

## Teachers' perspectives on multilingual classrooms: a cross-cultural investigation

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As an increasing number of multilingual children are enrolled in European schools, it is important to gain insight in the perspectives of teachers on multilingualism. Previous research has shown mixed results across different countries, with Flemish secondary school teachers in Belgium having strongly negative attitudes towards multilingualism (Pulinx et al., 2015) and teachers in Germany being considerably less negative (Rinker & Ekinci, in prep). This study investigates the attitudes of primary school teachers in Italy, Greece and the Netherlands, by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Using an online questionnaire based on Pulinx et al. (2015), we assess teachers' attitudes towards multilingualism in the classroom and their adherence to monolingual ideals. We investigate the potential effects of country, age, teaching experience, proportion of multilingual students, city size, training on multilingualism and whether teachers are bilingual themselves or not. We also investigate teachers' self-efficacy and to what extent the social status of the native languages of students may play a role. In total, we obtained 456 responses: 166 in Greece, 158 in Italy and 132 in the Netherlands. The results suggest that teachers in Greece are more positive towards multilingualism than teachers in Italy and the Netherlands ( $p < .001$ ). Moreover, in the Netherlands, the proportion of multilingual students is positively related to teachers' positive attitudes ( $p = .001$ ), and there is a positive effect of multilingualism training on teachers' attitudes in all three countries ( $p = .028$ ). We discuss the implications of these findings for educational language policy, highlighting the importance of providing teachers with training on multilingualism.

### References

- Pulinx, R., Van Avermaet, P., & Agirdag, O. (2017). Silencing linguistic diversity: The extent, the determinants and consequences of the monolingual beliefs of Flemish teachers. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 20(5), 542-556.
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