushioda 2011: 205).

Following Bourdieu, the aspect of the “relations of symbolic power” (Bourdieu 1977: 646), which becomes manifest in the question of how the individual gains access to second language communities and, if necessary, responds to resistance, is emphasized by Norton. She reports on case studies which show in many facets how adult learners struggle not to be marginalized, humiliated, embarrassed or even excluded in contexts of language learning and verbal communication (Norton 2000, 2001). Finally, Bourdieu’s notion of cultural and social capital lays the foundation for Norton’s idea that intentionally learning a second/foreign language can be conceptualized as investment (investment theory).

A conjunction between sociocultural, poststructuralist and humanistic tendencies is to be found in the wide-spread Language Socialization (cf. Duff/Talmy 2011) and Language Ecology approaches. Kramsch/Wellmon (2008), for example, combine Language Ecology, German theories of Bildung and Kramsch’s concept of Symbolic Competence in a systematic way. They under-

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2 Larsen-Freeman/Cameron (2008: 157, 160, note 16) note that much of the conceptual compatibility of DST and Vygotsky-related SCT approaches to language learning depends on whether the relation between mental and external social activity is thought of as dialectic or dialogic. Accordingly, only the latter view would grant commonalities with DST.
line that ‘Language Ecology’ is far from being founded on a coherent theory of language, its core element being rather “a holistic way of viewing language in its social and cultural environment” (ibid.: 219; cf. also Kramsch 2008; Kramsch/Whiteside 2008). In contrast to other studies informed by sociocultural thought, this approach explicitly refers to Complexity Theory.

4 Some elements of emergentist approaches in SLA-research

Emergentism has its origins in natural sciences, namely in the science of chaoscomplexity. Chaos Theory and its derivatives Complexity Theory and Dynamic Systems Theory (or Dynamic Adaptive Systems Theory) were developed to understand processes which cannot be explained within a logic of linear causality, for example in disciplines such as meteorology and astronomy. ‘Emergence’ as a central concept of these approaches describes the phenomenon of qualitative change in a developmental process. But contrary to linear causality, which explains changes as direct consequences of preceding states or interceptions, emergence is not predictable in time or nature. The reason for this is that it depends on the interactions of different parts within a complex system, and neither the exact result of such interactions nor their temporal dimension can be fully predicted. A popular example is the so-called butterfly effect, i.e. “the notion that a butterfly fluttering its wings in a distant part of the world today can transform the local weather pattern next month” (Larsen-Freeman 1997: 144). However, the course of such events is not characterized by randomness. Emergentist studies, in fact, reveal that processes within complex systems tend to give rise to moments of stability called ‘attractor states’. These are patterns characterized by a fractal structure, fractals being phenomena that show characteristics of self-similarity at different stages.

Diane Larsen-Freeman (1997) first introduced elements of chaoscomplexity theory into SLA-research. Meanwhile, this approach has gained some ground in the discipline (e.g. de Bot et al. 2007; Mercer 2001; van Geert 2008), and Larsen-Freeman herself continued investigating in this direction (cf. e.g. Ellis/Larsen-Freeman 2006; Larsen-Freeman 2011; Larsen-Freeman/Cameron 2008). What attracted researchers to DST was the perception that previous language acquisition theories had not been able to explain the interaction of complex factors. Variables that are thought to have an impact on language acquisition could not be controlled empirically to a sufficiently high degree to put researcher in a position to project and predict outcomes in detail. While DST claims this unpredictability to be inevitable, it still offers implications for the learning/teaching practice. According to DST-based learning theory (e.g. Emergentism), a complex learning environment is necessary to facilitate emergence. This clearly parallels the main ideas related to a rich learning context in...
constructivism. Further consequences pertain to the importance of the initial phases of a learning process and to the use of resources.

5 Bildung, Sociocultural Theory and Emergentism

The notion of Bildung originates in the era of late Rationalism and early Romanticism of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Bildung describes the individuals’ becoming an identifiable subject through a process of increasingly complex and diverse ways of relating to the world. Wilhelm von Humboldt conceived of the process of Bildung as an on-going interaction between the individual and the experiential world. In the course of this process, the individual draws on a distinctly human resource, which Humboldt calls Kraft (resp. Kräfte), by virtue of which people generate a meaningful concept of themselves and the world (cf. also Wimmer 2003: 185, note 1). While Humboldt thought of Bildung as a reconciled and ultimately as a balanced totality of each of these Kräfte, more recent reformulations of the notion of Bildung draw on postmodern epistemology, leading to a stronger emphasis of divergence – as opposed to classical convergence – of such modes of accessing the world. Contemporary models of Bildung see the individual engaged in negotiating rather than reconciling diverse modes of relating to the world.

For our context, the theoretical and empirical work done by Hans-Christoph Koller (2012) offers an interesting perspective. Koller’s understanding of Bildung is based on a differentiation of ‘learning’ and Bildung. While learning denotes any acquisition of information or knowledge within an existing schema, processes of Bildung are to be thought of as a particular kind of “higher-order learning” (ibid.: 15, our translation), through which the “fundamental figurations of how a person relates self and world change” (ibid., our translation). Drawing on the work by Rainer Kokemohr (2007), Koller continues to argue that changes of this kind may be triggered in situations in which a person fails to assimilate new knowledge according to his/her existing mental schemas, and simultaneously experiences this failure as a cognitive, emotional or any other sort of crisis.

Following from this, Koller (2012: 16ff.) raises four major issues which he believes a contemporary theory of Bildung should cover:

• How can the structure of ‘fundamental figurations of self and world’ appropriately be theorised?

3 Koller’s own summary account of what constitutes processes of Bildung reads: “Bildungsprozesse bestehen demzufolge also darin, dass Menschen in der Auseinandersetzung mit neuen Problemlagen neue Dispositionen der Wahrnehmung, Deutung und Bearbeitung von Problemen hervorbringen, die es ihnen erlauben, diesen Problemen besser als bisher gerecht zu werden.” (Koller 2012: 16)
How can the structure of such instances of crisis (Problemlagen) be theorised that (potentially) initiate processes of Bildung?

How can such processes of higher-order learning be conceptualised to explain the emergence of new fundamental figurations?

What are the appropriate methodological instruments to access processes of Bildung empirically?

We cannot present Koller’s account of the concept of Bildung here in full. However, his understanding of Bildung seems to share a number of conceptual characteristics with aspects of Sociocultural and Dynamic Systems Theory.

For the moment, we leave aside the first and second question from the list above and turn to the third. Koller (ibid.: 112ff.) points out that the subject may neither be aware of nor be in control of higher-order learning transformations at the moment of their occurrence. Koller refers to Ulrich Oevermann (1991), who speaks of the ‘emergence of the new’ and argues that the outcome of a higher-order learning process, on top of being invisible and undecipherable to a person while she/he is undergoing this process, is not predictable. Only retrospectively do new figurations become recognisable. However, it remains an open question whether ‘Bildung’ should be distinguished from ‘identity’ by the metacognitive ability to reflect on one’s “relationship to the world” (Norton 2000: 5). If we do so, referring to ‘Bildung’ would necessarily imply an element of metacognition, whereas referring to 'identity' would not (while at the same time not excluding it).

Taking a final step before turning to the concept of multiliteracies, we would like to raise a point for further discussion, again without being able to provide answers here and now: If the process of Bildung can be described as an emergent phenomenon, can other key concepts of Dynamic Systems Theory also be brought into play for theorising Bildung? Will it, consequently, be feasible to apply DST in research of processes of higher-order learning within the context of second or foreign language learning? If we follow Humboldt’s notion that Bildung occurs in and through the individual’s interaction with his/her material and (social) world, processes of Bildung become fundamentally dependent on context. Context is therefore not to be excluded from the picture as ‘noise’. In the same vein, de Bot et al. (2007) argue that DST allows to “merge the social and cognitive aspects of SLA and show how their interaction can lead to development” (ibid.: 19).

It would be tempting to explore other features of higher-order learning through the lens of DST as dynamic, recursive and reflexive. It would be equally tempting to explore the tools of empirical research used in both contexts. For reasons of limited space, we will do neither and turn to the concept of multi-
literacies for a similar investigation of underlying links with the theory of *Bildung*, DST and Emergentism.

6 Multiliteracies, Sociocultural Theory and Emergentism

Having been developed in the late 1990s, the concept of multiliteracies is meant to provide pedagogical answers to questions which derive directly from the social changes in western societies and from the changes in media-based communication. The demands seen by a group of researchers and practitioners, named *The New London Group*, relate to preparing young learners for a life in contexts of multilingual, multicultural and, in a Bakhtian sense, multivocal communication, digital communication, global and local participation and a complex knowledge society. The main idea is that traditional linear literacy focusing on the alphabet of one single language is no longer suited to cope with these demands. Future education should in fact take into account the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom, foster children’s language competencies in both schooling and heritage languages and introduce them to visual and computer literacies. According to the idea of education for citizenship, learners should also be enabled to develop critical literacy and social awareness rather than mere instrumental skills. This is basically what the *New London Group* in the subtitle of their manifesto refers to as the “design of social futures”.

The didactic and methodological outlines proposed by the *New London Group* are marked by a sociocultural approach taking a holistic view of the human: “Our view of mind, society and learning is based on the assumption that the human mind is embodied, situated and social” (The New London Group 1996: 18). In this perspective, learners’ social identity and social participation are points of major interest. In brief, the concept of multiliteracies (or ‘multimodal literacies’) can be defined as the capacity of learners to negotiate and generate (new) meaning in linguistically and culturally heterogeneous lifeworlds, using ‘old’ and ‘new’ media and adopting responsibility for themselves as well as for the community. This capacity requires above all the ability to combine and to integrate heterogeneous, complex elements in learning, thinking and acting.

If we ask about the relationship between the concept of multiliteracies and sociocultural theory, the answer is quite obvious as the writings of the *New London Group* explicitly refer to Vygotskian ideas. Learning is seen as a social process, or more precisely as a constantly modified result of social interaction, which concerns the individual as a whole not only in contexts of formal learning but in contexts of private, professional and political life as well. To our knowledge, no research has yet been done concerning emergence in multiliteracy
acquisition or practices. In view of the looming complexity, a DST-informed mindset might best be suited for an analysis of these processes.

As we have seen, the concepts of multiliteracies and Bildung both depart from a holistic view of the individual and emphasize his/her interaction with environmental factors particularly within sociocultural contexts. Whereas theorizing the notion of Bildung has also given rise to qualitative empirical investigations concerning the identity implications of Bildung (mainly through biographical narrative inquiry and reconstructive designs in the field of Bildungsgangsdidaktik), comparable research has yet to be tackled for an understanding of the development of multiliteracies.

7 Identity, Sociocultural Theory and Emergentism

The concept of identity has been an issue of controversial debate for quite a long time. Early sociological studies thought of identity as an essentially static construct of affiliating to social groups (cf. Ricento 2005: 897). At present, however, identity is seen as an individual and, after all, never-ending process of self-relating in changing social contexts. Thus, individual identity constructions are always dynamic and at the same time multi-faceted, as reflected in the concepts of fluid, situated and multiple identities. Bonny Norton, for example, underlines its dynamic and temporary character by defining ‘identity’ as “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future” (Norton 2005: 5).

Learning-/learner-oriented identity research was formed not only by sociocultural but also by post-structuralist influences (cf. Norton/McKinney 2011; Norton/Toohey 2002). Pointing to the sensitive issue of power relationships in language practice, Norton/Toohey (2011: 415) see language learning “as a process of struggling to use language in order to participate in specific speech communities”. Additionally, poststructuralist thought is reflected in the way subjectivity and language are considered as inextricably intertwined (cf. ibid.: 417): The individual is subject to language as well as its creative user. Based on these principles, Bonny Norton (2000: 127f.) developed a theory of identity as it is encapsulated in the frequently quoted notion of identity as a field of controversy and as a “complex site of struggle”, where people fight for recognition (cf. also Block 2007: 866f.; Dörnyei/Ushioda 2009b: 4f.). Empirical findings suggest that learning a second/foreign language interferes in the interdependencies of self- and world-perception. Learning and processes of self-positioning are hence seen as irresolvably interwoven.

Sociocultural identity research carries rich potential due to its contiguity to language learning approaches based on theories of Bildung, especially within the
so called Bildungsgangdidaktik (cf. Decke-Cornill/Hu/Meyer 2007; Meyer/Reinartz 1998). This line of research particularly focuses on long-term manifestations of learning within learners’ overall personalities. It thus draws attention to the personal relevance of foreign language learning and to its developmental perspective over longer periods of time. However, it remains a matter of debate whether sociocultural perspectives allow for a sufficient explanation of mental learning processes. In this respect, approaches in learning theory may usefully be based on Complexity Theory and its derivatives, DST and Emergentism. A link between these two is also suggested in studies on identity constructions of foreign language learners, which increasingly consider both theoretical approaches to be mutually compatible. Ushioda (2011) argues that language learning motivation can be conceptualised as a function of identity. In fact, complexity as a metaphor and the theory of Complex Adaptive Systems as a new paradigm can provide important stimuli for identity research. Sade (2011: 45), for example, puts the focus on the concept of attractors and the fractal dimension as tools for understanding the dynamics of identity constructions. In this perspective, empirical research may particularly benefit from longitudinal designs.

As case studies by Sade, Lamb, Paiva and Oxford (all 2011) and others demonstrate, the theoretical background of current identity research proves prolific in the context of second/foreign language learning. As an example, the dimension of collective identities has been conceptualized using DST inventory, above all by the notion of attractors (cf. Sade 2011: 46). All in all, complexity approaches have gained influence in motivation research related to language learning (cf. Dörnyei/Ushioda 2009c; Dörnyei 2010; Ushioda 2009). On the whole, however, research in this particular field is still at its outset. Taking a slightly different direction, we now briefly turn to phenomena of reflective learning.

8 Reflective learning and foreign language education

DST stipulates emergence (Larsen-Freeman/Cameron 2008: 58ff.) in learning processes. Being associated with higher-order learning, processes of Bildung probably follow this pattern as well. As we suggested with Koller (2012), for a change in the ‘fundamental figurations’ of one’s relations to the world and self to occur, a situation of crisis, in which formerly held schemas become dysfunctional, may be required as a necessary pre-condition. The imminent transformation may build up over time resulting in an ad-hoc change, like a breaking wave, or it may come unnoticed through continuous smaller changes. Sarah Mercer (2011) describes agency as a complex dynamic system. She shows how in the case of a student teacher of English and Italian, learning experiences and a changing sense of linguistic competence function as contexts for the
development of a sense of agency, leading to a growth in professional identity. The student teacher in question moves beyond a restricted professional identity to a more expansive way of relating to her professional self, and to language teaching as her future professional field.

For an investigation of reflective learning in languages, the context of pre-service language teachers is particularly interesting. In order to establish a professional identity, student teachers need to negotiate ‘identity options’ within at least three dimensions more or less simultaneously: language learner, user and prospective teacher (Chik/Breidbach 2011: 554). Reconstructing ‘identity options’ and tracing their professional development may lead to a deeper understanding of how reflective language learning works.

In the following excerpt, Tess⁴, who at the time of writing was a student teacher at a German university, tells her story of her year abroad. We use this part of her written language learning history to illustrate what we recognise as the emergence of an integrated understanding of language learning.

[...] Becoming part of South African society, I wanted to be able to express myself among others as appropriately as possible. I figured out that English provides expressions with certain connotations that don’t have an exact substitute in German and vice versa. While I experienced the differences in languages I became more conscious of a meta-level of language and realized that one doesn’t only carry facts by words, but that the words I choose to express a subject suggest how I feel about it.

This led me to a simple conclusion: The more words I have stored in my mind, the more likely it is that I find the words that best suit my thoughts and feelings. [...] So I listened and talked, went out to many cultural occasions, took part in church services, cooked with Indian women, went to dances in the temple, worked in children’s homes, travelled and every experience became a language experience as well. [...] Starting from the desire to interact appropriately in a new language and social context, Tess finds that English expands her possibilities of expression; this leads her to reflect on the communicative capacities of language. To be able to use this capacity in full, she sets herself a learning aim, which is to learn as many words as she can ‘store’ in her memory. For this, she seeks participation in social and cultural events, and she even finds a workplace. For Tess, in this process of becoming aware of her own learning leads to the next. Eventually, she is able to experience her being part of “South African society” as a language experience – and vice versa. The structure and wording of her narrative suggests that at some stage in the process, a qualitative change has occurred from a rather linear and accumulative to a dynamic and arguably more complex and holistic understanding of language learning.

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⁴ The real name of the student has been changed.
The text also shows that Tess negotiates her ‘identity options’ as a language learner and language user. As a language user, she aims to become a part of South African Society, which is concomitant for her with a need to express herself affectively and emotionally. As a language learner, her efforts to overcome the social distance affect her way of thinking about language. This is what seems to happen when she becomes aware of the capacities of language for allowing herself to adopt a new voice. The last sentence suggests that a new figuration has emerged when Tess writes of herself in terms of learner as user, who experiences language learning through active involvement in social events. In what particular way this new idea about language learning and using will affect her developing teacher identity does not seem to be a part of her explicit narrative. From a DST perspective, however, in which all of Tess’s identity positions can be seen as interdependently related, we may assume that in the long run, some effect will be made. However, when this will happen, in which way and with what outcome, is beyond prediction.

9 Research perspectives

Since the publication of Larsen-Freeman’s seminal article in 1997, DST has gained ground in Applied Linguistics and SLA research beyond a purely metaphorical use. Within the German context, Bleyhl even as early as 1989 (cf. Bleyhl 1989: 33f.) draws on concepts such as self-organisation and metaphorises language learning as a ‘meandering river’, suggesting an ‘ecologic’ understanding of language didactics (“ökologische Didaktik”, ibid.: 34). The development of language within and outside classroom contexts has attracted much interest of researchers in the meantime. What seems to be missing is wide-ranging research on the development of the language learner. Also, much of what is discussed as ‘intercultural learning’ builds on the assumption that language learning affords opportunities for reflective learning. However, a satisfactory conceptual (as opposed to a mainly metaphorical) understanding of how this should come about in actual teaching, has not yet been developed.

Both such and similar research lead us to the general question whether language learning can function as an ecological parameter for Bildung in the sense of leading to a change in the ‘fundamental figurations’ of how a person relates to the world and himself/herself.

- Are there existing threshold levels for linguistic skills to become critical for the perception of learners’ sense of self/identity?

- Are such thresholds dependent on other contextual parameters? And in particular: In which way does the quality of learning experiences (or the perception of these) form an ecologic variable for processes of Bildung to emerge?
To what extent does second/further language learning interact with acquisition processes of multiliteracies?

What potential impact do incidents of reflective learning (‘becoming aware’) have on system dynamics in learners? How do such incidents interact with internal and contextual parameters?

We know remarkably little about how – albeit plurilingual – language learning interacts with the acquisition of multiliteracies. We know little about processes of Bildung in a broad sense in conjunction with language learning. We believe, however, that a combined SCT and DST approach can help to close this gap.

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Identity Construction in Adult Learners of English for Specific Purposes (ESP): Exploring a Complex Phenomenon

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The aim of this paper is to explore identity construction in adult learners of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in Germany and to lay the conceptual foundations for further research on the construct of identity in the ESP context. As research on language and identity has mainly concentrated on contexts relating to migration, plurilingual societies and sojourns abroad, contact with a community of L1 speakers is invariably seen as the essence of identity construction in language learning. However, this seems hardly relevant to German ESP learners in a globalised economic environment, who are instead more likely to aspire to an enhanced professional identity where they use English as a lingua franca in an international context with other L2 speakers. By re-interpreting existing models of identity, a new context-specific model is derived to integrate factors that adequately reflect the language learning reality of adult ESP learners in Germany and their negotiation of identity. An outlook on practical applications of the new model is given.

1 Introduction

In the course of increasing migration flows and processes of globalisation, identity and identity construction have come into the focus of attention in foreign language education and research. As identity has been explored from many angles, it is difficult to define the construct; however, for the purpose of this study, it is assumed that identity is self-perceived and self-constructed, that it can and indeed does change throughout an individual’s life, and that multiple identities can co-exist in one individual.

On the whole, the negotiation of identity in language learners has most frequently been examined in contexts where learners are in direct contact with
L1 (‘native’) speakers, either as members of multilingual societies or as foreign language learners sojourning in a location where the target language is spoken as an L1. This paper aims to explore identity in a different learning context, that of adult learners of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in Germany. Compared to foreign language education at school, ESP courses for adults (e.g. Business English, English for Academic Purposes, English for Science and Technology, etc.) tend to have a much more functional purpose and a clear vocational orientation where language skills are usually acquired for communication in lingua franca contexts rather than for communication with L1 speakers. Although a large percentage of adult learners of English in Germany attend ESP courses, their perspective of identity and identity construction processes through language learning has remained largely unexplored.

This paper begins by outlining relevant aspects of identity construction in ESP and subsequently presents a short overview of the various scientific approaches to identity and language learning, comparing and contrasting previous research from the fields of anthropology, social psychology, and sociolinguistics. While these approaches seem to take into account aspects of both individual identity and group identities in language learning, they invariably see contact with an English-speaking community and culture as the essence of identity construction in this context, and fail to account for learners for whom achieving native-like language competence and familiarity with another culture may take low priority. Instead, as this paper suggests, ESP learners are more likely to aspire to an enhanced professional identity where they are able to use English as a lingua franca, improve their career prospects and position themselves as true global players, without uprooting their stable core identity.

A new model of identity construction in the ESP context is therefore proposed, adopting some aspects known from previous models but modifying and adding to them to reflect the realities of ESP learning among adults in Germany today.

2 Identity construction in ESP

To understand issues of identity and identity construction among adult ESP learners in Germany, it is necessary to gain an overview of their learning environment and their reasons for embarking on ESP courses, as well as an understanding of ESP itself. The concept of English for Specific Purposes was first developed in the 1960s and 70s (cf. Howatt/Widdowson 2004; Swales 2000) when, in times of increasing globalisation, more and more working adults needed to use English for work-related communication and discovered that the kind of English they had learnt at school was insufficient for their
requirements. Specialised ESP courses emerged, focusing e.g. on Business English, English for Academic Purposes or English for Science and Technology (Hutchinson/Waters 1987; Swales 2000), although highly specialised professional courses in Aviation English, English for Law Enforcement, English for the Pharmaceutical Industry or the Financial Sector also became available.

The study of ESP may include not only lexical and grammatical aspects of work-related language but also cultural insights into the respective profession, and train learners in practical skills (e.g. telephoning or giving presentations in English) so as to enable them to function competently as a member of the discourse community in their field. In particular, they may need English to read international publications (in print or online), communicate with international business contacts, attend conferences or trade fairs, design their own company website in English or even – for scientists and academics from all fields – to publish in international English-language journals. Yet ESP is equally of interest to students in higher education and to young people in vocational training because it is a valuable skill to have when entering the job market for the first time. At present, ESP is in fact the fastest growing sector in English language teaching (Vogt 2011) and – particularly in the Frankfurt/M. area of Germany (where the authors of this chapter are located) with its strong economic base in industry and finance – there are now more EFL teachers on the regional adult education market teaching ESP than general English (ELTAF 2008). Presumably, the situation is similar in other highly industrialised countries or regions (e.g. North East China, Li 2013).

However, when looking at this booming market for ESP, it becomes obvious that learning objectives and learner motivation have shifted. As an international *lingua franca* used worldwide in business, academia and many other communicative environments, English has become an increasingly prestigious language which by now has more non-native than native speakers worldwide (cf. Kachru 1992). It follows that adult learners around the world today study English not in order to travel to an English-speaking country or even to communicate with L1 speakers, but mainly to use it as a *lingua franca* in international work-related contexts with other L2 speakers. Eschmann (2005) found that in fact only 32% of learners of English at a German *Volkschule* (community adult education institute) had ever been to an English-speaking country, compared to e.g. 85% of learners of Italian who had been to Italy.

Consequently, existing models and research approaches to identity construction in foreign language learning will have to be modified or reinterpreted to suit these changed objectives.
3  Identity and foreign language learning: A variety of approaches

In order to define the construct of identity and to understand its role in foreign language learning, particularly in ESP, it is first of all necessary to explore and juxtapose a number of past and present research approaches relating to the subject.

**Anthropology**
The idea of a connection between language and identity, particularly when it comes to the acquisition of a second or foreign language, has been of interest to anthropologists, social psychologists, sociolinguists and educators alike. Historically, anthropological theories of a connection between language and national identity reach back as far as Herder and Humboldt (cf. Risager 2006). In the early part of the 20th century, anthropologists such as Boas, Sapir and Whorf successively developed the linguistic relativity theory which claims that “the structure of a language determines a native speaker’s world view. Different languages are assumed to lead to different world views” (Carroll 1999: 364) and, consequently, “learning a language changes the way a person thinks” (ibid.: 365). Despite a lack of empirical evidence, these theories are at the root of a research tradition reaching into the 20th and 21st century.

**Social psychology**
Around the early 1960s, a research tradition on attitude and motivation in second language acquisition (SLA) emerged in the field of social psychology. Canadian scholars, trying to investigate why English and French speakers in Canada were often unsuccessful at learning and using each other’s languages, showed that social psychological variables such as an open and friendly attitude towards the speakers of the other language (the L2 community) and the degree of identification with this community could have a strong positive effect on language acquisition (Gardner/Lambert 1959). In other words, to acquire a second language to a high level, the learner had to integrate this language and its community into his or her individual identity, to make it a part of his/her very self. Based on the social identity theory of intergroup behaviour (Giles/Byrne 1982; Tajfel/Turner 1979), Gardner (1985) eventually developed the socio-educational model of second language acquisition which was highly influential because it stressed the importance of individual difference variables in SLA, not only integrativeness (identification with a group of proficient speakers) but also attitudes and motivation, and showed their interrelation.

In this manner, the social psychological approach was the first to move away from the hitherto dominant idea of innate language aptitude as the main
predictor of achievement at second or foreign language acquisition (FLA) (Carroll/Sapon 1959), and to include factors specific to the individual’s personal identity. In addition, Gardner’s socio-educational model suggests that language learning may yield ‘non-linguistic outcomes’, which are of great interest when investigating identity changes and identity construction in foreign language acquisition. Despite admitting that “the nature of these proposed changes is not well detailed” (Gardner 1985: 143), Gardner (ibid.: 84) defines them as by-products of the language learning experience: “If attitudes and motivation influence how well someone learns a second language, is it not equally possible that the experience of learning a second language influences attitudes and motivation?” This circular interpretation of the socio-educational model illustrates the idea that many of the variables influencing language study in the first place may later resurface as – ideally positive – non-linguistic outcomes of language study. Empirical evidence seems to substantiate these claims, at least for students on intensive immersion courses in the target country and in migration contexts, i.e. where there is contact with an L2 community (Block 2007; MacIntyre et al. 2003; Pavlenko 2006). However, as described above, the ESP learning context in Germany which the present paper aims to examine usually offers little or no direct contact with an L2 community. In fact, with multicultural societies being the norm in our globalised 21st century, the cultural dichotomy presented by the intergroup model (L1 vs. L2 community) may be considered irrelevant in a context where a foreign language is learnt for purposes other than to communicate with a community of native speakers. Consequently, one must ask how learners can possibly perceive integrativeness when there is no longer an L2 community to integrate and identify with! For all these reasons, it is necessary to modify and update the existing model to account for a different, changed reality (see chapter 4).

At the same time, Gardner (1985) contrasted integrative orientation towards learning a language (which may affect identity) with instrumental orientation. The latter describes an individual’s motivation to learn another language fuelled by the prospect of external rewards such as valuable qualifications, employment prospects, promotion or a higher salary. Clearly, such external rewards can positively affect self-identity and are likely to be highly relevant to adult learners acquiring ESP for professional purposes. Dörnyei (2005, 2009) and Ushioda/Dörnyei (2009) connect language learning to an individual’s quest for the ‘ideal self’ (fuelled by personal hopes, aspirations and wishes) out of a choice of ‘possible selves’, as well as to a quest for societal status by fulfilling the expectations of others: the ‘ought-to self’ (what one believes one should be). This is in line with Oerter/Dreher (2008) who describe a natural human desire to reduce any discrepancy between current and ideal self. Hence, the ‘ideal L2 self’ (Ryan 2009) might be a person who speaks English confidently, who has an interesting job where they communicate in English on an international level,
who is successful and admired – all of which forms part of his/her self-identity. Interestingly, studies in countries as varied as Hungary (Czisér/Kormos 2009), Japan (Ryan 2009), and Iran (Taguchi et al. 2009) have confirmed these theories, taking into account not only the individuals’ personal aspirations but also the diverse cultural contexts they may live and study in, especially with respect to the ‘ought-to self’.

Sociolinguistics
While most of the social psychological theories described above focus on the individual self, sociolinguistic research emphasises the fact that human beings are social beings and do not exist in a vacuum. Hence, sociolinguists define individual identity as being constructed out of social identity and, as a consequence, out of many different group identities (Joseph 2004). In other words, people are not thought to interact and communicate purely as individuals but as members of the groups they belong to and identify with (Giles et al. 2010) and where they attach emotional significance to such membership (Benwell/Stokoe 2006). Multiple identities of an individual may include e.g. ethnic identity, national identity (Joseph 2004) or cultural identity (Thomas 1992) amongst others – but also, on a lower degree of abstraction, familial identity (Giles/Johnson 1981) or identity as a member of a sports club or similar social group. Such a multitude of identities is thought to be necessary because each individual has roles to play with regard to others, e.g. their parents, spouse, colleagues, boss, or friends (Joseph 2004). What is more, these identities are not fixed but constantly self-created and re-negotiated in the act of communication (Giddens 1991).

This raises the question as to which identities can change or be actively reconstructed when learning a foreign language, and, more specifically, English for Specific Purposes. Because of the different scientific approaches to identity, it is necessary to define the construct in a way that enables us to carry out further research relating to a specific learning context and environment. For the purpose of this research, it can therefore be summarised that self-identity

- is self-perceived, not objective but subjective,
- is not assigned but can change and be self-constructed,
- consists of multiple identities that co-exist and complement each other, e.g. individual identities and group identities,
- is created in communication with other individuals or groups,
- is “an ongoing lifelong project” (Block 2006: 35) as its construction and re-creation have become a fact of life in today’s globalised world,
- includes an awareness of what one is compared to what one would like to be.
Of course, despite the necessity for ongoing change, every human being wishes to retain a stable core identity in a quest for security and safety in their life (Norton 1997). So when it comes to foreign language learning, individuals may experience a “pull in opposite directions” (Jenkins 2006: 87): the attraction of English as a global language of communication that is sure to bring instrumental achievement, self-confidence and the respect of others, versus the safety and belonging offered by their L1 language of identification; modern-time identity flux versus desire for stability. This may have diverse effects on the learner, such as fear of assimilation (Clément 1980), resistance to speak the L2 in an attempt to protect one’s identity as a competent and articulate individual (Worth 2007), or a feeling of simultaneously embracing and rejecting the language learning experience (Granger 2004). In other words, learners will most likely refuse to ‘change’ identity in the sense of giving up one thing to obtain another. Instead, language learning ought to offer a positive opportunity to add something to what one already has, thereby enriching the total and allowing the learner to form an integrated self where all identities coexist peacefully.

Hence, learning about and experimenting with new identities in the course of language learning may be an attractive prospect, but – as explained above – ESP learners in Germany are unlikely to identify with native English speakers and their communities in any sense that could be called integrativeness. The reason for this is simply that English-language communicators and communicative situations, especially in the world of work (which ESP learners’ objectives are focused on) are becoming increasingly heterogeneous and detached from any clearly-defined national community (Dörnyei et al. 2006). So the question is how can there be identity construction in FLA when there is no longer an L2 community to identify with and when, rather than being geographically remote, such a community has in fact ceased to exist? Who will provide a tangible group identity or set an example students might strive to emulate? Or is motivation to learn ESP strictly limited to instrumental factors, i.e. the wish to learn a skill that may bring about promotion at work, a higher income, and the respect of others? And could purely instrumental motivation, although very likely to be present in ESP students, ever affect something so personal and emotional as self-identity?

4 Towards a new context-specific model of ESP identity

As language learning contexts change over time to reflect modern-day requirements and the specific needs of learners, it is obvious that the underlying constructs and research contexts also need to adjust, in order to keep pace with 21st century realities. However, it has been shown that the existing concepts and models of identity construction in FLA are no longer applicable in some context-specific 21st century language learning environments. Therefore, a new
model is needed in order to analyse and explain the nature of identity construction in adult ESP learners in Germany, to include newly relevant factors other than the ones described in the existing social psychological and sociolinguistic literature. This does not mean having to discard the concept of the integrative motive altogether, as some scholars have claimed (Coetzee-van Rooy 2006; Ushioda 2006), but it does create a need to redefine this motive to suit a new context. If there is no longer a tangible ethnic L2 community whose identity an ESP student may wish to integrate with, its place must be taken by something else: for example, a professional community with a professional identity.

So far, professional identity development (e.g. Glaser-Segura et al. 2010; Gordon/Luke 2012; Helmich et al. 2010), despite being a popular research topic in psychology, has rarely been linked to language. Yet it is a construct highly relevant to ESP as, after all, learners would expect to use their newly-acquired linguistic skills in a professional context. However, the quest for professional identity is quite distinct from purely instrumental considerations such as obtaining a good job, promotion and financial rewards. It can be defined as the integration of knowledge, skills, self-concept, values, attitudes and autonomy (Glaser-Segura et al. 2010), all of which involves a characteristic style of thinking based on solid knowledge of one’s discipline, coupled with self-motivation and enthusiasm (Farrell 2000). In other words, it is assumed that one’s profession – and with it, membership of a professional ‘community of practice’ (Wenger 1998) – is an identity-giving aspect of one’s life.

So how is identity constructed and reconstructed with regard to one’s profession and career? First of all, an individual’s quest for the ‘ideal self’ (Ushioda/Dörnyei 2009, see above) is likely to include an ideal professional self, and if a command of ESP forms a desirable part of this professional self, the individual is likely to be motivated to acquire ESP to a high level. Yet professional identity is not purely how individuals experience themselves as competent workers and fulfil their personal professional ambitions. It is also constructed socially via the perception of oneself as a member of a professional community, be it real or imagined. Such a community of practice may be characterised by “mutual engagement, a joint enterprise and a shared repertoire” (Wenger 1998: 73) whilst also sharing and maintaining a historical and social context, routines, structures, anecdotes and humour in everyday communication in the working environment.

This is also the point where language becomes relevant: To be a member of a professional group, one needs to share this group’s language and participate in the domain-specific discourse; in fact, language can be used by this group to “differentiate between in-group and out-group members” (Glaser-Segura et al. 2010: 200). So, if the language of one’s current or desired professional
community is English – or ESP, to be more precise – then successful acquisition of ESP is the entry ticket to this community and therefore a highly relevant factor of self-identity and identity construction. Even if this professional community is not (or not yet) present in a learner’s immediate environment, they may already imagine themselves as a future member. For example, Glaser-Segura et al. (2010) believe that professional socialisation begins as soon as professional studies are taken up.

It may be said, therefore, that the presence of an integrative motive in learners of ESP is of great importance to ESP linguistic achievement and successive socialisation in an international professional community or working environment. Hence, Gardner’s and Lambert’s (1959: 271) original definition of integrativeness as “a willingness to be like valued members of the language community” still applies in the modern-day ESP context, even though the L2 community in question is no longer a national one with its cultural characteristics, but a professional one with its own cultural environment. ESP learning can thus be both instrumentally and integratively motivated, without any inherent dichotomy between the two (cf. Ryan 2006), as integration into a professional community and instrumental achievement become closely interrelated and even interdependent.

Finally, an added factor of identity construction important to learners is the global aspect of ESP. At least for learners in Germany, an English-speaking professional community is likely to be an international one where this language is used as a lingua franca. Its members may not be in the same place geographically, but may otherwise share all the characteristics of a professional community so that – depending on the working environment – they are likely to identify as members of a global professional community (cf. Dörnyei et al. 2006) in a real or imagined sense. The learner has become a ‘global player’ who uses a prestigious language that makes them stand out as an individual yet identifies them as a member of an in-group. Of course, any kind of identity construction in ESP is likely to depend on an individual’s personal learning background as well, and there tends to be a great amount of difference between individual learners. Identity construction is highly likely to be influenced by how much time and effort an individual invests in ESP learning and how much personal importance he or she attaches to this effort. However, it is safe to say that most of them would feel attracted to the idea of eventually becoming a member of a community of globally involved professionals.

In summary, and taking into account the multiple identities of relevance to ESP acquisition, it is proposed that the following six factors are likely to play a part in an ESP learner’s identity construction (cf. figure 1):

• ‘Instrumental’: L2 being useful at work and promising economic gain
‘Professional’: individual identity as a professional, membership of real and imagined professional L2 communities of practice

‘Individual’: intrinsic quest for the ideal self, positive differentiation of the speaker

‘Global’: global identity, membership of a global community, prestige, positive differentiation of the language

‘Personal learning background’: social and historical learning background and learner’s relationship to the language, investment in language learning

‘L1 identity maintenance’: managing multiple cultural and social identities, retaining a stable core identity while exploring L2 culture and identities

As the model shows, six factors are believed to affect identity construction in ESP learners, and all these factors are likely to relate to each other. With multiple identities present or emerging simultaneously in an individual, identity construction in ESP learners is certainly a complex issue worthy of closer investigation in the future. The complexities include the need to balance individual versus group identities as well as the quest for membership of a professional L2 community of practice versus the need to maintain an integrated self.
5 Practical application and research outlook

Clearly, empirical research is needed to validate this model and to possibly identify additional factors that may exist, as well as to determine if and how all the factors described may interrelate. A research project is therefore planned whereby ESP learners from different fields (e.g. Business English, Academic English, Technical English, and other less often studied kinds of ESP) will be asked, both by questionnaire and by interview, about their personal perceptions of identity and identity construction with a view to learning and using ESP. A mixed methods approach (e.g. Ecarius/Miethe 2011) using both quantitative and qualitative research methods will then help to analyse and provide a clearer picture of how identity construction in ESP can take place in various individuals and what the main factors are in promoting or hindering such construction.

It seems obvious, though, that ESP acquisition and identity construction are likely to go hand in hand in some way. So, from a practical point of view, if linguistic achievement is to be promoted, it may be argued that identity development is equally desirable and deserves to be promoted by language educators. Of course, this can be a sensitive issue if one is to avoid manipulation and intrusion into a learner’s personal space. Hence, language educators may be best advised to promote identity construction and development simply by providing opportunities for students to reflect on and discuss identity issues while they learn, and by raising awareness. It is not expected that identity construction will per se depend on a teaching method or methods as the active ingredient in this process is thought to be the student, not the teacher – although he or she can offer help and encouragement.

Practical classroom activities to promote identity construction and development may include raising awareness of the instrumental benefits of knowing ESP, discussing the pros and cons of professional and lifestyle choices, doing case studies of working professionals abroad and possibly promoting social contact with such professionals, inviting speakers who are experts in the field, exploring opportunities for language practice outside the classroom, and comparing German and English-speaking professional cultures with a view to encouraging students’ desire to construct professional identity to the same level in L2 as in L1. In addition, identity issues may be of relevance in language counselling (a service that many schools and universities offer) and counsellors should therefore be aware of them. Testing the effectiveness of these practical activities could of course also be the topic of further research.

In this manner, identity construction will ideally become a powerful tool to aid the L2 learning process and help ESP students on their path to becoming global professionals.
References


Constructing German Learner Identities in Online and Offline Environments

Alice Chik (Hong Kong)

This article discusses the findings from an on-going school-based online exchange project between students from Hong Kong and Berlin. The former are proficient and confident English speakers, and have taken on the challenge to study German as an additional foreign language in after-school classes. While English cultural and popular cultural products are freely circulated in the Hong Kong media, there is very limited access to German cultural and popular cultural products. When it comes to language learning, it is possible to view the participants as having a split have and have-not identity between the two languages. Yet, how do participants see themselves as learners and users of German? Drawing on online writing practice artefacts, self-portraits, and interview data from the projects, I will argue that sociocultural-economic binaries do not necessarily define or limit students’ creativity and ingenuity in appropriating available resources in language learning. This article will conclude with implications for modern language teaching in secondary school settings and language teacher education.

1 Introduction

Though there has been increasing interest in multilingualism in the last decade, especially in European contexts, the situation in East Asia might have moved in a different direction. In a global context in which English is fast becoming the only second or foreign language learned and used by many learners due to its lingua franca status, the sociocultural spaces for learning and using other modern and Asian languages are fast becoming more limited. While the teaching and learning of English is almost a given in many East Asian educational systems, as witnessed in the provision of English classes in formal curricula, additional modern languages are usually not offered (Nunan 2003). In Hong Kong, English is a required academic subject starting from Primary One and students also have to pass a public examination aimed at the assessment of their English skills at the end of Secondary Six in order to progress to local tertiary Bachelor’s Degree programmes. However, modern languages such as French or German are usually not offered at schools at all. Many tertiary students,
especially those reading for a discipline in Humanities, usually take modern or Asian languages to fulfill the foreign language requirement. At secondary or primary levels, students will have to pay for private tuition if they wish to learn an additional language. In East Asian contexts, especially in Hong Kong, it is also a challenge for learners to construct personal spaces to effectively and efficiently learn a third language, an issue addressed by Humphreys/Spratt (2008) who claim that there is almost no social presence of modern languages in the community. It is then worthy to explore the learning and acquisition of languages other than English to further our understanding and challenges of modern language teaching in East Asia.

2  The teaching and learning of a third language

In the present chapter, I adopted Jessner’s (2008: 18) definition of third language (L3) as “the third language that the speakers had contact with during her/his lifetime” to highlight the exposure a learner has towards a language. It is drastically different from Hammarberg’s (2010: 97) definition of L3 as “a non-native language which is currently being used or acquired in a situation where the person already has knowledge of one or more L2s in addition to one or more L1s”. The latter definition highlights the complexity of multilingualism in contexts as a learner can simultaneously use and acquire an additional language to his/her existing knowledge of L1s and L2s. Given the social status of English in Asian contexts, Jessner’s (2008) definition is more representative of L3 learning. Studies on the teaching and learning of a third language frequently focus on three scenarios: children growing up with three languages, bilingual children learning an L3, and bilingual migrant children learning an L3 in new socio-linguistic environments. One issue that Jessner (2008) raised was the isolation of the teaching of an L3 in the classroom regardless of increases in immersion programmes or content-based learning. L3 teaching and learning is essentially being treated as a separate subject and disconnected from other academic subjects.

This isolation of teaching an L3 as an academic subject is problematic in itself, but it could also lead to other relevant problems in language learning. Csizér/Kormos (2008) found that among the 1777 Hungarian learners (aged 13 and 14) surveyed, German-learning students had a lower level of linguistic self-confidence than the English-learning students. They attributed the main factor to be students’ limited exposure to German media products, even though German is the major language spoken in the neighbouring countries. The lower level of linguistic self-confidence in turn led to a lower motivation to learn German. Access to media products and artifacts, such as popular music and films, is found to be the main contributor to students’ motivation to learn English (Csizér/Kormos 2009). Investigating foreign language learning motivation in
Hong Kong, Humphreys/Spratt (2008) surveyed 259 undergraduates who were learning French, German and Japanese. They found that although the 65 students learning German had high integrative motivation to learn, they had very low ‘linguistic self-confidence’, and had a high level of anxiety as beginners. Yet, we should focus on the L2 status among the learners from Hong Kong. Originally proposed by Williams/Hammarberg (2009/1998, cited in Falk and Bardel 2010), the status factor of learners’ L2 will directly impact the acquisition of the L3, as learners use a prior L2 as an orientation while learning an L3. This may be especially relevant in the East Asian contexts, as most students would have learned English as their L2, and they have greater and easier access to English media products than German media products. English is also being perceived as having a higher status, being the lingua franca in Asia.

3 Digital practices and second and foreign language learning

Dörnyei and Csizér (2005: 2) argue that “intercultural contact is both a means and an end in L2 studies”, and for many L2 learners, the major means for intercultural contact could well be through their digital practices. The current generation of learners are users of Web 2.0 tools in their daily lives: they are on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, blogs and wikis. The increasing use of Web 2.0 technologies in daily life is already part of popular cultural practices. There have been a number of studies investigating out-of-class second and foreign language (SFL) learning in digital environments (Black 2007; Kuure 2011; Lamy/Hampel 2007; Lee/Barton 2009; Leppänen et al. 2009; Thorne et al. 2009). In this environment that offers various media, young people are actively orchestrating a range of literacies to make meaning, construct knowledge and identities with and through multiple media, a practice that O’Brien (2006) terms “multimediating”. Literacy practices are blurred, or “dissolved” (Alvermann/Eakle 2007), especially in the digital age, because young people are actively “completing projects to help explain themselves, their interest, their pleasures, and the worlds they inhabit or would like to inhabit” (O’Brien 2006). When L2 learners are readily using different digital tools for SFL learning, there is a need to “examin[e] the social processes that hinder or facilitate the mobility of specific literacies across contexts” (Sheehy 2009: 144f.). This is especially relevant for the analysis of the transfer between L2 and L3 digital practices.

4 Methodology

The present article draws on a school-based online exchange project between secondary school students from Berlin and Hong Kong, however, this chapter only reports findings on the ways the Hong Kong participants viewed themselves as language learners of German. In Hong Kong, all students are required
to take English as a compulsory subject from Primary One (First Grade), and they have to pass the English examination at the end of their secondary education in order to enter university. It is debatable whether English is a second or foreign language in Hong Kong, as English learning contexts vary greatly among secondary school students (Poon 2010). Participants from the present study were Secondary Three (9th Grade) students (N = 8, all females) from a government-subsidized English-medium school. Studying in an English-medium school means that other than Chinese Language and Chinese History, all other subjects are taught in English. German is offered as an additional third language for selected students in an after-school curriculum. The offering of German is unusual for a school that runs a local curriculum. The school is located in an affluent neighbourhood and most students come from affluent socioeconomic family backgrounds. All participants have taken overseas leisure trips with their family or have joined study tours organized by the school. It is safe to assume that these participants come from more privileged backgrounds than the average secondary school student from Hong Kong.

However, coming from privileged backgrounds does not necessarily guarantee access to linguistic and cultural resources. English is listed alongside Chinese as an official language. All government and major corporation websites are bilingual in Chinese and English. According to the 2011 Population Census, 3.5% of the total population of about 7.2 million speak English as their usual language, with another 46.1% who speak it as another language. In addition to mass media in Chinese, people in Hong Kong also have free access to English-language mass media: two TV channels and three radio stations. The two local TV channels frequently broadcast popular contemporary American and British drama and sitcom programmes, for instance, CSI, Modern Family, and Downtown Abbey – to name but a few. In addition, TV viewers can subscribe to cable TV to watch premium channels like BBC, CNN, HBO, Fox and ESPN, etc. Films in English are the staples of Hong Kong cinemas. Locally published newspapers and magazines in Hong Kong English are also readily available for free or at very low cost. In the daily life of an average Hong Kong resident, English media products are easily accessible.

However, access to German in Hong Kong is much more limited. According to the German Federal Foreign Office, the estimate number of German citizens living in Hong Kong is about 3,000 (Federal Foreign Office 2012). Though German is offered in universities, it is usually not offered in government-funded or -subsidized local schools. Learners who are interested in learning German have to pay for private lessons at the Goethe-Institut, community colleges or private tutoring. Deutsche Welle-TV, the German news TV station, is only available from cable TV subscription. Newspapers printed in German and magazines are available only in selected newsstands and bookstores in the central business area. German films are occasionally available at selected
cinemas and during film festivals. In other words, German is not part of the general linguistic landscapes of Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong school is matched with a secondary school in Berlin. The Berlin school offers Mandarin Chinese as an additional option. The project team included eight secondary school students and three English undergraduates on the Hong Kong side, eleven secondary school students and three pre-service English teachers on the Berlin side. The Hong Kong participants had been learning German for three years in an after-school programme and had classes twice a week. After three years of learning German, some of the participants had already decided to drop the course at the end of the year. Some had decided to continue in the following year, and prepare for the British IGCSE German Examination. The project activities included workshops, a survey, blogging, video conferencing, self-portrait drawing, and focus group interviewing. Given the diverse data sources from both Hong Kong and German participants, this chapter focuses on the ways Hong Kong secondary school students see themselves as German learners in online and offline environments. The findings are drawn from data collected from a survey, from blogging, self-portrait drawing and focus group interviewing (table 1). All participants attended two workshops, and during the first workshop students completed a survey on their preferred German learning strategies and the potentials of using German popular cultural texts when learning German. In the project, each participant set up a personal blog and uploaded three to four entries over a 6-week period. The entries were written in English or German. Before the second video conferencing session, all participants drew their self-portraits as English and German learners. At the end of the project, participants discussed the challenges of learning German as a third language in Hong Kong. The interview was conducted in a mix of Cantonese and English and was then transcribed and translated into English.

Table 1: Activities conducted for the Hong Kong participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop 1</th>
<th>Survey, set up personal homepages and blogs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogging</td>
<td>Entry 1: My hobby (English), Entry 2: My neighbourhood (English/German)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video conference 1</td>
<td>Video conferencing in one group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 2</td>
<td>Self-portrait drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>Entry 3: Language learning stories (German)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video conference 2</td>
<td>Video conferencing in three sub-groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The focus of the analysis was to gain a general picture of the process of learning German as a third language and the ways participants positioned themselves in online and offline environments. Thus, a qualitative approach was adopted to
create the narratives of learning. The data analysis focused on the ‘subject reality’, in other words, on “findings on how ‘things’ or events were experienced by the respondents” (Pavlenko 2007: 165). This is a dominant position in narrative inquiry that pays attention to what was told by the participants and I did not try to establish that what was told was an objective or accurate truth (Barkhuizen et al. 2013; Riessman 2008). Content analysis and open coding was used to extract themes from the oral and written narratives (Lieblich et al. 1998), and the themes were discussed with the participants in the focus group interview at the end of the project.

5 Findings and Discussion

During the first workshop, all participants (HKS-8) took a survey on their digital habits for English and German language learning. All participants were avid users of digital tools and social media (e.g. Facebook, MSN, and YouTube), and they were no strangers to using the English interface on these websites or applications. All participants also reported that they regularly consume English print and media texts like novels, TV programmes, popular music and video games. Participants all agreed that they found using non-text book materials to learn English is more enjoyable and relevant to their daily lives. However, their personal habit for learning German painted a very different picture. Over the years, participants regularly took German classes after school and on Saturdays. The language course was provided by the Language Centre of a nearby university, and focused on helping beginner learners to acquire German. Participants used a German learning textbook with some supplementary materials provided by the teachers. Participants did not appear to devote additional energy and time to searching for German print and media texts (Table 2). The reading materials were a couple German magazines distributed by the teacher. The biggest surprise was the absence of German popular music. While the participants were experts in English pop, they appeared to have very limited (or no) knowledge of German pop music. Among the participants, one (HKS2) never made any attempt to look for additional materials for learning German.

Table 2: Activities that participants had done prior to the project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading German comics/books/magazines</th>
<th>Watching German TV programs or movies</th>
<th>Listening to German songs</th>
<th>Visiting websites in German</th>
<th>Playing video games in German</th>
<th>Using German in e-mail/online messengers/SMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HKS1, HKS7, HKS8</td>
<td>HKS6, HKS4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>HKS5, HKS6, HKS3, HKS4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another question addressing participants’ preference of popular cultural text use in the classroom also revealed interesting results (Table 3). All participants considered films to be the best popular cultural texts for learning German. They were not particularly keen on using digital tools, like video games or websites. The participants preferred films because it was possible to watch German films with English subtitles, so they did not have to worry too much about using a bilingual dictionary all the time.

Table 3: Popular cultural texts preferred by participants (the number at the end indicated participants’ priority).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comics</th>
<th>TV programs</th>
<th>Movies</th>
<th>Songs</th>
<th>Animations</th>
<th>Video games</th>
<th>Websites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HKS1-2</td>
<td>HKS3-1</td>
<td>HKS1-1</td>
<td>HKS5-1</td>
<td>HKS2-3</td>
<td>HKS6-1</td>
<td>HKS1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HKS3-3</td>
<td>HKS2-2</td>
<td>HKS2-1</td>
<td>HKS4-3</td>
<td>HKS2-3</td>
<td>HKS4-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HKS5-2</td>
<td>HKS4-1</td>
<td>HKS7-1</td>
<td>HKS8-3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HKS6-2</td>
<td>HKS7-1</td>
<td>HKS3-2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HKS7-2</td>
<td>HKS8-1</td>
<td>HKS5-3</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HKS8-2</td>
<td>HKS1-1</td>
<td>HKS6-3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants also liked the idea of using film and TV presentations as an in-class activity to replace the regular listening and fill-in-the-blank activities. In the last question on how popular cultural texts help when learning German, almost all stated that these texts could integrate German into their daily lives.

One explicit point that the participants voiced during the project was the disconnectedness of German from their daily lives. Even when some participants did not mention this explicitly, their drawings of self-portraits as German learners illuminated the psychological distance. Participants were asked to draw themselves as learners of German on an A4 paper and write a short explanation for the drawing. This exercise was modeled after Kalaja et al. (2008) on using self-portraits among Finnish pre-service teachers. In the self-portraits produced by the students in Hong Kong, the most striking commonality was that almost all participants drew only one single character in their self-portraits, either a human figure or a metaphor. Four participants drew human figures (HKS1, HKS5, HKS6, and HKS8) while the other four (HKS2, HKS3, HKS4 and HKS7) drew metaphorical figures (e.g. bird, fish, insect, and water tank). In the human-figure drawings, none of the figures was holding anything. The figure drawn by HKS8 was the most telling (figure 1). The girl in the drawing was visibly unhappy, and she was holding a very stiff pose. The girl was also wearing her school uniform because learning German “happened in school and it was difficult” (HKS8). Other participants also drew their figures...
wearing school uniforms (rather than casual clothing) as an indicator of the place that for them was linked to learning German: school.

Figure 1: An unhappy looking HKS8

Participants who drew non-human figures did so based on the themes of “working hard” and “slowness” (figure 2). The picture of a caterpillar eating a leaf was drawn by HKS7. She felt that her learning process was slow as the walking pace of a caterpillar but “[she] hope[d] that one day, [she could] turn into a butterfly which indicates I can learn German very well!” (HKS7). Other participants shared the same sentiment that they were not progressing fast enough. Unlike HKS8, participants who drew their self-portraits as an insect or a bird or a fish were not necessarily unhappy. In fact, from figure 2, it was clear that the participant projected a better future for her process of learning German.

Figure 2: HKS7 drew her self-portrait as a hungry caterpillar

The participants in general indicated that their experiences while learning German had been challenging because the learning was limited to the classroom. They also did not find strong reasons to extend learning to their personal lives, because they were not familiar with German popular culture. When we did the call for participation, the eight participants were enthusiastic because this was a good chance to make some friends in Germany. For the project, we invited both the participants from Hong Kong and those from Berlin to blog about their hob-
bies, neighbourhood and what they did to learn English, German or Chinese. During the first workshop, participants set up their personal homepages and blogs. On their homepages, participants were asked to write a short self-introduction in either English or German. Among the eight participants, only two chose to write in German (HKS1 and HKS2). This was a breakthrough, as HKS2 was the only student who had no exposure to German media products in the month prior to the project, yet she chose to start a blog only in German. Some students reported that they were worried that their German was not “good enough” and the students from Berlin would not “understand [their] broken German” (HKS3). At the beginning, they were also shy to upload photographs of their own because “[they did] not know if the Berlin students want[ed] to see [their] face” (HKS3). After the first round of checking out the websites of the students from Berlin, those from Hong Kong were happy to see “real faces” (HKS4). It was at this point that the concepts of communicating with “real teenagers in German” kicked in, even though one could argue that the whole project was artificially constructed. The issue of authenticity can be further discussed in a different paper, but the motivation factor of communicating for what the participants perceived as an “authentic purpose” is more important.

The participants from Hong Kong were free to choose the language of blogging, and the research team encouraged everyone to blog in their target language. Three participants (HKS1, HKS2, and HKS3) started blogging in German from the first entry on their hobbies. Others wrote two blog entries in German on their neighbourhood and language learning strategies beyond the classroom (figure 3; cf. next page).
The second journal entry on introducing a neighbourhood was an intersection between personal and academic purposes. During the focus group interview, participants mentioned that they did not think much about the neighbourhood they grew up in, and thought they had to think quite hard to say something about it. In addition, the requirement for visual elements made the task quite challenging because they wanted to show their German partners something unique about Hong Kong. They were motivated since some Berlin partners left them German comments, and they said they did not expect to feel happy about receiving comments, but they did. Writing in German to an authentic audience was something they thought they could not achieve in the classroom, because they had been completing writing tasks for their German teacher and the teacher alone. The task of writing was important because it allowed participants to produce German at their own pace. It was a “safe” exercise because “[They could] think about what [they] want to say and get some help from the dictionary” (HKS2).
One observable point is that the Hong Kong participants were happy to put phrases like “*Please tell me my mistakes, I would like to correct it! Thanks!*” (HKS2) into their blogs. This was quite different from their previous statements that underscored their need to “learn” German in the classroom. When asked about her code-switching in German and English, HKS2 was smiling and claimed that everyone on the project knew both languages. So it was natural that if she couldn’t find the German phrases to express herself, she could codeswitch and no one would find it strange. In their online modes, these Hong Kong students were happy to ask for help and guidance in their writing. Many of them were also more confident in expressing themselves in writing. During the interview, they agreed that reading and writing activities were the “safer” activities and that they were happy to participate because they could complete the tasks in their own paces without worrying about making mistakes. The use of a blog was considered an ideal situation because they could now use photographs and possibly later find some German songs on YouTube to share with others.

Participants pointed out that they were less afraid of making mistakes than they normally were in their classroom writing, because trying to tell the Berlin students about their stories (for instance, their neighbourhood) was more important than getting the grammar right. But an interesting aspect raised by HKS7 pointed to the self-monitoring in blogging, “[she had been] more careful in [her] writing because [she had] wanted to express [her] ideas clearly, so [she had] checked the short passage several times before uploading it”. All participants found that they had to use the dictionary more frequently because the new blog topics challenged their needs to adjust the tone and vocabulary. The challenges to write to an unfamiliar yet enthusiastic audience became “a thrilling experience” (HKS8) (figure 4; cf. next page).
Though McLaughlin (1990) pointed out that multilingual learners use different strategies to learn, the participants from Hong Kong appeared to be quite conservative at first in limiting their learning of German mainly to the classroom. It could be viewed that when the participants did not have a working knowledge of German popular culture, they found it difficult, if not impossible, to find media texts of personal interest as additional learning materials. Some tried to search for German pop singers, but were then frustrated by the random songs they found on YouTube. Some commented that the German films they went to see were “very serious” (HKS5). These teenagers were struggling to find the ‘right’ popular culture, and felt that they couldn’t achieve it on their own. The self-portraits drawn by the participants also confirmed the ways these learners of German differentiated the locales of learning English and German, respectively: everyday practices to learn English but classroom-based practices for learning German. The challenge to find entry points to access German media...
texts was certainly not rendered easier by their varying levels of proficiency. The finding aligned with Csizér/Kormos (2008) that access to foreign language media texts enhances linguistic self-confidence. When faced with the daunting task of searching for media texts, many of the participants opted to give up. However, the participants’ engagement with the online exchange showed that they were not indifferent to enjoying pop culture and digital practices in German, it was simply that they have yet to discover texts and practices of interest.

6 Conclusions

The present study confirmed that limited access to foreign language media texts could deter learners from fully engaging in and enjoying their L3 learning. Research on New Literacies Studies shows that SFL learners are capable of organizing and managing their SFL learning through different leisure and interest-driven digital practices, and these practices yield satisfactory learning experiences. The issue here with L3 learning is how to help learners transfer their skills of L2 digital practices to L3 digital practices. In the Asian contexts, an L3 is typically less common and less frequently used in sociocultural contexts, and thus an L3 student is essentially isolated except from his or her formal learning environment. In this case, the learners from Hong Kong have almost no or very limited exposure to German in their natural environments, for instance, at home or in school or in leisure activities. They could be viewed as ‘underprivileged’ in their learning of German. This is similar to many adults who are learning a foreign language for recreational purposes. For instance, for an adult Hong Kong learner studying French in Hong Kong, or a Japanese learner studying Italian in Japan, the best-case scenario that would see them surrounded by French or Italian in a non-threatening situation could well be in a French or Italian restaurant. Of course, this could be taking the argument to an extreme, but in linguistically poor environments, the challenges for modern language teachers would have to be helping learners to recreate a linguistically rich and sustainable environment for their learning process. Of course it may not be easy for L3 learners to have access to speech communities of their target language in their immediate social networks. L3 learners may still be able to construct media- and language-rich environments in order to enhance their learning progress.

In this article, we have come to understand young L3 learners’ need for popular cultural texts in their L3. We have also seen practices to bring L3 learning and use into their social worlds; however, they need additional help and skills to achieve this goal. The responsibility of modern language teachers then may well be to help learners to anchor learning in foreign language media products and artefacts.
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Multilingual Virtual Talking Books (MuViT) – A Project to Foster Multilingualism, Language Awareness, and Media Competency

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This paper introduces the theoretical framework and the main objectives of the European Comenius project MuViT (Multilingual Virtual Talking Books). The project engages primary pupils across the world in multilingual and audiovisual reading and writing processes through the use of information technology resources. MuViT contains software with five digital storybooks in five different languages (English, German, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish), an authoring tool for story production and broadcasting, and a web community. The paper first sketches the necessity of new and innovative learning and teaching methods in line with a digitalized and multilingual society. In a second step it details on the objectives and tools developed within the MuViT project. Thirdly it illustrates which research questions and activities are connected with the project. First findings from exploratory research in Germany and in Turkey concerning the use of the program show the potential of the MuViT tools for multilingual and media education.

1 Changes in our society – changes in our classrooms

As a consequence of migration, global economic expansion, and increasing mobility, our society can be characterised by growing cultural and linguistic diversity. The Eurobarometer 2006 (European Commission 2006) states that 56 per cent of all EU-citizens speak at least one foreign language in addition to their mother tongue. 28 per cent indicate that they even master two foreign languages apart from their first language. Many internet websites can be
optionally chosen and read in different languages, besides many of them making use of a mixture of languages on one and the same page, to present different products internationally or simply illustrate content in a ‘multicultural’ and thus open-minded manner. A view into common YouTube blogs shows how people today, being at different places all over the world, mediate from one language to another when discussing a video clip or a song, or when explaining to others difficult aspects of online tutorials. It becomes obvious that plurilingualism has turned from an exception to a norm.

Linguistic diversity goes hand in hand with the rapid development of new information technology, people all over the world communicate with each other, exchange information, read the same texts being in completely different places and speaking different languages. The new generation – the so called “digital natives” (Prensky 2001) are constantly connected with friends via smartphone, tablet or a computer, at any time of the day being at different locations in any country in the world. This generation cannot imagine anymore, how it was, when communication was still restricted to face-to-face or at least voice-to-voice situations, and what it meant for working processes when people exchanged or received information through printed texts only.

Most students today are more motivated to read multi-codal texts from a computer screen than mono-codal texts without images from paper in hand, and they feel far more comfortable when typing on a keyboard than writing in a spiral notebook. According to a recent statistic by the EU, more than 75 per cent of EU-citizens use a computer for communication and information exchange with other users on a regular basis – with this trend still growing (cf. Eurostat 2012).

These societal changes have also entered European classrooms, as different surveys stress the prevalence of children already at primary level using computers in a frequent mode. In addition, classrooms host children who bring along completely different linguistic preconditions, ranging from almost equally high levels of proficiency in two or more languages to deficient levels of competence in one or more languages spoken by the child. In Germany, for instance, many pupils often speak two mother languages other than German, such as Turkish and Kurdish. In most cases these children are not alphabetised in those languages and thus not able to read and write in their L1(s). When they enter kindergarten or school, these children do not possess a large lexicon in German in addition, as they have not gathered any literacy experiences in the language of their surrounding until this point, which often leads to grammatical difficulties in all of their available languages. Those children need extra support with regard to their L2 but also in their L1. In other cases children are proficient speakers in at least two languages and able to read and write in their available
languages – as their parents speak with and read to them in both languages from very early on.

It is a commonplace that new concepts for learning and teaching are needed, that include and further develop pupils’ different linguistic and technological qualifications.

2 Consequences and demands

Long ago educational policies reacted to the fact that our world has become linguistically and culturally diverse and that communication increasingly takes place in a multilingual way. On a European level, multilingualism is therefore a defined educational goal. In 2001, the European Year of Languages, the Council of Europe has called for the ‘retention and promotion of multilingualism within the European Union’ (Council of Europe 2001). In 2008 the European Commission declared multilingualism as “an asset for Europe and a shared commitment” (European Commission 2012: 3). The German ‘Integrationsplan’ calls on educators to see individual plurilingualism in our schools as a chance for the development of mutual understanding, tolerance and respect, and motivates teachers to incorporate different languages into their daily teaching routines (cf. Federal Ministry of Germany 2007).

In the same vein, foreign language pedagogy proclaims that “the potential of migration-induced plurilingualism […] should be fully utilised” (Kollmeyer 2007: 258, translation D. E.) and that “linguistic diversity has to be regarded as an opportunity and not a task” (Luchtenberg 1997: 121, translation D.E.). Language acquisition research has confirmed that a successful integration of the mother tongue can facilitate second language learning for plurilingual children (cf. Caprez-Krompák 2007; Gogolin 1988; Videsott 2011), and that an appreciation and integration of pupils’ first languages supports pupils’ identity formation in multilingual surroundings (cf. Cummins et al. 2005; Cummins 2001; Videsott 2011). Moreover, studies in the field of tertiary language learning suggest that pupils especially benefit from their plurilingualism with regard to learning new languages, when the learning environment affords them to make use of their available languages, e. g. by offering tasks that include a variety of languages (e. g. Gibson/Hufeisen 2007; Singleton/Aronin 2007). Hélot/Young (2002) demonstrate how, apart from the plurilinguals, even monolingual pupils may profit from such multilingual approaches in teaching and learning with regard to the development of language awareness. They not only learn more about different language systems but, by comparing these to their own, they learn more about their own mother tongue on top (cf. Hélot/Young 2002).
As a consequence, several suggestions for the integration of pupils’ family languages into first or foreign language classrooms and the interconnection between modern foreign languages have been made. However, most of these ideas are restricted to simple comparisons of the languages on the word or chunk level and are only suitable for pupils at secondary level. Only few suggestions consider an active integration of heritage languages at primary school level (cf. Elsner 2010; Esteve 2004; Preker-Franke/Preker 2011; Reif-Breitwieser 2004).

A definite lack of methodological guidelines for the application and implementation of multilingualism in primary schools and the unanswered question how to include other languages apart from the target language can be named as the most prominent reasons for the absence of other languages in the foreign and native language classroom (e.g. Kollmeyer 2007). Neither curricula nor teacher training or advanced teacher education programmes offer concrete practical suggestions or teaching materials for the realisation of this issue in language classrooms so far. An often rather deficient awareness of languages, coupled with insecurity in dealing with unknown languages, are essential reasons why, apart from the well-known and often criticised “monolingual habitus of the German school” (cf. Gogolin 1994), multilingualism is still ignored as a learning objective and a learning prerequisite in most classrooms to date. In a nutshell, even though most teachers strongly agree with the educational recommendations concerning a multilingual approach, they are not empowered to practically transfer this into their classrooms, since they have not been equipped with the appropriate knowledge, skills, and materials.

It is for the same reason that teachers are very hesitant when it comes to the integration of new media into their teaching and learning surroundings. More than 81 per cent of our pupils in the age between 8 and 16 use a computer at home on a daily basis, for playing games, learning, social interaction or information purposes (cf. IconKids & Youth 2008), but only 33 per cent of our pupils use computers at school at least once a week (Medienpädagogischer Verbund Südwest 2010: 29). Many teachers admit that they do not feel sufficiently prepared for the integration and use of technology in their classrooms and thus hardly ever incorporate technology-based activities such as internet research, online-games, web-quests or edutainment software. Teachers feel that they need further training and/or explicit methodological guidelines for working with the new media in their specific classrooms (Grossmann 2008: 14; Wiedwald et al. 2007: 49). Not very surprisingly, blackboard and print media are still the media of teachers’ first choice and the prime media to be worked with in schools. In contrast to this, pupils at home tend to gather multimodal experiences with digital texts on their computer, their smartphone or tablet. Many studies highlight how the attractive potential of new media is causing a threat to the young generation’s functional literacy skills, with images, graphics and sounds substituting reading and writing as a means of transmission of
information. Especially the chaotic flow of information can be misleading for pupils whose critical thinking skills have not yet been sufficiently trained (for further information about the use of media see http://www.onair.medmedia-education.it/project.aspx, website of the European media education project OnAir).

Education policy makers all across Europe therefore see the necessity of media education from the early years on and are keen to integrate it as a crucial part of education in their schools. Yet, the development and implementation of clear structures for media education vary widely across Europe. “There seems to be a huge gap between those members who have been implementing media education for years, and those without any sustainable infrastructure for its integration and implementation in their schools.” (Lemmen 2005: 1). While the UK, the Netherlands, and some of the new member states such as Hungary provide good examples of media education, other countries, including Germany, have just started to integrate the development of media competence as one cross-subject objective into their regional curricula. Nonetheless, teachers are rather left alone when it comes to concrete examples of good practice. In consequence, this often leads to ignorance or refuse of technical devices in the classroom.

The European Comenius project MuViT has been initiated based on this set of problems and needs. It seeks to combine both aspects elaborated on: The integration of many languages into our classrooms in combination with the use of new media. As UNESCO (2011) points out: “New information and communication technologies (ICT) can serve not only to encourage linguistic diversity and multilingual education but also to raise awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on mutual understanding, tolerance and dialogue.”

MuViT is designed to animate primary school pupils to read, write, compare, and work with texts in different languages on the computer. The following chapter will depict the project and its objectives.

3 The European Comenius Project MuViT

3.1 Project Objectives

The project name MuViT stands for Multiliteracy Virtual, pointing out the central ideology of the project which can be summarized as follows: Language learning should emerge from the cultural, linguistic, and digital experiences that learners bring into our classrooms and aim at the further development of a broad range and new forms of literacies, including functional, visual and multimodal literacies, media competencies, plurilingual awareness and critical thinking skills, altogether understood as multiliteracies (e. g. Elsner 2012). With this in
mind, the MuViT team-members, being researchers in the field of first, second and/or foreign language acquisition, teacher educators, teachers, or IT-specialists from Germany, Spain, Turkey, Latvia, and Russia, searched for a simple-to-use tool which could put this multiliterate notion into practice by enhancing multilingual learning and likewise the development of language awareness through the use of new media. Since a start in January 2011, the goal has been to develop, implement, and evaluate a concept for the use of digitalised, multilingual talking books that allow learners to simultaneously and autonomously work in their first, their second and a modern foreign language on the computer screen (MuVit player), alongside an authoring tool enabling children to produce and share their own multilingual storybooks within the MuViT web-community.

### 3.2 MuViT products in detail

The MuViT player consists of six age-appropriate stories in English, German, Russian (Latin and Cyrillic alphabet), Spanish and Turkish. The illustrated stories are read out by native speakers and a simultaneous highlighting function (similar to karaoke) is available in which words of the written story are marked at the moment they are spoken in order to support text comprehension.

Two pages of vocabulary introduction precede each story. On the first page key-words of a story are displayed within a context in order to facilitate the understanding of the story. The second page repeats important vocabulary separately, helping pupils to memorize and pronounce important key words. On both pages, as well as on the following pages, children can switch between languages at all times.

Subsequent to the stories in multiple languages, tasks related to text comprehension, language awareness, cross-linguistic comparisons, and language reflection follow. With these, pupils are supposed to be sensitised for different languages by doing cross-linguistic comparisons and to develop conscious awareness of rules in their available, targeted and chosen languages. Following the tasks the pupils are asked with which languages they have dealt within the software. Moreover, they are supposed to grade the difficulty of the stories and tasks in different languages. With the help of application protocols automatically recorded by the software, teachers are given the opportunity to gain insight into their pupils’ ability to handle the different languages and, if necessary, provide an impetus to work more intensively on one or the other language or try out new languages. The software is primarily designed for primary school pupils, however, the stories are also suitable for the transition to secondary level.

The additionally developed Authoring Tool allows children from all over the world to write, record, and design their own stories for publication. The tool
enables all learners to upload their stories, accompanying images and audio files. These stories can be exchanged with others, translated, and distributed within the MuViT Web Community, a registration system and forum for pupils and teachers all over the world.

A teacher handbook and materials for in- and pre-service teacher training workshops (cf. Wildemann et al. in this volume) have been developed in order to provide methodological guidelines for the use of the MuViT products in the classroom. All of the materials, including the software, tutorials for using the software and the authoring tool and teacher-training handbooks can be found on the MuViT website: www.muvit.eu.

4 Research in the context of the MuViT project

The central objective of the MuViT project is to foster the development of multilingualism with a special focus on language awareness and multilingual identity formation. Primary level pupils shall deal with their own and other languages in order to gain a basic or initial knowledge of structures and inventories of different languages. At the same time MuViT is supposed to arouse pupils’ interest in and curiosity of other languages. Moreover, dealing with numerous languages and obtaining multilingual awareness will improve the status of minority languages in the classroom, too. The MuViT software encourages the user to actively code-switch which is already a part of plurilingual pupils’ existing daily discourse-behaviour. In addition, the work with the digital texts is supposed to support pupils in the development of functional literacies – understood as reading and writing skills – in all of their spoken or learned languages. Besides these language-oriented goals, MuViT intends to challenge pupils to explore and use the media application (software, authoring tool and community) self-determinedly. MuViT therefore contributes to the development of media competencies as described by Vollbrecht (2001): Students should become able to apply media as a means of communication.

4.1 Exploratory Research during the project lifetime

Within the funded period of the project (1/2011-12/2012) there had been little time for research investigating whether the MuViT products and their implementation in schools can fulfill the targeted aims. However, our project group started with some exploratory research in all of the participating countries using different research methods, such as questionnaires, interviews and observations in order to gather first information on pupils’ exposure to the software and their overall perception.
4.1.1 Research questions

The observations and interviews should primarily fathom the potential of the software and give an answer to the following questions:

- Do mono- and plurilingual pupils make use of the different languages offered in the software?
- How often and why do pupils switch languages?
- What do pupils talk about when using the software in pairs?
- How do pupils like the MuViT programme overall?
- How easy/difficult/motivating do they find the handling of the medium?

4.1.2 Research design

The first inquiries with the software were conducted in spring of 2012 based on a pre-release version of the prototype MuViT 1.0. Subject groups were 69 fourth grade pupils from four primary schools in Frankfurt, Germany and Istanbul, Turkey. Both, the German and the Turkish group, are similar due to the high level of multilingualism in all classrooms. In opposition to the Frankfurt classes with their several different language combinations (Russian-German, Arabic-German, Serbo-Croatian-German), the group from Istanbul was more homogenous since the majority of this class is growing up bilingually with German and Turkish. Both classes also included monolingual German or Turkish children. MuViT could be deployed in the Frankfurt classes and pupils were observed and partially filmed while working with the software in class. Observations concentrated on code-switching behaviour of the pupils (How often and when?) and their behaviour while solving the tasks (Can they solve the tasks? Do they need help? Do they make use of different languages?), as well as during working with the software (Is the software self-explaining or do pupils need help?). Selected pupils were then interviewed using a semi-structured interview guideline that focused on pupils’ experiences and asked for their overall perception of the programme (How did you like the work with the programme? Was it easy or difficult? How many stories did you read? How did you choose them? What did you like/didn’t you like? Is there anything you would like to improve?) and their reasons for choosing and switching languages.

In another classroom in Frankfurt and in a school in Istanbul pupils were asked to work with MuViT in pairs. Their interaction was recorded and analysed with regard to the question if their communication showed evidence of language awareness. Questionnaires were given out to the pupils in order to determine pupils’ language background and their attitude towards their own and other languages.
4.1.3 First Results

Naturally, we are aware that the data generated within the exploratory research study cannot deliver any generalisable results but it allows for construction of hypotheses (e.g. Kleemann/Krähnke/Matuschek 2009).

**MuVit arouses interest and curiosity for different languages**

Clearly positive is the pupils’ estimation that the MuViT software has aroused their interest and curiosity for other languages. All of the observed and interviewed pupils confirmed that they liked working with the software and that they would appreciate to work with this or similar materials in the classroom in future. In dealing with the software it was observed that the interest in what the pupils described as “exotic” languages was particularly high. For instance, German and Turkish pupils liked listening to (passages of) a story in Russian so as to experience “how Russian actually sounds because I have never heard Russian before”. They also mentioned that they would welcome the integration of other languages than those already offered in the language-menu. They listed such languages as Chinese, Japanese, or French. Bearing in mind that those are “important” (Chinese) and “beautiful” (French) languages they expressed the wish to consciously listen to and learn them. When asked what she would do with the software if she had more time, a German-Turkish girl replied that she would pick a Russian sentence from a story and listen to it so often that she would learn it by heart. This way, she explained, “I would be able to speak a real Russian sentence and that would be very cool”. Generally speaking, the listening experiences enabled by the software seem to hold a huge fascination.

**MuVit contributes to the development of language awareness and identity formation**

When pupils were working with the software, it was interesting to observe that the mother tongue or the dominant language for bilingual children, respectively (usually German, being the language of instruction at all schools) is used as the major reference language. It serves as a reassurance to check if passages, sentences, or words were understood correctly. Comprehension backup, consequently, is a common occasion for code-switching. It is not surprising that the reference language for bilingual pupils in Germany and in Turkey, e.g. Turkish-German children, is always German. This can be explained by the fact that there has not been a systematic alphabetisation of the second language in a school context and Turkish in the case of the Istanbul group is merely seen as a foreign language and will not become a medium of instruction. The children explained this by saying that “German is our better language because we know more words, read more in German and are able to write more.”
An entirely different picture could be drawn in interactive situations with the software when, for instance, a monolingual German-speaking pupil worked with a German-Turkish speaking child. The alleged advantage that a monolingual German-speaking pupil experiences in the classroom at school, a context in which plurilingualism is perceived as a problem and whose curricular premises and educational goals are based on monolingualism, makes way for a new experience: plurilingualism is perceived as an advantage in this setting. The bilingual girl realises that her knowledge in two languages is not a handicap here but helps her when dealing with the software. She is the one dominating and controlling the interaction thanks to her plurilingual competence, helping and giving advice to her monolingual German-speaking friend. After working with MuViT, a pupil at the Istanbul school stated that her stronger language is German, but added proudly: “By the way, I can also speak Turkish!” Throughout the questionnaire, prior to the testing, she had not mentioned her Turkish skills. By dealing with MuViT she has obviously experienced that her plurilingual knowledge is definitely to be valued as beneficial and that Turkish can be just as valuable as other languages.

It can be assumed that the above depicted situations have a positive effect on the development of language awareness on a “social-educational level” (e. g. Breidbach et al. 2011: 14). Future studies will deal not only with this aspect but also with the question of how identity formation of plurilingual pupils is influenced by working with MuVit.

In addition, it could be seen that pupils actively analyse the rules of the languages that they read the stories in. One monolingual German pair, for example, stops at a certain point in a story and talks about negation aspects in the English language (see Wahl 2012: 56):

Pupil 1: “Da ist schon wieder das t” (“There is the t again”, translation D. E.)

Pupil 2: “Doesn‘t, he does not want to go to school. Right.”

Without being asked to, pupils autonomously discuss grammatical aspects of a language, which in the long run, should contribute to the development of language awareness on a “linguistic-systematic level” (Breidbach et. al. 2011: 14).

Pupils consciously make use of different languages when working with MuViT

‘Code-switching’, as defined by Gumperz (1973), refers to the alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation. It is the skill to switch between two or more languages due to communicative necessities during a conversation in a way that is appropriate for that particular situation. For children and teenagers with a so-called migration background, in particular, code-switching is a daily necessity and a useful strategy as it allows them to...
compensate linguistic deficits in one language by resorting to their knowledge in another language. On the other hand, this form of ‘language contact’ is very challenging and is based on creativity, linguistic knowledge, and language competence.

MuViT explicitly invites users to an unbiased approach to code-switching with its range of different languages. And the observations could show that all children, no matter if they are monolingual or plurilingual, make use of the different languages. However, it could be seen that the plurilingual children switch more often between the different languages offered in the programme than the monolingual children. Comprehension difficulties or insecurities are frequently observed when switching to the reference language within a story for the purpose of making sure that the content is understood correctly (see Wahl 2012: 56):

Pupil 1: Also warte, warte, warte, warte. Also, erst mal sagt er, sagt von ihm die Mutter, ‘willst du heute zu die Schule gehen?’ Und er sagt ‘ja’. Und die Mutter sagt, ähm, ‘geh wie jeden Tag’, also nein (reads), just like, ‘ich liebe diesen Tag’, sagt sie glaub ich.


Pupil 2: Ach so.

Beyond comprehensive aspects, stylistic features prompt the young users – no matter if they are monolingual or plurilingual – to switch to another language: The magic spell in the story ‘Magic Maddox’ ends with a rhyme (‘Abracadabra, one and two, there is a goldfish in my shoe’) whereupon two girls in Turkey checked this page of the story systematically in all other languages to find out whether the magic spell rhymes in all of them (it only does in Turkish!). A giant, ugly and dangerous looking dog, ironically named ‘Sugarplum’, plays a key role for the punch line of the story ‘Mister Miller’. The funny surprise effect is a reason for these girls to check the name of the dog in all other languages.

Altogether, it can be concluded that comprehension insecurities as well as stylistic finesse such as funny names, exaggerations or contrasts (to the picture information) can act as stepping-stones for code-switching. In the pupils’ reflections they serve for the purpose of language comparison, which suggests the assumption that MuViT – at least on a receptive level – in fact contributes to an unbiased practice of code-switching. Unlike in daily school situations, code-switching can be used as a conscious strategy for language comparisons in the context of the software and subsequently make a valuable contribution to the development of language awareness. This assumption shall also be followed up in future studies.
MuVit contributes to media education

The MuViT software was presumed to have a positive influence on the development of media competencies. However, our observations could show that the handling of the programme was no challenge to the pupils at all as they had no problems or questions when working with the programme. However, pupils clearly pointed out the deficits of the software, such as the lack of adaptability with regard to difficulty (choice of levels) or more language options. This shows that pupils are able to reflect on what media might be useful for. A higher learning potential is expected for the Authoring Tool where apart from handling the PC and software the development of presentation competencies and publishing skills play a vital role. Since the activation of this tool on the Internet platform has just started, this assumption will be a subject-matter for future studies.

5 Summary and further research

The EU-funded Comenius-Project MuViT has been developed against the background of the two key changes in our society which strongly influence people’s daily discourse and information behaviour. The MuViT tools have been invented to make a significant contribution to multilingual and media education in school. Based on first classroom observations and recorded interactional situations as well as first interviews with the target group of fourth graders in Turkey and Germany, preliminary insights into the application and benefits of the multilingual software have been gained, leading to various theses that need to be further explored. Supposedly, working with the software has a positive impact on the identity formation and the development of language awareness of mono- and plurilingual children alike. The integration of languages such as Turkish seem to be of particular value in immigrant societies such as Germany, in which the reputation of immigrant languages is rather poor among the majority of the population, because it is associated with a low social status.

As it enhances an unbiased dealing with the software and supports code-mixing strategies, MuViT can help to equalise the linguistic relations in classrooms on the individual level of personal learning experiences. A larger research project, concerned with the question if MuViT fosters language awareness on the linguistic-systematic and the social-educational level, is currently being undertaken by Viviane Lohe, University of Frankfurt, who is working on her PhD with the title Developing Language Awareness in Primary School Children through Multilingual Virtual Talking Books.

The observations could also show that pupils read and listen to the texts with great interest and that they do this in different languages of their choice. It needs to be further researched how pupils’ reading, writing, and listening skills in
different languages may benefit from working with the programme and in how far the multimodal input (audio-visual and different languages) may be especially suitable for foreign language learners. Financing for a larger interdisciplinary project titled Wirksamkeit von multimodal-mehrsprachigem Input für das fremdsprachliche Textverstehen bei ein- und mehrsprachigen Schülerinnen und Schülern in der Grundschule (Effect of multimodal-multilingual input on foreign language text comprehension of mono- and plurilingual pupils at primary level) has just been applied for at the Ministry of Education in Germany. The project will start in August 2013 and will be conducted by three researchers from Frankfurt University, Daniela Elsner, Ilonca Hardy and Astrid Jurecka.

Furthermore, it will be interesting to see how pupils use their available languages when reading and listening to the stories in rather unknown or newly learned languages. Observations made in this context allow for the conclusion that most often the dominant language spoken at school serves as a reference language for the children in case of doubt and when comprehension problems occur. This also gives an important hint to the meaning of previously learnt languages for further language learning. Especially cooperative settings seem to trigger the use of different languages when working with the programme. However, which constellations and tasks are the most effective ones when using the software is a question that is being researched in a project funded by the Federal State of Hesse, Germany and undertaken by Daniela Elsner, Ilonca Hardy and Judith Bündgens-Kosten, all Frankfurt University, and titled Bedeutung der Erst- und Zweitsprache bei Lernern der Fremdsprache Englisch für die kooperative Bearbeitung textbasierter Lernaufgaben. (Meaning of L1 / L2 for learners of English as a foreign language during cooperative and text-based learning processes.)

Last but not least, MuVit does not only cater to pupils but also to teachers as it gives them the chance to learn more about their own and other languages, including some family languages of their pupils by using a computer programme. Raising awareness for the fact that there is a multilingual reality inside and outside the classroom and that, besides the dominant school language, other languages exist that are worth learning about. This might help to counteract the current dominance of the school language as the only language of education. If this were to be accomplished, a small but important step towards a more balanced relation of languages in a modern, multilingual, technology-driven, transmigration society would be taken.
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Belgian CLIL Teachers’ Professional Identity

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Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is a generic term referring to a teaching approach whereby content is taught through a second or foreign language. For Belgian teachers entering the CLIL classroom, this dual-focused approach is a challenge, since they are either trained as content or language experts. This demands a professional (re)orientation which current teacher training programs in Belgium do not yet offer. How CLIL teachers interpret this multiple role and how they deal with it in practice, constitutes their professional identity. Insight in CLIL teachers’ professional identity is expected to be useful in helping them to cope with the ‘CLIL-challenge’ by contributing to the development of teacher training programs for CLIL.


1 Introduction

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is a generic term referring to a teaching approach whereby content is taught through a second or foreign language. Compared to other forms of foreign language teaching (FLT), “in essence, its distinctiveness lies in an integrated approach, where both language and content are conceptualized on a continuum without an implied preference for either” (Coyle 2007: 545). This drive for integration is “a powerful pedagogic tool which aims to safeguard the subject being taught whilst promoting language as a medium for learning as well as an objective of the learning process itself” (Coyle 2002: 27). For Belgian teachers entering the CLIL classroom, however, the integration of content and language learning implies a significant change in their mindset, since they are either trained as content or language experts. They have to deal with a situation that moves away from the traditional view on education where each discipline tends to stand on its own. As a result, we see that content teachers, who are not familiar with second language acquisition theories, predominantly focus on subject matter,
while language teachers display an overemphasis on linguistic form (Coyle 2007).

While “the study of teacher cognition has established itself on the research agenda in the field of language teaching and provided valuable insight into the mental lives of language teachers” (Borg 2003: 81), research into teachers’ attitudes and beliefs in CLIL is still rather scarce but is getting increasingly more attention. The aim of the present exploratory study is to contribute to understanding how CLIL-teachers perceive their professional experience, how they interpret their (multiple) roles and how they think they deal with it in practice. To answer this question, we would like to describe CLIL teachers’ perceptions of their professional identity, a concept that is closely related to quality and innovation in education (Lamote/Engels 2010). Research has shown that teachers’ perceptions of their own professional identity strongly affect their efficacy and professional development as well as their ability and willingness to cope with educational change and to implement innovations in their own teaching practice (Beijaard et al. 2004; Lamote/Engels 2010). This study is the first to examine CLIL teacher beliefs and attitudes in the Belgian context.

When a school wants to introduce CLIL education, it has to take a number of aspects into consideration, such as when to start, how many hours, which languages, etc. (Van de Craen et al. 2008). These decisions depend on various local factors and on language policies. In officially trilingual Belgium where the majority languages are Dutch and French, it is therefore logical that schools mainly concentrate on Dutch and French. Contrary to such geopolitical considerations, a number of Belgian schools have also adopted English as the favourite second language.

2 CLIL pedagogy

In order to provide a basis for bringing together the different facets of CLIL, Coyle (2002, 2007) developed the 4C’s conceptual framework, in which she expounds the interrelationship between content (subject knowledge), communication (language knowledge), culture and cognition. According to Coyle (2007), however, a cohesive view of CLIL pedagogies is still lacking. She states that two general observations can be made about European CLIL in the last two decades. On the one hand, CLIL pedagogies have been highly influenced by language acquisition theories that favor language teaching perspectives. On the other hand, transmission-oriented approaches to CLIL in certain contexts have encouraged teachers to focus primarily on content delivery. As Lyster (2007: 1) points out, traditional teaching methods indeed “tend to separate language development from general cognitive development”, ignoring the relationship between form and meaning, and between language learning and content learning. However, as Freeman (2002: 6) puts it: “when applied to language as
subject matter, PCK [pedagogical content knowledge] becomes a messy and unworkable concept”.

With the European Framework for the professional development of CLIL teachers (Marsh et al. 2010), an attempt has been made to formulate the professional competences a CLIL teacher is expected to acquire. It aims to provide a set of principles and ideas for designing CLIL professional development curricula. Nevertheless, this document states that the integrative nature of CLIL is highlighted as a major challenge in the development and implementation of a teacher education curriculum. We might thus conclude that applying CLIL the way it is conceptualized by researchers suggests significant changes in the scope of teachers’ responsibilities. Teachers undertaking CLIL would need to develop multiple types of expertise: among others, in the content subject, in the target language, with regard to best practices in teaching and learning and in the integration of the previous three. But, off-the-shelf CLIL materials still are in short supply (Mehisto et al. 2008). Teachers would therefore often spend considerable time developing their own course material and/or adapting existing learning resources. Furthermore, changing the medium of instruction would place increased organizational and cognitive demands on CLIL teachers, as much as on their students (Mehisto 2008). The integration of content and language teaching would not be “self-evident” and it seems to require considerable training for both teachers and pupils (Gajo 2007: 578).

In Belgium, teachers are trained to teach just one subject, i.e. a content subject or a language. In the absence of formal training on integrating content and language teaching, teachers’ beliefs could become a crucial factor in guiding their pedagogical classroom practices (Tan 2011) and could be viewed as a lens through which teachers perceive and filter external information (Beijaard et al. 2004; Lamote/Engels 2010). Therefore, it is the aim of the present study to investigate CLIL teachers’ perceptions of their professional identity.

3 The professional identity of teachers

Teachers’ beliefs, and therefore their professional identities, are found to have an influence on their teaching practice (Borg 2003). Sammons et al. (2007) even found a relationship between aspects of teachers’ professional identity and pupils’ attainment in English and mathematics. In general, we can say that the concept of professional identity refers to the perception that teachers have of themselves as teachers. It appears from the existing research, however, that the concept of identity has been difficult to define in a clear-cut way (Borg 2003). In their review of research on teachers’ professional identities, Beijaard et al. (2004) point out that the concept has been used with different meanings and definitions in more general literature as well as in the domain of teaching and teacher education. On the one hand, authors have drawn on the definition of
identity as used in the social sciences and philosophy, relating it to concepts of self (Erikson 1968) and to what is termed as personal identity (Korthagen 2004) and self-understanding (Kelchtermans 2005). However, as Lamote/Engels (2010: 4) put it, “in an occupation where who one is as a person is so much interwoven with how one acts as a professional, both sides cannot be separated”. “It seems unlikely that the core of the personal will not impact on the core of the professional” (Loughran 2006: 112). Furthermore, Beijaard et al. (2004) argue that a teacher’s professional identity is not unitary but consists of sub-identities formed through a teacher’s different contexts and relationships. “Some of these sub-identities may be broadly linked and can be seen as the core of teachers’ professional identity, while others may be more peripheral” (Beijaard et al. 2004: 122). Essential for teachers is that these sub-identities do not conflict, but that they more or less harmonize.

Another feature of professional identity is the idea that the construct is dynamic and can be seen as an ongoing process of interpretation and re-interpretation. This corresponds to the notion that teacher development never stops and can best be seen as a process of lifelong learning (e.g. Day 2002). In this study teachers’ professional identity will be described in terms of the CLIL teacher’s perceptions of task orientation, professional orientation and self-efficacy, three indicators for which we find support in the literature on the professional identity of teachers (Lamote/Engels 2010).

3.1 Professional orientation

By professional orientation we mean perceptions of teachers about their professional role(s) in a broader sense, not limited to their classroom practice but with regard to organizational aspects of the school context. In that sense, professional orientation is not a stable indicator of professional identity, since views of the teaching profession and the role of teachers have changed over time. One example is that a teacher’s role has changed from transferring knowledge to facilitating learning processes. Moreover, during the past decades, the roles and responsibilities of teachers have broadened extensively (OECD 2005). Present-day teachers are expected to be concerned with collaborative work in the school team, to contribute to school policy making, to expand their knowledge by looking for other theories and methods, to collaborate with parents and external partners, and so much more. This view of the teacher who reflects and acts on a broader level, showing him- or herself to be creative, an innovator and team player contributing to school development, corresponds to Hoyle’s (1980) conception of the ‘extended professional’, whereby extended professionals are expected to be more flexible with regard to educational innovations. As we mentioned in the introduction, CLIL teachers are facing significant challenges in the scope of their responsibilities. In this study we
therefore assume professional orientation to be an important descriptor for CLIL teachers’ professional identity.

3.2 Task orientation

In line with the conceptualization of teachers’ professional identities by Lamote/Engels (2010), we consider task orientation as referring to personal theories teachers have with regard to their core task. Task orientation refers to teachers’ answers to the questions: ‘What do I want to achieve with my pupils and how do I want to do this?’ Like professional orientation, task orientation is influenced by the prevailing knowledge and beliefs about the goals and teaching methods at a certain time. The current reforms regarding teaching methods are strongly dominated by constructivist as opposed to behaviorist theories, resulting in two different views of knowledge, learning and teaching methods and a pupil-oriented approach vs. a content-oriented approach. From the perspective of a content-oriented ideology, the teacher focuses on discipline in the classroom, on preparing pupils to take their responsibilities in society and on developing competences and skills in core subjects. The pupil-oriented view mainly emphasizes pupil involvement, personal development of pupils, creativity and active knowledge acquisition. In our attempt to capture current beliefs about good education, we build on Denessen’s (1999) construct of task orientation, which distinguishes between three different aspects of teaching: (1) the educational goals, (2) the instructional emphasis and (3) the pedagogical relation between teachers and students, for each of which he describes a more student-oriented approach vs. a more content-oriented approach.

With regard to the specific task orientation of CLIL teachers, characterized by a dual-focused approach on content and language learning, the following documents may serve as a reference: the European Framework for CLIL Teacher Education (Marsh et al. 2010), An observation tool for effective L2 pedagogy in CLIL (de Graaff et al. 2007) and the Standard for Bilingual Education (European Platform 2012). The proposed items tend to capture a more vs. a less integrated approach of content and language learning.

3.3 Self-Efficacy

Tschannen-Moran/Woolfolk Hoy (2001: 783) define a teacher’s self-efficacy as “a judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated”. This definition builds on Bandura (1977) who introduced the conceptual framework and asserted that efficacy beliefs were more powerful than a person’s actual abilities for the task at hand. Teachers’ sense of efficacy
has proven to be a powerful construct, related to many meaningful educational outcomes such as teachers’ motivation (persistence, commitment, enthusiasm) and instructional behavior in the classroom. Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy would work longer with students that struggle, would recognize student errors and would attempt new teaching methods that support students (Guskey 1988) and they would be more willing to adopt instructional innovation (Guskey/Passaro 1994). In addition, a high level of self-efficacy is said to contribute to important student outcomes such as achievement, motivation and their own sense of efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998). Self-efficacy beliefs turn out to be affected by four major sources – previous successful experiences, indirect experiences (e.g. modeling by someone else), persuasion by others and emotional feedback (Tschannen-Moran/Woolfolk Hoy 2001). Research has also shown that teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs are situation-specific in that a teacher can hold divergent efficacy beliefs for different teaching situations. Efficacy beliefs may vary within teachers depending upon the subject area, characteristics of students, the number of course preparations they face, and whether they are teaching outside the field of expertise (Ross et al. 1999; Tournaki/Podell 2005; Tschannen-Moran/Johnson 2011).

4 The study

4.1 Method

Participants

The participants are Belgian secondary school CLIL-teachers (N = 80) from 45 schools in Flanders (5), Brussels (9), and Wallonia (31) who completed a questionnaire in the period between May-June 2012. The distribution of male and female respondents was 38.8% and 61.3%, respectively. The average age was 39 (SD = 9.3), the average amount of experience in secondary education was 9 years (SD = 7.9) and the average amount of experience in CLIL education was 4.5 years (SD = 3.2). For 60% of the respondents the CLIL target language is their mother tongue.

Research tool

The participants completed an online survey which can be split up in two larger sections. In the first section respondents were asked for information concerning several background variables on the one hand: age, gender, mother tongue, language knowledge, academic background, teaching experience in secondary education and more specifically in CLIL education and school contextual variables on the other hand: CLIL target language, CLIL subjects, teaching materials being used, professionalization and training, professional support and collegial interaction. The second section consisted of several scales, for which
respondents had to answer every statement on a five-point Likert scale. The scales measuring the dimensions of professional identity – task orientation, professional orientation and self-efficacy – are described below.

**Professional orientation**

Professional orientation of the CLIL-teachers was measured using the 13-item scale developed by Jongmans/Beijaard (1997). We decided to convert this scale – originally scoring on a four-point scale – to a five-point Likert scale, in conformity with the other scales being used. The final score reflects the levels of professional orientation. Based on Hoyle’s (1980) conception, a high score (strongly agree) stands for an ‘extended professional’. A sample item is: ‘It is important for teachers to attend in-service training courses’.

**Task orientation**

For the assessment of the general task orientation of CLIL-teachers we used the Views on education scale developed by Denessen (1999). This scale has 25 items, which are subdivided into three areas: educational goals, instructional emphasis and pedagogical relationship. Sample items are: ‘It is the school’s responsibility to teach students a critical attitude toward society’ (educational goals – personal and social development); ‘If children want to make something of their lives, they need to learn a lot at school’ (educational goals – career development); ‘Students can also learn a great deal from each other’ (instructional emphasis – process); ‘I believe competition between students is important to foster learning’ (instructional emphasis – product); ‘I think it is important that students are above all diligent and make an effort’ (pedagogical relationship – discipline); ‘I think student participation in school matters is important’ (pedagogical relationship – involvement).

To measure the task orientation of CLIL teachers we developed items for several areas of the CLIL-approach: learning goals, didactic approach, feedback and evaluation, language awareness strategies. All task orientation items had to be read as statements starting by ‘I believe it is my responsibility as a CLIL teacher…’. Sample items in the different areas are: ‘… to set clear content goals as well as language goals for each lesson’ (CLIL learning goals); ‘… to opt for learning activities that offer opportunities for language development’ (in terms of the four language skills: speaking, writing, reading, listening (didactic approach)); ‘… to give corrective feedback on pupils’ oral language production’ (feedback); ‘… to make pupils aware of the differences and similarities between languages’ (language awareness strategies). Depending on a high score (strongly agree) or a low score (strongly disagree), respondents could be regarded as more
or less oriented towards an integrated approach of content and language learning.

**Self-efficacy**

CLIL teachers’ efficacy beliefs for more general aspects of teaching were measured using the *Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale* (short version) (Tschan nen-Moran/Woolfolk Hoy 2001). This measure assesses three dimensions of the underlying construct: sense of efficacy for instructional strategies, sense of efficacy for stimulating pupils’ involvement and sense of efficacy for classroom management. Each statement had to be read from this viewpoint, ‘As a CLIL-teacher, to what extent do you feel able …’ and had to be scored on a 5-point response scale (1 = not at all, 2 = very little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = a great deal. Sample item: ‘… to motivate students who show little interest in school work?’

For the assessment of teachers’ sense of efficacy about CLIL instructional strategies, a 17-item survey was composed based on the same documents used for the development of the CLIL task orientation survey. The aim was to cover several aspects with regard to effective CLIL pedagogy. The statements had to be read from the viewpoint: ‘As a CLIL-teacher, to what extent do you feel able …’. Sample items are: ‘… to reach the core goals of the course by using authentic materials in the target language’; ‘… to use didactic strategies that push the language output of pupils in the target language’; ‘… to use corrective feedback to make pupils aware of their linguistic errors’; ‘… to use a level of language proficiency that complies with the students’ level of comprehension’; ‘… to set assignments and tests to evaluate the pupils’ progress with regard to language as well as the subject area’. Additionally, CLIL- teachers were asked about their perceived pedagogical role within the CLIL classroom on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = ‘I see myself exclusively as a content teacher’ to 7 = ‘I see myself exclusively as a language teacher’.

Another important contextual variable that was added to the questionnaire is that of collegiality among teachers. Teacher collegiality, which can be described as the quality and impact of professional relationships whereby teachers openly and continually investigate and critique school/classroom practice with a view to improvement (Lieberman/Miller 1999), is accepted as essential to professional practice. Recent research has suggested that developing the ability of school personnel to function as professional collegial communities may result in substantive school improvement and success (DuFour 2004; Goddard et al. 2007; Little et al. 2003). Strengthening interpersonal relations among teaching personnel is thought to influence a school’s professional culture and lead to teachers increasing their involvement and ownership (Andrews/Lewis 2002).
Furthermore, collegiality is said to play a significant role in improving teaching and instructional practices and fostering innovation (Hopkins et al. 1998).

From the assumption that improvement in teaching is a collective endeavor rather than an isolated event, Little (1990) created a model explaining a school’s journey from independence to interdependence. Her model included four forms of collegiality: storytelling and scanning for ideas, aid and assistance, sharing and joint work, which she put on a continuum ranging from activities that are compatible with teacher independence and autonomy to activities that require interdependent action and are believed to have great potential to build a school-wide culture of collegiality. Based on Little’s model, we developed a scale with 14 items, measuring the level of collegial interaction. Sample items are: ‘I exchange ideas on education with colleagues’, ‘Sometimes I ask a colleague for help with regard to my teaching practice’, ‘I swap teaching materials with colleagues’, ‘Within our CLIL team we share responsibility for the design of our CLIL courses’.

4.2 Results and discussion

We start the description of the results with a report of the factor structure of each instrument. For all of the scales a principal component analysis (PCA) with orthogonal rotation (varimax) was conducted. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis. The internal consistency of the scales and subscales was verified by a test of alpha reliability and by checking the theoretical framework.

Professional orientation
A PCA of the items assessing the professional orientation of CLIL teachers provided us with three components based on the Kaiser criterion, which we labeled ‘professionalization’ (5 items, $\alpha = 0.867$), ‘team policy’ (3 items, $\alpha = 0.629$) and ‘cross-curricular cooperation’ (5 items, $\alpha = 0.724$).

Task orientation
First, we performed a PCA for the three general dimensions of task orientation. For the items measuring objectives of education, the PCA provided two components based on the Kaiser criterion. By analogy with the theoretical concept taken from Denessen (1999), we labeled component 1 as ‘personal and social development’ (6 items, $\alpha = 0.832$) and component 2 as ‘career development’ (4 items, $\alpha = 0.844$). A PCA of the items assessing the pedagogical relationship revealed a three component structure, which we reduced to two components as only two items were related to component 3. In accordance with Denessen’s re-
search (1999), we named the first component ‘discipline’ (5 items, \( \alpha = 0.752 \)) and the second component ‘involvement’ (3 items, \( \alpha = 0.731 \)). A PCA of the items measuring the instructional emphasis showed a structure with two components, the first of which we referred to as ‘process’ (4 items, \( \alpha = 0.758 \)) and the second ‘product’ (3 items, \( \alpha = 0.418 \)). Since the internal consistency of the ‘product’ scale scores under the acceptable standard of \( \alpha \geq .60 \), we excluded it from further analysis.

Another PCA was conducted for the 16 items assessing CLIL-teachers’ task orientation, which provided us with four components based on the Kaiser criterion. Since the fourth component consisted of only two items, we decided to reduce the number of factors to three. After an interim analysis of internal consistency, the three-factor structure seemed to be the best solution. We labeled them: ‘language awareness strategies’ (6 items, \( \alpha = 0.843 \)), ‘goals and instruction’ (6 items, \( \alpha = 0.795 \)), and ‘stimulating input and output’ (4 items, \( \alpha = 0.711 \)).

**Self-efficacy**

First, a PCA for the 12 items assessing teachers’ sense of efficacy about the general aspects of teaching revealed a three-factor structure. By analogy with Tschannen-Moran/Woolfolk Hoy (2001), we named the first component ‘sense of efficacy for instructional strategies’ (3 items; \( \alpha = 0.691 \)), the second ‘sense of efficacy for stimulating pupils’ involvement’ (4 items, \( \alpha = 0.762 \)) and the third component ‘sense of efficacy for classroom management’ (5 items, \( \alpha = 0.837 \)).

Based on a second PCA, teachers’ sense of efficacy about CLIL instructional strategies, measured on a five-point Likert scale, was split into four components based on the Kaiser criterion. We labeled them: ‘form and meaning-focused processing’ (6 items, \( \alpha = 0.842 \)), ‘scaffolding and feedback’ (5 items, \( \alpha = 0.810 \)), ‘selecting and adapting material’ (3 items, \( \alpha = 0.754 \)) and ‘stimulating input and output’ (3 items, \( \alpha = 0.734 \)).

**Collegiality**

A PCA was conducted for the 14 items informing about collegiality in the school team, which provided a three-factor structure. In line with Little’s model on collegiality (1990), we labeled the first component ‘Sharing, aid and assistance’ (5 items, \( \alpha = 0.735 \)), the second ‘Joint responsibility for work’ (5 items, \( \alpha = 0.830 \)) and the third ‘Storytelling and scanning for ideas’ (4 items, \( \alpha = 0.835 \)).
Table 1 (cf. next page) summarizes the internal consistency, explained variance, mean and standard deviation for different subscales measuring professional identity of CLIL-teacher. The scores of CLIL-teachers on the professional orientation scales turned out to be moderate to low (Figure 1: M (= mean score) items). According to Jongmans/Beijaard (1997, based on Hoyle 1980), a low score on these scales represents a ‘restricted professional’ profile, teachers who are primarily focused on the classroom and mainly concerned with their own teaching activities, didactic behaviors and subject matter. If we consider the different subscales of professional orientation, we notice that the rather low score particularly pertains to what we labeled the ‘cross-curricular cooperation’ scale, with items asking for teachers’ beliefs about the importance of cooperation between colleagues and cross-curricular tasks. This low score is in line with the low score of CLIL teachers on the scale assessing collegiality in their school context. Keeping in mind Little’s model (1999), we can say that CLIL teachers, in average, seem to be at one end of the curriculum, i.e. the ‘independence’ side (as opposed to the ‘interdependence’ side), implying that they are working autonomously in a school culture with little collegial interaction or feelings of joint responsibility about the development and practice of the CLIL curriculum. Rather moderate are the scores on the professionalization subscale, which indicates that the teachers are open to innovation, prepared to read professional journals and follow extra training.
Table 1: Internal consistency, explained variance, mean and standard deviation for different subscales measuring professional identity of CLIL-teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>N items</th>
<th>C alpha</th>
<th>% explained variance</th>
<th>M items</th>
<th>SD items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task orientation (general)</td>
<td>Personal and social development</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education goals</td>
<td>Career development</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.844</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional emphasis</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.758</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.418</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical relationship</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.752</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task orientation CLIL</td>
<td>Language awareness strategies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.843</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goals and instruction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stimulating input and output</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.711</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional orientation</td>
<td>Professionalization</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.867</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cross-curricular cooperation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.724</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team policy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.629</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy (general)</td>
<td>Class management</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.837</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student engagement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.762</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructional strategies</td>
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<td>0.691</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Form and meaning focussed processing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.842</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scaffold and feedback</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.810</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selecting and adapting material</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stimulating input and output</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.734</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial interaction</td>
<td>Sharing, aid and assistance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.735</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint responsibility</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.830</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Storytelling and scanning for ideas</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.835</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional support</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.747</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLIL-teachers’ scores on the general task orientation scales are rather moderate as well, although more tending towards a pupil-oriented approach to teaching (Table 1: M items). They seem to emphasize personal and social development of their students and are in favor of a process-oriented approach in the classroom. Concerning the student-teacher relationship, on the other hand, CLIL-teachers seem not to agree with pupils’ taking too much part in decision-making at school, but rather want to maintain discipline in the classroom. With regard to the specific CLIL task orientation subscales, the same moderate results hold true. Teachers neither agree nor disagree markedly with the statements that, for example, raising language awareness by using different strategies or setting clear content and language goals, are part of their responsibilities as a CLIL teacher.
With reference to their self-efficacy, CLIL teachers attribute themselves rather low scores on the scales measuring their sense of efficacy beliefs about the general aspects of teaching (Figure 1: M items). Especially with regard to the subscale ‘student engagement’ (M = 2.53), indicating that one is able to keep students motivated for school work and to help them appreciate the value of learning, CLIL teachers believe to have rather little influence. Remarkably, the opposite is true for teachers’ sense of efficacy about the CLIL approach, for which they attribute themselves moderately high scores on the different subscales, ranging from 3.55 to 3.76.

When asking respondents about the CLIL subjects they taught at their school, we noticed that part of the teachers indicated that they teach both content classes and language classes within the CLIL program. By language classes we mean English, French or Dutch as a foreign language, but also conversation classes or writing and reading courses in the target language. Apart from teaching biology and chemistry, for example, some teachers indicated that they provided language-based courses. In the analysis, teachers were therefore divided into two groups on the basis of whether they only taught a content class (N = 41), or whether they also taught a language class in addition to teaching a content class (N = 21).

The results of the scale where respondents had to indicate their perceived pedagogical role within the CLIL classroom on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = ‘I see myself exclusively as a content teacher’ to 7 = ‘I see myself exclusively as a language teacher’, show that teachers’ beliefs about their respective roles as mainly content teachers or mainly language teachers depend on the types of courses they teach (figure 1). Those respondents who teach only content classes see it as their principal pedagogical role to teach content, whereas those who also teach a language course have a much more balanced, ‘integrated’ approach to teaching content and language. As research has shown, these perceptions may have implications for the actual instructional practices of these teachers. Especially in the case of the content teachers, whose pedagogical beliefs show little regard for the important role of language in the teaching and learning process, their classroom practices may limit students’ (language) learning opportunities. In fact, both content and language teachers can offer expertise to CLIL, but as for example Mehisto (2008: 104) concludes from extensive lesson observations and debriefing sessions with teachers in Estonian CLIL programs, “many teachers appear to have a mindset that does not readily leave room for taking on an expanded role as both a teacher of content and language”. It is possible that many content teachers do not recognize that content acquisition is inextricably tied to language learning and that every content lesson needs to be a language lesson. As Lyster (2007: 5) remarks on the strategic manipulation of language in immersion and content-based classrooms “[s]uch an approach requires a great deal of systematic planning and does not
necessarily come naturally to content-based teachers”. Indeed, different teachers may have very different representations of the role and function of language in learning and teaching, with “far reaching consequences for the language ecology of their classroom and therefore also for the language opportunities which arise in them” (Dalton-Puffer 2008: 12).

Figure 1: Percentages of teachers teaching only content classes and those teaching both content and language classes who see themselves as either more a content teacher or a language teacher.

5 Conclusion

The main focus of the present study was to describe Belgian CLIL teachers’ perceptions of their professional identity. More specifically, our aim was to explore CLIL teachers’ beliefs about the professional characteristics of the content and language integrated approach. In this article, we report on quantitative data collected through an online survey. This survey was distributed among secondary CLIL teachers in both the Dutch and the French-speaking community of Belgium.

Three professional characteristics were considered as representations of teachers’ professional identity: their professional orientation, task orientation and self-efficacy. For the measurements of these characteristics, we made use of multiple item scales that were found valid and reliable in previous research. As both the construct self-efficacy and task orientation demanded specific items with regard to the integrated approach of CLIL, we developed separate scales for the assessment of teachers’ sense of efficacy about CLIL instructional strategies and task orientation for goals, methods and strategies that are considered necessary for the multiple focus in CLIL.

Results show that CLIL teachers in the Belgian context describe themselves as having a moderate view on general task orientation, tending towards a pupil- and process-oriented approach of teaching. The same moderate scores appear for the scales measuring CLIL specific instructional orientations, where respondents seem to have no marked opinion about the use of language awareness strategies,
goals and instructional methods for the integrated approach or the stimulation of input and output. With regard to their sense of efficacy, CLIL teachers attribute themselves moderately low scores for self-efficacy with regard to the general aspects of teaching, as opposed to moderately high scores for teachers’ efficacy with regard to specific aspects of CLIL teaching. Since self-efficacy is regarded as a powerful construct related to teachers’ motivation and behavior in the classroom as well as contributing to important student outcomes (Tschan nen-Moran et al. 1998), further research is needed to shed light on how these efficacy beliefs are established and what factors may lead to their improvement. As a positive linear correlation was found with the level of collegiality in the school context, opportunities for raising self-efficacy beliefs undoubtedly lie in helping school teams to function as professional collegial communities, working together in an atmosphere of joint responsibility (Andrews/Lewis 2002).

Another interesting finding concerns the CLIL teachers’ perceived pedagogical role within the CLIL classroom. Teachers who provide both content and language classes in the CLIL curriculum seem to have a more balanced, ‘integrated’ view on teaching content and language as opposed to teachers who exclusively teach the content subject they were trained for. A greater focus on the integration of content and language in educational literature and teacher training could help to change the fixed mindset, separating language learning form content learning, for future generations of teachers. This is also a plea for the integration of general pedagogy and subject specific pedagogy, which are often treated as separate areas of expertise in Belgian teacher training programs.

Finally, we deal with the limitations linked to the method that was used in this study. First, when using self-reporting instruments, there is always the risk that respondents provide ‘socially’ desirable answers. Second, the length of the questionnaire (estimated time: 40 min.) might have been responsible for respondents not to be as reflective and accurate until the last question. Furthermore, the closed structure of a questionnaire with set answering categories leaves little room for specifications or nuances. Although we added space for remarks and several open questions, most data was gathered through multiple choice questions and multiple item Likert scales, so that respondents only had to tick boxes to state their beliefs. In their review study, Beijaard et al. (2004) assert that “a structured though open method of data collection” to capture teachers’ professional identity seems to be most desirable. They further emphasize the relevance of stories and narratives in research on teachers’ professional identity. Therefore the present quantitative study should be extended with qualitative research, comprising interviews with teachers, classroom observations and the use of stimulated recall (see also Borg 2003). Also relevant for further research is the exploration of teachers’ professional identity from the perspective of other stakeholders. Since professional identity is socially defined, shaped through interaction with others and with the
environment, it would be interesting to explore perspectives of all those involved (school management, educators, trainers, parents, students, policy makers, etc.).

References


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