



Brief

Translanguaging in Early Childhood Education Context: A Language Ideology Discussion on Language Norms and Pedagogical Practices

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Our paper is based on what has been called the “multilingual turn” in second and multilingual language research (May, 2014), and more specifically what is related to translanguaging and multilingual practice in educational contexts. Multilingualism as a phenomenon has been applied to varying degrees and in various ways in second and multilingual language research in Nordic ECEC contexts (Pesch, 2021). Studies show that educational and language policy guidelines on multilingualism in education seem to be vague and ambiguous (Alstad & Sopanen, 2020; Giæver & Tkachenko, 2020). The studies point out that it is unclear how “linguistic diversity” is understood in the framework plan for ECEC, that being multilingual is constructed as dichotomy to being Norwegian and that steering documents involve conflicting discourses with some being characterized by more monoglossic and others by more heteroglossic ideologies. Palviainen and Curdt-Christiansen (2020) point out that multilingualism as a concept is promoted in Northern-European education politics, while simultaneously native like language competence appears as the norm. Otterstad and Andersen (2012) argue that the discourse on cultural and linguistic diversity as a resource is becoming authoritative in the field and point to the fact that there are few who have challenged a resource-oriented approach. An uncritical approach may, according to Otterstad and Andersen, be problematic because it obscures other challenging dimensions as for example power, discrimination, colonization, and silencing.

In a similar vein as the resource-oriented approach is gaining authority in the field, it seems as though translanguaging is establishing itself both within language and early

childhood education and care (ECEC) research. We base this article on an ongoing discussion in international research, focusing on the significance of translanguaging, the underlying view on language and the ontological stance this implies for research and teaching practice. We then explore and discuss this ongoing language ideological debate transferred to the Norwegian ECEC context. We argue for how translanguaging needs contextualizing in the transition from US-American to Norwegian or European context, while the concept at the same time may confirm central pedagogical and professional perspectives in the Norwegian ECEC context.

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