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Putting translanguaging into practice: A view from England

Abstract

Our understandings of multilingualism have changed significantly over the last 50 years. Whilst there is broad agreement of the positive benefits of multilingualism, we are still debating how best to harness and make use of multilingualism with respect to curriculum and pedagogy in different contexts. Many teachers find themselves working around tensions between monolingual educational policies and multilingual classroom realities. Translanguaging offers us potential new and flexible ways of responding to the needs and practices of multilingual students and addressing gaps between policy and classroom realities. In this paper, we explore the opportunities and constraints of adopting translanguaging practices in publicly funded schools in England where greater school-based curriculum autonomy is being mooted. Our discussion is informed by an analysis of policy documents and teacher interview data, which allowed us to begin to map out an agenda for change with regard to the realisation of translanguaging pedagogies within state-funded educational contexts in England.

1. **Introduction**

As Jaspers (2018) suggests, translanguaging has from its early uses in the 1980s undergone significant expansion and now represents a complex concept that

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encompasses a broad range of ideas, issues and agendas (as seen in the work of Williams 1996; Baker 2001, 2011; García 2009; Creese & Blackledge 2010, 2015; Canagarajah 2011; García & Li Wei 2014; Lewis, Jones & Baker 2012; García & Kleyn 2016, for example). As Leung and Valdes (2019:1) state, translanguaging is "a rapidly expanding conceptual-cum-theoretical, analytical and pedagogical lens that directly draws from contemporary perspectives on bi/multilingualism and that in many ways both informs and challenges existing theoretical positions and pedagogical practices". While there is a growing body of work showcasing the wide range of trans/multilingual pedagogical initiatives taking place (Cenoz 2008; Cenoz & Gorter 2011; Creese & Blackledge 2010; Duarte 2018; García, Johnson, & Seltzer 2017, Gynne 2019 for example), much of the work has been done in contexts where teachers and students can use their own languages other than the official language of instruction. In such contexts translanguaging pedagogies have been able to take advantage of shared multilingual language practices dominant in the classroom and/or wider community such as Spanish and English in some contexts in the USA, and local national languages and English in some contexts in Scandinavia (see for example Gynne 2019; Paulsrud et al. 2017). As Duarte (2019:3) highlights "the implementation of translanguaging approaches in mainstream education does not yet belong to the *status quo* in most European schools", and of specific interest to this paper is the recognition that there are fewer accounts of the development of trans/multilingual pedagogies in classrooms in which linguistic diversity is very high but where the languages are not shared by teachers and students, contexts that are very common in classrooms in England. Indeed some say that it is not possible to use students' own languages for teaching and learning because there are too many different languages in the classroom. The key issue we address in this paper is: What

can we do to make translanguaging a part of mainstream pedagogy in state-funded schools in England in the next period.

In this paper, we begin by adopting translanguaging as an analytic lens through which to explore the notion of multilingualism as it currently plays out in education policy and practice in state-funded schooling in England. Understanding and evaluating multilingualism in language and education policy in England in this way is, we argue, a crucial first step in beginning to understand the types of discursive spaces multilingualism occupies and how these spaces in turn both open up and/or potentially close off the development of multilingual/ translingual pedagogies and practices in schools and classrooms in England[1].

Drawing on policy documents, interviews and published classroom data, we explore and identify the ways in which the terms such as 'language', 'languages', 'bi/multilingualism' are construed and represented in the education system in England, and look at the ways in which they are/have been taken up in school and classroom practices, and wider policy discussions. Next, we present an account of interviews with experienced language teaching professionals to offer a view on how the teaching profession construe bi/multilingualism and what affordances and constraints might be in play in relation to the adoption of translanguaging practices. In the final section we look at the implications of our findings for policy and practice regarding teacher professional education and development and curriculum provision against the backdrop of a newly introduced school inspection framework that allows for greater

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[1] Because of the devolved nature of educational administration in the four 'home' nations within the UK, there are differences in policy and practice between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In this discussion we will be explicitly referring to 'England' and 'UK' where appropriate.

school autonomy for curriculum and pedagogy. We draw on the insight from our data and analyses to put forward central tenets that, we believe, need to be in place for translanguaging and multilingual practices to shift from being a possibility to a classroom reality for teachers and students in state-funded education in England.

2. Understanding multilingualism through a translanguaging perspective

Translanguaging is a wide-ranging concept that is very much part of the on-going multilingual turn within applied linguistics over the last 20-30 years (May 2013). Although situated in diverse contexts and settings, much of the recent scholarly work recognises that discussions in language education has tended to be premised on monolingual rather than multilingual perspectives (for further discussions, see García 2009; Creese & Blackledge 2010, 2015; Canagarajah 2011; García & Li Wei 2014, García & Kleyn 2016; and Makoni & Pennycook 2007, for example). Such a bias has left us with conceptual frameworks and categories that do not and cannot take fuller account of the complex multilingual interactions that characterise (super) diversity, or "the diversity of diversity in complex 21st century societies" (Block 2018: 13).

It has been pointed out that in contexts where individuals from diverse language backgrounds interact with one another, they make use of shared cross-lingual resources to communicate (Makoni & Pennycook 2007; García 2009; Creese & Blackledge 2010, 2015; García & Li Wei 2014; Jørgensen et al 2011; Jørgensen and Møller, 2014). Languages organised by labels such as English, Spanish, French for example do not meaningfully capture what happens at the level of the individual language use. In this sense 'named languages' as bounded entities are simply

sociocultural and historical artefacts, rather than accurate descriptions of an individual's linguistic repertoire. Rather than viewing languages as existing in a state of separation and isolation from one another, a translanguaging perspective takes the dynamic view that language in use is a fluid set of multilingual resources from which individuals draw to make and comprehend meaning. Pedagogically oriented translanguaging can be a crucial step towards meeting the learning needs and trajectories of students in multilingual classrooms as it starts from a closer approximation of the actual lived experience for multilingual learners. From the speakers/writers' perspectives what we see is not a set of discretely coded and bounded languages in use but rather a set of fluid and flexible resources for making meaning in different contexts.

From this perspective then, multilingualism as lived experience is more than just the learning and accumulation of languages, it is a way of making use of all linguistic means from diverse sources to act semiotically. Rather than viewing languages as discrete, bounded and stable wholes a translanguaging perspective calls for us to see language and multilingualism in social life as much more dynamically mobile. In this discussion, we understand multilingualism in schools and classrooms (and society more broadly) as referring to the use of linguistic resources that social actors possess flexibly and contingently to facilitate effective communication. These resources are in motion and can represent locally practised repertoires for meaning making. In educational terms this would mean students and teachers should make active use of all linguistic resources that have been brought into the classroom for teaching and learning purposes. By extension, it would also mean that a 'standard' language that

has been designated as the language of schooling does not need to be the only language that is used in the classroom.

3. Multilingualism in the English context

Ethnolinguistic diversity can take many forms. Superdiversity (Vertovec 2007) as noted above, is a term that has been used to capture the changing ethnolinguistic landscapes of cities and countries worldwide. Britain, with its long history of immigration and population movements, has a number of urban centres, which are often characterised as being superdiverse. London, for example is often cited as being home to more than 250 languages (Baker & Eversley 2000). Approximately 40% of the London population of over 8 million is made up of non-White ethnic groups (Greater London Authority, 2013; Hamnett, 2012). At the same time there are many parts of the country with settled minoritized communities where the local diversity comprises a smaller percentage of non-White population (varying between 4.5-17%) and a smaller number of community languages and English (Hamnett, 2012).

In terms of public educational discourse in the past 40 years two issues have tended to dominate the policy agenda with regard to language and multilingualism: English as Additional Language (EAL) and Modern Foreign Languages (M/FL, more recently just FL). In the English context, these are important portmanteau issues for our discussion because it is through the lenses of EAL and M/FL that we can begin to identify the ways in which multilingualism is perceived and understood by teachers and other educational professionals. And of course any move towards adapting translanguaging practices in the classroom would require sympathetic, active

professional support for multilingualism as a pre-requisite. Below, we provide a brief overview of the ways in which EAL and M/FL are currently positioned within state-funded schooling in England. The goal of this part of the discussion is not to present an exhaustive account of policy and practice but to offer some contextual background to pave the way for the empirical investigations we present later.

4. EAL and M/FL in the context of England

Educational policy governing state-funded schools and statutory education provision in England with regard EAL, as has been widely documented elsewhere (Costley 2014; Costley & Leung 2009; Edwards & Redfern 1992; Leung 2001, 2007, 2010, 2018), has for the most part been characterised by a policy commitment to the principle of equality of access to publicly funded schooling provision for all students, regardless of their language backgrounds (Bourne, 1989; DES 1975; National Curriculum Council, 1992). In organisational terms (both at the level of curriculum and classroom teaching) this has been realised through policies of 'mainstreaming' in which **all** pupils are placed in age appropriate year groups within the regular school curriculum that is taught and assessed through the medium of (Standard) English. From this perspective, there is no need for any curricular differentiation in respect of students' language backgrounds and language learning needs; EAL is not a distinctive subject or area of learning. In effect this has meant that students from diverse language backgrounds are expected to learn English while they engage with classroom and school activities, alongside their peers with English-speaking backgrounds.

The official school figures show that there are over one million pupils in UK schools for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL) (Department for Education 2018) and between them over 360 different languages are spoken (NALDIC, 2014). 21.2 % of the primary school students are classified as having a home language other than English; the corresponding figure for secondary schools is 16.6% (Department for Education 2018:10). Whilst historical migration patterns have meant that larger numbers of EAL learners are found in schools in larger urban areas, schools across the country – both rural and urban - have seen a significant increase in the number of multilingual young people in their school populations in recent years.

Policy over the last 30 – 40 years has, in support of social equality and ethnic plurality, celebrated ethnolinguistic diversity as a rich and valuable characteristic of schools. While it has been clearly stated that "no child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold" (DES, 1975: 286), there is, to date, no curriculum guidance for utilising students' languages other than English in pursuit of learning in school. In this sense, multilingualism as it relates to EAL learners has tended to be celebrated as part of the learners' ethnic and language identities rather than a resource that is to be actively drawn upon for learning and for engaging with the curriculum (see Conteh, Martin & Helavaara Robertson 2012 for a further discussion of relevant policy disposition). The *de facto* consequence here then is that even though classrooms tend to be made up of multilingual students, classroom practices and pedagogies are overwhelmingly monolingual (English) and students' linguistic repertoires are often seen as barriers to learning rather than potential resources for learning.

Since the implementation of the National Curriculum in the early 1990s Modern Foreign Languages (M/FL, now Foreign Languages, hereafter M/FL), typically prestigious standard varieties of national languages such as French, German and increasingly Spanish and Mandarin Chinese, are expected to be offered in secondary schools. The study of an M/FL has been compulsory in Primary schools since 2014 and whilst the formal study of a language is currently not a statutory curriculum requirement for secondary school students, the Government target of 90% of all students studying an M/FL by 2025, as part of the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc)[2]. This means that there is pressure on schools to ensure their students are studying an M/FL.

Every year the British Council issues a report on 'Language trends' in England, which looks at the teaching of languages in schools in England and specifically at the impact of policy and the ways in which it is taken up at school level. The most recent report shows a 19% drop in the take up of languages (Tinsley & Doležal 2019). The report cites perceptions of languages as being difficult subjects, lack of opportunities to use languages, difficulties around staffing, and Brexit (UK exiting the European Union) as some of the reasons for the continued decline in student numbers, which are findings that have been widely reported in other research and reports (see Andon & Wingate, 2013; Holmes & Myles, 2019; Wingate & Andon, 2017 for further discussion).

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[2] The Ebacc is not a formal qualification but rather 8 subjects the Government has recognised as being important for all students to study as part of a broad and balanced school curriculum. See https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-ebacc/english-baccalaureate-ebacc for further details

We can characterise multilingualism in the English education-scape in this way: on the one hand the linguistic diversity of the school in celebrated in policy but here is little curriculum support for the development and use of students' own languages and for EAL; on the other, M/FL is a long-established curriculum area but student take up is low and declining. This complex 'language void' is reflected by the fact that current school inspection framework does not mention language issues specifically (Ofsted[3] 2019).

5. Policy discourses and professional construals – Data Sources

As stated earlier, we are interested in charting some of different ways in which the concept of multilingualism is construed and presented in policy discourses in England. In particular, we will explore how these discourses work to inform and shape school and classroom practices, and what implications they may have for developing and adopting multi/translingual pedagogies.   Analytically we view discourse as the means through which the construction and mediation of meaning takes place and it is part of social practice (Gee, 1999).   Furthermore, following Wodak (2012:185), discourse itself can also be understood as a constituent of social action because there is:

'a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it. They shape the discursive event, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially

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[3] The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) is a non-governmental organisation that is charged by Government to inspect, evaluate and report on the quality of educational provision (as well as other services) in schools across the country. This takes place largely through an inspection regime. https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities and relationships between people and groups of people'

Given our primarily professional interest in the potential issues and possibilities of multi/translingual practice in schools in England, we looked at a range of official documents and conducted interviews with experienced language teaching professionals to inform our discussion.

We created two small corpora for analysis using AntConc (3.5.8). The first is made up of a selection of recent (past 15 years) policy documents and published guidelines on EAL and M/FL for teachers in England. The corpus is made up of 13 texts that are specifically related to EAL and 13, which are specifically related to M/FL and which totals 163790 words. (A full list of the texts used to compile the corpus can be found in Appendix A.) This corpus is not intended to be an exhaustive collection of documents but rather a snapshot of some of the relevant curricular policy and guidance statements that would allow us to see if there are any noticeable propositions and themes with respect to language and multilingualism.

The second corpus comprises the interview data we collected. We adopted a purposive sampling approach (Cohen, *et al.* 2018; Delice 2010; Dörnyei 2007) and interviewed four experienced language education professionals: a specialist school inspector of EAL with national standing, a teacher and advisor of EAL working as a consultant for local government and schools, a school-based EAL teacher with departmental responsibilities and research experience, and an M/FL teacher educator leading a pre-service teacher training programme at a university. Their professional

experiences range between 15 and 30+ years. All of our participants have significant experience of working with multilingual learners and three of them are multilingual themselves. We chose these participants for our interviews because their specialisms and professional positions, taken together, represent reasonably good coverage for the relevant fields of practice. All of our participants have experiences not only of teaching in a wide range of classrooms across the country, but also in observing teaching and teacher training in a range of schools across the country. We reached out to the interviewees via our professional networks and explained that we were contacting them on account of their professional practice and academic knowledge of the field. All participants had experience of being interviewed as well as in interviewing others. The interviews were conducted on Skype; they were semi-structured and the shortest lasted 20 minutes and the longest 60 minutes, totalling approximately 145 minutes (see Appendix B for interview questions). The interviews were transcribed. This corpus consists of 17,992 words, excluding the interviewers' questions.

6. Data Analysis

The data analysis was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, using the corpus tools of Key Words, Word List and Concordance, we looked at the uses of the terms 'language', 'languages' and 'bi/multilingualism' and the immediate discourse environments in which they occurred. In the second stage two steps were taken: The transcribed interview data was fed into AntConc for analysis, we also conducted a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2012; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006; Kvale 1983 and see earlier discussion on theoretical orientation). The analytic process followed what Wodak (2012:188) has called 'abductive: a constant movement back

and forth between theory and empirical data'. In our case we extended the meaning of 'theory' to include concepts, principles and espoused beliefs and values in the data. For instance, whenever we found ourselves a little unsure of the perlocutionary meaning of a particular interviewee utterance on 'language', we checked our initial interpretation or hunch against the surrounding discourse and/or relevant documents to see if we could see any semantic prosody. There were also occasions when the two researchers had taken different meanings from the interview data. In all such instances, we went back and forth between interview data, interpretation and relevant documents iteratively to achieve a shared understanding. In terms of the use of the findings for interpretation, we regarded both the document and interview analyses as complementary.

7. **Findings**

We begin this discussion with an overview of some of the key themes and patterns we have identified in the corpus of policy texts and documents through using the Word list, Key word and Concordance functions within AntConc. We then move onto to discuss the interview data, both in terms of the findings from the corpus explorations as well as that from a thematic analysis. The themes emerging from our analysis across the data sets will be summarized

We began by looking at the word frequencies in our corpus of policy texts with a focus on terms related to language issues. We found that 'language' was the tenth most frequent word (the nine more frequent items were function words such as 'and' and 'pupil'). We also noted that it appeared in the singular form more frequently than in its plural counterpart. We then searched for other key words that we felt were

important and Table 1 below shows the rank and frequency of some of five terms we searched for.

<INSERT ABOUT HERE Table 1: EAL and M/FL corpus frequencies>

This led us to look further into the concordances to try and understand how they are used within the texts in our corpus. Figures 1 and 2 below show examples of the concordances that are generated around the words 'language' and 'languages' in our document-based corpus. These examples illustrate some of the patterns we have found. Taken together these patterns represent a semantic prosody, which we have found useful when we worked with the interview data

Figure 1 shows some of the ways in which 'language' in the singular is used in the texts in our corpus. We observed that 'language' carried different meanings to serve different discursive purposes. Lines 79 and 82 for example, show the idea of language as being a tool for expressing meaning accurately. It is being used to refer to the presentation of curriculum knowledge and in these instances it is referring implicitly to English. Line 77 by contrast shows language being used as a generic term to refer to a specific (although unnamed) M/FL language. The final point of interest in this short extract is the way in which line 81 shows language as referring to the notion of acquisition and again this is referring to English. These usages are repeated in the concordances and the most regular is that which involves language as a referent to as a proxy of English.

<INSERT HERE Figure 1: Examples of concordances for uses of Language >

Figure 2 shows some examples of the textual environment surrounding the use of 'languages'. In these examples, we can see that while language is used in the plural

form, it refers to a very specific meaning - 'languages' is a synonym for M/FL and the study of languages within the curriculum. It is not a reference to languages as a diverse set of resources that might be deployed for classroom communication; it refers to languages as objects of study.

<INSERT ABOUT HERE Figure 2: Examples of concordances for uses of Languages>

7.1 Interview Data

Two broad and interrelated themes emerge from our analysis of the interview data. These are: the role and use of language/s in the classroom and teacher training, and the different values attached to languages and how this shapes ideas of multilingualism. In the following discussion we show extracts from the different interviews, as well as the policy documents (in our corpus) to explore these two broad themes.

The role and use of language/s in the classroom and teacher training

In reflecting on multilingual practices as they have experienced them in schools and classrooms, a major theme in the interview data expressed independently by all of our participants was the role of formal and mandatory assessment in shaping and determining teachers' (and students') ability to, and motivation for, using students' own multilingual resources in classes. For the participants, although working with multilingual individuals (both students and colleagues) a part of everyday routine experience, when it comes to teaching and learning issues, English is the unmarked medium of school and classroom communication. In M/FL teaching the target

language (e.g. French) and/or English are assumed to be used for teaching. Other languages brought to the classroom by students and teachers tend not to be mentioned.

A recurring explanation for the lack of use of multilingual repertoires was the extent to which it would be actually useful to the students. *Extract 1* below reveals how formal assessments and exams are identified as posing fundamental restrictions on the ways in which language/s are used, and considered to be useful in classrooms.

Extract 1 (School Inspector)

01   Yeah, the other challenge, the other challenge particularly for secondary

02   schools is if you were to teach a subject through the medium of another

03   language at the end of the day they are still going to be assessed through

04   the medium of English. And the National Curriculum right from the

05   beginning was always clear that you should only be assessed in the

06   language that you have been taught in and GCSEs don't give you the

07   option to take these GCSEs through the medium of Mandarin or through

08   any other language, they need to take it through the medium of English so

09   again that would make it a very periphery activity if you do a bit of history

10   through Spanish they can't run it all the way through GCSE because of the

11   key concepts and having to express yourself in and through English in the

12   GCSE unless you become fully bilingual pupils

In lines 4-8 we see the impact of the statutory assessment regime of the National Curriculum exerting a clear influence on classroom practices. As mentioned earlier, while the curriculum does not expect students to 'cast off' their languages, it makes no provision for them. Here, the curriculum does not 'outlaw' the use of other

languages but Standard English as the de facto language of instruction means that assessing in another language would not be deemed appropriate and fair. As stated in line 09, this renders students' (and teachers') full linguistic repertoires as peripheral resources with no clear role in the learning process. This tells us that the monolingual assessment framework is regarded as the norm and therefore teaching and learning should also be carried out monolingually.

In *Extract 2* we see again how the language of instruction, or the target language asserts an influence over the pedagogical choices of the teachers. Below the challenge of finding a role for multilingualism as a resource for the classroom is clearly felt. In the extract the participant explains why they felt their colleagues did not fully embrace and take up the multilingual resources, classroom materials and activities they had developed in order to make use of students' fuller linguistic repertoires in the M/FL classroom.

Extract 2 (M/FL Teacher/Researcher)

01   it didn't go down as something that everyone is going to start using erm

02   primarily because when you look at the GCSEs well I think when you look

03   at the GCSE paper why would you need other thought processes another

04   language you're learning to translate between English and Spanish so

05   maybe don't put another one in there

A key point in understanding this utterance is not that the participants themselves saw no value in the students' languages. All of the participants involved in teaching expressed positive views of making use of their students (and their own) multilingual repertoires in classes. However, in the recounting their day-to day interactions and

discussions with colleagues there was little mention of actually making use of such resources. From the participants' perspectives there seems to be a culture of going 'with the flow' - the multilingual resources in the classrooms not being active used simply because there was no practice or culture of using other languages, particularly in terms of engaging in complex work as is shown in *Extract 3* below.

Extract 3 (EAL Consultant)

01   I don't see much going on actually unless the teacher does, you know the

02   teacher is checking in a way and does 'how would you say that in your

03   language?' and stuff like that. I don't really see much problem solving or

04   strategy discussion or stuff like that going on in different languages

While exams and the pressures of assessment and the absence of any established multilingual practice were presented as the main reasons for the lack of use of students' linguistic resources, there are other interrelated factors that were highlighted by the participants as contributing to a marginalising of students' additional linguistic resources. These centred on multilingualism and a concern for classroom control and management.

Extract 4 (Teacher Trainer)

01   'I wouldn't know if they were talking on task I won't be able to monitor,

02   you know monitor the quality of what they were saying' and stuff like that

03   so I think you know lots of teachers are locked in a monolingual principle

04   still and I see that even in M/FL even though it is not a monolingualism in

05   the sense that you are dealing with another language but there is still it is

06   still English plus one in a way where really allowing or really knowing

07   how to allow sort of lots of different languages going on and stuff like that

08   is really a challenge for us all in a way erm and maybe you know it is

09   about the teacher not knowing not having total control of bits of the

10   language going on in the class is a challenge and it might mean that they

11   might not know all language and all concepts are being understood and

12   processed in the way they want

Extract 4 above opens with a participant quoting concerns expressed by M/FL teachers and trainees. What we see in these extracts is the voicing of a clear sense of uncertainty around what to do with students' multilingualism as resources for learning and how to manage multilingual classrooms as being issues that prevent, and deter teachers from taking up multilingual classroom practices. This concern with remaining in control and/or having to understand all the language of the classroom as a reason for not using languages other than English is not unique to this data and has been highlighted in other similar discussions (see Gynne 2019 for example). Of course in the context of England, there is no professional requirement for teachers to adopt multilingual practices given the focus on the acquisition and use of Standard English in the curriculum and specific target languages of M/FL and this is very clearly discussed in *Extract 5* below that provides an insight into that context.

Extract 5 (School Inspector)

01   in the early days of the National Curriculum there was a lot of talk about

02   pupils could be assessed in the home language but I think there has been

03   a policy vacuum I don't think there has been a policy to outlaw it but I

04   think there has been a policy vacuum and in light of that vacuum I think it

05   has just withered because you haven't had people there promoting it

06   anymore and therefore it doesn't happen in ITE[4] for example you don't get

07   trainees hearing about it because you come across a lot of bilingual

08   trainees and I ask them you know and it just doesn't come up you know

09   the idea that they are training to teach biology and they might use their

10   home language in a biology lesson just doesn't occur so I think there is a

11   vacuum there rather than a policy shift

The 'policy vacuum' as it is discussed above is important as what it means, and which underlies the data presented so far, is that teacher training, both in relation to EAL and M/FL has not focused on students' existing linguistic repertoires. This means that there is limited or no professional culture and practice with regard to multilingual pedagogy. This was discussed by all the participants and captured clearly below in *Extract 6.*

Extract 6 (EAL Consultant)

01   Well I think it is simply knowledge I think it is simply a lack of awareness

02   I would have thought erm whether or not this is the right thing to do or not

03   I mean erm I am often asked in training sessions you know do you even

04   sort of let them use their own home languages together er or should it just

05   be English medium or I get those sorts of questions sometimes there is a

06   you know a very very big lack of awareness /…/ there is a bit more

07   awareness a little bit more in terms of general English EAL strategies but

08   there's a huge lack of awareness really in terms of you know use of home

09   languages etc etc and codeswitiching and all that kind of stuff people

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[4] ITE stands for Initial Teacher Education

10   don't know anything literally about it I would say

This EAL consultant has substantial experience of working with teachers in different parts of the county an in this extract they strongly stated that the lack of national policy guidance on the use of languages other than English had led to a high level of uncertainty on the part of classroom teachers. Our examination of policy documents also confirms this point made by the *EAL consultant* (cf. Appendix A).

7.2 Languages as valuable commodities on the margins

As discussed above, all of our participants have significant experience of working in linguistically diverse schools. In discussing multilingualism in relation to how it plays out in the classrooms, and in particular in relation to language learning, some noticeable points emerge that begin to provide an insight into the value of multilingualism, and the status of 'being multilingual'.

Extract 7 (M/FL Teacher Researcher)

01   from just the image I have of M/FL when I think about it I think the

02   multilingualism that is present is that it is European, that it is a useful

03   skill that will help you talk to foreign people even though in essence it

04   isn't, and of course it does touch on the everyday multilingualism that is

05   lived in our classrooms and society even though there is no explicit link,

06   even in schools like I'm in which is in the absolute heart of multilingual

07   XXXXX where 80% of our students have contact with at least another

08   language. I suppose, well no, I suppose another superficial link there is

09   the community languages GCSE but that is often a rushed job

In *Extract 7* multilingualism is seen as representing a particular type of communication involving a particular set of people and languages. For this participant, multilingualism as it plays out in the curriculum does not mirror the day to day-lived experiences of learners growing up in multilingual contexts such as London, Birmingham, and Manchester for example. Rather, multilingualism is something more 'exotic', foreign or 'European multilingualism'. This same theme is also evident in *Extract 8* below in which again we get a sense that multilingualism is not necessarily seen as a resource for communication, but rather it is a sign of a particular type of educational background and achievement.

Extract 8 (Teacher Trainer)

03   So yes, I do think being competent in a language that people usually learn at

04   school like traditionally French, or German or to a lesser extent Spanish erm

05   I can describe it in modern languages terms as a form of multilingualism but it

06   is a very particular form of multilingualism which signals kind of a level of

07   education or a kind of European cosmopolitanism

The imagery here is one of multilingualism as something which happens somewhere else, it is for holidays, it is for future prospects rather than an everyday reality and way of being and doing in the world. It is also implicitly associated with a middle

class position – using 'level of education' as a proxy indicator. This comes through very clearly in *Extract 9* in which our *M/FL Teacher Researcher* participant reflects on whether and to what extent students' being conceptualised as multilingual was approached in their teacher training programme.

Extract 9 (M/FL Teacher Researcher)

01   I think it was like a novelty like oh and they might speak another

02   language you know rather than it like being something that would

03   obviously happen.

For this participant there was no expectation, at the level of training that students might be multilingual, and that their linguistic repertoires might be resources that could be drawn upon in the M/FL classroom. Such a position has important implications for the expectations around how languages are learned and what types of resources for learning students are (or are not) perceived as bringing with them to the classroom.

In *Extract 10* below we see an instance of the non-articulated relationship between perceived classroom experience and actual classroom practice. When this highly experienced EAL specialist, who is an English-Spanish bilingual, was asked to reflect on the extent to which they made use of multilingual resources in their own teaching, the first response was in effect 'not a lot'. However, when the interviewer probed this further, the answer was that Spanish was actually used with some of the students.

This suggests that, non-consciously, the use of languages other than English does not really register as part of classroom language communication. Only English counts.

Extract 10 (EAL consultant)

01 I mean to be honest I mean you are making me reflect on about what I do now

02 which is basically the closest I get to that is actually talking about how the

03 mother tongue might be supported a bit with the translation of materials and

04 the role of allowing students to share their own languages to access content

05 but really in my own training sessions I do very little on it myself so

06 (laughing) that doesn't bode well does it

07 [Interviewer] *Okay have you ever used Spanish with the kids?*

08 Oh 100% absolutely yeah yeah yeah yeah when I supported kids with a

09 Spanish speaking background and I have actually been in a mainstream team

10 teaching context which I actually don't do much of that now remember I

11 hardly do that now but absolutely 100 % absolutely used it absolutely yeah

12 /…/ yeah I have used it absolutely but please don't ask me for specific

13 examples because that was quite a while back I absolutely used it yeah

Perhaps the most concise statement on the value of multilingualism is presented below in *Extract 11*.

Extract 11 (Teacher Trainer)

01 In an ideal world you would promote languages per se and the ability to

02 speak different languages per se but that is an abstract idea because

24

03   languages each have their own value set I mean two languages are not

04   treated the same symbolically, they don't have the same chance, they don't

05   have the same attraction. So as an abstract idea, of course any language

06   teacher would advocate multilingualism and it doesn't matter what

07   language the important thing is that you are learning a language but the

08   reality is that languages circulate in certain ways

What we see here is a very clear articulation of the idea of linguistic capital (Bourdieu 1991) and the view that not all types of multilingualism and/or language learning and usage are cultivated and celebrated in the same ways in schools. This is very much reflected in the somewhat narrow diet of languages that constitute a 'typical' M/FL curriculum offering (e.g. French, Spanish).

Another point of interest in the data with regard to the positioning of language and multilingualism in the school contexts was the extent to which discussions about language and multilingualism particularly with regard to the specific needs of multilingual learners came up in schools. In the interview with the *M/FL teacher researcher*, we asked about the extent to which multilingual pedagogies and ideas such as translanguaging are things that teachers discussed much outside the classroom.

Extract 12 (M/FL Teacher Researcher)

01   that will come up but the thing is we don't really have many conversations

02   about that as they are all really responding as everything is really urgent and in

03   meetings it is all about dates for things so I don't really feel like there is much

04   talk on the methods we are using or what we are doing with our multilingual

05   students like there is not much discussion

What we see in *Extract 12* is that although ideas such as multilingual pedagogies and translanguaging maybe ideas that M/FL teachers might have come across, very little, if any, time is available to discuss such ideas and pedagogical practices more carefully.   Other, pressing issues appear to crowd out the possibility of such discussions.

A further theme with respect to the idea of talking about language and language practices and pedagogy is that whilst our participants noted that there was often limited discussion about language and languages pedagogies among colleagues and within meetings, there is a similar lack of discussion between colleagues within and across EAL and M/FL- two areas of the curriculum where multilingualism is arguably at the heart of the work teachers (and learners) are doing.

Extract 13 (Teacher Trainer)

01   So in terms of translanguaging, translanguaging fascinates me because it is

02   something that people have always done in language in modern

03   languages lessons in terms of switching languages and to adapting to the

04   moment erm and stuff like that either explaining words differently I mean lots

05   of the strategies that are developed for EAL such as you know not depending

06   too much on spoken language and using more and conveying concepts in

07   different ways and illustrations and stuff all of that is the bread and butter of

08   language lessons so in a way there should have always been much more

09   discussion between EAL teaching and M/FL teaching

7.3 Are schools ready for translanguaging practices?

The overall finding of our analysis is that at present there is no real evidence of sustained and coordinated educational policy, curriculum support and classroom practice in England with respect to trans/multilingual pedagogy. There is rhetorical celebration of multilingualism in the policy documents and this is reflected in the interviewees favourable attitudes towards multilingualism themselves. However; at the same time because of the lack of positive engagement and encouragement at the policy level there is no real culture or practice in schools of using languages as flexible resources that can be meaningfully deployed for learning and assessment purposes, or a culture of collaboration between and across colleagues working within EAL and M/FL.   From our data, we identify a number of factors, which begin to explain and unpack this essentially monolingual disposition.

Firstly, English as the statutory language in the curriculum exerts a far-reaching influence over what happens in schools and classrooms. As the official school language, it has effectively become the ***only*** language of schooling and as such students' fuller linguistic repertoires are simply not afforded classroom space and recognition – by extension they are not regarded as being necessary or useful in curriculum success. The next contributing factor is that within the M/FL curriculum and assessment there is similarly no provision or requirement for using languages other than the target language or English. Indeed, multilingualism or using pupils

other languages in the M/FL classroom is not mentioned at all in any of the curriculum documents and syllabuses[5]. The third contributing factor is that the need to manage and coordinate classroom activities has led to a perception that if the teachers encourage pupils to use their own languages, the teacher might lose control of the class as they would not be able to understand all the languages in their classrooms and monitor what learning is taking place. These factors combine to mean that schools and teachers in England are simply are not really prepared, either through teacher training or curriculum provision, or through regular ideas exchanges between colleagues to take full advantage of students' multilingualism. Rather than being regarded as a resource for classroom learning and assessment, multilingualism can be seen as more of a classroom management issue.

8. Possible actions for future directions

While we recognise that at this time English is the statutory language for schooling in England, there is nothing to stop curriculum authorities expanding the discussion of school language to include flexible use of students own languages to support teaching and learning. Such a shift means that there is also the need to create assessment frameworks that would recognise multilingual language use in the subject areas (Geography, History for example) and we note the work of Schissel et al. (2018) and others with respect to translanguaging and multilingual assessment. In this sense what is required is an opening up of the horizon of the medium of education and a re-framing of the opportunities that different languages/media potentially can offer students and teachers. The recently introduced Ofsted inspection framework (Ofsted

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[5] Except in cases where the student's home language is an M/FL, e.g. French for a French-speaking child.

2019) has given rise to the possibility that schools can adopt educational and curriculum policies of their own choice, as long as they can provide a sound rationale. This newly conferred local school autonomy would not preclude multilingual policies and practices.

Another area for action is teacher education. Flexible multilingual approaches should be reflected in the pre-service programmes and continuous professional development of all teachers. Teacher education, as we have seen in the data, can shape practice in schools. This means that there is a need to talk about language issues beyond the current conceptual confines of English and M/FL, and adopt a much more active policy to promote the educational value of students' own languages as part of the broader celebration of multilingualism in society. This also means that there is the need to counter the perceived orthodoxy of M/FL favouring European languages and other globally powerful languages such as Mandarin, over local community languages spoken by students themselves.

In terms of future directions and changes in the language practices of classrooms in England we cannot, as our experience has attested, assume that the innovative practices that go on in isolation in schools and classrooms, or that the good will of some staff, school and families would be enough to effect lasting wholesale pedagogical change. Or that celebrating diversity will necessarily result in the take up and maintenance of multilingual practices. In this sense there is a need for change in policy and practice. Below we highlight three key areas of action in school practice and teacher education we believe to be essential for any kind of meaningful change to take place in the immediate and medium term.

1) To take advantage of the changes to the Ofsted inspection Framework and to take full advantage of its emphasis on maximizing the quality of learning for all students and to re-position the perception and use of language/s in the curriculum

2) To increase dialogue between EAL and M/FL teachers in schools in order to begin to shift the ways in which multilingualism is understood and discussed in schools and to help teachers to mobilise languages in and across schools. Teachers of English (subject) may also be brought into this discussion.

3) To pay attention to accounts of effective translingual classroom practices, from both UK and other world locations, in initial teacher education and continuing professional development programmes. Such accounts are needed to encourage the development of translanguaging practices as part of teacher professionalism.

In the longer run such ground level professional activities would likely contribute to policy development at the whole system level. As we have found in this study, policy rhetoric without the support of informed professional practice is unlikely to lead to any change.

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Appendix A: Corpus texts

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Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Thinking about your experiences in schools, since the implementation of the National Curriculum, what changes, practices, strategies etc. have you seen with regard to languages/multilingualism in schools (M/FL, EAL, etc)?

2. In your experience, how has policy impacted on multilingualism in schools? What types of multilingualism do you see in schools i.e. code switching etc.?

3. What is your view of the new Ofsted framework and how do you think this will help/hinder schools interested in adopting more multilingual practices?

4. What advice would you give schools who wanted to make use of students' languages more in schools -for example code switching/translanguaging,?

5. Since 1989/81 and the onset of the National Curriculum, what has been the main focus/trajectory of school education policy re M/FL in terms of how language teaching is seen in schools?

6. On what basis languages are selected for inclusion on the curriculum?

7. What teaching approaches are trainee teachers taught to teach and make use of in class?

8. Do you make see M/FL teaching as promoting multilingualism, if yes, what does this mean?

Table 1: EAL and M/FL corpus frequencies

Rank	Frequency	Word
10	1663	Language
26	686	Languages
32	598	English
86	238	Bilingual
91	233	EAL

Figure 1: Examples of concordances for uses of Language

Figure 2: Examples of concordances for uses of Languages