

Addressing linguistic equality and educational justice in two teacher education programs: voices from pre-service French and Geography teachers in Germany

Lisa Marie Brinkmann, Franziska Gerwers, Neli Heidari, Sílvia Melo-Pfeifer, Sandra Sprenger

Universität Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany

Research Domains

Learning, teaching and assessment (LTA)

Abstract

We analyse how pre-service teachers of two different school subjects - French as a foreign language and Geography - reacted and evaluated the introduction of a module on service learning, addressing the interconnection of linguistic equality and educational justice. We first present the module “Linguistic equality as a basis for social and educational justice”, which delved into the relationship between linguistic (in)equalities and social and educational justice. We then describe its integration in two teacher education programs, at a German university, in Summer Semester 2024. More specifically, we describe the implementation setting, the tasks assigned to the pre-service teachers, the projects they developed, and their assessment of the integration of the module in their teaching education. This study allows us to understand how pre-service teachers in the two cohorts foresee their role as teachers supporting linguistic equality to address cognitive and educational justice at school.

Full paper

Service learning has been acknowledged as an important approach to develop student teachers’ awareness of contemporary issues connected to social justice, inequalities in social participation and other issues potentially related to multilingualism in society (Porto, 2023). In this presentation, we analyse how pre-service teachers of two different school subjects - French as a foreign language and Geography - reacted and evaluated the introduction of a module on service learning, addressing the interconnection of linguistic equality and educational justice. For developing their awareness of the connections between multilingualism and social and cognitive justice, the authors of this presentation created the teaching module “Linguistic equality as a basis for social and educational justice”, which delves into the relationship between linguistic (in)equalities and social and educational justice. During the completion of the module, students are called: i) to understand the concepts of linguistic equality, social justice, and educational justice; ii) to critically analyse concrete classroom situations and educational contexts in which linguistic inequality has caused school and social injustices; and iii) to develop knowledge on forms of resistance against linguistic injustices at school and in the classroom, namely culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies.

During Summer Semester 2024, at the Hamburg University (Germany), the module was implemented in two teacher education programs. At the Bachelor level, it was integrated in “Introduction to Geography Education”, with 40 students; at the Master level, it was introduced in a seminar aiming at

accompanying French student teachers' first internship at school, with 15 students. In the first setting, after the completion of the module, students were called to develop collaborative concrete teaching methods, designed to enhance teacher agency regarding handling linguistic diversity and preparing them to address stigmatization and bias in the Geography classroom. In the second setting, students were called to develop short-term research projects to diagnose and critically analyse instances of linguistic (in)equality, at the micro (the French classroom), meso (the school) or macro (the school community) levels. In both cases, following principles of professional identity development by designing and implementing research projects, students constructed their own collaborative projects, focusing on issues they previously negotiated and discussed in small groups. By leaving free space for designing and implementing projects, the teachers in the two settings wanted to leave space for the co-construction of formative and intersubjective paths, based on locally identified instances of linguistic inequalities, instead of reproducing knowledge in a transmissive way.

This study allows us to understand how pre-service teachers in the two cohorts foresee their role as teachers supporting linguistic equality to address cognitive and educational justice at school. Specifically, it supports the idea that issues of linguistic inequalities should not be limited to teaching programs dealing with language school subjects only. Instead, the integration of the module "Linguistic equality as a basis for social and educational justice" in Geography and French teacher education programmes shows the interest of making student teachers from different school subjects aware of the multilingual dimension of teaching and learning in superdiverse societies, such as Hamburg. It also highlights the fact that, due to a longstanding monolingual mindset in education (Gogolin, 1994), student teachers might have difficulties in understanding the added-value of implementing culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies and assessment practices. The conceptualisation and implementation of collaborative research projects at school around identifying and addressing issues of linguistic inequality opened opportunities for identity and professional development anchored in the critical observation of school happenings, reducing the gap between theory and local teaching practices.

References

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