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ARE LITHUANIAN HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS READY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLURILINGUAL APPROACH?

Abstract. The growing global outreach of the EU, intensified immigration, and increasing linguistic and cultural diversity have significantly affected the European higher education (HE) landscape. As HE institutions become more multilingual and multicultural, educators are expected to develop competences in linguistic sensitivity and plurilingual practices. This study addresses two research questions: do Lithuanian HE teachers consider themselves prepared to implement the plurilingual approach in their teaching, and do teacher education programs in Lithuania equip educators to work in multilingual and multicultural settings? The research was conducted in two stages. Firstly, the data of 67 Lithuanian HE language and EMI teachers responding to the questionnaire-based survey (developed by the APATCHE project team) were analyzed. Secondly, a preliminary screening of university courses was carried out across three teacher education programs (Initial Teacher Education, Continuous Professional Development, and BA/MA Philology programs) in two major teacher education centers in Lithuania: Vilnius University (VU) and Vytautas Magnus University (VMU). The findings suggest that Lithuanian HE is making progress toward greater linguistic and cultural inclusiveness. Teachers demonstrated a favorable orientation toward plurilingual practices, as reflected in their self-assessments. However, the curriculum analysis revealed that current and prospective language teachers are being insufficiently prepared for the challenges of multilingual classrooms. These results highlight the need to reconceptualize teacher training programs and expand opportunities for in-service and continuous language program teachers to acquire competences to meet the challenges of multilingual and multicultural classrooms.

Keywords: language education; monolingual approach; multiculturalism; multilingualism; plurilingual approach; plurilingualism.

Introduction

Europe has for centuries been a vibrant place of rich cultural and linguistic diversity that has invariably served it well in fostering its economic, cultural, social, and educational development. The increasing plurality of the EU population has been vividly evidenced by the Eurostat data: over the last decade, immigration into the EU has been steadily growing from fewer than 2 million in 2013 to around 5 million registered in 2023[1]. In 2024, the EU had 29 million, or 6.4%, of non-EU citizens and 44.7 million, or 9.9%, of its residents born outside the EU, which demonstrates a 2.3 million increase in comparison with the year 2023[2]. The EU multiculturalism and multilingualism since its establishment has been considered one of its pillars towards prosperity and shared societal wellbeing, as set in the EU seminal motto "Unity in diversity". Nonetheless, the values coded in the moto and the EU cultural and linguistic diversity policies[3] have been continuously facing challenges as to their implementation.

Along the same lines, the landscape of Higher Education (HE) has changed immensely as a natural consequence of increasing expansion of global academic cooperation and internationalization of education – student and staff mobility, integration of foreign exchange and international students as well as free and forced migration. HE institutions aim to meet these challenges by creating inclusive global communities for their diverse, multilingual and multicultural student, teacher, and researcher populations as well as by building European University alliances with multilingualism high in their agendas.

The present study was inspired and facilitated by the EU funded strategic partnership project *APATCHE – Adding Plurilingual Approaches to language Teacher Competences in Higher Education*[4] that aimed at collecting

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[1] EU population diversity by citizenship and country of birth, https://ec.europa.eu/ eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_population_diversity_by_citizenship_ and_country_of_birth
[2] See previous footnote
[3] The European Language Policy, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/ 142/language-policy
[4] APATCHE, http://www.apatche.eu/

empirical data on language use and awareness in higher education in Europe, examining HE language or EMI teachers' self-perceived knowledge, skills, values and attitudes with regard to the plurilingual approach, identifying their needs, and creating a self-study online course for HE teacher professional development (Peeters, 2023; Mačianskienė & Peeters, 2024). Pursuant to the conceptual foundation of the project, we embark upon the present study with the following research rationale:

- HEIs are increasingly becoming multilingual and multicultural due to the experience brought by the incoming and outgoing students and teachers, reflecting the composition of contemporary societies of today's globalized world. However, is this linguistic and cultural diversity successfully incorporated and exploited as a meaningful resource in HEI classrooms?

- HE teachers need to handle the challenges created by higher institution internationalization, to foster and develop a multicultural ethos in their classrooms as a prerequisite for the EU diversity and inclusion policies. Thus, it is important to develop HE teachers' competences, empowering them to use the plurilingual approach that values all languages and language varieties that students know in the class (native, local, learnt) in teaching any subject at a HEI. Nevertheless, are HE teachers adequately equipped with the necessary savoir-être and savoir-faire of linguistic and cultural sensitivity to be able to embark on such a task and do the curricula of the teacher education programs contain the courses where the relevant competences are developed?

Research questions:

- Do Lithuanian HE teachers regard themselves as prepared to implement the plurilingual approach working in multilingual and multicultural classrooms?

- Do language teacher education programs (pre-service / in-service) publicly state that they provide training for prospective language teachers to meet the challenges of multilingual and multicultural settings?

Objectives:

- to conduct a situation analysis of HE teachers' self-assessed knowledge, skills, needs, attitudes, and values, focusing on the application of the plurilingual approach;

- to perform a preliminary screening of the curricula of language teacher training programs in two main language teacher training centers (Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) and Vilnius University (VU)) that offer teacher education in Lithuania focusing on the publicly stated offering of courses on *plurilingualism, multilingualism, and/or multiculturalism* and their derivatives.

Theoretical Framework

The very notions of *plurality* and *diversity* are sometimes difficult to conceptualize in academic discourse, let alone be willingly embraced by the public. To put it in the words of one of the most prominent scholars of plurilingual practices, Piccardo, "there is an intrinsic difficulty in thinking about, and even more in accepting, plurality and diversity" (2018, p. 211). Thus, approaches to handle diversity by different societies may have been quite versatile extending from the jubilant espousal and exploitation of its various benefits to anxiety and rejection with an ensuing strong need for its control, as further exposed by Piccardo:

> On the one hand, there is the idea that multiplicity and diversity can increase the chances of social and economic progress and that socialization through integration in educational and occupational contexts can absorb newcomers, even when they retain a distinct identity and/or community. On the other hand, the fear exists that diversity will dilute, deracinate, and alienate communities and individuals (Piccardo 2018, pp. 208–209).

To set the theoretical framework for the present study it is highly important to conceptualize three fundamental terms, pivotal in the contemporary discourses of language policy, practices, and education, namely, *multilingualism*, *plurilingualism,* and *translanguaging.* The three

concepts, showing some overlap in their semantic scope and pragmatic usage, have nonetheless accumulated some essential divergence in the philosophical and attitudinal stance that is permeated by their very choice. As synthesized in CEFR, the concept of *multilingualism* is most generally defined as the coexistence of languages at the societal or individual level where different languages are delineated as separate and somewhat static entities (Council of Europe, 2020). Defining multilingualism in the same vein, Bak and Mehmedbegovic-Smith (2017) add that the aim of learning languages is to achieve "the idealized competency of the native speaker" in each of the different languages that coexist alongside each other, but separately, within individuals or societies (p. 3). Differently, *plurilingualism* captures the holistic nature of language learners' linguistic repertoires, sees learners as social agents in developing these repertoires and stresses dynamic use, awareness and experience of multiple languages or varieties (Piccardo, 2019; Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30). It acknowledges the partial knowledge of a language as well as flexibility and creativity in using the plurilingual repertoire in our individual way. As Mehmedbegovic-Smith and Bak (2019, cf. Bak and Mehmedbegovic-Smith, 2022) state, "the concept of plurilingualism provides a true qualitative leap in terms of our understanding of language (2019, para. 7)". The plurilingual approach "emphasises the development of effective communication skills which draw on all of our linguistic and cultural experiences in an interactive way" (Mehmedbegovic-Smith and Bak, 2019, para. 6) and is seen as a life-long activity.

Translanguaging was introduced as a pedagogical concept in bilingual education where two "languages are used in a dynamic and functionally integrated manner to organize and mediate mental processes in understanding, speaking, literacy, and, not least, learning" (Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012, p. 641). As such, it primarily focused on language production and communicative needs in multilingual general education classrooms, especially in bilingual contexts (Garcia & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2018). The advocates of the plurilingual approach consider translanguaging to be one of the plurilingual strategies used by plurilingual speakers in communication or teachers while embracing the plurilingual approach.

The three terms are seen to differ in the attitudinal stance that they convey. For instance, in her discussion on the preference of the term multilingualism vis-à-vis plurilingualism, Piccardo observes that multilingualism is still a preferable term among scholars from the English-speaking realm even when they adhere to the holistic and dynamic approach to individual linguistic repertoires: "the term multilingualism to refer to all forms of linguistic plurality has remained centre stage and scholars writing in English have decided to use the term multilingualism even when they recognize the conceptual differences between plurilingualism and multilingualism (Piccardo, 2019, p. 185). As she further adds, the scholars invent various collocations such as "active multilingualism", "dynamic model of multilingualism", etc. to make the term multilingualism serve for the conceptual scope that plurilingualism was introduced to express, i.e. dynamic and fluid exploitation of linguistic resources (Piccardo, 2019, p. 186).

Similarly to Piccardo (2019, Piccardo et al., 2022) and Galante (2022), we conceptualize plurilingualism and the plurilingual approach as a complex phenomenon, broader and more complete in scope than similar, and sometimes seen as interchangeable, concepts like code-switching or translanguaging. While the latter two are often confined to communicative and/ or pedagogical practice mostly related to bilingualism, the conceptualization of plurilingualism extends from the field of language policy and ideological stance of inclusivity to plurality of linguistic approaches and diverse linguistic repertoires including but not limited to solely communicative function. Galante (2022) captures a very important attitudinal divergence between the concepts of plurilingualism and translanguaging: seeing translanguaging as language mixing to the extent of such fluidity where the very naming of languages loses significance, which can be especially harmful to minority or immigrant languages, as they would be primarily threatened to be submerged by the "big" or dominant languages.

On the contrary, plurilingualism comprises a very important value-based philosophical stance that allows for a holistic and inclusive understanding of plurilingual competences focusing not only on the knowledge and the practical skills of the exploitation of one's language repertoire, but also on nurturing the pluralistic attitude where every language

in one's repertoire stands as a recognizable, acknowledgeable, and equally valuable component. The notion of plurilingualism is at the core of the linguistic ideology of the Council of Europe, presented as follows: "Plurilingualism is at once connected to the legal protection of minority groups, the preservation of Europe's linguistic heritage, the development of individuals' language skills and the creation of a feeling of belonging to Europe in the context of democratic citizenship" (Beacco & Byram, 2007, p. 31).

The search for harmonious diversity has always been on the agenda of the EU language policy that has consistently paired linguistic diversity with the notion of inclusion as well as with multilingual science communication and knowledge transfer (Conceição, 2020). The obvious need for examining the development of HE language teachers' competences and proficiency has been witnessed by a significant growth in the relevant studies and publications. In their study of teachers' attitudes toward plurilingual instruction in one Canadian university, Galante et al. (2020) voice the complexity of the implementation of the plurilingual approach in a university classroom and stress the need to give the university teachers more training to improve their relevant competences: "Although recent calls have been made for a plurilingual shift in language learning, particularly in countries with linguistically and culturally diverse populations, teachers are still unsure about how to apply plurilingualism in the classroom" (Galante et al., 2020, p. 980). Given the discussion above, a plurilingual approach in HE is inevitable as plurilingual students learning in today's schools that increasingly become multilingual and multicultural require us to take their languages and cultures into consideration while teaching languages and other subjects.

Methodology

Operational Definitions

In this study, the participants' familiarity with the plurilingual approach (knowledge and awareness, skills, attitudes and values) is

measured by a participant's score on Likert-type questions. *Knowledge and awareness* of the plurilingual approach is measured by the participants' positive view to the use of more than one language while teaching a foreign language or using all languages present in class and agreeing with the notion that mediation is an important plurilingual skill. Participants' endorsement of native speaker teachers as the ideal model for foreign language teaching is interpreted as a rejection of the plurilingual approach. In the same vein, participants' support for immersion in foreign language teaching or teaching entirely in that language and support of the notion that the use of more than one language confuses students is interpreted as a lack of alignment with plurilingual principles.

The participants' *skills* to use the plurilingual approach are identified by their level of agreement that interaction and mediation are as important as writing and speaking, and that they involve these communicative language activities while teaching languages; that they also compare languages and involve more than one language at a time; that their scientific teaching includes more than one language, and that students should learn how to switch between languages when appropriate and learn how to communicate scientific knowledge in more than one language. The research participants' expressed necessity to receive training to improve their own plurilingual skills and skills on how to improve plurilingual skills of their students is also considered as their self-assessment of possession or a lack of plurilingual skills.

The participants' *attitudes and values* as part of plurilingual competence are measured by their scores to questions on respecting and valuing linguistic and cultural differences between students, on teaching students to respect and value each other's linguistic and cultural differences, their approval that learning and teaching in different languages increases students' motivation and well-being, their agreement that in their field of scientific expertise other languages than English are needed, and the level of disagreement with the ideas that plurilingual approaches in HE are not feasible because teachers are not trained for it, and that EMI is an important asset for all students, national and international.

The *preparedness* to teach in multilingual and multicultural classrooms is measured by the participants' familiarity with the plurilingual approach and by the number of courses that contain *plurilingual, multilingual, multicultural* and their derivatives in the titles and descriptions of courses offered in two main language Teacher Training Centers in Lithuania, considering them as potential opportunities provided for prospective teachers to familiarize themselves with the plurilingual approach and enable them to use it in their language teaching, working in multilingual and multicultural classrooms. Conversely, courses in monolingual didactics are considered as indicators of a lack of focus on plurilingual didactics.

Research Design

The present mixed-methods study (a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods) proceeded in two research stages over the period of 2022–2025 and used the sequential explanatory design. In September-October of 2022, the quantitative survey analysis of HE teachers' self-assessed plurilingual competences and practice in the application of the plurilingual approach in Lithuanian HEIs was performed as part of the study conducted in the above described APATCHE project (Research Stage 1). We aimed to identify if higher education teachers are aware of, know and use the plurilingual approach in teaching languages or teaching their subjects through English as a medium of instruction (EMI). For our research purposes, the data of the Lithuanian cohort of the study was collected, with a purpose to identify if Lithuanian HE teachers are prepared to put the plurilingual approach into practice and work in multilingual and multicultural classrooms.

In 2024-2025, a preliminary screening of the course titles and course descriptions of language teacher education programmes with regard to the development of plurilingual competences at two main teacher education centres in Lithuania was performed (Research Stage 2), to examine if the curricula of language teacher education programs (pre-service/in-service) include courses on *plurilingualism, multilingualism* and/or *multiculturalism*, thus, providing opportunities for prospective teachers to prepare to work in multilingual and multicultural settings. As the course descriptions were found

to be publicly available only at one university's website (VMU), a proxy measure of content was used analyzing only the titles of courses offered at the other university (VU).

Population and Sampling

The purposive non-probability sampling was employed for the survey. The participants were selected based on the following specific characteristics relevant to the research aim and research questions: they were higher education teachers who teach either languages or content subjects through English as a medium of instruction. As all five partners of the APATCHE project were universities, the survey was distributed among the partners and extended outside the partnership to each university's partners, associations, and other higher education institutions. The total sample size was 450 respondents to the overall APATCHE survey, and 67 participants (17%) of the Lithuania sample chosen for this research analysis.

During Research Stage 2, two main teacher education centers (VMU and VU) were chosen to identify if the universities publicly state that they provide training for prospective language teachers to meet the challenges of multilingual and multicultural settings. The preliminary screening of 2562 courses in 56 programs offered for pre-service and in-service teachers were analyzed in three groups of study programs: BA, MA, and Continuous Professional Development levels.

Ethical Considerations

The Survey used in Research Stage 1 was prepared by all APATCHE partners, reviewed and approved by the independent University of Antwerp Ethics Committee for the Social Sciences and Humanities, stored on a secure drive at the University of Antwerp, and protected in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). No measures were taken in terms of ethical considerations in Research Stage 2 as publicly available websites of language education programs were analyzed.

Informed Consent

While administering the survey, research participants received an information sheet and the consent form, by means of downloadable PDF forms. They agreed to the terms and conditions explained therein and provided their consent to participate in the study voluntarily, having understood the goal for which the data were collected, processed, and used within the framework of the study, and that the data would be processed with strict confidentiality. They also agreed to the privacy policy, including the Qualtrics.com privacy policy, as described in the information sheet for participants. The participants were informed that participation in the survey posed no physical or mental risks but provided with benefits instead – by enhancing their awareness of plurilingualism and linguistic sensitivity (APATCHE, 2023).

Data Collection Methods

Instrument

The structured questionnaire survey with Likert-scale items and demographic questions, prepared and completed in the APATCHE project, was comprised of four open and 66 closed questions clustered into five structural parts, covering the topics from participants' work and linguistic profiles as well as their students' linguistic profiles to their own plurilingual competences and familiarity with the plurilingual approach. All the questions were compulsory. Multiple submissions were prevented, but the IP addresses were not saved for data analysis. Downloadable PDF versions of the information sheet and the consent form were available in the introductory question for the participants. The survey was prepared in English and translated into seven more languages and was carried out in all project partner countries. For this study, only the Lithuanian sample was extracted that contains data of the participants who grew up and/or work and live in Lithuania ($N = 67$, 17% of the total sample). Their background information: degree, work profile (position, work experience, work in another country experience), gender, and

linguistic profile (their overall proficiency in foreign languages and the use of languages while teaching) served as independent variables trying to determine the research participants' readiness to use the plurilingual approach in their teaching.

A content analysis applying a keyword filter was used to identify if universities publicly state that they offer courses on the plurilingual approach in the curricula of the programs for in-service and pre-service language teachers. A text search was used to scan the publicly available textual data (course titles) provided in the programs chosen for the analysis, identifying and counting every instance of the pre-defined keywords: "plurilingualism", "multilingualism", "multiculturalism" and their derivatives ("plurilingual", "multilingual", "multicultural"). Next, a content analysis applying semantic coding was used, having identified the titles where the topic was implicitly embedded in the curriculum rather than explicitly. Finally, for deeper content analysis, course descriptions available at one university's website were also analyzed, applying semantic coding.

Data Analysis

In Research Stage 1, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) data analysis software was used to process, analyze and interpret the research findings, aiming to determine statistical relationships between participants' self-assessment of plurilingual competences (dependent variables) and the participants' profile (independent variables): participants' work experience (two categories: 19 years or fewer and 20 years and more), level of education (two categories: with or without PhD) and teaching domain (two categories: foreign language or EMI classes). Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) were used to summarize data and ANOVA statistical test was performed to compare the means of two groups to determine if independent variables (participants' work abroad, their work experience, educational background and teaching field) have significant effects on dependent variables.

In Research Stage 2, a preliminary screening of university courses in three programs was performed: Initial Teacher Education programs (providing

BA in education and teacher qualification), Continuous Education Development programs (providing teacher qualification), and Philology (BA and MA) programs. The purpose was to filter the titles of the courses offered in these programs, based on the exact presence and absence of the keywords of *plurilingualism, multilingualism, multiculturalism*, and their derivatives (*plurilingual, multilingual,* and *multicultural*). If the keyword was in the title of the course, it was considered a highly reliable or explicit indicator of the existence of courses that prepare teachers to work in multilingual and multicultural settings and employ the plurilingual approach. To take context into account and not to miss relevant information if a related word or concept is used in the title instead of the exact keyword, it was decided to include the titles, the content of which may very likely include and discuss *plurilingualism, multilingualism, multiculturalism* and prepare teachers to work in today's multilingual and multicultural schools. Thus, two groups of titles were collected for further analysis:

- Group 1: Titles with keywords stated explicitly.
- Group 2: Titles with implied keywords (related terms).

Then, course titles on monolingual didactics were also included in the analysis as potential indicators of a lack of focus on the plurilingual approach. Finally, publicly available course descriptions (VMUc, 2025) were analyzed to identify cases where the plurilingual approach or a related topic was implicitly embedded in the course topics.

Results and Discussion

Research Stage 1

Demographic Analysis of Research Participants

The participants of the Lithuanian sample (*N* = 67) include foreign language or EMI teachers from various Lithuanian HEIs and is strongly dominated by female members (86%) (Fig. 1.1). In terms of their work experience, the participants cluster over the whole spectrum of year

categories; however, the largest group (34%) consists of highly experienced university teachers with more than 25 years of work experience and only 4% belong to the group with less than five years of experience. The majority of the participants hold the position of assistant teacher with or without PhD or assistant/ associate professor (in total 43% of participants with PhD and 57% with MA degree). Over two-thirds (63%) of the participants do not have long-term international work experience.

Figure 1.1

Participants' Background Information

In addition to participants' general social attributes, we investigated their linguistic profile, i.e. the linguistic competences they have at their disposal in addition to their L1 as it directly relates to their potential to apply the plurilingual approach in their teaching practice (Fig.1.2).

Figure 1.2

Participants' Linguistic Profile (in Addition to L1)
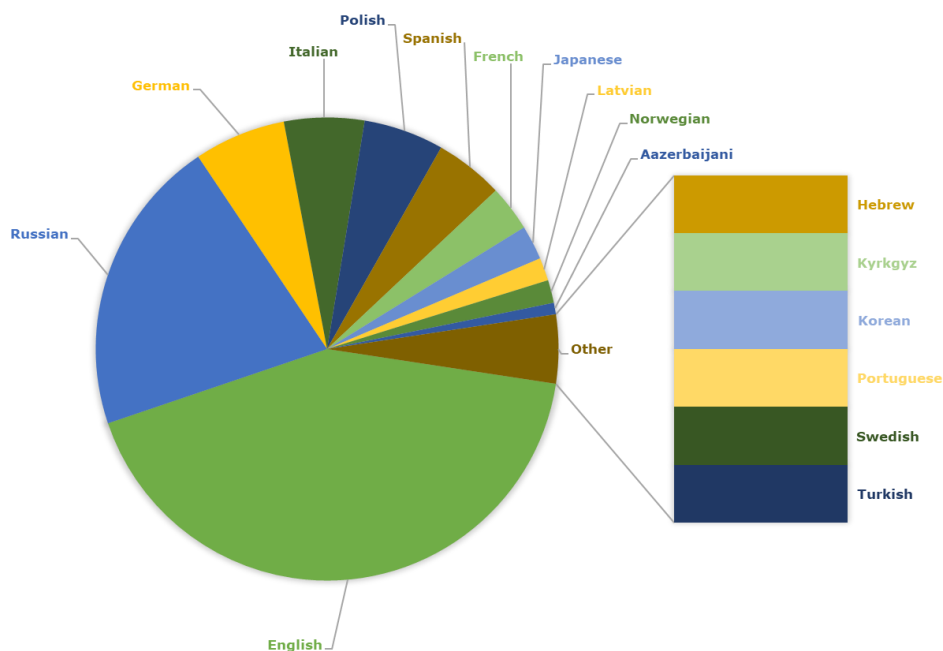
When asked what other languages, apart from their L1, HE teachers employ in their personal or professional life, as can be expected, the substantial majority (79%) declared English (Fig. 1.2). Among them, one third (34%) indicated that they use only English as their additional language for personal and professional communication, while almost half of the participants (45%) revealed that they use English and other languages. The remaining minority (21%) use other languages rather than English for their daily and work communication. This could be seen as a disturbing factor providing that English functions as the unavoidable working language in academic and scientific communication and these teachers could be left in some professional isolation. Given that 34% of participants are senior HE teachers with over 25 years of work experience (Fig. 1.1), it is highly likely that their language repertoire encompasses Russian instead of English which is a typical L2 among relatively younger Lithuanian citizens. Russian is indicated by a similar percentage of the sample (39%). Further, in

the linguistic profile of the participants, we find much smaller percentages of other languages (3–12%) which include the major European languages, German, Italian, Spanish and French, the neighbor languages, Polish and Latvian, and one of the main Asian languages – Japanese. There are also single cases of other less widely learnt languages, making the total number of languages spoken by the sample teachers amount to 17.

## HE Teachers' Self-Assessed Competence to Apply Plurilingual Approach

Following the widely accepted composition of a competence, we aimed at a multifaceted evaluation of HE language and EMI teachers' preparation to apply plurilingual approaches at tertiary level by analyzing their self-assessed (1) knowledge and awareness, (2) skills as well as (3) attitudes and values regarding plurilingualism and plurilingual practices. For all three components, the participants of the survey were asked to indicate their perception of the given statements on a Likert scale from 'completely agree' to 'completely disagree' with a 'do not know' option. Figure 2 displays the distribution of the statements on (1) *plurilingual knowledge and awareness*, according to the participants' approval from the most acceptable at the top to the least acceptable at the bottom. The results of the other two components, namely, (2) *plurilingual skills* and (3) *attitudes and values* will be presented in Figure 3 and Figure 4 respectively and discussed thereafter.

The assessment of *plurilingual knowledge and awareness* demonstrates participants' overall positive disposition towards plurilingual practices in HE language classes. Interestingly, the statement that has received most approval (79% agreed completely and slightly) relates to participants' assumption that they still lack adequate understanding of plurilingualism, which not only indicates the high majority's strong approval of the use of the plurilingual approach in tertiary education, but also reveals their belief in the necessity for further professional development in that field ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 1.13$). Similarly, participants' stronger or weaker support manifests through their choices for statements that capture the main features

of plurilingual competence. Namely, around half of the participants express a strong agreement with the idea that at least three foreign languages should be included in the repertoire of all HE students (M = 3.9, SD = 1.2), and that mediation makes an important plurilingual skill (M = 4.45, SD = 0.88). Half of the participants express stronger or weaker approval of the proposition that using more than one language in a foreign language classroom improves proficiency in all languages involved (M = 3.61, SD = 1.03), which could be students' home languages or other languages in their repertoire. At the same time, we can observe some disapproval of statements that could be linked to monolingualism; namely, around 40% of the participants convey their complete or slight disagreement with such statements that teaching a foreign language should be done exclusively in the target language (M = 2.54, SD = 1.41) and that using more than one language in a foreign language classroom would confuse students (M = 2.68, SD = 1.36). It is indeed up to the mastery of applying the plurilingual approach by the teacher that could ensure that such propositions do not cause issues in multilingual HE classrooms and for that teachers must be adequately prepared.

Figure 2

*Assessment of Lithuanian HE Teachers' Plurilingual Knowledge and Awareness*
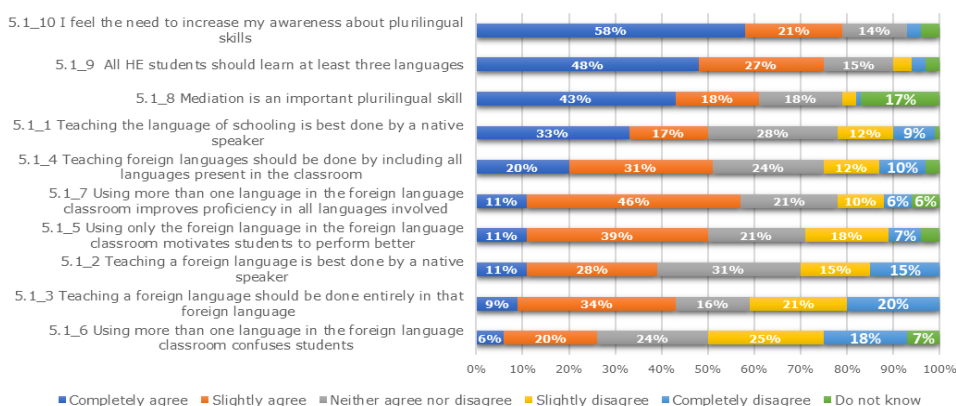
While demonstrating much appraisal of plurilingualism in HE, the distribution of participants' answers also shows a considerable split of opinions, which signals the lack of understanding of how plurilingual practices could be

applied and enhanced HE processes and the classroom atmosphere.

This is particularly evident through a rather high percentage (14%–31%) of answers failing to declare a positive or negative stance and even 17% conveying the lack of knowledge regarding mediation as a plurilingual skill (*M* = 4.45*, SD* = 0.89). Participants seem to also highly diverge in their view on the role of a native speaker in a language classroom (*M* = 3.05*, SD* = 1.02) and whether using more than one language in a language classroom could confuse students (*M* = 2.66*, SD* = 1.15). The latter result especially alludes to the lack of robust competence to apply the plurilingual approach, namely, to effectively exploit the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of contemporary HE classrooms.

Figure 3

HE Teachers' Assessment of Plurilingual Skills
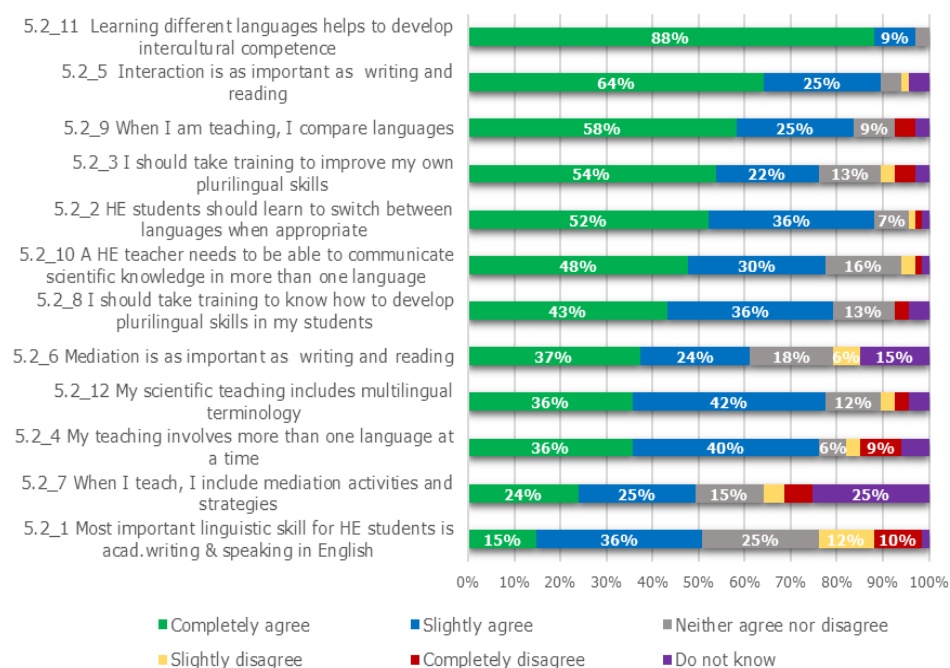
For more insights into HE language and EMI teachers' self-assessed plurilingual competence, ANOVA test for statistically significant differences between means was performed to find out if there is any dependence of

participants' work experience, education level (MA or PhD) and teaching domain on their self-assessment of *plurilingual skills*. Statistically significant differences were found between the groups of participants with the longer (20 and more years) and shorter work experience (19 and fewer years) with regard to their support to the idea that mediation is an important plurilingual skill (F = 5.32, *p-value* = .025) (i.e. more preference for plurilingualism among more experienced teachers) as well as the assumption that teaching a foreign language should be done entirely in that foreign language (F = 5.97, *p-value* = .017) (i.e. more preference for monolingualism among less experienced teachers). Likewise, it was discovered that HE teachers of languages show significantly more endorsement of statements declaring the plurilingual approach, namely, that teaching foreign languages should be done by including all languages present in the classroom (F = 9.27, *p-value* = .003), that all HE students should learn at least three languages (F = 7.356, *p-value* = .009) and that HE teachers themselves need to increase their awareness of plurilingual skills (i.e. more preference for plurilingualism) (F = 10.95, *p-value* = .002*)*.

In contrast, EMI teachers gave significantly more support to statements that show more preference for monolingualism; namely, they maintain that teaching a foreign language is best done by a native speaker (F = 7.08, *p-value* = .010) and that using more than one language in the foreign language classroom confuses students (F = 6.95, *p-value* = .011). Thus, it can be concluded that participants with 20 and more years of work experience and those who teach foreign languages have more knowledge and awareness of the plurilingual approach and practices than those whose experience is shorter and who teach other subjects through the medium of English as an additional language. The academic degree (PhD) does not seem to be such a delineating criterion as participants without PhD are significantly more supportive of the idea that teaching foreign languages should involve all languages present in the classroom (F = 7.38, *p-value* = .009), which is an important component of the plurilingual approach, but participants with PhD are significantly linked to the idea that at least three languages should be learnt by students in HE (F = 8.1, *p-value* = .006), which also pertains to plurilingualism.

The assessment of the significance of *plurilingual skills* (see Figure 4) further corroborates the finding that HE teachers place an overall high value on plurilingualism. Importantly, the strongest approval (97% and 89% of complete and slight agreement) is granted to the statements that are related not to the plurilingual approach *per se*, but to the highly demanded 21st century soft skills, namely, intercultural competence (M = 4.85, SD = 0.44) and interaction (M = 4.58, SD = 0.67), which coincides with the findings by Sarwari et al. (2024). Moreover, strong support (83% of complete and slight agreement) is given to the proposition that teachers compare languages in their teaching practice, which demonstrates participants' acknowledgement of their plurilingual skills. Making use of similarities and differences between languages or, in other words, exploiting a plurilingual skill, cross-linguistic comparison, is an important component of the plurilingual approach, supported by many researchers (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; Cummins, 2019, 2022; Woll & Paquet, 2021); it is also part of the definition of the plurilingual competence in the CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020). Another statement with an equally high positive evaluation, namely, the belief that HE students should learn to switch between languages when appropriate (88% who agreed with the statement), likewise pertains to a successful exploitation of plurilingual competence and interaction skills. This finding mirrors, in its high positive score, the result for the statement that all HE students should learn at least three languages (75% of the participants, two-thirds of whom agree completely) and reinforces the participants' overall favorable stance on plurilingualism.

Similarly to the results of the analysis of *plurilingual knowledge and awareness* discussed above, the results of participants' self-assessment of their *plurilingual skills* show strong support for self-reflection and the need for professional development, claiming that they should take training to improve their own plurilingual skills (53% agree completely and 22% slightly agree (Fig. 3)) as well as training to improve their competence to develop plurilingual skills of their students (43% and 38% respectively). The same support is granted to the statement that HE teachers need to be able to communicate scientific knowledge in more than one language (78% agreed, including 48% who agreed completely). All statements receive over three

quarters of complete or slight agreement. Another parallel with the discussion on *plurilingual knowledge and awareness* is the concept of mediation, which is highlighted as an important skill of plurilingual practices, but at the same time pinpointed as the least recognizable one (with the highest percentage of *Do not know* answers): i.e., the statement that HE teachers include mediation activities and strategies in their teaching practice is endorsed by half of the participants (48% with only 24% who agree completely), but one fourth of the respondents cannot give an evaluating response to this statement at all. One more similarity to the patterns seen among the results of *plurilingual knowledge and awareness* is the highest number of disagreeing responses received by the statements related to a monolingual approach. In this case, it is the dominance of English in academic discourse, namely, the statement that the most important linguistic skill for HE students is academic writing and speaking in English. As one fourth of the participants disagreed with this idea it allows us to see them as supporters of the plurilingual approach.

The ANOVA One-way analysis of participants' self-evaluation of their *plurilingual skills* shows similar tendencies as in the discussion of *plurilingual knowledge and awareness*. Statistically significant differences were determined between two independent variables, i.e. the *HE language teacher* and *HE EMI teacher groups*, in terms of their agreement with the statements that capture important plurilingual practices, such as mediation, inter-comprehension, and others. These include the statements, firstly, focusing on participants' plurilingual practices, i.e., that their teaching practices include using mediation activities and strategies ($F = 12.3$, *p-value* = .001) as well as using cross-linguistic comparison ($F = 38.92$, *p-value* = .000) and exploitation of more than one language at a time ($F = 12.52$, *p*-value = .001); secondly, focusing on participants' own competences, i.e., that they should take training to improve their own plurilingual skills ($F = 5.51$, *p-value* = .02) and to improve their competences to develop plurilingual skills of their students ($F = 5.73$, *p-value* = .02); and thirdly, focusing on students' competence development, i.e., that learning different languages helps to develop HE students' intercultural competence ($F = 7.82$, *p*-value = .007), that they should learn to switch between languages when it is appropriate ($F = 9.95$, *p-value* = 0.002), and that mediation is as

important for HE students as the skills of writing and reading (F = 4.06, *p-value* = .049). Thus, in total, eight proposed statements that especially accentuate plurilingual practices have been endorsed by the study participants who teach languages (much more than by EMI teachers; the differences between the results are statistically significant). This is a very much anticipated result that gives hope for more inclusive and diverse plurilingual competence development at tertiary level in language classes.

Another similarity with the previous discussion of *plurilingual knowledge and awareness* (Fig. 3) is the statistically significant difference found between different groups with regard to work experience (19 years or less and 20 years and more) expressing their appreciation of mediation (i.e. more preference for plurilingualism) (F = 5.19, *p*-value = .027). On the other hand, there is also a significant link between the opinion of participants with a shorter period of international experience (19 years and fewer) and the acknowledgment of one's need for further competence improvement in order to know how to develop students' plurilingual skills, which is the declaration of the lack of plurilingual skills and at the same time could be seen as the endorsement of plurilingualism. The academic degree in this case seems to be more indicative of the preference for the plurilingual approach than in the case of the statements regarding *knowledge and awareness* (Fig. 2). Namely, there is a statistically significant difference between the opinion of the participants holding the PhD academic degree and those with MA degree in their endorsement of the statements that learning different languages helps to develop intercultural competence (F = 4.64, p-*value* = .35), and that HE students should learn to switch between languages when appropriate (F = 4.21, *p-value* = .45), which highlight the importance of HE students' plurilingual competence development. Meanwhile, participants without PhD split in their opinions: they significantly adhere to the proposition that the most important linguistic skill for HE students is academic writing and speaking in English *(F = 8.79, p-value = .004)*, which alludes to the dominance of English possibly at the expense of other languages, but at the same time support a feature of the plurilingual approach, namely, the comparison of languages in their teaching practices (F = 4.65, *p-value* = .035).

Figure 4

HE Teachers' Assessment of the Attitudes and Values of the Plurilingual Approach
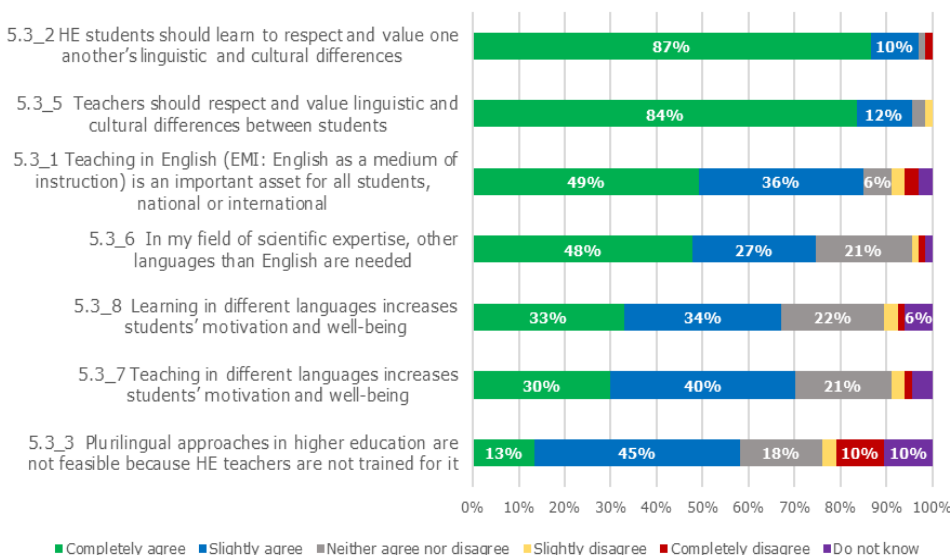
As elaborated in the theory section of this article, the conceptualization of plurilingualism encompasses not only the element of language practices and activities, i.e., the dynamic and fluid exploitation of one's linguistic repertoire but also an important aspect of an attitudinal stance, i.e. the appreciation of a complex and inclusive nature of a plurilingual competence where every linguistic variety of that repertoire is recognized and valued. Therefore, it was especially important to analyze participants' *attitudes and values* (Fig. 4) towards plurilingualism and their opinion as to how much plurilingualism is a value in HE education in Lithuania. Comparably to the assessment of *plurilingual skills* (Fig. 3), the highest value is assigned by most of the participants to statements related to cultural and linguistic diversity as well as mutuality and tolerance in HE classrooms (87% and 84% of complete agreement to the relevant statements). Another similarity is strong approval to the personal hunch to improve their plurilingual competence as is demonstrated by almost half of participants completely agreeing with the statement that it is necessary to have competences of languages other than English in their field of scientific

expertise. One third of the participants express complete agreement and a slightly higher number of them show their tentative agreement with the statements that link teaching and learning languages to students' increased motivation and well-being. However, assessing the last three statements, the number of the undecided participants is the largest (21–22%) in comparison to the number expressed about other statements, which suggests that it is necessary to analyze this link in greater detail. Finally, it is important to pay close attention to the feasibility of the plurilingual approach in HE. Formulated from a negative standpoint, namely, that the plurilingual approach in HE is not feasible and that this is the outcome of the lack of teachers' relevant competences, it has received slight or complete endorsement by more than half of the participants, with almost one third being undecided. This finding might signal not only the need for the relevant professional training, but also the insufficiency of openness and appreciation of diversity in Lithuanian HE.

The ANOVA test of HE teachers' *attitudes and values* of the plurilingual approach (Fig. 4) yielded less insight than in the case of the previous two categories (assessing the participants' *plurilingual knowledge and awareness* (Fig. 2) and *plurilingual skills* (Fig. 3)). Significant differences were found comparing the responses of participants who teach languages and those who teach EMI courses in their attitude towards respect and value of linguistic and cultural differences between students ($F = 4.96$, *p-value* = 0.03), where language teachers agreed with the statement more than EMI teachers. The same findings were obtained comparing the responses of teachers having different academic degrees; here two statements that directly relate to teachers' sensitivity towards students' feeling of inclusion were determined; namely, that it is important to show respect to students' linguistic and cultural background and that multilingual teaching increases students' motivation and well-being ($F = 3.99$, *p-value* = .050 and $F = 4.87$, *p-value* = .031). As a tentative argumentation for such a finding, one could suggest that teachers with a lower academic degree, such as an MA, have more inclination to see the whole picture of the classroom rather than strictly concentrate on academic achievements.

Research Stage 2

According to the Lithuanian Teacher Education Regulations (Lithuanian Minister of Education, Science, and Sport, 2019), teacher qualification can be acquired in four routes: (1) upon completion of a HE first-cycle study program in pedagogy, which includes a pedagogy, teaching subject, and/or pedagogical specification modules; (2) upon completion of a first-cycle university study program in a field other than pedagogy, which includes a pedagogy study module (60 study credits); (3) after completing a pedagogy study module (60 ECTS) alongside a HE first-cycle study program in a field other than pedagogy; (4) upon completion of a professional study program in pedagogy (120 ECTS), based on 60 ECTS pedagogy and 60 ECTS teaching subject studies (open to persons with HE degree).

Abundance of materials have been created on plurilingual approach by various projects run at the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (ECML) to help prepare language teachers to work in multilingual and multicultural secondary education environment. HE Teacher Training Centers could benefit from using this material in the relevant study programs and courses[5].

Analysis of Initial Teacher Education Programs

Aiming at identifying if future language teachers, i.e. students studying in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs (Routes 1, 2, 3) and graduates or teachers studying in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs (Route 4) are acquainted with the plurilingual approach and prepared to employ it in their future language teaching in multilingual and multicultural settings, the analysis of language teacher education programs in two main Teacher Training Centers in Lithuania (Vilnius University (VU) and Vytautas Magnus University (VMU)) was performed in 2024–2025.

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[5] ECML projects that offer teacher training materials for the plurilingual approach: *Language Educator Awareness (LEA). Plurilingual and pluricultural awareness in language teacher education: A training kit* https://www.ecml.at/Portals/1/documents/ECML-resources/LEA-EN.pdf); ConBaT+ (Content Based Teaching + Plurilingual/cultural Awareness) https://conbat.ecml.at/en/.

The keywords *plurilingual, multilingual, multicultural, linguistic diversity* (and their derivatives) were chosen as the indicators of the topics related to our research aim, and the titles of the study subjects (offered as compulsory and optional) in teacher education programs were filtered by the above-mentioned keywords. In addition, BA and MA philology programs were analyzed in both institutions with the same purpose, as philology program graduates can also be acquainted with the plurilingual approach and prepared to work in multilingual and multicultural settings during their theoretical and practical studies. To work at school, they need to complete professional pedagogical training.

All ITE Subject Pedagogy programs (study field/ branch: Pedagogy) (see Table 1, Appendix) award a qualification degree of BA in Education and teacher qualification and are focused on the development of competences in two languages. The analysis of 161 subject titles of six Subject Pedagogy programs at VMU (VMUa, 2025) yielded the following results: five out of six programs offer a compulsory course *Intercultural Communication and Multilingualism*, which strongly suggests a focus on the issues related to our research question: preparation to work in multilingual and multicultural settings. Nevertheless, it is only a reasonable initial presumption that it embraces the preparation of teachers to use the plurilingual approach in their classes. The courses *Linguistics of Romance Languages* (Subject Pedagogy English and Italian as a FL) and *Comparison of Polish and Lithuanian Languages and Basics in Translation* (Pedagogy of Polish Language and Another FL) do not contain the searched keywords but are implicit indicators related to our research aim, as they may prepare teachers to use cross-linguistic comparison as one of the plurilingual strategies. However, all six programs still offer monolingual didactics courses (see Table 1, Appendix), and the rest of the courses are focused on overall language proficiency development and studying the language and literature of the given language in depth. Thus, out of 161 subjects offered as compulsory and optional courses in six Subject Pedagogy programs at VMU, only seven course titles (three distinct titles) provide an indication that prospective teachers undergo some preparation to use the plurilingual approach in their language teaching or, more generally, to teach in multilingual and multicultural settings.

The analysis of 298 course titles of language courses offered by all seven ITE Subject Pedagogy programs at VU (VU, 2025) identified no explicit match for the keywords: *plurilingualism, multilingualism, multiculturalism* and their derivatives. Two German language (Lithuanian and German, English and German) programs offer an *Intercultural Communication* course, which may be indirectly related to preparing prospective teachers to work and live in a multicultural environment and cross-cultural encounters. All programs offer monolingual didactics courses: *English Language Didactics, French Language Didactics, German Language Didactics, Lithuanian Language Didactics,* and *Polish Language Didactics.*

The analysis of two Primary and Pre-school and pre-primary teacher education programs (110 course titles) offered at VMU yielded more positive results. Four courses were directly related to our research object, as their titles indicate: *CLIL and Plurilingual Pedagogy,* a two-part course taught by two teachers, focuses on the English language and content integration as well as direct teaching of the plurilingual approach and linguistically sensitive teaching; other three courses provide opportunities for teachers to prepare to teach in multicultural school environment, e.g., the courses *Multicultural Education, Children's Linguistic and Literary Education in the Context of Communication Diversity,* and *Language Education in Multicultural Context.* Although the latter course aims at developing future primary school teachers' competences to teach the Lithuanian language in an intercultural context, it also discusses methods of educating bilingual/multilingual children and differences between bilingual/multilingual and monolingual education strategies, which are directly linked to the focus of our analysis. As course descriptions show (VMUc, 2025), prospective teachers are offered opportunities to acquire competences indispensable for teaching in a multilingual and multicultural school environment.

Analysis of Professional Pedagogical Study Programs

VMU Professional Teacher Requalification (Module) studies are offered to graduates who have already acquired a higher education diploma and/or degree in the subject field and a pedagogical qualification but intend to gain

additional subject qualification or specialization by choosing an appropriate module. For our research purpose, only language teacher modules are analyzed: 1-year study programs (60 ECTS). VU School Pedagogy, pedagogical professional studies are offered to those who intend to acquire a pedagogical qualification, holding a HE degree in appropriate field (in our case, philology graduates). In both cases, as the research shows, study programs provide only monolingual subject didactics courses (see Table 2, Appendix). Graduates who hold higher education but in a different field of study are admitted to a 2-year study program (120 ECTS). Upon completion they are awarded a teacher's qualification and subject competences. Regarding our research focus, the English, German, French, Spanish, and Polish Language programs were chosen for the analysis. The investigation yielded some positive results: two modules (see Table 3, Appendix) offer *Multilingualism and Multiculturalism* subject, and one module offers *Intercultural Communication and Multilingualism* course, which allows us to draw a conclusion that the future FL teachers are acquainted with the plurilingual approach, and this will allow them to work in multilingual and multicultural classrooms. The course with the title *Development of Slavic Languages* most likely provides opportunities for comparison of languages of the shared linguistic family and origin; consequently, exercises a plurilingual strategy of receptive intercomprehension.

Analysis of Philology Programs (BA and MA)

It is often the case that BA or MA philology program graduates, having acquired one or another type of pedagogical qualification, choose to work as foreign language teachers at Lithuanian secondary schools; therefore, it was purposeful to investigate the preparation of philology graduates to meet the challenges of multilingual and multicultural environment. Although neither BA nor MA philology programs aim at preparing language teachers, some of them still offer courses in language teaching and applied research, offer traineeships in Lithuanian and abroad in various fields, including language teaching. E.g., VU BA program courses in Central and East European Languages and Cultures (Polish Studies

(conducted in Polish and in Russian) and Russian Studies offer *Practical Work and Internship: English as a foreign language teaching* as an optional course (group internship for all students) (see Table 3, Appendix)). Five more programs offer courses that share the title *Practical Work and Internship;* while the program specifier after the colon determines specific language track: *English as a Foreign Language Teaching, German as a Foreign Language Teaching, Italian as a Foreign Language Teaching,* and *Spanish as a Foreign Language Teaching, Lithuanian as a Home Language and as a Foreign Language Teaching.* The courses are offered as optional ones in the final semester, although no courses in didactics (neither monolingual nor plurilingual) are offered throughout eight semesters of studies in any of these programs (VU, 2025).

The screening for course titles that provide evidence for our research in terms of preparing graduates to teach (if they choose to do this) at schools, which are becoming increasingly multilingual and multicultural, yielded some positive results. The analysis of VU BA program course titles found two explicit matches of the keyword *multilingualism*: an optional course *Culture and Multilingualism*, offered in over 10 programs in the Culture or Media studies, and a compulsory course *Multilingual Vilnius Literature,* offered by the Lithuanian Studies program. Although no indication of plurilingual approach being introduced to philology students was found, but some programs offer courses that strongly or moderately imply topics related to our keywords, e.g. *Indo-European Linguistics, Linguistic Variation in Indo-European Languages, Introduction to Comparative Grammar,* and *Introduction to Roman Philology.* As VMU course descriptions of most courses are publicly available (VMUc, 2025) and allow for deeper analysis, a different situation was found in some courses. For instance, students of BA in Philology program are offered two topics in the course Teaching English as a Foreign Language: *Plurilingual Approach* an*d Linguistically Sensitive Teaching* where students are theoretically and practically (performing simulated lessons) acquainted with the approaches and their use in teaching languages. The course Introduction to Sociolinguistics discusses the topic of *Bilingualism and Multilingualism,* which is a direct indicator of acquainting students with today's multilingual reality.

VU MA programs do not explicitly focus on multilingualism or multiculturalism; however, such courses as, e.g., *Sociolinguistics* or *Contrastive Grammar of the Baltic Languages,* or *Contrastive Grammar of Lithuanian* and *Italian Linguistic Typology* can be expected to cover linguistic variations, linguistic diversity, cross-linguistic comparison but not necessarily plurilingualism specifically. Therefore, such courses were included into the group of implicit indicators of preparing students to meet the challenges of multilingual and multicultural settings.

VMU MA program *Sociolinguistics and Multilingualism* (VMUd, n.d.), an international joint-degree study program, designed and offered at four universities, aims at training "a new generation of sociolinguists who will possess a broad scholarly and practical understanding of the parallel use of multiple languages in Europe and a professional awareness of multilingualism's social dynamics and its cultural, political and socioeconomic impact in varying European contexts." Among many career opportunities that will open to graduates upon the completion of the program, two are directly related to our focus: "Counseling on multilingualism issues at political and cultural institutions, including the EU institutions" and "Counseling and analytical teaching on multilingualism issues in educational institutions of all levels." During the first semester, while studying at VMU, among other courses, the students are offered *Multilingualism in Europe, Plurilingual Approach in Language Education,* and *Multilingualism and Sociolinguistics* courses that, as course descriptions indicate, prepare students to reach the set learning outcomes that cohere with our research focus.

The titles and course descriptions of the other two VMU MA *Philology* study programs directly indicate the preparation of future philologists or most likely language teachers to teach in a multilingual environment and apply the plurilingual approach, which is at the focus of our study. Two MA programs – *Applied English Linguistics* and *Modern Linguistics* – offer *Plurilingual Approach in Language Education* and *Language Teaching in Multilingual Setting* (respectively), which explicitly indicate the use of plurilingual approach and preparation of graduates to teach in multilingual and multicultural schools.

Two other initiatives are worth mentioning, each from both institutions analyzed. VU Faculty of Philology offers a module *Arqus Plurilingualism Mode* (French and English as foreign languages), prepared within the *Arqus* Alliance of universities. It is offered for individualized studies for BA students and as an optional subject for BA and MA Erasmus+ students. The module aims to "develop communicative competence in two foreign languages and to allow students to familiarize themselves with linguistic theoretical concepts of linguistic diversity, language learning strategies, (socio)linguistics, plurilingualism and multiculturalism, also to develop their critical approach to and reflection on learning languages[6]." Another instance that institutions are changing their language teaching practices and try to tailor their classes to increasing multilingual and multicultural students is the course, directly related to our research – *English C1: CLIL and Plurilingual Pedagogy*, taught at the Institute of Foreign Languages, which is "particularly designed for students of various types of education program but could also be of interest to those preparing to become secondary school teachers" (VMUa, 2025). The aim of the course, among others, is to acquaint students with "<...> plurilingual pedagogy and linguistically sensitive teaching as well as to empower them to apply those principles in their teaching practices"; the course "is based on the plurilingual approach" (VMUa, 2025).

To sum up, the results of the preliminary screening of 3616 course titles of 71 programs offered at VU and VMU for pre-prospective and in-service teachers demonstrate that only a small number of courses discuss topics that may prepare teachers to work in the multilingual and multicultural setting. The **exact presence** of the keywords under investigation (*plurilingualism, multilingualism, multiculturalism* and their derivatives) in the titles and descriptions was found only in the titles and descriptions of 13 courses offered by 33 programs: *multilingualism/multilingual* appears in eight course titles and course descriptions; *plurilingualism/plurilingual* is used in five (*plurilingual approach, plurilingual pedagogy, plurilingualism module*); *multiculturalism* and *multicultural* are used twice. Although the explicit use of these concepts in the title is a highly reliable indicator that the topics under

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[6] https://www.vu.lt

investigation are studied within the course, the study found numerous **related terms** in the titles making the topic likely to be covered in the course. Such titles are attributed to implicit or proxy indicators of the use of the plurilingual approach and preparation of graduates to teach in multilingual and multicultural spaces. The research findings allow us to conclude that, although not stated directly, many opportunities are created for prospective teachers to familiarize themselves with current trends and practices in language education and be able to use the acquired competences in their language teaching, working in multilingual & multicultural classrooms.

Limitations

The sample of the Lithuanian APATCHE survey participants is too small (N = 67) to draw generalizations about all teachers in Lithuania; still, it provides some data on a lack of teacher self-assessed preparation to teach in the multilingual and multicultural environment. Due to insufficient access to university program course content, the goal was limited to preliminary screening and specific course title analysis which allowed us to identify potential or explicit offerings, i.e. courses that prepare students for work in multilingual and multicultural educational environments. In those cases where the course descriptions were available, the analysis – being preliminary of this kind – was delimited to the semantic coding of course topics rather than explicit analysis of learning outcomes and course aims and objectives. More explicit subject description analysis, focusing not only on the content but also on learning outcomes and course aims, could have provided more explicit and correct information on the inclusion of the topics on the plurilingual approach; however, they were not publicly accessible.

Conclusions

The present study aimed at examining the potential for linguistic inclusivity and the plurilingual approach in HE classrooms under the circumstances of its growing linguistic and cultural diversity. Pursuing this aim, it embarked on two research questions, namely, if the teachers in

Lithuanian HEIs assess themselves as prepared for the application of the plurilingual approach in their teaching practice and if language teacher pre-service (ITE) and in-service (CET) education programs provide training for prospective language teachers to work in multilingual and multicultural settings. The said research questions were examined in two research stages: the first stage included the analysis of the participants' self-assessed *knowledge and awareness*, *skills*, as well as *attitudes and values* regarding the development of plurilingualism and the application of the plurilingual approach. It was followed by the second research stage that included the study of language teacher ITE and CET programs by conducting a preliminary screening of their curricula in two Lithuanian universities that offer teacher education focusing on the publicly stated offering of courses on *plurilingualism, multilingualism, and/or multiculturalism* and their derivatives.

The first research stage exposed some tentatively favorable precondition for the application of the plurilingual approach through the evaluation of participants' linguistic repertoires: in total, the participant sample ($N = 67$) is marked by linguistic diversity and includes 17 languages at their disposal; nevertheless, only English and Russian receive a more considerable percentage in terms of their usage. In the self-assessment analysis, it has been found that in general HE education teachers display quite a positive disposition towards the plurilingual approach as it is outlined in the operational definition of the present study. Namely, participants expressed more agreement with statements endorsing plurilingualism in comparison to those that express a more monolingual stance. They also highlighted the need for continuous professional development in the application of the plurilingual approach. The need for competence development appears to be especially acute in the case of mediation: its conceptualization and application strategies.

Descriptive statistics was performed to investigate if participants' evaluations of the statements reveal their familiarity with the plurilingual approach; ANOVA test was performed to find out if there existed statistically significant differences in participants' self-assessment depending on their work experience, teaching field (language or EMI teachers) and academic degree (MA or PhD). The research findings indicate that participants with

more years of work experience and those who teach foreign languages have a more favorable disposition towards plurilingual approach and practices than those whose academic experience is shorter and who teach other subjects through the medium of English. Longer work experience also correlated more with the appreciation of mediation as a communicative activity, while those with less work experience expressed more need for their competence development in the application of the plurilingual approach. HE teachers with an MA academic degree appeared to be more appreciative of the plurilingual approach to show respect and attention to students' cultural and linguistic identity as well as to enhance students' sense of inclusion and wellbeing.

The second research stage included the analysis of the study courses that contain the keywords *plurilingual, multilingual, multicultural* and their derivatives in the titles and descriptions of courses offered in two main language Teacher Training Centers in Lithuania, considering them as potential opportunities provided for prospective teachers to familiarize themselves with the plurilingual approach and enable them to use it in their language teaching, working in multilingual and multicultural classrooms. Conversely, courses in monolingual didactics were considered as indicators of a lack of focus on plurilingual didactics. The screening of the curricula of language teacher training programs revealed that monolingual language didactics still prevail and could lead to the preference and habit of monolingual language teaching of future and current language teachers. Although the prospective teachers are offered programs in two foreign languages, explicit offerings of courses on *plurilingualism, multilingualism, multiculturalism* and their derivatives are scarce.

Therefore, it can be stated that Lithuanian HE is taking successful steps towards making HEIs more prepared for linguistic and cultural diversity and inclusiveness. This is evidenced by quite a strong HE teachers' plurilingual mindset, or rather favorable orientation towards the application of the plurilingual approach, as can be seen from their self-assessment results. However, the screening of the teacher training curricula regarding the components of the plurilingual approach, as seen from the course titles and course descriptions, revealed that prospective and current language teachers are insufficiently prepared to meet the challenges of multilingual and

multicultural classrooms, which calls for reconceptualization of language teacher education.

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Appendix

Table 1

ITE Language Teacher Education Program Courses as Direct or Indirect Indicators of the Use of Plurilingual Approach

Programs	Number of Programs/ Courses	Explicit /Direct Indicators	Implicit/ Proxy Indicators
Initial Teacher Training (ITE) Degree: BA in Education, Teacher Qualification (4-year-studies, 240 ECTS)			
VMU (Subject Pedagogy) - Pedagogy of English and Another FL (1) French; (2) German; (3) Italian; (4) Spanish) - (5) Pedagogy of Polish Language and Literature and Another FL (English) - (6) Pedagogy of Lithuanian Language and Literature (incl. Lithuanian as a FL)	(n = 6/161) 4 /74 1/45 1/42	***Intercultural Communication & Multilingualism** (1-4, 6)*	- ***Linguistics of Romance languages*** *- English Language Didactics 1; Subject Didactics 2: French; German; Spanish as a FL Didactics.* *- Polish as a Foreign Language Didactics; Didactics of Polish Language and Literature;* - ***Comparison of Polish and Lithuanian Languages** and Basics of Translation (5)* *- Didactics of Lithuanian Language and Literature; Lithuanian as a FL Methodology*
VU (Subject Pedagogy) - English & Another FL (French; German) - Polish & a FL (English; French; German) - Lithuanian & a FL (French; German)	(n = 7/298)		*- Intercultural Communication* *- Alternative Foreign Language Teaching Methods* *- Monolingual didactics (English Language Didactics (LD); French LD; German LD; Lithuanian LD; Polish LD)*
VMU Pedagogy of Primary Education and Early Foreign Language Teaching Pre-school and Pre-primary Education	(n = 2/110) 1/56 1/54 _____ *N = 15/571*	***Multicultural Education*** ***CLIL and Plurilingual Pedagogy***	- ***Language Education in Intercultural Context*** *- **Child's Linguistic and Literary Education in the Context of Communication Diversity*** *- Early Language Education* *- CLIL in Early Stage of Education* *- Monolingual Didactics (English Language Learning and Teaching Technologies; Early English Language Education)* **-** *Didactics of Early Language Education*

Table 2

CPD Teacher Education Program Courses as Direct or Indirect Indicators of the Use of Plurilingual Approach

Programs	No. of Programs / Courses	Explicit / Direct Indicators	Implicit/ Proxy Indicators
Professional Pedagogical Studies (PPS), Teacher Qualification (1 year-studies, 60 ECTS)			
VMU Requalification (Module) studies for teachers Module: English Language for Upper-Intermediate B1/B2 Module: Spanish Language for Upper-Intermediate B1	2/22		*Subject Didactics (English, Spanish)*
VU "School Pedagogy" 9 Modules: English/ French / German / Latin / Latvian / Lithuanian /Scandinavian/ Spanish	9/32		Subject Didactics for each module *English/ French / German / Latin / Latvian / Lithuanian /Scandinavian/ Spanish Didactics*
Professional Pedagogical Studies, Teacher Qualification and Subject Competence (2-year studies, 120 ECTS)			
VMU Requalification (Module) Studies for Teachers Module 1: English Language for Beginners A1 Module 2: German Language for Beginners A1 Module 3: French Language for Beginners A1 Module 4: Spanish Language for Beginners A1 Module 5: Polish Language and Literature	4/100 *N = 15/154*	***Multilingualism and Multiculturalism*** *(Modules 2, 3, 4)* ***Intercultural Communication and Multilingualism*** *(Module 1)*	*CLIL in the Early Education (1, 4)* *Intercultural Communication (Modules 2 & 3)* *Subject Didactics I & II (English LD, German LD, French LD)* ***Development of Slavic Languages*** *(Module 5)* *Subject Didactics (Theoretical Basics of Language Didactics; Didactics of Polish Language & Literature; Polish as a Foreign Language Didactics)*

Table 3

Philology Program Courses as Direct or Indirect Indicators of the Use of Plurilingual Approach

Programs	No of Programs, Courses (Compulsory, Optional)	Explicit/Direct Indicators	Implicit/ Proxy Indicators
Study Field: Philology. Degree: BA in Humanities			
VU (1) Central and East European Languages and Cultures (CEELC) (Polish studies, for beginners, in Russian) (2) CEELC (Polish studies) (for advanced, in Polish) (3) CEELC (Russian studies) (for beginners, in English) (4) CEELC (for advanced sp., in Russian) (5) English Philology (6) English and another FL (German) (7) German Studies (for beginners, in English) (8) German Studies (for advanced, in German) (9) Italian Philology (10) Lithuanian Studies (11) Spanish Philology	(n = 11/1225) 1/105 (19/86) 1/101 (17/84) 1/161(20/141) 1/160 (19/142) 1/137 (17/120) 1/105 (24/81) 1/41 (24/17 1/127 (19/108) 1/150(22/128) 1/32 (30/2) 1/106 (36/70)	***- Culture and Multilingualism*** (in all except 7) ***- Multilingual Vilnius Literature*** (10)	*- Sociolinguistic Situation and Language Policy in Lithuania (10)* *- Ethnolinguistics;* *- Empowering Young Learners: Current Trends in Language Education;* *- Indo-European Linguistics;* *- Linguistic Variation in Indo-European Languages;* *- Introduction to Comparative Grammar;* *- Introduction to Roman Philology (9); Language Contact and Linguistic Areas; Germans and Lithuania: Linguistic and Cultural Junctures (8);* *-Introduction to Sociolinguistics (7; Intercultural Communication (in 10 courses)*
VMU (1) English Philology (2) Lithuanian Philology and Publishing Foreign Languages and Cultures: (3) Italian Studies and Romance Languages (4) German Languages and Communication (5) Francophone Studies	(n = 5/231) 1/43 1/41 3/147	*- TEFL Methodology (*topics*:* ***Plurilingual Approach; Linguistically Sensitive Teaching****) (1)* *- Introduction to Sociolinguistics (*topic: ***Bilingualism & Multilingualism)*** *(1)*	*- Didactics of Lithuanian as a FL (2)* *- Qualifying Practice of FL and Intercultural Communication* (3-5) *- Linguistics of Romance Languages (3, 5)* *- Intercultural Communication (5)* *- Contrastive Text Linguistics & Pragmatics (4)*

Programs	No of Programs, Courses (Compulsory, Optional)	Explicit/Direct Indicators	Implicit/ Proxy Indicators
Study Field: Philology. Degree: MA in Humanities			
VU English Studies (Linguistics) English Studies (Literature, Linguistics, Culture) English Studies (Media Discourse) Languages and Cultures of the Nordic and Baltic Sea Region Linguistics (Baltic Linguistics) Russian Studies (Literature, Linguistics, Culture) Russian Studies (Media Linguistics)	(n = 7/340)		*Sociolinguistics; Contrastive Grammar / Contrastive Grammar of the Baltic Languages/ Contrastive Grammar of Lithuanian and Italian Linguistic Typology; Language and Gender: From Grammar to Politics Language and Culture; Narratives of place and migration in the NBS region; Current Practices in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*
VMU (1) Sociolinguistics and Multilingualism (2) Applied English Linguistics (3) Modern Linguistics	(n = 3/41) 1/10 1/22 1/9 _____ *N = 26/1837*	***Plurilingual Approach in Language Education*** (1,2) ***Multilingualism in Europe*** (1) ***Sociolinguistics and Multilingualism*** (1) ***Language Teaching in Multilingual Setting*** (3)	*- Language in Sociocultural Context* (1) *- Innovative Language Teaching Strategies* (1) *- Cross-Cultural Communication* (1, 2) *- Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods in Sociolinguistics (1)*

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AR LIETUVOS AUKŠTOJO MOKSLO DĖSTYTOJAI PASIRENGĘ ĮGYVENDINTI DAUGIAKALBYSTĘ ĮGALINANČIĄ PEDAGOGIKĄ?

Anotacija. Globalaus pasaulio iššūkiai, intensyvėjanti imigracija ir auganti kalbinė bei kultūrinė įvairovė turi didelės įtakos Europos aukštajam mokslui. Mokslo įstaigoms tampant vis labiau daugiakalbėmis ir daugiakultūrėmis, tikimasi, kad dėstytojai ugdys savo kalbinio jautrumo ir daugiakalbės praktikos kompetencijas. Šiame tyrime nagrinėti du klausimai: ar Lietuvos aukštųjų mokyklų dėstytojai mano esantys pasirengę taikyti daugiakalbystę įgalinančią pedagogiką savo darbe ir ar Lietuvos dėstytojų rengimo programos rengia pedagogus, galinčius dirbti daugiakalbėje ir daugiakultūrėje aplinkoje? Tyrime dalyvavę 67-ni Lietuvos aukštųjų mokyklų kalbų dėstytojai ir dalykus anglų kalba dėstantys dėstytojai užpildė APATCHE („Dėstytojų kompetencijų tobulinimas taikant daugiakalbę prieigą aukštajame moksle") projekto komandos parengtą klausimyną. Pirmame etape buvo analizuojami dėstytojų apklausos duomenys. Antrame etape atlikta preliminaria universitetinių dalykų analize siekta išsiaiškinti, ar mokytojų rengimo programos siūlo dalykus, įgalinančius būsimus (pradinio mokytojų rengimo, filologijos bakalauro ir magistro studijų) ir jau dirbančius (tęstinio profesinio tobulinimo) mokytojus taikyti daugiakalbę prieigą. Rezultatai rodo, kad dėstytojai palankiai žiūri į daugiakalbystę įgalinančios pedagogikos taikymą, bet jaučia poreikį tobulinti savo kompetencijas. Taip pat nustatyta, jog kalbų mokytojų rengimo programose dominuoja vienkalbė kalbos mokymo prieiga, stokojama konkrečių dėstomųjų dalykų, kurie parengtų studentus pasitikti ir įveikti daugiakalbės ir daugiakultūrės aplinkos keliamus iššūkius, todėl siūloma įtraukti daugiakalbystę įgalinančios pedagogikos temas į mokytojų rengimo programas.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: daugiakalbė prieiga; daugiakalbystė; daugiakultūriškumas; kalbos mokymas ir mokymasis; vienkalbystė.