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LINGUISTICALLY SENSITIVE TEACHING IN A MULTILINGUAL CONTEXT: PERCEPTIONS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS OF THE BASQUE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY

Summary. Multilingual environments and migration have led to an increasing number of multilingual students, and consequently, to a need to take the varying linguistic repertoire of students into account in education. The aim of the present study is to explore Linguistically Sensitive Teaching (LST) as a possible linguistically inclusive approach and to examine how LST is perceived by pre-service primary teachers in the multilingual context of the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), where the majority language, Spanish; the minority language, Basque; and the foreign language, English are included in the curriculum, all while some students might have other additional home languages that are not part of the curriculum. The methodological approach is a qualitative research study, in which data have been collected among a group of pre-service primary teachers from the BAC through written reflections, focus groups and observations. The results show the perceptions of the pre-service teachers on education policies in relation to linguistically sensitive teaching practices, good practices identified during their school placements, possibilities to promote Linguistically Sensitive Teaching in the classroom, the role of the minority language Basque in LST, and the threats, challenges and opportunities perceived in LST. It is concluded that despite some basic notions of LST, the lack of in-depth knowledge of pre-service teachers is visible, advocating for the need to include formation on LST in Initial Teacher Training.

Keywords: Linguistically Sensitive Teaching; minority languages; migrant languages; multilingual education; primary education; teacher training.

Introduction

The increasing number of multilingual students in European schools is the result of migration and multilingual environments. Finding migrant students in contexts where a minority language exists is becoming more

frequent, and consequently classrooms might be formed by speakers of local minority, majority and/or migrant languages (Aronin & Hufeisen, 2009; Vertovec, 2007). In order to adequately manage this multilingual scenery in education, Linguistically Sensitive Teaching (LST) could be considered. LST is a teaching approach that encompasses the entire school community. With a holistic approach, LST tries to adapt to the sociolinguistic background of the students by focusing on the environment, the wellbeing, the adequate use of languages and the balanced use of majority and minority languages. In the present study, the way pre-service teachers perceive LST in a multilingual context where a minority language, majority language and migrant students' home languages come together in the classroom is examined.

This article focuses specifically on multilingual education in the Basque Autonomous Community and aims to explore how pre-service primary teachers view LST by analysing their perceptions on the use of Linguistically Sensitive Teaching in practice as compared to policy, and on the opportunities, threats and challenges that LST might bring along. In the next sections, multilingual education in Europe and the BAC will be discussed as well as the role of LST.

Multilingual Education in Europe and the Basque Autonomous Community

The Council of Europe (2016) puts into value multilingualism and underlines the importance of promoting multilingualism and respect for multiculturalism in schools. First of all, they argue that, in the context of an increasingly multilingual society, every European citizen must develop multilingual competences in order to achieve a more cohesive and equal society. Therefore, European institutions advocate for a school curriculum that takes into account several languages, where students have the opportunity to develop a rich linguistic repertoire. Furthermore, regarding didactics, the Council of Europe advocates for softening the existing rigid boundaries between languages in common one-language-only ideologies, and fostering the connections between languages. They believe that building bridges between languages could provide an important pedagogical potential (Council of Europe, 2016). Since the Barcelona Agreement (2002), all countries of the European Union are

committed to promoting multilingualism and to teaching at least two languages in addition to the local language(s). This scenario provides several challenges. On the one hand, many current pedagogical practices and strategies are still based on monolingual principles (Portoles & Martí, 2018), obstructing the pedagogical potential of integrated language learning. On the other hand, the local scenery might be already linguistically diverse, putting into play different local languages and or migration languages, as a complex starting point for learning additional languages in the curriculum.

The latter is the case of the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), an administrative area located in the North of Spain, close to the border with France, which has around 2.1 million inhabitants. In this area, two official languages coexist: the minority language, Basque, and the majority language, Spanish. The two local languages are present throughout the educational system, as well as English, and in some cases French as foreign languages—the latter usually in Secondary Education (a more detailed description of the educational context will be provided in the section “The context for this study: the Basque Autonomous Community”). In addition, as in the rest of Europe, the home languages of the pupils appear to be increasingly diverse, and in many cases, migrant students do not have the main languages of the curriculum as their first language.

Within this context, the educational policy of the BAC aims at the acquisition of the basic competencies proposed by the European Commission (2006), that is, the ability of students to communicate effectively in the local language(s) as well as, in at least one foreign language (Heziberri, 2016). The educational policy puts special emphasis on minority languages and cultures as an educational value, in line with the 1992 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Heziberri, 2016). The educational system of the BAC is thus faced with a challenging linguistic situation, as stated in the policy document: “It must be taken into account that the Basque society of the 21st century is multilingual, and therefore schools must necessarily promote multilingual citizens” (Heziberri, 2016, p. 18). The main aim is to prepare students to be able to communicate in Basque and Spanish in all areas of daily life, as well as in one foreign language, usually English. The main challenge ahead for the educational system of the BAC is to develop

multilingualism on solid basis of competency in, and active use of, the minority language Basque.

Linguistically Sensitive Teaching (LST)

In order to reach a true multilingual education, including an active use of the minority language, a change of direction from a monolingual to a holistic multilingual view is fundamental. A change that can be considered “revolutionary, as it puts into question the whole monolingual foundation of theoretical and applied linguistics” (Kramsch, 2012, p. 109). This change of direction has been referred to through several concepts, such as the “multilingual turn” (May, 2014) or “Focus on Multilingualism (FoM)” (Gorter & Cenoz, 2011; Cenoz & Gorter, 2014), the latter advocating for the necessity of adopting a holistic approach towards languages in both research and teaching.

According to the FoM, the separation that traditionally has existed between languages should be left behind in order to consider teaching from a more holistic point of view, focusing on the connecting elements between languages, rather than on the ones that might separate them. A pedagogical planning to foster connections between languages is known as “Pedagogical Translanguaging” (Baker, 2011; Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012). By softening the boundaries between languages, a more sensitive teaching can be achieved, as it better adapts to the needs of the students.

Connected to these ideas, we find other theoretical conceptualisations of multilingual education, such as “multilingual socialisation in education” introduced by Meier (2018), which questions the monolingual perspective and thinking in education. In the same line, “linguistically responsive teaching” (Alisaari et al., 2019; Lucas & Villegas, 2013) advocates for the value of multilingualism and how we can make the most of it. Closely related to the essence of this concept we find “Linguistically Sensitive Teaching” a concept that refers to the act of treating the languages of the pupils in an inclusive—and therefore sensitive—way in all teaching practices. Even if different denominations have emerged in different educational contexts, all of them share a democratic and inclusive ideology and defend the creation of

supportive multilingual learning environments. Being that LST is the underpinning theoretical idea for this study, it will be described in the next section in more detail.

Definition of LST

Linguistically Sensitive Teaching (LST) is a teaching approach that seeks to find an adequate, sensitive and inclusive answer to the question of the increasingly multilingual scenery in education. LST takes into account four areas: 1) the multilingual environment of the school as a whole, 2) the wellbeing of students as related to the chance to use their full linguistic repertoire, 3) the adequate use of languages inside the classroom with the aim of understanding and cooperation of the students, and 4) flexible use of both majority and minority languages.

Thus, LST takes into account the whole school community – including classroom, school-wide and outside-school practices, going beyond an exclusive focus on what happens in the (language) classroom. This holistic approach could lead to changes in the school system as a whole, instead of changes in language didactics only.

The ideology underpinning this educational approach is transformative and inclusive, defends social cohesion and takes into account the reality of a multilingual school. In this line, LST pays special attention to the role of languages in order to ensure students' significant learning, as well as their personal growth and psychological wellbeing. LST advocates for the responsible and planned use of more than one language in class but also in the whole school, leaving aside one-language-only policies. Making use of students' whole linguistic repertoire and building bridges between languages is essential. Thus, a linguistically sensitive teacher allows for multilingual approaches that will make use of students' whole linguistic potential.

The Council of Europe (2016) refers to the concept of LST in their policy on multilingual education. All concrete measures they propose to promote LST are based on four main principles aimed at students to 1) understand language and content, 2) develop adequate academic language skills, 3) use languages in an active way and 4) have equal chances to learn.

In sum, LST refers to the effort of being sensitive and the capacity of education to adapt to different sociolinguistic circumstances and students' differing linguistic needs. This would mean a step forward in an inclusive multilingual and multicultural approach towards education, where the wellbeing and needs of the students are covered by effective content and language learning.

LST and Initial Teacher Training

Portoles and Martí (2018) showed how still many teachers do not have enough knowledge of up-to-date literature about multilingualism, and they found that, as a consequence, monolingual practices still prevail. Although there is no extensive literature on teachers' beliefs towards multilingualism and how formation could affect those beliefs, the available literature on beliefs indicates that in different contexts there still is a prevailing monolingual paradigm, such as in Valencia (Spain) (Portoles & Martí, 2018), the Basque Autonomous Community (Spain) and Friesland (The Netherlands) (Arocena et al., 2015) and Finland (Alisaari et al., 2019). Despite the complexity of changing teachers' beliefs, Portoles and Martí (2018) believe that formation in Initial Teacher Training might be the most adequate place to start changing teachers' beliefs into more linguistically sensitive ones and to start raising awareness on sensitive practices and strategies among the teachers. Taking into account the deep-rooted monolingual beliefs and practices among schoolteachers, the aforementioned change towards LST would best start in Initial Teacher Training, where future teachers (educators of Primary Education, from 6 to 12 years old) are prepared for their future career. In line with the school-wide approach, not only the future language teachers should be involved, but also all other subject teachers, as linguistic sensitivity concerns the whole professional community of teachers. The formation of primary education teachers might be the most suitable starting point since teachers might have to teach multiple subjects in a future, and boundaries between subjects might therefore be not as rigid as in secondary education where often a more one teacher-one subject approach can be found.

Teacher training is believed to be an effective tool to change teachers'

beliefs and to promote linguistic awareness among them. Results of the study of Gorter and Arocena (2020) corroborate this idea, as they found that a formation of pedagogical translanguaging has an impact on teachers' beliefs regarding multilingualism, leading to a stronger conviction that languages should not be separated but intertwined and that simultaneous acquisition of languages can support each other, instead of being harmful.

Taking into account the importance of the formation of teachers for paving the way towards Linguistically Sensitive Teaching, this study focuses on the beliefs of future teachers in the Basque Autonomous Community. The study is part of the larger European research project LISTiac, which will be briefly discussed in the next section.

The LISTiac Project: LST in Europe

In the present study, the focus is on how future primary teachers perceive Linguistically Sensitive Teaching. The data for the study are collected within the wider framework of the Linguistically Sensitive Teaching in all classrooms (LISTiac) project. This international Erasmus+ project aims to respond to the increasing need for Linguistically Sensitive Teaching by working on teachers' reflections as a first step towards change.

The Basque Autonomous Community in Spain participates in this Action Research project together with seven other countries and communities (Belgium, Catalonia, Finland, France, Lithuania, Portugal and Slovenia) where the aim goes beyond merely describing reality, as the researchers try to change the reality in collaboration with the professional educational community (in-service teachers, pre-service teachers and teacher educators).

A wide variety of samples and instruments is used in the project to gather professional communities' reflections on linguistically sensitive teaching. From a critical paradigm, those data will form the basis for a possible change in teaching on the way towards a more inclusive, sensitive, holistic and integrated multilingual education system. For the purpose of this paper, only part of the data regarding the BAC will be described.

The Context for This Study: The Basque Autonomous Community

As mentioned previously, the BAC is a multilingual area, where the majority language Spanish and the minority language Basque are official languages. More specifically, this research has been carried out in the province of Biscay, in an area called Gran Bilbao, where Basque is spoken by approximately 23% of the population. In other words, it is an area where the majority language is Spanish (Cenoz, 2015).

Apart from that, English is not official in the community, although it is present in all educational models, as it is taught as a foreign language. Exposure to English outside the school is very limited, as there are few occasions where English input can be received apart from music, videogames and other limited spheres (Cenoz, 2015). Although the use of each language may vary from person to person, there is no doubt that two official languages and a large number of languages from other origins coexist in the community. As Cenoz (1998) points out, this linguistic diversity in the BAC is due to the rapid industrial development of the community in the 1960s and 1970s and a subsequent extensive immigration from other Spanish areas into the Basque Country. According to the Basque Statistics Office (Eustat, 2019), languages with a large presence in the area are Galician (more than 25,697 speakers in the province), Arabic (more than 13,435 speakers in the province) or Romanian (more than 11,119 speakers in the province).

It should be taken into account that Basque has several dialectal varieties. Basque has five main dialects distributed in the BAC, Navarre and the northern provinces located in the French state. The present study has been carried out in the province of Biscay, where the "Western dialect" of Basque is prevailing (Zuazo, 2014). However, in the exact area of Gran Bilbao where the research was carried out the standard or "Batua" form of Basque is predominant.

Regarding the educational system, in the BAC, 3 linguistic education models have been offered for more than 30 years. The most popular model is model D, a linguistic immersion model in Basque, where most of the pupils are enrolled. In this model all subjects are taught in Basque, except for

the language subjects Spanish and the foreign language, usually English. Model B provides a bilingual approach where at least half of the teaching hours are taught in the minority language Basque, and the other half in Spanish, except for the foreign language. There is also the option of enrolling in model A, which is offered completely through the medium of Spanish, except for the language subjects of Basque and the foreign language.

Research Aims and Research Questions

The main focus of the current research is to analyse how pre-service primary teachers in the Basque Autonomous Community perceive Linguistically Sensitive Teaching. The research questions that guide the study are the following:

- RQ1: How do primary pre-service teachers perceive the use of LST in practice?
- RQ2: What opportunities, threats and challenges do primary pre-service teachers foresee in the use of LST?

In order to address the research questions proposed, a qualitative research study was carried out. The methodology of the current study will be explained in detail in the following section.

Methodology

In this qualitative research study, a questionnaire with open questions, a written reflection (SWOT analysis), focus group discussions and observations were used with students coursing Initial Teacher Training in the BAC.

Participants

This research was carried out at a university in the Basque Autonomous Community (Spain), in the province of Biscay. The participants were 14 second-year students of the Primary Education degree, more concretely,

7 female and 7 male students from ages 19 to 25. In order to be accepted at this university, the students previously needed to prove they were proficient in Basque by showing a high B2 or C1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) in the language. These pre-service teachers had not received any specific LST training yet, although in their third year the university will offer a compulsory module called "Integrated Language Treatment".

Research Tools

The data collection tools from the European project LISTiac were translated into Basque, the language of instruction of the pre-service teachers at university. The instruments are described in detail below.

Questionnaire. Five questions were proposed so as to reflect on LST:

- What do you understand by Linguistically Sensitive Teaching?
- Why do you think it is/is not important for teachers/for your teaching activity?
- Have you been able to identify linguistically sensitive practices in classes at the university/in the schools/in your practice periods? If yes, could you give some examples?
- Have you ever felt you needed more linguistic support?
- Do you think there is coherence between the education policies and the linguistically sensitive teaching practices?

SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis was used as a written reflection to determine and define the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of LST as perceived by the pre-service teachers.

Dialogue mat. A specific tool was created by the LISTiac project called the Dialogue Mat which consists of six questions about LST placed on a poster-size cardboard. The aim of this tool is to guide the participants to reflect and exchange their ideas and opinions in a focus group discussion. The topics

addressed at the Dialogue Mat are: 1) the importance of LST and related experiences, 2) the role of the teacher in LST, 3) possible actions for the implementation of LST, 4) challenges, threats and opportunities to overcome to carry out LST, 5) Basque and European educational policies and 6) the profile of the future linguistically sensitive in-service teacher.

Observations. Two researchers observed the group discussions, that is, the group discussion of the SWOT analysis and the written Dialogue Mat. Fieldnotes were taken during the two group activities, which were helpful for the interpretation of the written results afterwards.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The data collection was done during two different classes. Following the university's schedule, each session lasted for an hour and a half. The first session was done around the start of the participants' school placements, and they had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with LST after a short presentation about the LISTiac project, as well as to fill out the consent forms. The first session involved the questionnaire and the SWOT analysis. First, the pre-service teachers were given 10–15 minutes to answer individually to the questionnaire. After that, participants filled out the SWOT analysis individually. Once they finished, they gathered in small groups and discussed their ideas and opinions while observed by the researchers, and, lastly, they filled out a group questionnaire and a group SWOT analysis that represented the whole group's discussion. In total, there were three groups, one group formed by three pre-service teachers (group 1: St_1, St_2 and St_3) and two formed by four pre-service teachers (group 2: St_4, St_5, St_6 and St_7, group 3: St_8, St_9, St_10 and St_11). Three pre-service teachers (St_12, St_13, St_14) did not participate in this written group reflection due to incompatible schedules.

In order to give the pre-service teachers enough time to observe and reflect on the topics worked on in the first session, the second session was carried out two weeks later. In this session, the focus group discussion was proposed. First, the Dialogue Mat was shown, and the researchers read

the questions aloud with the participants in case they had any doubts. Afterwards, the pre-service teachers discussed and filled out the Dialogue Mat in group for an hour and ten minutes while observed by the researchers. In total, one group of six pre-service teachers (St_5, St_10, St_11, St_12, St_13 and St_14) were available to fill in one Dialogue Mat. The researchers only intervened when questions were asked, and they listened to the discussion while taking fieldnotes. Towards the end of the session, the pre-service teachers shared the most relevant reflections that were mentioned during the session.

The first research question was: How do primary pre-service teachers perceive the use of LST in practice? Data to address this first research question were gathered by means of the questionnaire, the SWOT analysis that was firstly filled in individually by the students and consequently, discussed in small groups, the focus group discussion of the Dialogue Mat and observations. The second research question was: "What opportunities, threats and challenges do primary pre-service teachers foresee in the use of LST?" The data to answer that research question was collected through the focus group discussion as well as the individual and group SWOT analysis. Observations were also used to interpret the data.

The collected data were digitised using Word (digital word processing program) and then, using the free coding technique, data-based codes were created to classify the content using the fieldnotes as guidance to contrast the gathered data.

Results

In this section the results of the current study are described bearing in mind the two research questions proposed.

Perception of LST in Practice

The first research question was: "How do primary pre-service teachers perceive the use of LST in practice?". The results are divided into three categories following the coding of the data: 1) students' beliefs about the connection

between education policies and linguistically sensitive teaching practices, 2) good practices that students have observed during their school placement and 3) students' proposals on how to become linguistically sensitive teachers.

The Relationship Between Education Policies and Linguistically Sensitive Teaching Practices

The students' reflections show that in their opinion Linguistically Sensitive Teaching is strongly related to education policies. Different points of view on this topic are displayed. On the one hand, four students out of fourteen thought that there is coherence between education policies and linguistically sensitive teaching practices. Although, St_11 said that: "Yes, but we do not know much about it" [bai, baina ez dakigu askorik horri buruz] underlining that students lacked information about the relation between LST and education policies. On the other hand, seven students perceived the coherence between education policies and linguistically sensitive teaching practices differently, as for instance St_4 said: "There is no coherence, one thing is said in education policies and another is done in Linguistically Sensitive Teaching" [ez dago koherentziarik, hezkuntza politikan gauza bat esaten da eta hizkuntzekiko sentsiblea den irakaskuntzan beste bat egiten da]. The student highlights the idea of the lack of coherence between education policies and LST. In the same vein, in the SWOT group analysis the students St_4, St_5, St_6 and St_7 mentioned that: "Education policies talk about things which are not put into practice" [hezkuntza politikan gauza batzuetaz hitz egiten da, non, ondoren ez direnak praktikara eramaten]. Likewise, St_8, St_9, St_10 and St_11 expressed that: "In theory, we think so, but then they do not put it into practice [Teorian pentsatzen dugu baietz badagoela baina gero praktikara ez dute eramaten] underlining the lack of connection in between the two areas.

Regarding the minority language Basque, St_5 added in the student reflection that ""In theory" there is a plan to protect the Basque language, but we don't know, or they don't express it well" ["izatez" badago euskararekiko babes plan bat baina ez dakigu edo ez dute ondo plasmitzen] pointing out that, although there is an educational policy to protect and promote the Basque language, they do not have enough knowledge about it.

Good Practices

Participants were asked to identify LST practices at their university courses taught by teacher educators and during their school placements by the in-service primary teachers. Filling out the questionnaire, pre-service teachers were able to identify good practices at school, however, none of them identified those at university. In this line, St_12 mentioned that "I have not identified any cases at university classes. Nevertheless, at school I have" [unibertsitateko klaseetan ez dut kasuren bat identifikatu. Eskolan aldiz, bai]. It seems that participants visualised LST practices more clearly if those were related to primary students at school.

The good practices which were identified during their placement were usually connected to migrant students who had difficulties using Basque. In the questionnaire, St_7 expressed that "there is a Muslim student whose mother tongue is not Basque. Therefore, he receives support in order to learn through Basque and the teacher gives him every explanation both in Basque and Spanish" [musulmana den ikasle bat dago eta bere ama hizkuntza ez da euskara. Horren ondorioz, laguntza jasotzen du euskaraz ikasteko eta irakasleak euskaraz eta gazteleraz azaltzen dizkio gauza guztiak]. The participant remarked that the use of more than one language is beneficial to help the student in his learning process. Bearing in mind that Basque is a lesser-used language, whenever there is a student who uses a different language at home, there is an effort to ensure the acquisition of Basque. In other words, pre-service teachers comprehended that a great number of LST practices were directed towards teaching the minority language to non-Basque speaking students, since Basque is the main language of schooling. Likewise, St_12 mentioned the idea of doing exams in Spanish instead of Basque to a student who recently came from England. So, pre-service teachers were aware of the usefulness of switching between languages for educational purposes when a migrant student is part of the class. In this line, St_6 expressed the following in the questionnaire: "We can say that if there are migrant students at school, teachers need more support" [esan dezakegu, eskolan etorkinak badaude, irakasleek babes gehiago behar dutela]. This statement illustrates that participants advocate the need for greater support for in-service teachers.

Students' Proposals

Despite the lack of knowledge of the topic, but based on the good practices that the pre-service teachers detected during their placement, the participants were able to make their own proposals to be linguistically sensitive teachers in the future. Among these shared ideas, some were repeated, such as, using translations, which was mentioned during the Dialogue Mat by all the participants. St_13 said that translation was a common resource used in the school where (s)he was doing her placement, thus, (s)he proposed that, for those non-Basque speaking students, translating texts from Basque to Spanish could be useful. Furthermore, this participant suggested that the translation in Spanish could be given after the Basque text in a smaller font.

Besides translation, another proposal was to learn from the students who have a different L1. As stated by St_14 "the students with a different L1 don't have to teach us their languages the same way we teach them ours but perhaps they can teach us some curiosities, so it is bidirectional to some extent" [Lehen hizkuntza desberdina duten ikasleek ez digute beraien hizkuntza guk gurea erakusten diogun bezala irakatsi behar, baina agian beraien hizkuntzako bitxikeria batzuk, o sea nolabait bi norantzatakoa izatea]. This suggestion was considerably popular among the participants. After their discussions, they agreed that an exchange between the students whose L1 is different, and the rest of the class would be beneficial for the classroom.

In addition, the pre-service teachers also proposed to have older students come to the class to assist the teacher. St_10 mentioned the help of the students of the last compulsory year of Secondary Education. This is a common practice in many schools in the Basque Country since a lot of students feel motivated when working with older students. It is more frequent in small schools rather than in big ones, although bigger schools also use this practice. Regarding daily practices, St_11 introduced the idea of "every Monday, reflect on what was done during the weekend in a diary" [eguneroko bat egiten dute astelehenero asteburuan zer egiten duten azaltzeko], to help the teacher discover the languages the students use with different people in different situations and use this as a strategy to encourage

reflection on the language use among the students.

Another strategy proposed by the participants was related to the pace of the class. Pre-service teachers perceived that in order to adjust to all students' learning processes it was essential to adapt the rhythm of each lesson. Consequently, while reflecting on the Dialogue Mat, St_11 discussed the opportunities that LST can offer when it comes to adapting the pace of the class: "[LST] respects different rhythms" [Erritmo desberdinak errespetatzen dituen]. Moreover, St_7 thought that it was necessary to adapt the rhythm of the class to each student. Along the same lines, when St_1, St_2 and St_3 were doing the group questionnaire and the group SWOT analysis, a discussion arose about adapting or slowing down the pace of the class. At first, the participants mentioned slowing down the pace of the class. However, this proposal was quickly changed to adapting the class. The participants realised that the aim was to adjust to the students' needs without losing time. Therefore, pre-service teachers were aware that LST provided the opportunity to harmonise different rhythms, as well as to personalise different activities in order to support the learning process of each student.

In conclusion, it might be said that the coherence between policy and practice is not always clear to the pre-service teachers. Moreover, the participants did not identify any LST practices during their University lectures, however, they recognised good LST practices during their school placement. Concretely, many pre-service teachers mentioned migrant students and understood that good practices were aimed at them. The main aim was to acquire Basque in order to foster the learning of the minority language and to enable the learning of content through it. In a few words, to favour non-Basque speaking students' learning process. Furthermore, the participants believed that these practices are enriching for the students and they were able to propose strategies for the promotion of LST in the classroom and inclusion of the students.

Opportunities, Threats and Challenges Of LST

The second research question was: "What opportunities, threats and challenges do primary pre-service teachers foresee in the use of LST?".

The results are focused on the opportunities, threats and challenges of the relation between LST and majority and minority languages and of the role of the teacher.

The Challenging Relationship Between LST and Local Minority and Majority Languages

The participants clearly stated their concerns regarding the proficiency levels expected from the students of Primary Education in the languages contemplated in the curriculum. As stated by St_14 “perhaps one of the challenges has been expecting a lot from the children. That is, the challenges that have been imposed by Spain and Europe” [igual erronka motak izan direnak izan daitezke gehiegi eskatu umeari, hau da, ze erronka mota ezartzen dizkigute bai Espainiak, bai Europak]. As explained by this participant, students are expected to be proficient in at least three languages. However, this pre-service teacher would rather be fluent in the L1 and L2 before studying a third language. “I would prefer to master A and B and then go into C in a future...” [Nik nahiago nuke A eta B ondo menperatu eta gero etorkizun batean C batean sartu]. Thus, the participants believed that expecting a high level in both spoken and academic language in Basque, Spanish and English can be a challenge.

Furthermore, the participants discussed how the current language policies could benefit minority language since, for example, the Basque Government expects the schools to teach Basque for a certain number of hours. However, the teaching of Basque is considered complex and one of the main threats as perceived by the participants is the risk of losing Basque since other languages in the curriculum take hours of the minority language. That can be seen in the example provided by St_2: “giving importance to another language can threaten Basque” [beste hizkuntza bateri garrantzia ematean euskera mehatxatu daiteke]. In addition, the participants talked about Biscayan, the Basque dialect spoken in Biscay, and mentioned the difficulties to teach them this dialect since “learning Biscayan can be a difficulty for some students” [bizkaiera ikastea zenbait ikasleentzat izan daiteke zailtasuna] (St_14). The in-service teachers pointed out that autonomous or regional languages are

already looked down on, and that can lead to discrimination and complications to teach minority languages and dialects, especially because as pointed out by St_5 “the perception of the language [is different], it’s not the same knowing English or knowing Basque” [hizkuntzen harrera, ez da berdina ingelesa jakitea edo euskera jakitea] and the participants stated that, as a result, controversy is noticeable.

The Teacher as a Determining Factor: The Opportunities, Threats and Challenges

Participants highlighted that the teacher is a determining factor in order to put into practice Linguistically Sensitive Teaching. Teachers’ lack of interest or their unwillingness to collaborate is understood as a threat to carry out LST practices. That idea was mentioned by St_14 in the SWOT analysis when thinking about threats: “teachers’ willingness to help the student” [Irakaslearen gogoia ikaslea laguntzeko]. In the same sense, pre-service teachers stated that fear towards the unknown influences teachers’ attitude and behaviours, and it could even lead to discrimination. St_14 expressed the following when completing the Dialogue Mat: “racism is a problem we need to face” [aurre egin behar diogun arazo bat da arrazakeria]. So, the participant highlighted the necessity to overcome teachers’ fears and worries. In addition, selfishness was perceived as another influencing factor for developing LST. If teachers feel that LST is not beneficial for them or their group of students, they could believe there is no reason to carry out any LST practice. During the Dialogue Mat St_12 gave an example of what (s)he believed an in-service teachers’ attitude could be: “I do not need LST. Why shall I do it if it is not for my own good?” [LST ez dut behar, zergatik egingo dut nire onerako ez bada]. That statement reveals the need to think beyond teachers’ own benefit.

Furthermore, teachers’ training was perceived as an important aspect to put LST into practice. Participants defended that there is not much teaching about LST and that teachers are not usually aware of useful and enriching teaching methods. Filling out the Dialogue Mat St_12 expressed that sometimes in-service teachers find it hard to leave their comfort zones: “that lack of knowledge places you in a comfort zone which you do not want to

leave” [azkenean ezjakintasun horrek ipintzen zaitu en una zona de confort ez duzula nahi hortik atera].

Even if including LST and leaving aside teachers’ comfort zone could entail a great effort for the teaching staff, it could be an enriching opportunity to promote students’ inclusion and their learning. In fact, as it was perceived in the Dialogue Mat, pre-service teachers believed that LST offers the same opportunities for all the languages and at the same time, it could be a useful tool to promote language awareness. St_7 stated the following when completing the SWOT analysis and thinking about opportunities: “a greater diversity and information about different cultures or languages” [aniztasun gehiago izatea eta kultura edo hizkuntza desberdinen inguruko informazioa edukitzea]. In the same line, St_3 explained that LST could be a good opportunity to offer support for different languages and make them visible.

Finally, St_14 mentioned that it could be seen as an opportunity to have another teacher’s point of view in order to promote LST in class, as stated during the Dialogue Mat:” if there were two teachers in class one could be responsible for ensuring better understanding or translating or so” [egongo baziren bi pertsona ba azkenean bat arduratzen da berak hobeto ulertu dezan edo itzulpenak egin edo...]. So, participants perceived that greater support is needed for in-service teachers in order to create more opportunities to carry out LST practices during primary lessons.

In conclusion, the participants identified the opportunities that LST brings to the classroom. However, in their opinion, adding majority languages to the classroom could be seen as a threat to the local minority languages, in this case, Basque. The pre-service teachers were aware of the existence of policies that protect the minority language, nevertheless, as stated before, they are not familiar with them. Additionally, the participants saw that it is difficult for the three languages to have the same importance and usefulness due to the social prestige of each language. Besides, the teacher was recognised to be crucial to be able to develop LST. The willingness to help students in their learning process, the fear towards uncertainty or selfishness could have an impact on the design and implementation of LST. Moreover, the lack of formation and the lack of human resources were seen as a threat to the expansion of these teaching practices. However, pre-service teachers

perceived LST as an opportunity to make different languages visible and to promote language awareness including minority languages.

Conclusion and Discussion

The first research question was: How do primary pre-service teachers perceive the use of LST in practice? Answering this question, the data show that the students highlight the idea of the lack of coherence between education policies and Linguistically Sensitive Teaching practices. They state that there is, in theory, a legal aim to promote a more inclusive and sensitive teaching but it appears not to be always carried out. In that sense, they seem to be aware of this need, but at the same time, they are also aware of the difficulties that educators have when it comes to applying those legal requirements. Linked to that idea, they mention the case of the local minority language. They are aware that Basque is legally protected as a minority language. That is, they mention the plans and initiatives to protect and promote the language in education. However, in line with what was found by Portolés and Martí (2018) they lack deeper knowledge about it. They do not offer many details on those plans, which could show a lack of training regarding this issue.

Taking into consideration the theoretical framework of this study, it can be said that students have a multilingual perspective. They are aware of the “multilingual turn” (May, 2014) and the necessity of nowadays’ society to preserve all the coexisting languages. Furthermore, they know their sociolinguistic reality, and they see Basque threatened by the local majority language. Awareness of that necessity and the sociolinguistic reality can be considered as a positive point from the LST perspective, as those educators are going to be potential actors promoting multilingualism (Portolés & Martí, 2018). Besides, it can be seen as a step towards “an inclusive multilingual and multicultural education approach” (Council of Europe, 2016). Nevertheless, more training and knowledge is needed in order to provide them with more tools, reflection and strategies to be sensitive and develop a real multilingual mindset (Gorter & Arocena, 2020).

Participants were able to identify good practices at school during their school placements, however, if there were any good practices in the University

classes pre-service teachers were unable to identify them. Pre-service teachers identify good practices related to migrant students and their abilities to learn the local minority language. They emphasise the usefulness of switching languages to learn the local minority language and to ensure students' learning through Basque. It seems that pre-service teachers did not point out the entire multilingual environment of schools or the well-being of all students in terms of language learning. Participants placed the needs of migrant children to learn and use local minority languages at the centre of good practices rather than all students, schools and school communities. Although participants were able to recognise good practices, they were mostly related to language learning. However, LST extends on a broader area and highlights the importance of multilingualism and enhances the vital importance of it in all classrooms (Alisaari et al., 2019; Lucas & Villegas, 2013).

Besides identifying good practices, the pre-service teachers were also able to give proposals based on their experiences during their school placements and academic life. While giving these proposals the participants had mainly migrant students in mind. Thus, among their suggestions, making translations was a recurring answer, especially for newly arrived students. Additionally, to promote inclusion, the pre-service teachers believe that the students who have a different L1 could teach the rest of the class including the teacher a few words, expressions or curiosities about their language. Based on these proposals, the participants have associated Linguistically Sensitive Teaching with the inclusion of migrant students. It has to be stressed that all of those practical proposals and associations with the migrant students are in line with what LST means, even if LST is a wider approach (Council of Europe, 2016).

Furthermore, the pre-service teachers were aware of the relevance of different rhythms inside the classroom. The participants underlined the importance of respecting the paces of the students and adapting to the class, either by adapting the rhythm or the activities. However, the pre-service teachers believe that training is important to know how to react in front of the students. Thus, it can be concluded that training could have an important impact on the promotion of LST (Gorter & Arocena, 2020).

The second research question was formulated as follows:

What opportunities, threats and challenges do primary pre-service teachers foresee in the use of LST? The data reveal that first of all a concern was expressed regarding the relationship between LST and local minority and majority languages. The requirement of reaching proficiency in both local languages as well as at least in one foreign language (European Commission, 2006; Heziberri, 2016) is considered as an opportunity as well as a challenge. On the one hand, the fact that Basque is included in the curriculum is considered a very positive opportunity, as it ensures the transmission of this local minority language which could otherwise be endangered. However, on the other hand, the presence of majority languages in the educational system is perceived as a threat to dedicating enough time to the minority language. Participants indicate that indeed the hours that are dedicated to the majority languages in the curriculum cannot be dedicated to the minority language. Not only the limited number of hours, but also the fact that the minority language, and especially the regional dialects, are considered less of a value than the majority language plays an important role. Therefore, the majority language is considered a threat towards teaching the local minority language and even more the local dialect of that minority language.

Moreover, the pre-service teachers indicate that the teacher is a determining factor in Linguistically Sensitive Teaching. On the one hand, the teachers' lack of interest or their unwillingness to collaborate can be seen as a threat to carry out LST practices. Not only the lack of willingness to help students is mentioned but also the fear teachers might have towards the unknown. The fact that the teachers might not always see LST as beneficial for themselves or their students, might make them reluctant towards doing such an effort. A challenge is identified in the preparation of the teachers since the participants indicated that there does not exist much teaching about LST and as a consequence, teachers might not be fully aware of useful and enriching LST teaching methods. This is in line with earlier findings of Portolés and Martí (2018) who showed that for instance in the Valencian Autonomous Community still, many teachers lack knowledge of up-to-date literature on multilingualism. This lack of knowledge might make it difficult to make a teacher leave his or her comfort zone. Moreover, the fact that usually no more than one teacher is available per group due to limited human resources,

is seen as a threat to be able to carry out real linguistically sensitive practices. Despite all this, LST is considered as an enriching opportunity to promote students' inclusion and their learning, by supporting language awareness, in line with the main aim of the LST approach.

To conclude, we have observed that pre-service teachers have some basic ideas about what LST means and its opportunities, threats and challenges. However, the lack of depth is evident, which means that further work is needed to achieve a more linguistically sensitive and multilingual education.

It must be taken into account that the current study presents some limitations since only one context has been analysed and data of only a limited number of participants was gathered. Nonetheless, the study illustrates that the context of the BAC is linguistically complex, and consequently, it is necessary to continue reflecting and working on good practices and all the aspects that improve teaching. Furthermore, the results show the opinions and beliefs of the participants that contribute to the understanding of the perceptions of the future in-service teachers. More research is needed to define how to improve teacher training, how to raise awareness among professionals and how to expand multilingualism in a holistic way.

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**KALBAI JAUTRUS MOKYMAS DAUGIAKALBIAME KONTEKSTE:
BASKŲ AUTONOMINĖS BENDRUOMENĖS BŪSIMŪJŲ MOKYTOJŲ
IŽVALGOS**

Santrauka. Dėl daugiakalbės aplinkos ir migracijos auga daugiakalbių mokinių skaičius, todėl būtina atsižvelgti į mokinių kalbinius skirtumus ugdymo procese. Šio tyrimo tikslas – išnagrinėti kalbai jautrų mokymą (angl. LST) kaip galimą lingvistinį integracinį metodą ir išsiaiškinti, kaip LST suvokia būsimoji pradinė klasių mokytojai, pradedantys dirbti daugiakalbiame Baskų autonominės bendruomenės (angl. BAC) kontekste, kuriame į mokymo programą įtraukta ispanų kalba, mažumos kalba (baskų) ir užsienio kalba (anglų), o kai kurių mokinių gimtoji kalba gali būti dar kita, neįtraukta į mokymo programą. Metodologinė prieiga – tai kokybinis tyrimas, kurio duomenys buvo renkami pasitelkiant BAC būsimojų pradinė klasių mokytojų grupės rašytines refleksijas, tikslines (angl. *focus*) grupes ir stebėjimą. Rezultatai atskleidžia būsimojų mokytojų požiūrį į švietimo politiką, susijusią su kalbai jautraus mokymo praktika, gerąją praktiką, kuri buvo nustatyta stažuočių mokyklose metu, galimybes skatinti kalbai jautrų mokymą klasėje, mažumos baskų kalbos vaidmenį kalbai jautraus mokymo praktikoje, išvelgtas kalbai jautraus mokymo grėsmes, iššūkius ir galimybes. Daroma išvada, kad, nepaisant kai kurių pagrindinių LST sąvokų, ikimokyklinio ugdymo mokytojams trūksta išsamių žinių, – tai rodo, kad į pirminį mokytojų rengimą reikia įtraukti LST.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: kalbai jautrus mokymas; mažumų kalbos; migrantų kalbos; daugiakalbis ugdymas; pradinis ugdymas; mokytojų rengimas.