The use of languages in secondary and higher education: teachers' beliefs and practices

Executive Summary

This report, part of the PEP (Promoting Plurilingual Education) project, presents the results of an exploratory study on a non-statistical sample gathered on a voluntary basis drawing on a survey about beliefs and practices of language teachers in secondary and higher education concerning plurilingualism. Conducted across Europe, the study aimed to:

1. Examine teachers' perceptions and self-reported practices related to plurilingual education.
2. Identify challenges and strategies for integrating plurilingual approaches in teaching and assessment.
3. Provide recommendations for training and resources to support plurilingual education.

Survey Highlights

- Participants: 800 educators from diverse European countries participated, providing insights into their beliefs, classroom practices, and needs for implementing plurilingual approaches.
- Period of the survey: Data was collected online between May 28th and July 7th, 2024, using LimeSurvey.
- Design: The survey featured closed and open-ended questions, covering themes such as European plurilingual policies, teacher beliefs, classroom practices, and demographics.
- Data Analysis: Data treatment was conducted using SPSS software (version 29.0.2.0).

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Key Findings

- Teachers emphasize the cultural and societal benefits of plurilingualism, including intercultural dialogue, linguistic diversity, and social inclusion.
- Classroom practices often incorporate multiple languages for fostering comprehension, emotional engagement, and metalinguistic awareness.
- Plurilingual assessment practices remain limited, indicating a need for alignment between teaching and evaluation.
- Teachers report significant challenges in the implementation of plurilingual practices, including insufficient institutional support, resources, specific training, and time.

Recommendations

- Design targeted in-service and pre-service professional development programs focusing on plurilingual education.
- Enhance inter- and intra-institutional support and curricular frameworks to integrate plurilingual practices systematically.
- Promote policy alignment by valuing linguistic diversity and providing a coherent, open, and sustainable framework for implementing plurilingual practices throughout the educational path.

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