

Teacher and Student Perspectives on the Use of Linguistic Landscapes as Pedagogic Resources for Enhancing Language Awareness: A Focus on the Development of Cognitive and Affective Dimensions



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Abstract In this contribution, we compare teachers' and students' perspectives on the use of linguistic landscapes (LLs) as resources for language education in general, and for the development of language awareness in particular. As non-participant observers, we analyse how two French-language teachers integrate LL modules at the secondary level in two different classes in Germany (one in an urban centre, the other in a peri-urban location) and compare teacher and student perspectives on the advantages of that integration. In order to carry out this comparative study, we performed in-depth semi-structured interviews with the two teachers, constructed a questionnaire for students, and complemented teacher and student answers with our thick description of classroom happenings. This study illustrates the pedagogical potential of using LLs in formal language education settings, namely to develop the affective and cognitive dimensions of language awareness. The positive effects seem to be valid for both students with and without migrant background, as well as for both those living in urban and non-urban settings. The study also shows how students and teachers scaffold each other on their path towards a more reflective relationship with societal multilingualism and individual plurilingualism.

Keywords Language awareness · Affective and cognitive dimensions · Formal language learning · French classroom

1 Introduction

The use of Linguistic Landscapes (LLs) as resources for the classroom can be seen as part of the growing “visual turn” (Kalaja & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2018; see the introduction to this volume) in education and studies on multimodal translanguaging (see

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S. Melo-Pfeifer (ed.), *Linguistic Landscapes in Language and Teacher Education*,
Multilingual Education 43, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-22867-4_10

Seals, in this book). They can also be understood in more traditional terms, as means for conveying authenticity to classroom activities, thus bridging the gap between in and out of the classroom. According to Pasewalck (2018), LLs are particularly suitable to promote student criticality and reflexivity, through projects based on creative and discovery tasks.

As signs constructing and indexing social, cultural, material, and ideological contexts (Blommaert, 2013), languages in students' LLs are indeed of high interest and pedagogical value for language awareness (LA) research, as they could be used to question power dynamics across languages and communities, attitudes, and norms surrounding linguistic use (Hatoss, 2018). In the field of foreign language education and teacher training, the use of LL is still under-researched, both in terms of practices and representations (Badstübner-Kizik & Janíková, 2018; Pasewalck, 2018). In terms of practices, some accounts have shown that LL can promote language and critical awareness (Brinkmann et al., 2022; Clemente et al., 2012; Dagenais et al., 2009; Tjandra, 2021). The available literature also reveals language teachers' positive attitudes regarding the integration of LLs in the classroom, both for enhancing target language learning and for developing students' plurilingual competence (Brinkmann et al., 2021), while others focus on how students react, usually positively, to LL integration in classroom activities (Roos & Nicholas, 2019).

In this chapter, we focus on the potential of integrating LLs as resources in the foreign language classroom to develop students' LA, analysed under five dimensions. More particularly, following a previous study which focused on the power, performance and social dimensions of LA (Brinkmann et al., 2022), we now analyse the outcomes of classroom activities around the collaborative description and analysis of LLs in terms of the affective and cognitive dimensions of LA. Our research questions are: "How do teachers and students assess the use of LLs as multilingual resources in the foreign language classroom?" and "What evidence of the development of the cognitive and affective dimensions of LA can be reconstructed from the multi-method approach adopted?". We begin by discussing the concept of LA and its five dimensions, before describing the literature analysing the impact of pedagogical work with LLs on students' LA. Subsequently, we present the methodological design of the empirical study, describing the implementation settings, participants, tasks, and instruments for data collection. We then move on to present the data analysis, commenting on the major findings.

2 The Development of Language Awareness and Critical Language Awareness Through the Use of Linguistic Landscapes in Education

From its inception in the early 1980s, language awareness (LA) was a concept framing multilingual education (James, 1999). However, it did not, initially, envision foreign language education from a holistic perspective, as the pedagogies for

language education at the time were kept separate (namely the mother tongue and the foreign languages). LA was born from the acknowledgement that the lack of literacy in the first language is related to a lack of proficiency in foreign languages. Through the introduction of the concept, James (1999) makes it clear that languages cannot be reduced to linguistic features and grammar. Through its lifetime, the term LA became a “cover term for almost everything to do with language” (Donmall, 1992, p. 1), being used to describe, research and interpret a very diverse setting of contexts and actors that are somehow connected to language learning, teaching and use (see the heterogeneity of contributions in Garrett & Cots 2013). Over time, language awareness became a *Leitmotiv* in language education, integrated in many national and regional curricula (Schmenk et al., 2019). For the purposes of this paper, we will adopt the definition by the Association for Language Awareness (n.d.), which defines LA as “explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use”. According to James and Garrett (2014), developing LA would entail the development of five interconnected dimensions:

- cognitive dimension: knowledge about language in general, its functions and fields of application as well as metalinguistic skills. This dimension, which is related to explicit knowledge about language and focus on form is very present in literature on foreign language learning;
- affective dimension: development of curiosity and positive attitudes towards and motivation to learn languages;
- social dimension: awareness of the importance of language and different cultures in society, to foster good social relations in diverse contexts;
- performance dimension: reflection on language learning processes and on their interfaces with LA, meaning the interrelation between declarative knowledge about languages and its procedural use;
- power dimension: awareness of the power (relations) of languages in terms of ideologies and their impact in subjects’ lives; this dimension is closely related to critical LA, which will be addressed below.

Following the prodigality of the concept and its effervescence in the literature (which always entails some “conceptual straining” and stretching, according to Sartori, 1970), James (1999) introduced the distinction between LA and “consciousness raising”. The first, he claims, refers to “having or gaining explicit knowledge about and skill in reflecting on and talking about one’s own language(s), over which one hitherto has had a degree of control and about which one has also a related set of intuitions” (p. 102). The second concept refers rather to “becoming able to locate and identify the discrepancies between one’s present state of knowledge or control and a goal state of knowledge or control” (James, 1999, p. 103). The first thus relates to explicit and declarative knowledge about languages, displayed for example through the use of specific metalanguage; the second engages with closing the gap between real and intended goals and being able to notice linguistic phenomena that are still unknown to the learner. As we will see in the empirical study, both concepts, which we see as extremely entangled, can be served by the introduction of LLs as

pedagogical resources: declarative knowledge about languages and metalanguage can be used during noticing experiences that can be initiated either by teachers or by students themselves.

Recent developments (Hélot et al., 2018) acknowledge the need to highlight LA's critical dimension, echoing Fairclough's (1992) call to pay more attention "to important social aspects of language, specially aspects of the relationship between language and power, which ought to be highlighted in language education" (p. 1). This implies the need to pay attention to the role languages play in contemporary social life, as "the development of a critical awareness of the world, and of the possibilities for changing it, ought to be the main objective of all education, including language education" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 7).

Following this reasoning, we can understand how working with LLs in the foreign language classroom might contribute to the development of students' critical LA.¹ As the results of empirical studies acknowledge, working with LLs as pedagogical resources does not merely mean identifying and documenting the presence of different languages in the landscape, as if these were objects to be named, counted, and described. In fact, the presence of languages in the LL is not to be taken at face value, but as an indexicalisation of societal, political and ideological values and positionalities. Languages might be or become signs of empowerment and disempowerment, of ethno-linguistic visibility or invisibility, of processes of creating linguistic minorities and majorities, of legitimation or illegitimation of linguistic diversity and practices in given sociohistorical spaces and contexts. Introducing LLs in language education is thus a strategy towards the development of such critical LA. According to Hélot et al. (2012):

learning to read the LL can be used as a means to understand power relationships between languages and literacies within society and to drive the attention of teachers who will necessarily operate in multilingual and multicultural schools not only to the material world of signs, but also to the symbolic meaning communicated by them (p. 22).

In the following, we review the studies found to connect the use of LLs to the development of (critical) LA, focusing on their outcomes. As we can see from these studies, LLs can be integrated into the curriculum to foster LA in a variety of contexts (from primary to higher education), and with a variety of pedagogical designs (from indoor to outdoor contexts or mixing both) or classroom settings (foreign language classroom or interdisciplinary content building).

Dagenais et al. (2009) investigate how the use of LLs can contribute to the development of students' linguistic awareness through pedagogical work in the classroom. Dagenais et al. (2013) and Caillis-Monnet (2013) proposed the didactisation and curricularisation of LLs. Working in immersive settings in Canada, Dagenais et al. (2013) use LL in order to develop: (i) an ecological perspective of languages from the individual and family level to the community, national and global level; (ii) a valuing awareness of individual plurilingual repertoires and social multilingual resources; (iii) synergies between curricular languages, namely the languages of instruction

¹ For a description of how LLs have been introduced in language education settings, particularly in terms of linguistic *foci* and indoor or outdoor learning, see Brinkmann et al. (2022).

and foreign languages, and the other languages of students' plurilingual repertoires and the social fabric.

Clemente et al. (2012), in a predominantly monolingual community in Portugal, attempted "to increase knowledge of endangered languages and cultures, to promote the discovery of hidden and distant LL" (p. 268), by engaging a first year Primary School classroom in meaningful discovering and interpreting activities around the idea of endangered world landscapes. Another main feature of this project was that activities were embedded in an interdisciplinary holistic approach to teaching and learning, leading to the development of a "continuum of literacies" (Clemente et al., 2012, p. 273), ranging from reading and writing in several languages, to technological, artistic or environmental literacies. In the project conclusion, the authors recognise children's ability to perceive and understand the connection between human activity (namely languaging) and natural phenomena, also fostering the comprehension of diversity as a common feature of the world (and not as an exception).

More recently, Elola and Prada (2020) acknowledge, in their study on the use of LLs in Spanish classes in the state of Texas, U.S.A., based on an immersive "action-research" approach, that "LL-based pedagogies may provide students with a toolkit to enhance their sociolinguistic awareness, develop a critical perspective on local/community languages in their area, and how these languages coexist alongside official/majority languages" (p. 223). In terms of LA, students could reflect on moments of flexible language choice, relativising notions of linguistic purity and norm, hybridity, and the native speaker.

Within the context of classes to welcome migrant and refugee children in Canada, Tjandra (2021) worked with pupils on their analysis and interpretation of the LL they newly inhabited. The author analyses how certain activities anchored on the analysis of these landscapes influence learners' linguistic awareness and language learning, through authentic and situated scaffolding, and their sense of belonging to a new social space. In the context of the advantages of using linguistic and semiotic landscapes in language teaching, we consider, with Tjandra (2021), that "the functions of LL not only provide pedagogical benefits but also facilitate one's awareness regarding power issues related to languages and how its representation or lack of representation may affect one's sense of identity and belonging" (p. 3).

Finally, in a study by Brinkmann et al. (2022), the authors also adopt a critical perspective on the use of LLs for language education, in Germany and the Netherlands. Analysing how the use of LLs as resources for the French and Frisian classroom, respectively, can enhance LA, the authors conclude on their positive effects on the social, power, and performance dimensions of LA. The authors (2022) state that "the pedagogical introduction of LLs in the (language) classroom enabled plurilingual students' repertoires to be activated, be legitimized, shared, and (re)constructed by means of engagement in plurilingual practices" (p. 107), with positive outcomes for students having grown both monolingually or bilingually.

As we saw from this review of the state of the art, all dimensions of LA are implicitly or explicitly addressed in studies dealing with the pedagogical use of LL for language education purposes. What all these studies have in common is the

explicit reflection in which students and teachers collaboratively engage, using the linguistic and semiotic clues present in the LL as prompts for reflecting about the roles and status of languages in the daily life of societies and individual persons. With more or less scaffolding provided by the teachers, students recognise and interpret the sociolinguistic realities they inhabit and notice patterns of language use and abuse in the LL. Having said this, and recalling James' (1999) dichotomy, LLs are used both to develop LA and to raise consciousness of how languages around us (re)produce and fashion linguistic ideologies and (dis)orders and also to foster students' contact with (still) unknown languages.

3 Empirical Research

This empirical study adopts a multi-method approach that aims to compare the perspectives of teachers and students on the implementation of LL-based approaches in the French (as a foreign language) classroom. We used interviews to explore the teacher perspectives; questionnaires and individual reflections were collected to explore student perspectives; through classroom observations, the interplay of students and teachers could be explored.

3.1 *Design of the Study: Context and Participants*

We conducted the empirical study in the French classroom in March 2021 in one school in Hamburg and one school in the city periphery. At that time, the covid-19 pandemic situation allowed for face-to-face teaching with half of the class on one day and half of the class on another day. The linguistic context is slightly different between the two locations,² although both schools have plurilingual students.

Data was gathered on one lesson in four classes, but only three were observed directly, with two different teachers (for details see Table 1). The aim of the lesson was to raise students' LA. A dynamic presentation (using the software Prezi), co-developed by the teachers and the researchers, served as material and structured the classroom activities. In the presentation, a young character presents her hometown Hamburg in French and describes her day. The description focuses on what she sees and thinks at the places she goes to; these parts of the story are illustrated with photos (Figs. 1 and 2). After reading and visually perceiving the presentation, the students discuss together with the teacher questions about the text and further ideas on language(s), cities and LLs.

² The school in Hamburg is located in a neighbourhood with 18.7% migration background (Statistisches Amt für Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein 2020), whereas the school in the periphery is located in a region with 12.2% migration background (Landesamt für Statistik Niedersachsen 2014).

46 Students, aged 11 and 12, (four classes, from two different schools) and two teachers participated in the study, as represented in Table 1.

3.2 *Data Gathering Instruments and Data Analysis*

The same methodological procedures were used to collect data in both research settings, following a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative data (see Brinkmann et al., 2022 for multisite research design). The following four data gathering methods were used in the four settings (except in S2 where no human resources were available for classroom observation):

- Classroom observation: The complete lesson of 90 min (S3, S4) and 45 min (S1) was observed by at least one researcher as non-participant observer sitting next to the teacher. The transcription was done directly (no recordings were allowed) through a pre-categorized observation table. The observation table is divided into macro-(the number of students, etc.), meso-(task instruction, etc.), micro-observations (student and teacher statements, etc.), and a reflection on micro-, meso- and macro-levels that includes observations and comments by the teacher after the class. Furthermore, the micro-observations were categorized according to the five language awareness dimensions developed by James and Garret (2014);
- Teacher interviews: an in-depth semi-structured interview was led by one of the researchers with each teacher; one with a duration of 24 min and the other 43 min. The interview structure focused on the teacher's perspective on the lesson, on the students' engagement to the class, and the achievement of the lesson aims.
- Student questionnaires: 44 students replied to the questionnaire in all settings (data for S1 and S2 (i.e., the school in Hamburg) were collected on the same day, whereas data for S3 and S4 (i.e., the school in the periphery) were collected on another). Using a five point Likert-scale, the questionnaire contains 18 items on the cognitive (5), social (2) and affective (4) dimensions of language awareness, the methods used (6) and one free item for additional impressions (1) (Prompt: "Do you have any other comments on how the presentation affected you? If so, please enter them here."). Finally, the questionnaire included one free text field: "Summarise in a language (or languages) of your choice what you have learned in class."
- Student reflections: After completing the questionnaire, the students were asked to write a reflection as homework. The task description was: "You write an e-mail to a student in the parallel Spanish class. You explain what you did in French class today. You describe what you have read and what pictures you looked at. You say what you thought and what you learned. (30–50 words in your chosen language(s))."

The data was analysed in two steps and in terms of the cognitive and affective dimensions of language awareness in turn. The quantitative data from the items of the questionnaire will be presented first, and then completed by qualitative data from the

classroom observations, teacher interviews, student reflections and student comments in the free text field from the questionnaire. This means that, after a quantitative and descriptive data presentation, a second step is based on the discourse and/or interaction analysis of selected excerpts of classroom interaction, teacher interviews or student reflections. The structure of the data analysis is divided into the two contexts Hamburg and periphery, as well as into teacher and student perspectives. Since the teachers each used the same material in both classes, the results will be presented together always indicating the setting for the qualitative data.

4 Results

The results are divided into two categories: the cognitive and the affective dimension of LA. To recall, we understand the cognitive dimension as being related to knowledge about language in general, its functions and fields of application as well as metalinguistic skills. The affective dimension refers to the development of (positive) attitudes towards languages.

4.1 *Cognitive Dimension of Language Awareness*

Student perspective

The results from the five items in the questionnaire related to the cognitive dimension are displayed in Fig. 3 through the calculated mean of each. The general mean between 2 and 2,6 represents students' agreement with the increase of their cognitive dimension.

This average agreement appearing in the quantitative data is in line with the qualitative data. In their reflections and questionnaires, in both settings, more than ten students mentioned the acquisition of new vocabulary and facts in/about other languages, as shown in the following example:

Ich habe gelernt, dass ich mit Hilfe anderer Sprachen, die ich schon kannte, mir Wörter erschließen konnte. Außerdem, dass ich auch in der Stadt sprachlich was lernen kann.³ I learned that I can explore the languages. Other languages help me to understand languages. (S3/4)

This student alternates between German and English to express becoming aware of the usefulness of language learning. It is noteworthy that this student applies translanguaging strategies to stress the knowledge and use of several languages on a practical and theoretical, metacognitive level. The same translanguaging practices were observed in both contexts.

³ (Our translation) "I learned that I could discover the meaning of words with the help of other languages that I already know. I also learned that I can learn languages in the city".

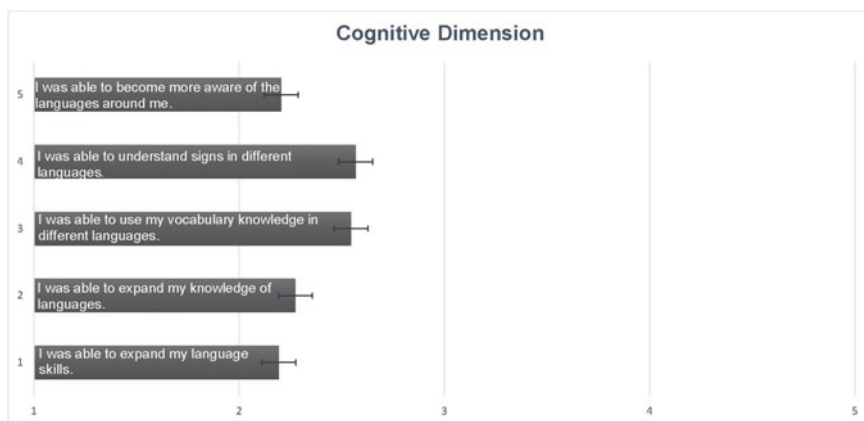


Fig. 3 Results from the items of the cognitive dimension (1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = disagree; 5 = strongly disagree)

Some students also describe developing awareness of their city’s language diversity. One student from the periphery (setting S3/4) declared “During the presentation I realised that we have so many languages around us in everyday life” and another, from the city (setting S1/2), conceded that “I would never have thought that so many languages live in such a small space”. This student ascribes a life, an autonomy to languages that is particularly interesting in the formal language-learning context. Students also mention that they learned about reasons for language diversity referring to migration and globalisation. They highlight that they learned how culture and language are connected. Another student from S1/2 explained:

Then we talked about which shop comes from which country and what you could derive it from. I also didn’t realise that so many famous brands come from France, like *Hermes*. I learned that there are many different cultures in Germany even though not everything comes from Germany. I find that very cool and also interesting.

Some students explained that they also expanded their French language skills, especially reading skills. Particularly, some refer to intercomprehension skills and the usefulness of knowing other languages as in the first quotation in the section. In terms of intercomprehension between romance languages, some students understood languages as systems with similarities: “I now know that Portuguese and French are similar and I can derive some of the language. I also liked that the lady⁴ read out the [Portuguese] sentence” (S1/2). From this encounter of the student with an intercomprehension situation, it is possible to observe the interplay between LA’s cognitive and affective dimensions: the student understood how intercomprehension works and showed positive attitudes towards it, especially at the level of comparing Portuguese and French pronunciation (oral comprehension). This also implies that

⁴ The “lady” refers here to one of the researchers that was observing the classroom via on-line streaming and was spontaneously called by the teacher to take an active role and read the sentence in Portuguese out loud.

other languages are welcome by the students to the space of the foreign language classroom, either visually or in terms of “soundscape”.

Students thus acknowledged the usefulness of developing a plurilingual repertoire in order to enhance their understanding of how languages work, thus fostering their metalinguistic awareness. This metalinguistic awareness might then be reinvested in formal language learning. The use of the plural form in the previous statement by the student (“Other languages help me to understand languages”) makes this claim tangible: “languages” as resources and languages as “goals” are both formulated in ways that make them more organic and not as discrete entities, thus also implying some porosity between formal and informal language learning.

Teacher perspective

Both teachers mention that students identified the reasons for having different languages in a city. T1 comments: “many of them had something to say about that” and they “found a lot of things on such a small picture where basically only two shops or something were to be seen”. T2 believes that “they [will] walk through the city [and] suddenly look at certain linguistic documents with different eyes or [...] hear a language or a dialect or an accent”. In the last two comments, the link between indoor and outdoor learning is clear. T2 specifies that students can make sense outside of the school of what they learned in the school and vice versa. They can say to themselves “the experiences I have gained there, I can then integrate them back into the language lessons”. Additionally, one of the teachers refers to the meaning and function of language and its diversity in general:

I believe or hope that they have learned on a methodical level that they can rely on their feeling for language when it comes to infer the meaning of unknown words or even small sentences. They have learned that they can use similarities from other languages to understand French.
(T2)

Metalinguistic awareness, as we also saw in the students’ perspective, is referred to as an integral part of the cognitive dimension of language awareness. The teacher clearly refers to the awareness of similarities in languages and how students can profit from this. The same teacher also highlights intercomprehension practices: “they have learned that there are similarities between the languages and that you can really use these similarities actively, for example for reading comprehension” and “they can rely on their feeling for language when it comes to opening up unknown words or even small sentence contexts [...] for understanding French” (T2). She also provides an example: “I’m thinking of *supermarket* and *supermarché*. They very quickly saw that the German and English words are almost identical and then the step to the French *supermarché* was, I think, a very obvious one” (T2). The phenomenon of similarities of languages and its practical use was also discussed in S1:

Example 1:

St 4: Well, I think if you know French, well I don’t know how that is now because I don’t know it (laughs.), then you can probably understand Portuguese.

T1: That’s the case! Especially in writing.

St 6: Do you understand Portuguese?

T1: In writing, yes. I was on holiday in Portugal for two months and what was written there, on information boards or something, I could read it. And the same goes for Spanish, of course. (All students look at her and seem interested.)

Student 9: That means, if you are in Madeira or something and there is a quarantine, you could tell them that you have to go out with the dog for a while?

T1: No, I can't say that.

St 9 and at the same time St 1: But you could write it in French or something.

T1: Oh, yes.

St 9: And then they would understand.

T1: Yes, then we could understand each other like that via the writing.

St 4: With as many Germans as there are, you can just speak German.

Example 1 shows the teacher's engagement in raising students' language awareness by making them see the benefits of language learning by referring to a personal experience. In this specific case, teacher and students discuss the cognitive value of intercomprehension across languages of the same linguistic family. They interact around the cross-comprehension possibilities that linguistic transparency can offer in order to convey meaning. Interestingly, the potential of intercomprehension is recognised for receptive and productive skills, but its success is associated to receptive competences only, something that is thematised in the literature on intercomprehension (Araújo e Sá & Melo-Pfeifer, 2021).

As already seen from the students' perspective above, work on LL seems, for both students and teachers, to foster awareness of intercomprehension across different languages. This opens up spaces for discussing multilingual interaction and, by this means, for mainstreaming multilingual pedagogies based on intercomprehension (Melo-Pfeifer, 2020).

4.2 *Affective Dimension of Language Awareness*

Student perspective

The results from the four items in the questionnaire relating to the affective dimension of LA are displayed in Fig. 4. The general mean between 1,8 and 2,3 represents students' even stronger agreement with the increase of their affective dimension than the increase found for the cognitive dimension. When assessing the classroom activities in the two open questions of the questionnaire, they used terms such as "interesting", "exciting" and "fun". Importantly, students assessed the use of already known and unknown languages in the classroom positively, even if those already

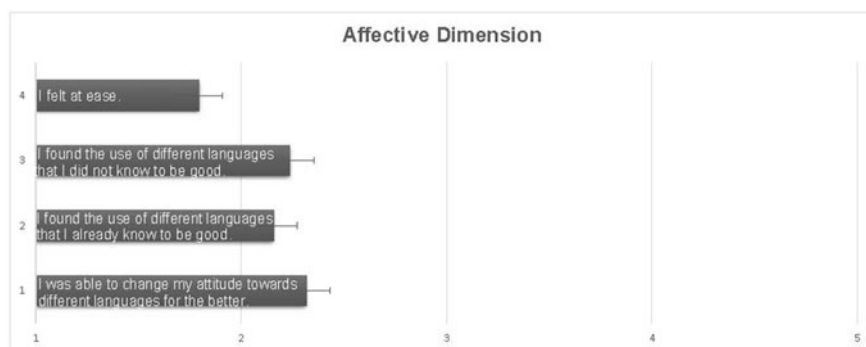


Fig. 4 Results from the items of the affective dimension (1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree)

known were valued more. Such results would be an argument to use other languages in the foreign language classroom, disrupting monolingual ideologies and practices.

These insights from the quantitative data can be found in the qualitative data as well. One student denotes positive attitudes towards the English language: “My dad has three relatives in the U.S.A. and then we always get letters from the three of them and it’s kind of cool English” (S2). The use of “cool” to refer to English coming from America might be seen as contrasting with the less “cool” English learnt in the classroom, possibly meaning that students recognise the different uses of the same language, outside and inside the classroom.

In the final reflections, some students mentioned aspects about their affection towards languages because they like to link (a) culture(s) to (a) language(s). One student from the surrounding areas of Hamburg wrote: “I thought it was really great that we also learned something about other cultures”. Other insights into the affective dimensions of LA can be found in sentences such as: “We studied languages and found out interesting things”, indicating a general curiosity towards foreign languages, or “It was very interesting to learn that so many languages are in Hamburg”, showing a positive attitude towards linguistic diversity.

Six students decided to write their reflection in another language (English, French, Hindi, Plattdeutsch or Russian) and one student used translanguaging strategies (including the languages Chinese, Dutch, Italian, Japanese and Portuguese) to write the reflection. As in Elola and Prada (2020), students also challenged the linguistic boundaries; in our case, they also actively adopted more flexible linguistic practices. Figure 5 reproduces the final task written in the minority language Plattdeutsch.

As referred by Brinkmann et al. (2022),

[students] felt free to express [themselves] resorting to a variety of languages, engaging in multilingual practices. Even though the instruction for the task referred to the possibility of choosing the language(s) of production, the fact that the students accepted the call to transgress the monolingual communicative stance is a sign that they felt they could perform more adequately, when speaking about multilingualism, using different languages (p. 103).

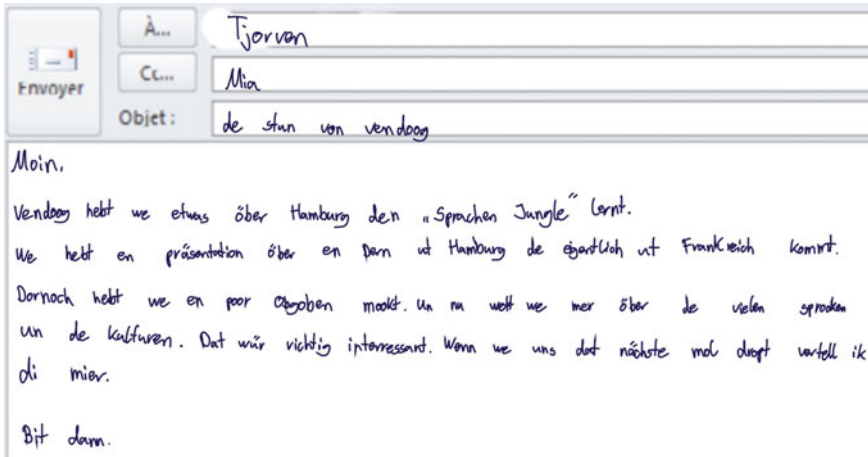


Fig. 5 Evaluation task by a student⁵ (S3/4)

Teacher perspective

The role of the affective dimension in language awareness is clearly highlighted by T2: “language, or thinking about one’s own language, is really a key to promoting emotional or social aspects”. T2 stresses the affective dimension in the interview, but more examples of how the teachers raise the students’ language awareness at an affective dimension can be found in class settings. Most occurrences refer to one question in the presentation about the minority Northern German language Plattdeutsch that led to a discussion about preferred language and reasons for their preference. T2 comments: “they understand that such a language or a dialect has something to do with their own identity or with their own childhood or with certain family members”.

There are different examples in all the settings that illustrate this understanding. In S3, T2 invites all the students to explain why they like English, a language most of them are in contact with, shown in the following example:

Example 2:

St 8: I like English

T2: Okay, can you explain why?

St 8: No, not really, it’s always been like that. I like the country.

T2: Oh so England.

⁵ (Our translation) Subject: The lesson of today.

Hello,

Today we learned about Hamburg, the “language jungle”. We had a presentation about a girl from Hamburg who is actually from France. Afterwards we did a few tasks. And now we know more about cultures. That was really interesting. Next time we meet, I’ll tell you more.

See you then.

St 8: Well yes and America.

St 2: I like English because you hear it everywhere and because it's familiar.

T2: Where do you hear English?

St 9: On TV and in series or something.

St 1: At school.

T2: I suppose you also listen to English music?

Students: Yes.

T2: Where else?

St 2: Tourists, you hear English all the time there too.

Whereas T2 had to initiate the questioning about reasons for preferring a language, in S1, T1 could build on the conclusions of a student, illustrated in the example below.

Example 3:

T1: Who else loves a language?

St 10: Polish [...] I grew up speaking it.

T1: Ah, because your parents speak it and you speak it with them too, because it's familiar to you.

Example 3 shows teachers emphasising the depth of one's affection to a language based on home languages' emotional weight. The teacher values the affective dimension attached to the student's biography and making this value a theme for the classroom also legitimises it, at least as a valuable theme that can be collaboratively discussed and not left outside the classroom. In this way, the foreign language classroom opens up to discussions about multilingualism and plurilingualism and not only about one target language and one target culture.

T2 also acts in a similar fashion while talking about Plattdeutsch in S4, as illustrated in the example below:

Example 4:

St2: Maybe he lived there somewhere and is happy to see it again.

T2: Yes, maybe he knows it from his grandparents and it reminds him of them and that's a positive feeling.

Referring to this situation in S4, T2 states: "I found this [question] particularly successful because two students reported that they had Croatian as their family language [...] and another student, whose family comes from Zimbabwe, said that the Shona language is spoken at home". She highlights her interest in the class by ending the section about the Plattdeutsch question: "Suddenly I notice all the languages that are present in the classroom. We will have to go into that in more detail at some point" (T2 in S4). In general, she sees a positive effect in raising students' LA in the

affective dimension since: “I observed with the pupil from Zimbabwe that she was particularly awake and pleased to talk about it” (T2). Importantly, the implementation of classroom activities based on the discussion of LLs helped the teacher to discover and uncover the diversity of languages present in the classroom and made her aware of the need to keep discussing students’ linguistic biographies in a safe space. Seen from this perspective, it could be argued that working with LLs can foster teachers’ reflexivity around the value of implementing multilingual pedagogies and therefore contribute to their professional development.

5 Conclusion

Our study has showed the entangled nature of two dimensions of LA (the affective and the cognitive), that we trace back to the complexity of LA itself. The increase in students’ cognitive and affective dimensions, attested by students themselves and by the teachers, refers to becoming aware of the connection between language and culture, linking indoor and outdoor learning, or the learning potential of intercomprehension and translanguaging strategies. Concerning the cognitive dimension, it is referred to in terms of interlinguistic comparison (a sign of focus on form) and the usefulness of speaking different languages, but hardly in terms of declarative knowledge. This might be due to a lack of tasks focusing on this aspect. We also noticed, mainly from the presentation of classroom interaction excerpts, how signs of students’ LA are combined with and dependent on teachers’ own assumptions about languages and multilingualism. Indeed, even if in both sites the classroom tasks are led by the teacher, students and teachers nonetheless co-construct knowledge about linguistic diversity, languages and LA.

We can thus conclude on the double value of using LLs as means to introduce the theme of linguistic diversity in the target language classroom. On the one hand, LLs provide teachers and students with prompts to designate and comment on linguistic phenomena; on the other, they create a positive atmosphere of discovery, sharing and co-interpretation of those and other phenomena, which are mutualised and used as “funds of experiences” of the group. By doing so, not only the boundaries of expert and novice are blurred, but also equal opportunities are given to teachers and students to develop their LA. Through eliciting and commenting on each other’s examples and lived experiences with multilingualism and plurilingual repertoires, students and teachers scaffold each other’s reflections.

This study provides elements to question two important assumptions present in the literature on multilingual pedagogies and on the pedagogical use of LLs. One assumption relates to multilingual pedagogies being particularly adequate to meet the needs of plurilingual students (meaning generally with a migrant background) and the second assumption relates to the work around LLs as particularly suitable for urban and superdiverse contexts. The first assumption could be debunked as follows: students growing up both monolingually and plurilingually benefit from tasks on LLs,

valuing the different components of their repertoires. Students growing up monolingually acknowledged the added-value of language learning in the school contexts while those growing up plurilingually value both languages learnt at school and at home. We can conclude that pedagogical work with LLs brings students closer to societal linguistic (super)diversity, even if this diversity is not immediately apparent or recognisable in the surroundings, and also promotes multilingual pedagogies for all. All students become experts of their linguistic environments, potentially blurring the lines between students with and without a migrant background. The second assumption can be challenged as well: bringing students from “less urban and more peri-urban” spaces (Blommaert, 2013, p. 1) into contact with superdiverse LLs, the study shows that children living in the periphery of urban centres also benefit from the reflections prompted by urban LLs examples. Results from urban and peri-urban cohorts show that students benefit from the work on LLs, at both the affective and cognitive levels.

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