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FINNISH TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT STUDENTS' HOME LANGUAGE USE

Abstract:

This study examined Finnish teachers' (N = 691) beliefs about students use of their home languages in learning tasks and teachers' preparedness to implement the requirements of the Finnish curricula. The teachers' beliefs related to students' use of their home languages were mainly positive; however, only 7% of the teachers reported encouraging home language use, while 20% of the teachers reported preventing it. The teachers who reported tolerating the use of home languages in the classroom were more interested in whether the students accomplished the task than what language they used. However, many of the teachers (39%) required that the students report on their discussions in the language of instruction. The results indicate varying language practices, some of which are not aligned with the Finnish curricula.

Keywords: Home languages ⬥ multilingual pedagogies ⬥ teachers' beliefs ⬥ language practices

Introduction

The growing number of multilingual learners is challenging educators and education organizers to reconsider traditional monolingual education. In some places, such as Finland, there has been a shift from monolingual educational policies to more holistic policies wherein all languages are seen as resources for learning. Indeed, current Finnish educational policies (National Agency of Education, 2014, 2015) are highly progressive with regard to the role of languages in learning (see Alisaari, 2020; Alisaari et al., 2019b). However, little information is available on what beliefs teachers hold regarding students' use of their entire linguistic repertoires for learning, or on how Finnish teachers' beliefs on language use align with the current educational policies (see, however, Alisaari et al., 2019a). Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore teachers' beliefs about students' use of their home languages in learning and to examine what instruction teachers give with regard to language use during collaborative learning tasks.

A person's beliefs are the ways they perceive the world and the ideas or opinions that they hold true (Barcelos, 2003; Kalaja et al., 2016). Beliefs are context-dependent (Kalaja et al., 2016), formed by both personal and professional experiences (Biesta et al., 2015). Teachers' beliefs influence their classroom policies and actions (Althusser, 1976; Johnson, 2013), especially in Finland, where teachers have remarkable pedagogical freedom and the curricula do not require the use of any specific methods. Thus, it is important to investigate teachers' beliefs in order to interpret their preparedness to implement the requirements of the curricula and subsequently develop better teacher education and professional development programs. Moreover, as previous studies have shown that teaching experience and experience working with students with immigration background are reflected in teachers' beliefs and practices (Alisaari et al., 2019a), we also examine how these background factors are related to teachers' beliefs regarding students' use of their home languages in the classroom.

The aim of this study is to examine Finnish elementary, secondary, and upper-secondary school teachers' beliefs regarding students' use of their home languages in learning. The two research questions are:

1. How can teachers' beliefs about students' use of their home languages during a collaborative learning task be categorized, and are the different categories inter-related?

2. Is there a relationship between teachers' background factors (teaching experience, area of professional expertise) and their beliefs regarding students' use of their home languages in the classroom?

In this study, the term *student with immigration background* is used to refer to first- or second-generation immigrant students who speak other languages as their home languages than the language of instruction. The term *home language* is used to refer to the language that these students use with their families; we have chosen to use this term (see e.g., Eisenchlas & Schalley, 2020) even though we acknowledge that it dichotomizes the language used at home and the language used at school (Seltzer, 2019). It is particularly problematic that the term *home language* restricts the domain of the language to the speaker's home (Seltzer, 2019). However, it does not address the speaker's proficiency in this language; instead, it reflects the idea of the language that is the closest to a person's identity (see also Eisenchlas & Schalley, 2020). Furthermore, we use the term *language of instruction* to refer to the language used for classroom instruction, which in Finland can be Finnish, Swedish, or Sami (or the target language during additional language classes). However, we want to emphasize that we use these terms with full awareness that none of them are neutral.

Multilingualism: Policy and instruction

Finland has a multilingual history, and the national languages, Finnish and Swedish, and the indigenous language, Sami, are all acknowledged in the constitution. Furthermore, the language-learning program in basic education (grades 1–9) is extensive; all students learn at least two additional languages. Until recently, educational policies and practices have been monolingual. Even in areas where both Finnish and Swedish are spoken, separate schools exist for each language; in each, only one language is used as the language of instruction, except in Content and Language-Integrated Classrooms (CLIL), which are still relatively rare.

Recently, increased immigration has raised the number of languages spoken in Finland, especially in the larger cities. For example, in 1980, there were only 9000 inhabitants (0.2% of the population) who spoke a home language other than Finnish, Swedish, or Sami, while by the end of 2019, this number had increased to 412,644 (7.5% of the population). Moreover, in 2018, 6.5% of all students in basic education studied Finnish or Swedish as a second language[1], and in the province of Uusimaa, the area around the capital region, the percentage was 13.5% (Education Statistics Finland, 2019; Statistics of Finland, 2020.) In spite of these trends, official educational language policies followed monolingual norms until 2016, and linguistic diversity was primarily seen as involving students with immigrant background (Zilliacus et al., 2017).

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[1] In the Finnish core curricula, only students whose home language is not Finnish, Swedish, or Sami can study Finnish or Swedish as a second language; when a Swedish speaking student studies Finnish or vice versa, it is studied as a second domestic language (National Agency of Education, 2014; National Agency of Education, 2015).

Today, there are many students with immigration background in Finnish schools, and there may be a dozen or more different languages spoken in one classroom. This change is reflected in the current Finnish core curricula, which have created an ideological space for multilingualism (see also Hedman & Magnusson, 2019) supported by stakeholders. All students in basic and upper secondary education should be allowed to use their entire linguistic repertoire for learning, and all teachers should critically review their pedagogical practices through a language lens (Alisaari, et al., 2019b; National Agency of Education, 2014, 2015). However, it is often the case that the home languages of students with immigration background go unheard during the school day.

While some teachers worry that these students will not learn the school language if it is not used all the time (Alisaari et al., 2019a; Cummins, 2001; Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Rodríguez-Izquierdo et al., 2020; Shestunova, 2019), there is substantial evidence that using home languages during learning does not prevent learning the language of instruction, rather a strong knowledge of one's home language supports learning both other languages and school subjects (Cummins, 1979, 2007; Ganuza & Hedman, 2018; Goldenberg, 2008; Ovando & Combs, 2011; Ramirez, 1992; Slavin & Cheung, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 1997). For example, the studies of Thomas and Collier (1997) and Ramirez (1992) showed that students who mainly used their home language, Spanish, for learning at school learned English better than those who studied in English. In addition, Ganuza and Hedman (2019) found that students' reading comprehension skills in their home language, Somali, were more indicative of their learning outcomes in other subjects than their reading skills in the language of instruction (Swedish). Furthermore, a review of studies on bilingual reading instruction indicated that bilingual approaches to teaching reading are beneficial (Slavin & Cheung, 2005). In spite of a common misbelief, teachers do not need to know students' home languages, they only need to see the students as experts in their own languages and understand that all languages are valuable learning resources (Duarte, 2018). There are many ways a student's entire linguistic repertoire can be used as a resource for learning, even when the teacher is not familiar with the languages (see e.g., García et al., 2016), for example by encouraging students to seek information in their home language or discuss a topic with a peer who speaks the same language.

Unfortunately, many teachers are either unwilling or unable to use their students' home languages as learning resources (Alisaari et al., 2019a; Iversen, 2019; Lundberg, 2019; Sullivan, 2016; Taylor et al., 2008), and students' home languages are invoked only unintentionally (Burner & Carlsen, 2019). Historically, children who speak other languages at home than the language of instruction have been punished for speaking their home languages at school. Cummins (2001, p. vii) described this as "coercive relations of power" and suggested it should

not be manifested in the classroom. Indeed, a study by Thomas and Collier (1997) demonstrated that teaching only in the language of instruction results in considerably lower academic outcomes than if home languages are included. Advocating for the use of home languages in learning can enable students to use their entire cognitive capacity, support their holistic identities (Cummins, 2001), and positively influence their self-esteem and enthusiasm for learning (Catalano et al., 2019). Pedagogies where students' multilingual resources are used for communication and learning, called multilingual pedagogies or translanguaging (see e.g., Creese, 2017), will be presented in the following section.

Multilingual pedagogies

It has been argued (García & Hesson, 2015; García et al., 2016) that all teaching should support the entire linguistic repertoires of bilingual and multilingual students. Pedagogy wherein all of students' linguistic resources are flexibly used for learning has been termed translanguaging (García & Hesson, 2015). In the Finnish core curricula, this pedagogy is referred as the use of multiple languages or multilingual practices (National Agency of Education, 2014, 2015); we have mainly used the term *multilingual pedagogies* in this study. These kinds of pedagogies usually require endorsement from policy makers (García & Hesson, 2015), but teachers' actions are also relevant, as there are differences in how translanguaging occurs in classrooms: In fact, it is the teachers who enact the curricula in the classroom practices that implement, construct, and shape the policies (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Menken & García, 2010). According to Cenoz (2017a, 2017b), translanguaging may be planned, or it may be sporadic and not intentionally supported by teachers, such as when a student asks their peers for clarification in their home language.

Other pedagogical models also actively support multilingualism in the classroom. For example, collaborative learning allows students to co-construct knowledge through social interaction with peers who speak the same language, which provides them opportunities to develop their skills within their zone of proximal development (Teemant & Hausman, 2013; Vygotsky, 1986). When students are encouraged to use all their languages, their understanding of the topics being taught may be deeper than if they are restricted to using only the language of instruction (Tharp et al., 2000).

There is some concern regarding the actual implementation of multilingual pedagogies and teachers' reactions to the use of students' linguistic repertoires for learning (Alisaari et al., 2019b). Thus, there is a need to better understand teachers' beliefs about the use of different languages for learning, since "if teachers don't believe that drawing on all the students'

linguistic and other semiotic resources in teaching is good pedagogy, it will not work because they are not convinced of the value" (Catalano et al., 2019, p. 66).

Method

This study is a part of a larger research project investigating teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to culturally and linguistically diverse learners. In this sub-study, we focused on one open-ended question from an online survey that elicited teachers' self-reported perceptions of how they would react in a situation where students with immigration background use their home languages during a collaborative task.

Data collection

The data were collected in the spring of 2016 using an online survey based on a preliminary version of a survey about linguistically and culturally responsive teaching by Milbourn, Viesca, and Leech (2017). The survey was advertised through social media, various professional websites, email lists related to teaching, and the national educational fair. A cover letter and a link to the survey were also sent to all local education offices in Finland with the request that they be forwarded to all the teachers in the area. Information about the study and its purpose and the protection of the data was included in the cover letter and on the first page of the online survey. Participants were informed that filling out the survey implied consent. It was not possible to calculate the participation percentage, as the number of people who received or saw the survey link is unknown.

Questionnaire

The responses of 691 teachers to one open-ended question were examined. The question was: "Your students are working in pairs. You walk around the classroom, watching the pairs work. You approach two students with immigration background who are speaking to each other in their home language. You do not know the language. How do you react?" A collaborative learning task was used as the context for this question because successful collaboration requires negotiation, knowledge construction, and joint regulation of a learning process, which may involve the use of one's entire linguistic repertoire.

The question was part of an online survey that included both Likert scale (1–5) statements and open-ended questions; a more detailed description can be found in the studies of Alisaari and colleagues (2019a) and Heikkola and colleagues (forthcoming). In the online survey, the response ratio to the 11 open-ended questions was approximately the same for all the questions

(around 85%); this was lower than the response ratio to the Likert scale statements, which may be due to the open-ended questions being at the end of the survey, the number of the questions, or the fact that answering them was not compulsory. Nonetheless, the high number of responses to this question (N = 691; 84% of all participants) provided rich data that enhances understanding the beliefs behind the classroom language practices of Finnish teachers. These are key to addressing the obstacles and opportunities related to the implementation of the progressive curricula, especially as this sample is highly representative of the Finnish teacher population. However, it should be considered that answering the survey was voluntary, thus participants may have been more interested in the topic than non-participating teachers, which can affect the generalizability of the results.

Participants

A total of 820 teachers participated in the larger survey, 84% of which (N = 691) answered the open-ended question that form the data for this sub-study. Of these 691 respondents, 79% identified as female, 21% as male, and 1% as other. The mean age of the participants was 48. The gender and age structure was relatively representative of the larger Finnish teacher population (Kumpulainen, 2017). The participants included 92% Finnish L1 speakers, 6% Swedish L1 speakers, and 2% speakers of other languages as L1.

Teachers in secondary or upper-secondary school comprised the largest group of respondents (47%); of these, 20% taught mathematics and what are known in Finland as theoretical subjects (e.g., biology, religious studies, and social studies); 16% taught Finnish as a first or second language and literature; 11% taught foreign languages; and 7% taught arts and P.E. The second biggest group were elementary school classroom teachers (25%), then 15% were special education teachers or teachers of newly arrived migrants, 5% were principals, 4% were counselors, and 4% were other (mostly substitute teachers).

Data analysis

All of the responses were in Finnish or Swedish and the coding was done in Finnish; Examples from the data presented in this paper have been translated into English by the authors. At the beginning of the qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980), Authors 1 and 2 read all the teachers' responses, and Author 3 read the first 100 responses to gain an initial understanding of any recurring topics. Based on the preliminary review of the data, Authors 1, 2, and 3 identified three topics for more detailed content analysis: 1) teachers' beliefs related to students' use of home languages; 2) teachers' focus on task, language, or both during collaborative learning tasks; and 3) ways teachers gave directions regarding students' language use during a

collaborative learning task. By task, we mean that teachers focus on students accomplishing the task, by language that the focus is merely on the language used to do the task, and by both we mean that teachers made reference to both of them. Next, Authors 1, 2, and 3 outlined the categories of the responses (presented below). As each response was reviewed, it was analyzed and coded accordingly. First, all the authors read and discussed the first 100 responses, created the initial coding scheme, then coded these accordingly. Responses that did not fit any of the three categories were categorized as "Not applicable". After the first 100 responses were coded, an understanding of the categorization was negotiated to establish inter-rater reliability. Second, Authors 1 and 2 analyzed all 691 responses independently; the coders reached a satisfactory agreement (95%). Finally, the categories were named by all authors based on an anonymous reviewer's suggestions during a revision of the article.

Teachers' Beliefs About the Use of Languages Other than the Language of Instruction

Teachers' beliefs as reflected in their reported actions were coded as (a) *restrict*, (b) *tolerate*, or (c) *encourage* regarding students using their home languages in a collaborative learning situation. The categories were data-driven, and they were intended to capture the teachers' beliefs as well as how they communicated with their students. The categories and examples of the data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Categories illustrating teachers' beliefs about students' home language use

Category	Description	Example from the data
Restrict	The teacher does not allow students to use their home languages.	"I point out that at school/classroom, we speak Finnish, and if it is necessary, you can quickly ask for some help in your native language."
Tolerate	The teacher does not deny students' use of home languages but does not encourage it either.	"I don't react in any way. It's completely natural that people speak their home languages."
Encourage	The teacher encourages the use of home languages and communicates this to their students.	"I don't react. I continue in the same way as with others; I ask and check in a common language if their work is proceeding well and remind them that they can always ask me to help and that they can search words and texts via internet by using their home language, Finnish, or English, whatever best supports their understanding."
Not applicable (N/A)	The teacher does not clearly express their attitude toward students' home language use.	"I don't teach students with immigrant backgrounds."

Teachers' Focus During Collaborative Learning Tasks

In the initial reading, several responses were noted wherein teachers emphasized wanting to see students accomplishing the task regardless of what language they used; other teachers strongly argued for the use of the language of instruction. In addition, some teachers reported focusing on both task and language. These categories are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Categories illustrating teachers' focus during collaborative learning tasks

Category	Description	Example from the data
Task	The teacher is most interested in students being on task.	"I ask them if they are talking about the assignment."
Language of instruction	The teacher points out the importance of the language of instruction.	"I request that they change the language to Finnish."
Both task and linguistic resources	The teacher wants the students to work toward a learning goal using whatever language is suitable.	"I don't react. Students can, by all means, process the content to be learned with their own language and create output in Finnish."
N/A	The teacher does not clearly express whether they are more concerned about the task or the language used.	"It depends on the situation and the assignment."

Directions About Language Use During a Collaborative Learning Task

The kinds of directions teachers reported giving regarding students' language use during a collaborative learning situation was also coded. The responses varied, from the teacher's own understanding to emphasis on the task or the language of instruction. The categories and examples thereof are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Categories illustrating the teachers' directions about students' language use during a collaborative learning task

Categories	Description	Example from the data
Reporting to teachers in language of instruction	The teacher asks the pupils to tell them what they are doing in language of instruction. Focus is on the teacher's understanding.	"I ask them to use Finnish and tell me how their work is proceeding."
Supporting the inclusion of the language of instruction in the task	The teacher allows the use of all linguistic resources and provides guidance for the use of the language of instruction. Focus is on the task.	"I ask them to be brave and use Finnish, and on the challenging points, I tell them to use their own language."

Reporting on & supporting the inclusion of the language of instruction in the task	The teacher encourages students to report how their work is proceeding in the language of instruction and provides guidance for their use of the language of instruction in their work. The focus is on the teacher's understanding and the task.	"I ask what they were discussing, and if it is task-related, I help them to formulate their answer in Finnish."
Restricts usage to the language of instruction in the task	The teacher tells students to use only the language of instruction. Focus is on the language of instruction.	"I tell them to switch to English because we are having an English lesson."[2]
N/A	The teacher did not mention giving directions concerning language use.	"I let students continue their work."

Next, SPSS 25 was used for crosstabs and Chi square statistics to explore how significantly the teachers' background factors (teaching experience, area of professional expertise) were linked to their beliefs about students' use of home languages in the classroom. In addition, Cramér's V was used to determine the strength of the association of categorical variables: background factors, teachers' beliefs, whether the teacher focused on language or task, and what directions were given regarding language use.

Results

Beliefs related to students' use of home languages

The teachers' reported beliefs related to students' use of their home languages in a collaborative learning task were mainly neutral with 71% tolerating home languages (Table 4). However, almost one-fifth of the teachers (18%) expressed negative beliefs.

Table 4. Distribution of teachers' (N = 691) beliefs related to students' use of their home languages in a collaborative learning task

Beliefs	N	%
Encourage	48	7
Tolerate	490	71
Restrict	124	18
N/A	29	4
Total	691	100

Only 7% of the teachers' beliefs could be characterized as encouraging students' use of their

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[2] During language lessons, the language of instruction is sometimes the target language.

home languages, as can be seen in excerpts 1, 2, and 3 (the original examples in Finnish can be found in the Appendix).

1. *I ask [them] if they need help. I offer it. I make sure that the discussion is content-related and is related to the given assignment. I remind them that the time spent using their own language is their right to get to know the topics, but it is also trusting [them] to stay on topic.*

2. *I encourage [them], and I might ask them to write in both their home language and in Finnish. I want to learn new expressions myself, and these can be taught to other students in the class as well.*

3. *I ask if I can help with the assignment, and I encourage [students] to do the task by collaborating in their home language.*

These responses express open-mindedness towards the use of home languages in the classroom. The teachers described their own conduct as being in the service of the students (1, 2, 3) and ensuring that the students' intentions are in line with the task (1, 2). The teachers also expressed an understanding of the importance of home languages during collaboration (3).

The small number of responses in the category of *encourage* might be related to the fact that teachers' *tolerate* beliefs formed a continuum, thus only the clearest cases could be coded as *encourage*; this variance in responses is demonstrated in Figure 1. When the teachers neither strictly forbade home languages nor encouraged their use, the responses were coded as *tolerate*.

Figure 1. The continuum of tolerate responses
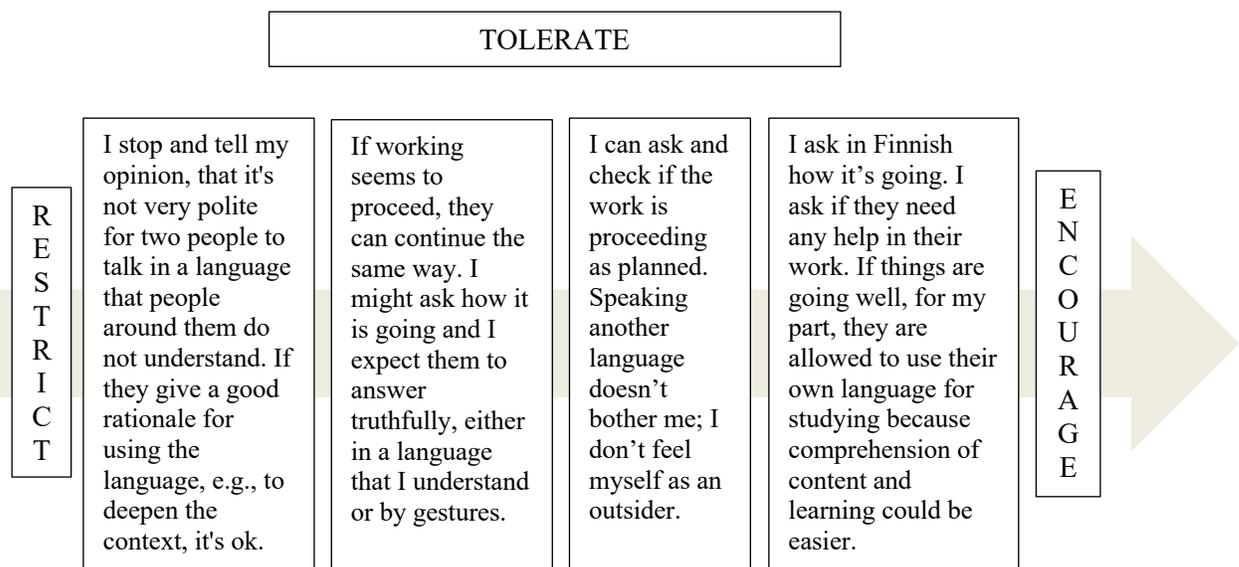
In both the *encourage* and *tolerate* categories, the teachers' responses included many expressions like "I ask if I can help". These teachers make themselves available, but they also trust their pupils' capacity to express or even assess their own needs. When moving from *encourage* toward *tolerate*, the expressed stance becomes conditional. There are many expressions like "if the work is proceeding", "if they give a good rationale", and "I might ask", reflecting the contextual nature of group work. When the students are working on the assignment, the use of home languages is tolerated but not encouraged.

As shown in Table 4, almost one-fifth of the teachers (18%) expressed negative beliefs related to the use of students' home languages in the classroom and reported preventing the use of languages other than the language of instruction. This can be seen in the following excerpts:

4. *I put my hands on my ears and pretend to be horrified and say, "Speak Finnish – PLEEEEZ," and I do this often (I'm a Finnish L2 teacher) without judging but humorously.*

5. *I remind [them] that we speak Finnish only here. If [they]still do not change the language, I will tell [them] how bad I and other pupils feel when we don't understand their talk.*

6. *Out of the class!*

7. *I ask [them] if they are talking about the assignment, and I ask [them] why it was necessary to talk in their own language. Then I guide them to use Finnish.*

These examples illustrate how the teachers who restrict the use of home languages treat it as an affective matter. They reported reprimanding (4–7), emotional reactions through embodied conduct (4), naming emotions (4, 5), and using harsh, authoritative directives (6). Many of the responses reflect a moral stance instead of a pedagogical justification. Furthermore, the teachers used authoritarian language reflecting necessity or demand. This authoritarian perspective reflects an orientation towards a monolingual school where only the language of instruction, which is often the majority language, is allowed.

Some of the responses in the *restrict* category included pedagogical rationale as a basis for the beliefs; for example, 4% of all participants considered the choice of language a classroom management issue (8) and mentioned that they never paired two learners with the same home language. Furthermore, 2% of the teachers believed that not using the language of instruction indicated not understanding the content of the assignment (9). There were also teachers who

reported beliefs about the use of home languages as being related to topics other than schoolwork, disturbing other students (10), or even violating the rules (8, 10).

8. *I point out that the rules of the class include speaking Finnish. If you cannot follow the class rules, the next stop is in the corridor. I would also send a parental note, and I would raise the issue in the work community if breaking the rules is continuous.*

9. *I check what they are talking about. If it is task-related, I might ask, "Do you need help?" If it is clearly something else that slows down or disrupts schoolwork, I would ask them to stop.*

10. *In such cases, the use of your own language is allowed; that is, unless it bothers others.*

Balancing the foci of language and task

One of the issues that the data-driven content analysis revealed was the different emphasis teachers placed on the context-dependent practices. As mentioned, the teachers indicated concern about either accomplishing the task or focusing on what language their students used. The distribution of the teachers' answers is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Distribution of teachers' (N = 691) focus on task, language, or task and linguistic resources during collaborative learning situations

Focus	N	%
Both task and linguistic resources	318	46
Task	223	32
Language of instruction	100	15
Not applicable	50	7
Total	691	100

These results show that almost half of the teachers (46%) considered task and linguistic resources equally important, meaning that they mentioned both the aim of accomplishing the task and the use of students' linguistic resources (11). Almost one-third of the teachers (32%) reported that their main focus in a collaborative learning situation was the task and that the students were actively working (12).

11. *I praise them for their hard work and ask if they need help. If they can work well in their own language and the output is generated in Finnish, then it does not bother me.*

12. *I look at what they have accomplished in their work.*

However, 15% of the teachers emphasized only the role of language (13). These responses often included the Finnish verb *pyytää* or the Swedish verb *be*, both of which can be translated as *ask* or *request*; its connotations are relatively positive, and its degree of obligation leaves room for the request to be declined (13).

13. *Because the students are in a Swedish-speaking school, it is important that the language during the lessons is Swedish. I would probably ask (Swedish: be) them to try to speak in Swedish instead.*

There was no mention of either language or task from 7% of the teachers: *"I smile"* or *"I don't have this kind of pupil."* Many of these responses indicated that teachers *"let the pupils be"*; based on the brevity of these responses, it was not possible to interpret the corresponding beliefs.

Significant correlations were found between the teachers' beliefs and their focus on task or language: The teachers who believed in tolerating the use of the home languages also emphasized the task or both the task and the linguistic resources ($r = 0.159, p < 0.001$).

Giving directions concerning language use

Next, the way the teachers reported giving directions about language use during a collaborative learning task was examined; Table 6 shows the distribution of the teachers' responses. Many of the teachers (39%) did not mention giving any directions regarding language use, rather they reported letting the students work without getting involved. Responses with no explicit mention of giving directions regarding language were categorized as *not applicable*.

Table 6. Distribution of teachers' directions regarding language use during a collaborative learning task from the largest percentiles to the smallest

Directions regarding language use	N	%
Report to teachers in the language of instruction	228	33
Support students' use of the language of instruction in the task	21	3
Report on & support students' use of language of instruction in the task	42	6
Restrict usage to language of instruction in the task	131	19
N/A	269	39
Total	691	100

Most of the preferred language practices (33%) were coded as *report to teachers in the language of instruction* and showed that the teachers wanted students to report on their work primarily in the language of instruction (14). However, almost one-fifth of the teachers emphasized *restricting usage to the language of instruction in the task*, reflecting monolingual practices

(15, 16). These responses often expressed reprimand with verbs such as *point out* (16, in Finnish *huomauttaa*) or *demand*, though sometimes the expressions were more reassuring using verbs such as *encourage* (15).

14. *I would maybe ask them to tell me some of their thoughts in Finnish.*

15. *I encourage them to switch to Finnish.*

16. *I point out that at school/in class we speak Finnish, and that they can quickly ask for help in their own language if they have to.*

A small percentage of the teachers (6%) answered that they would ask their students to report on their work in the language of instruction and pedagogically support their students' efforts, such as by helping them find accurate academic or subject-specific vocabulary (17). In addition, a few teachers (3%) reported providing support for students' use of the language of instruction but also tolerated the use of other languages (18).

17. *I try to help the pupils say it in Finnish, and in return I will also try to learn a new word in a foreign language.*

18. *I'll let them be. However, I encourage them to also build as much Finnish as possible into their output. It's the same in any language when you learn something, as long as you learn it. The Finnish language classes are the exception. [During them], it is easier to understand and accept the requirement [of Finnish only].*

A relationship was found between teachers' beliefs about the use of home languages and their given directions concerning language use (Table 7). Of the respondents who restricted the use of home languages, 82% were also coded as requiring students to continue collaborating in the language of instruction. In contrast, only 5% of those who tolerated the use of home languages required the use of the language of instruction. Those who wanted their students to report in the language of instruction were almost always coded as either tolerating or encouraging the use of home languages. This indicates that the teachers asking their students to include the language of instruction in their work did not necessarily reflect negative beliefs about the use of home languages, rather a desire to ensure that the teachers and students would understand each other (14) and make progress with their Finnish.

Table 7. Crosstabulation of teachers' beliefs and directions concerning language use during a collaborative learning task

	Report to teachers in language of instruction % (N)	Support students' inclusion of language of instruction in the task % (N)	Report in and support students' inclusion of language of instruction in the task % (N)	Restrict to the use of language of instruction in the task % (N)	N/A % (N)	Total % (N)
Restrict	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	82 (101)	17 (21)	100 (123)
Tolerate	43 (208)	3 (19)	6 (31)	5 (26)	42 (205)	100 (489)
Encourage	32 (16)	10 (5)	18 (9)	2 (1)	38 (19)	100 (50)
Not applicable	14 (4)	0 (0)	3 (1)	3 (1)	79 (23)	100 (29)
Total	33 (229)	4 (24)	6 (41)	19 (129)	39 (268)	100 (691)

Background factors

Next, background factors (area of professional expertise, teaching experience) were analyzed to discover whether they were related to teachers' beliefs about the role of language in a collaborative learning task, their focus on language or task, and their directions regarding language use.

Areas of professional expertise

Teachers' (specific) professional expertise was examined as a background factor to determine whether there were differences according to teachers' areas of specializations. First, the following teacher groups were compared: classroom teachers (grades 1–6), subject teachers (grades 7–12), special education teachers (grades 1–12), and school counselors, who also have teaching responsibilities in Finland (grades 7–12). Next, teacher groups based on subject were compared: Finnish as a first or second language, other languages, mathematics or theoretical subjects, and arts and crafts. There were no differences related to beliefs about students' use of home languages between the teacher groups in either of the two different groupings. However, with regard to whether teachers focused on task, language, or both during collaborative learning situations (Table 5), there were significant differences between some of the subject teacher groups ($X^2(9) = 23.3, p < 0.010$, Cramér's V = 0.15); only 18% of the language teachers focused on task, whereas 46% of the arts and crafts teachers focused on task over language. Moreover,

21% of the language teachers focused on language regardless of the task, while none of the arts and crafts teachers focused on language only. The teachers' directions regarding language use did not differ significantly between the groups.

Work experience

We examined teachers' general work experience as another possible factor that might have affected teachers' beliefs. The number of years of teaching had no significant effect on their beliefs, whether they focused on language or task, or the directions they gave regarding language use. Teachers' experience working with students with immigration background only influenced whether they focused on language or task ($X^2(18) = 21.7$, p = 0.245 (2 cells under 5), Cramér's V = 0.1). Of the teachers who had no experience working with students with immigration background, 23% reported focusing on task over language, whereas 40% of teachers who had 10–20 years of experience working with students with immigration background focused on task over language.

Discussion

Our aim was to examine Finnish teachers' (N = 691) beliefs related to the use of students' home languages for learning and whether these beliefs reflect the multilingual pedagogies (García & Hesson, 2015) required by the current Finnish core curricula. The qualitative analysis of an open-ended question consisted of three topics: 1) teachers' beliefs about the use of home languages in the classroom; 2) teachers' focus on language or task; and 3) teachers' directions to their students regarding language use during a collaborative learning task. In addition, possible links between teachers' background factors (teaching experience, area of professional expertise) and their beliefs about students' use of home languages were investigated.

The results showed that the majority of the respondents held neutral or positive beliefs about students' use of home languages and would tolerate the use of home languages or what can be seen as translanguaging during a collaborative task. Previous research has shown that when teachers encourage the use of home languages, immigrant students' identities and their sense of belonging at school are affirmed (Tarnanen et al., 2017), which engages the students more actively (Cummins et al., 2005; Paris, 2012; Taylor et al., 2008). Encouraging students to use their home languages also enables them to deepen their understanding of a topic more than if they are restricted to using only the language of instruction (Tharp et al., 2000). However, in our study, while the majority of the teachers surveyed would not stop discussions in home languages, they also did not actively provide opportunities for or explicitly encourage them.

When planning instruction, in particular collaborative tasks, the role of language must be considered; teachers can advocate for social interaction to support learning the language of instruction and/or enable learning content through peer support from students of the same home language (de Jong, 2011). It is essential that teachers make intentional pedagogic decisions that include ways to actively advocate for the use of home languages to promote the best academic outcomes for students with immigration background (see Cummins, 1979, 2007; Ganuza & Hedman, 2018; Goldenberg, 2008; Ovando & Combs, 2011; Ramirez, 1992; Slavin & Cheung, 2005). Thus, while the teachers surveyed tolerated translanguaging during collaborative learning situations, they did not intentionally plan or encourage it (see also Cenoz, 2017a; 2017b). This may reflect a lack of knowledge about how to implement effective multilingual pedagogical practices. Because educational policies can reduce social inequalities and provide equal learning opportunities to all (see also Borgna, 2017) encouraging learners to use their entire linguistic repertoires could positively influence their identities and learning outcomes.

Moreover, the use of one's home language has intrinsic value, which situates this topic within the perspective of linguistic human rights. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2001, 2017), human rights are actualized in education when students are encouraged to learn through both their home languages and the language of instruction. Accordingly, instead of implicit language rules, teachers should reflect on their beliefs regarding language values and openly discuss language use with both their students and the entire school community. Indeed, valuing all languages aligns with the Finnish curricula and the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe, 2010). However, our findings indicate that teachers' approach to language use is reactive rather than proactive: they accept the use of different languages but they do not encourage it or explain why it would be important to use home languages.

It is somewhat alarming that almost one-fifth of the participants reported that they would restrict the use of home languages in the classroom. Moreover, language was sometimes seen as a problem (see Ruiz, 1984) and related to off-task behavior (see Duarte, 2019), and some responses bound language choice with classroom management issues or transgression and indicated that the use of home languages may be penalized. These ideologies, which can be harmful to students' identities and learning outcomes (Cummins, 2001), echo outdated monolingual beliefs (see also Aronin & Singleton, 2019; Garley, 2019) or the unspoken rules of monolingual schools where languages other than the language of instruction offend discipline and order. This can be explained with the outdated idea that a language is learned only by using it as much as possible (see also Cummins, 2001), even though research has demonstrated the opposite (e.g., Ramirez, 1992; Thomas & Collier, 1997). Globally, there has been a long tradition of keeping languages separate in schools (Gorter & Cenoz, 2017). Findings concerning

the promotion of monolingual ideologies have also been reported in Finland (Tarnanen & Palviainen, 2019; Alisaari et al., 2019b): Although the curriculum requires and teachers claim to value diversity and multilingualism, the implementation of including home languages in classrooms is still rare. This finding is partly confirmed by our results.

This study also found differing views with regard to language goals or task accomplishment. The main focus seemed to be the task, though many teachers also emphasized the role of language, indicating the importance of both academic and linguistic development. It is important to note that pedagogical planning that integrates both task and language can respond to students' needs and nourish their linguistic development while challenging them academically, and such practices should be supported with pedagogical training. Only a few teachers emphasized the role of language at the expense of the task, indicating a view that language choice is essential, regardless of the outcome. However, many of these teachers were language teachers, which makes their emphasis on language clear. Furthermore, the teachers who considered home languages a resource for learning focused more on task completion than language. Thus, our findings indicate that for most of the teachers, their students' academic accomplishment was the primary focus.

Some of those teachers who restricted home languages feared that students used them to discuss topics other than schoolwork. However, as Duarte (2019) has shown, off-task discussion occurs as much in the language of instruction as it does in home languages; on- and off-task behaviors are similar regardless of students' language choices. Many of the teachers in this study responded that they would allow students to converse in their home language during a task, but they would make sure that the outcome of the task would be in the language of instruction. If students' skills in the language of instruction are still developing, discussing in their home language may deepen their understanding of a topic more than if they are restricted to using only the language of instruction (see, e.g., Collier, 1995; Swain, 1979).

The results of this study indicate that a teacher wanting students to report on their work in the language of instruction does not necessarily reflect negative beliefs about the use of home languages; based on teachers' responses, in many cases it appears to indicate a desire to ensure that students understand the content of the lesson. However, explicitly requiring the use of language of instruction might send implicit messages about the value of and appreciation for different languages. Students' achievements can be hindered if practices are implemented that do not support effective schooling for students with immigration background (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Thus, it is important for teachers to critically reflect on their language policies in order to promote effective schooling for all students.

In sum, though teachers might show a surface acceptance of students' home languages, a deeper look could reveal pedagogy that is still not optimal for students with immigration background by sending mixed signals about the value of their languages. Thus, when analyzing teachers' pedagogical practices, the analysis should not only examine teachers' beliefs related to the use of home languages, but also include whether they focus on task accomplishment or language choice and how they provide feedback regarding students' language use. A wider scope provides a deeper understanding of teachers' language-related beliefs and practices. Further, this wider scope provided us with one of the important findings, namely that teachers tend to be passive in their stances regarding language use. There is a need for teachers to take a more proactive stance about the importance of the use of home languages both for the deepening of conceptual development as well as for the affective benefits. Our study indicated that teachers need more support in doing this work, for example professional learning opportunities or a school culture that supports them in becoming active advocates for the use of entire linguistic resources of their students.

Moreover, collaborative learning is more beneficial if teachers facilitate students' discussions (Teemant & Hausman, 2013). Teachers can support conceptual development by providing lexicon and concepts and support knowledge construction by guiding students deeper into their discussions (Tharp et al., 2000). However, explicit support was mainly absent from the teachers' responses in this study; very few teachers reported that they would guide the development of the language of instruction, for example by providing vocabulary. Indeed, many of the teachers reported that they would not support their pupils' work in any way, they would just *"let the students be"*. This lack of support does not optimally benefit learners' development (see, e.g., Tharp et al., 2000), even though the approach includes allowing the use of home languages. However, the tendency to not interfere with students' work might be related to the idea of negative face (see e.g., Brown, 2015; Brown & Levinson, 1986); in the Finnish cultural context, when students work individually, teacher interference can be considered an infringement on their independence. Since supporting was not explicitly asked about, we cannot make any solid claims about this issue based on our data, and further studies on this topic may be needed.

Next, we compared background factors of the different teacher groups. With regard to teachers' professional expertise, the subjects taught by the secondary school teachers were related to whether they focused on task or language. We found that language teachers focused on language choice more than task accomplishment, while arts and crafts teachers focused on students completing the task. Even though it might be expected that language teachers naturally focus on language, it is important to note that home languages can be used as a resource for

learning additional languages as well; for example, learning vocabulary in a new language is easier when the concepts are known in the home language.

Teachers' general work experience did not significantly affect their reported beliefs about the use of home languages or whether they focused on language or task. However, the amount of experience teachers had working with students with immigration background did influence their preferences; those with more experience in this area focused on task over language more often than teachers with less experience.

Teachers' general beliefs related to the students' use of their home languages were mainly positive, but their reported classroom practices were more reflective of monolingual ideologies. Furthermore, the teachers whose beliefs were coded as *restrict* held rigid opinions. This might be due to multilingual pedagogies being challenging for many teachers, as the Finnish school system has promoted monolingual ideologies until only recently (Alisaari et al., 2019b). Our findings suggest that teachers should encourage multilingual practices and help students understand how the use of their full linguistic repertoire will benefit them in both school and the wider community. Concrete training in and modelling of multilingual pedagogies is needed (see e.g., Catalano et al., 2019) to help teachers understand the importance of such practices. Developing teacher education to include linguistically responsive pedagogy that advocates for multilingualism and reflects the realities of the classroom in every teacher's basic training could ensure better learning for all students.

It should be considered that only teachers' written responses were analyzed in this study, and their practices were not observed. However, the categories, which were based on the first 100 responses, sufficiently accounted for all of the responses and for the analysis of the entire data of the study, and they are indicative of cultural perceptions held by teachers in the Finnish context. Our analysis was data-driven and revealed topics that were not predetermined by the authors. In this way, new information about teachers' beliefs about home language use was generated. Future studies could focus on actual classroom practices and combine observations with interviews of students and teachers in order to gain a deeper understanding concerning home language use in the classroom.

Conclusion

Currently, language policies for education are changing in many countries with a shift towards encouraging teachers to include students' home languages as a resource for learning. In Finland, the curricula for basic and upper secondary education support multilingual practices (National Agency of Education, 2014, 2015), and thus, teachers have a unique opportunity to implement

practices that increase academic success for all learners. The results of this study indicate, nevertheless, that even in a country where educational policies are highly progressive, policy-level change is not enough. While most of the teachers reported having positive beliefs about multilingualism, few of them actively encouraged the use of different languages, which would align with the ideologies reflected in both the national curricula and theories of translanguaging (García & Hesson, 2015). The findings indicate that teachers, especially those with less experience with students with immigration background, would benefit from time to reflect on both the curriculum and their beliefs and practices, additional resources to develop their work, and more theoretical and practical professional development for using multilingual pedagogies in their classrooms (see Kirsch et al., 2020 for the possibilities of professional development influencing teachers' beliefs). The finding that most teachers indicated that they would allow the use of home languages in the classroom suggests that through critical reflection they could likely adopt a more proactive stance, especially if given opportunities to develop deeper understandings about and classroom practices for multilingual pedagogies.

The findings suggest that transferring pedagogical recommendations at the policy level to teachers' practical competences does not happen automatically. This is something that needs to be taken into account in developing professional learning for both pre- and in-service teachers. If we want linguistically responsive pedagogy to go beyond rhetoric and platitudes to change-making pedagogical practices at the grass-roots level, attention should be given to helping teachers understand the rationale for a translanguaging pedagogy, as well as specific steps they can take in their classrooms to create both the climate and the practices that can maximize students' academic and affective outcomes. This professional learning should extend to helping teachers to intentionally use translanguaging pedagogies in their classrooms. This would include how students' languages can be used as a resource for learning in order to make sound, multilingual pedagogical decisions and classroom language policies. One way to do this is to discuss about them with the students, for example pointing out the ways they can use their entire linguistic repertoire in their learning. These policies must be based not only on the national core curricula but also on the teachers' reflections on the value of languages. Most importantly, teachers need to build trust in the classroom that their students are indeed using their languages for learning even when the teachers cannot understand their languages (see also Duarte, 2019). Through teacher training or professional development, teachers can become more comfortable with the fact that "mixing languages is a legitimate act that does not result in penalties but rather is an effective means of expressing and communicating ideas that cannot be transmitted in one language" (Shohamy, 2011, p. 427).

Whether or not teachers are proactive in their promotion of linguistically responsive pedagogy can be reflected in the ways they guide their students' language use during lessons. The findings also suggest that further investigation could reveal any relationships that might exist between teachers' beliefs and their focus on task completion vs the languages students use to do so. It makes a difference for students' identity and their sense of belonging whether teachers' pedagogy reflects encouragement for the use of home languages rather than pedagogy wherein the languages are only tolerated. Policies that appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity positively impact the sense of belonging for students with immigration background (Celeste et al. 2019; Picton & Banfield, 2020; Yeasmin & Uusiautti, 2018). One way for schools to reduce ethnic inequalities (Borgna, 2017) is to develop these kinds of policies and practices: Intentionally encouraging students to use their entire linguistic repertoires for learning would benefit all learners and engage them more actively in school practices (Cummins et al., 2005; Paris, 2012; Taylor et al., 2008).

While this study was conducted in the Finnish context, it does have implications for other educational contexts that are grappling with increased linguistic diversity among their student populations. Finnish teacher education is theory- and research-based, and all teachers are trained to critically reflect on their work and conduct research. Nevertheless, even though the teacher education is recognized for its high quality, and educational policies advocate for a linguistically responsive pedagogy, classroom practices do not yet fully reflect these practices. Thus, it is important to support teachers' pedagogical development more thoroughly in all educational contexts – particularly when significant changes are made in national educational policies. When teachers succeed pedagogically, both they and their students thrive. In other words, offering pedagogical support for teachers benefits everyone in the school context. For teachers to be able to take more active stances towards their students' home language use and change their pedagogies in this matter, they need to get enough support and possibilities for professional learning (Soini et al., 2016). Pedagogy is always related to teachers' personality (van Manen, 2015), and thus, changes in pedagogy require changes in teachers' identities (Kyckling et al., 2019), which is not always easy nor without pain (hooks, 1994).

Acknowledgments

(OAJ) and the Association of Finnish Language Teachers for advertising the survey; and Eero Laakkonen for the help in statistical analyses. Additionally, we are deeply grateful to the anonymous reviewers of this article and for Professor Emerita Nancy Commins for their valuable suggestions for revising the manuscript.

Funding

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Appendix

The original examples of teachers' responses in Finnish:

1. Kysyn tarvitsevatko he apua, tarjoan sitä. Varmistan, että keskustelu liittyy opiskeltavaan asiaan, annettuun tehtävään. Muistutan heitä, että omakielinen hetki on heidän oikeutensa saadakseen asioita selväksi, mutta se on myös luottamusta asiassa pysymiseen.

2. Kannustan ja saatan pyytää heitä kirjoittamaan vastauksen sekä omalla, että suomen kielellä. Haluan itsekin oppia uusia ilmaisuja ja ne voidaan opettaa muillekin luokassa.

3. Kysyn, voinko auttaa tehtävässä, ja rohkaisen tekemään tehtävässä yhteistyötä omalla kielellä.

4. Laitan kädet korvilleni ja esitän kauhistunutta ja sanon "Puhukaa suomea pliiiiiis!!!". Teen tätä usein (olen s2-opettaja), mutta ei ikinä arvostelevalla tavalla vaan hauskan kautta.

5. Muistutan siitä, että täällä puhutaan ainoastaan suomen kieltä. Jos eivät vieläkään vaihda kieltä, kerron, kuinka pahalta tuntuu minusta ja muista oppilaista kun emme ymmärrä heidän puhettaan.

6. Ulos luokasta!

7. Kysyn oliko puhe tehtävästä ja kysyn miksi oli tarpeen puhua omalla kielellä. Sitten ohjaan käyttämään suomea.

8. Totean, että luokan sääntöihin kuuluu suomen puhuminen. Jos luokassa ei osaa olla sääntöjen mukaan, on seuraava pysäkki käytävässä. Laittaisin myös noottia kotiin ja nostaa asian esille työyhteisössä, mikäli sääntörikkomus alkaa olla toistuvaa laatua.

9. Seurailen, mistä he mahtavat keskustella. Jos se liittyy työhön, saattaisin kysyä, tarvitsetteko apua. Jos se on selvästi jotain muuta ja hidastaa tai häiritsee koulutyötä, pyytäisin lopettamaan.

10. Tällaisissa tapauksissa oman kielen käyttö sallitaan eli ellei se häiritse muita.

11. Kehun heitä ahkerasta työskentelystä ja kysyn, tarvitsevatko he apua. Jos työskentely onnistuu omallakin kielellä eli syntyy tuotosta myös suomeksi, niin minua se ei haittaa.

12. Katson mitä he ovat saaneet työssään aikaan.

13. För att eleverna befinner sig i en svenskspråkig skola, är det viktigt att lektionsspråket är svenska. Jag skulle troligtvis be dem att försöka diskutera på svenska istället.

14. Pyytäisin ehkä sanomaan jotain ajatuksistaan myös suomeksi.

15. Kehotan vaihtamaan suomen kieleen

16. Huomautan, että koulussa/luokassa puhutaan suomea, ja että nopeasti vain voi kysyä apua omalla kielellä, mikäli on pakko.

17. Yritän auttaa tyttöjä sanoittamaan asiaa suomeksi ja vastavuoroisesti yritän opetella jonkin uuden sanan minäkin vieraasta kielestä.

18. Annan heidän olla. Rohkaisen kuitenkin purkamaan tuotokset myös suomeksi niin paljon kuin mahdollista. On aivan sama millä kielellä jonkin asian oppii, kunhan oppii. Suomen kielen tunnit ovat pieni poikkeus. Silloin vaatimusta on helpompi ymmärtää ja hyväksyä.