



Multilingual teacher training in South Tyrol: strategies for effective linguistic input with young learners

Lynn Mastellotto & Renata Zanin

To cite this article: Lynn Mastellotto & Renata Zanin (2022): Multilingual teacher training in South Tyrol: strategies for effective linguistic input with young learners, Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, DOI: [10.1080/17501229.2022.2075368](https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2022.2075368)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2022.2075368>



Published online: 15 May 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Multilingual teacher training in South Tyrol: strategies for effective linguistic input with young learners*

Lynn Mastellotto  and Renata Zanin 

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Attempts to cultivate a multilingual mindset in education in South Tyrol find an obstacle in educational norms, structures and policies that divide students into linguistically distinct schools based on their self-identified main language. Education in the region is administered through three separate educational authorities – German-speaking, Italian-speaking, Ladin-speaking – and teachers are prepared for service in one of these based on their own declared linguistic identification. Plural identities and translingual interaction do not flourish in this context where language separation is the norm. This paper begins with an overview of the educational policy of language separation in South Tyrol and its impact on the language achievement of its students. It then addresses how the Free University of Bolzano has responded to the need for improved language competences through teacher training for multilingual schools in the Province of Bolzano.

Design: The paper presents the preliminary results of a small-scale study with in-service preschool teachers through an action research cycle in which classroom observations and a language input observation scheme are used to quantitatively measure the quality of teachers' language input in second-language instruction in German and English, and provide formative feedback for improvement in teaching practice.

Findings and Value: The expected outcomes of the study are threefold: (1) improving input and corrective feedback strategies of language teachers; (2) raising language awareness among teachers participating in peer observation; (3) empowering the emergence of language rich episodes through effective planning of interactive lessons in second/foreign language teaching. The study contributes to an understanding of what makes teachers' corrective feedback strategies in preschool settings effective in rendering input comprehensible for young learners, thus assisting language appropriation processes.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 27 October 2020
Accepted 3 May 2022

KEYWORDS

Multilingual education; teacher training; language input and interaction; corrective feedback; foreign language teaching

1. Introduction

Since the introduction of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2000, it has been widely accepted that language competence is decisive for success at school, at university, in the workplace and, generally, in society. The Barcelona objective (2002, 19) of enhancing linguistic diversity throughout the EU by developing the plurilingual competences (L1 + two L2) of European citizens marks an important moment in the multilingual turn in education: not only is multilingualism increasingly entrenched in communication, economics, and in everyday practices in the personal sphere of life in the twenty-first century, but also in educational policies and practices (Conteh and Meier 2014).

CONTACT Lynn Mastellotto  lynn.mastellotto@unibz.it

*Although the article is the result of a fruitful collaboration between the authors and both parties discussed and edited the text in full, Lynn Mastellotto is the main author of the paper in its entirety and Renata Zanin contributed specifically to section 3.

In Italy, an attitude of greater openness and sensitivity to language diversity and a recognition of the importance of language competences in society and in schooling have taken root over the past fifteen years, opening up the national linguistic space. The shift in education policy is apparent in two ways: first, through the expansion in the teaching of foreign languages in the first and second cycles of education; second, through the increased use of additional languages for teaching subjects in schools. Pupils in Italy begin learning a first foreign language as a compulsory subject from the first year of primary school (age 6) under Law 53/2003 which provided for compulsory teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) (Gross and Mastellotto 2021). By the end of upper secondary education (age 19), students in Italy are required to reach a B2 level on the Global Scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the foreign language (Indire 2018).

Moreover, a content and language integrated learning approach, commonly known as CLIL, has moved from the margins of experimentation to the mainstream of compulsory education in Italy. This 'dual focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content *and* language' (Coyle, Hood, and Marsh 2010, 1) is implemented through the study of school subjects in a vehicular language, most often English, starting in primary school. This approach is promoted by the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Commission (EC) as an innovative and efficient means to develop plurilingual competences among all European citizens by improving their language awareness and language learning. CLIL is also understood as a means of building intercultural communication skills among emergent bilinguals (García, Kleifgen, and Falchi 2008) by allowing them more exposure to the target language than traditional foreign language courses can offer.

These shifts in education policy in Italy are the result of research on multilingualism and a greater understanding of the processes of second language acquisition in early childhood, especially regarding the advantage of starting early with foreign language education. Children acquire multiple languages and construct their self in multilingual contexts through active participation in authentic, language-rich situations which occur naturally in the spaces they inhabit, both at school and outside school. As Ibrahim (2019, 34) states: 'They are given access to multiple and simultaneous sociolinguistic and sociocultural experiences and develop their multilingual repertoires across multi-layered "local" and "translocal" spaces.' This view is widely supported by scholars (see Blackledge and Creese 2012; Blommaert and Backus 2013; Cenoz 2013; May 2014) who see multilingualism not as the sum of several, discrete languages, but instead as a complex of particularized semiotic resources within individual repertoires, recognizing that language interaction is mediated by various individual and contextual factors. This view, moreover, recognizes identity as a complex, context-dependent phenomenon which children negotiate in a flexible and skilful way, with multiple selves emerging from varied linguistic encounters in social spaces.

The emergence of this multilingual mindset finds an obstacle, however, in the 'monolingual habitus' (Gogolin 1994, 1997) reflected in educational contexts in South Tyrol where norms and practices treat languages as separate and do not allow for their integration in a holistic approach to multilingual education. The monolingual habitus of the classroom – deriving from Bourdieu's 'habitus' (1979) that refers to the embodiment of social structures that are reproduced through social practices – is operationalized through educational norms, structures and curricula that promulgate a 'one culture, one language' vision, a vision based on a narrow language-ethnic identification which serves the political purpose of language separation in order to maintain entrenched monolingual spaces. This political agenda is especially marked in South Tyrol given the history of conflicts and tensions that have defined the contested border territory for the past one hundred years (see Mastellotto and Zanin 2021). As a consequence, multilingualism in the area has historically been pursued through separate monolingual realities, each with its own social and institutional practices, as illustrated in the three distinct educational authorities – German-speaking, Italian-speaking and Ladin-speaking – that administer the region's schools.

The article begins with an overview of the policy of language separation in South Tyrolean educational contexts and its impact on the language achievement of its students. It then addresses how the Free University of Bolzano has responded to the need for improved language competences in South Tyrol through multilingual teacher training based on action research with in-service teachers in the Province of Bolzano's Italian-language school authority. The small-scale study conducted with a group of German second-language and English foreign-language preschool teachers reveals the need for focused attention on the quality of language input and corrective feedback to support children's linguistic development in the target language. It also indicates the challenges of developing more flexible forms of multilingualism in a school context where monolingual realities are the norm and multilingual interaction in hybrid spaces is impeded on a structural level.

2. Language education in South Tyrol

The highly contested border region in northern Italy – known alternately as South Tyrol, Südtirol, and Alto Adige – represents a complex situation wherein a minoritized majority (Italian speakers) and a majoritized minority (German speakers) live side by side, their linguistic and cultural identities maintained through a consociational model of political organization in which a power-sharing agreement (PSA) initiated in 1972 continues to the present day (see Mastellotto and Zanin 2021). The Second Autonomy Statute (1972, art.19, para.3) presents the principle of separate education in South Tyrol through the creation of three functionally independent educational authorities (with three independent school Inspectors) in a system of parallel schooling, with pupils taught in their mother tongue by teachers of the same language, either German-speakers or Italian-speakers depending on the main language of instruction (see Autonomous Province of Bolzano [n.d.](#), Constitution and Agreements).

The linguistic landscape in South Tyrol is multilingual since different official languages co-exist, yet it is based on structural monolingualism with three distinct school systems operating independently, each with its own educational authority and specific policies regarding language instruction in schools. Tensions resulting from this 'glocalization' (Robertson 1995) are not easily resolved in the region.¹ Section 2.1 below presents language education in these three distinct realities and Section 2.2 examines the linguistic performance of students at the end of secondary education, addressing the limitations imposed by the institutionalization of a monolingual habitus in South Tyrol.

2.1. Multilingual schools, monolingual habitus

Schools in the Ladin communities within the Province of Bolzano are characterized by the presence of three main languages – Ladin, Italian and German – since contact with neighbouring German- and Italian-speaking communities has facilitated cultural exchange since time immemorial. In this context, Ladin is the official L1 and German or Italian are the second (L2) and/or third language (L3). English is learnt as a foreign language (FL) and is taught from the fourth year of primary education. Following the Ministerial Decree of 1948, the Ladin system has been open to multilingualism and has, over time, developed a parity model of plurilingual education. In this model, Italian-language instruction and German-language instruction enjoy an equal number of hours, meaning that some course components are taught in German, others in Italian, and Ladin is used as an auxiliary teaching language. The parity school system has had its own Educational Authority since 1975 and its own Pedagogical Institute since 1987, both located in Bolzano. For the training of Ladin teachers, the Free University of Bolzano established a Ladin Department within the Faculty of Education in Bressanone in 1998.²

The situation of language instruction in Italian-language schools in South Tyrol is quite different, where German and English are introduced as second languages in kindergarten. Later, in primary school, German and English are used as vehicular languages in CLIL lessons (subjects taught in L2); this practice then continues in middle school and in upper secondary school. By contrast, in

German-language schools in the region, Italian L2 is introduced in the first or second year of primary school, whereas English L3 starts only in the fourth year of primary school and then continues until the end of secondary schooling. In German-language schools in South Tyrol, CLIL lessons are foreseen only in secondary education.

The following chart illustrates the breakdown of total minimum hours of instruction in L1, L2 and L3 across the five years of primary school for each of the province's school authorities; L1, L2 and L3 refer to the status given to languages within the school system and not to pupils' self-declared language repertoires [Table 1](#).³

Notwithstanding the significant number of hours spent on language learning from primary school onwards in all three school systems, the majority of students in South Tyrol have difficulty attaining the required B2 level in the second languages on the Global Scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) by the end of secondary schooling (age 19), as will be discussed below.

A B2 level of the CEFR posits an ability to use the target language flexibly and accurately in a variety of complex communicative contexts, both written and oral. A B2 level is regarded as an 'independent' level of attainment in L2, in which the target language can be used for general communication, including with native speakers; it is also regarded as the prerequisite for acceding to courses taught in L2 at university. Moreover, a B2 level in the L2 (either Italian or German depending on the L1) is the requirement for public employees in the Province of Bolzano entering the workforce with a secondary school diploma.

2.2. Multilingual competences of students in South Tyrol

According to data collected in the 2017 Kolipsi II study, the majority of secondary students in South Tyrol tested below B2 level for language competence in Italian L2 and German L2, notwithstanding the many years of language study throughout their schooling (Mastellotto and Zanin 2021). The table below illustrates students' attainment levels by percentage according to the CEFR Global Scale. Participants in the Kolipsi studies were all secondary school students (4th year) in the Province of Bolzano, South Tyrol, in 2007 and 2017 (see Abel, Vettori, and Martini 2017) [Table 2](#).

While language competences at B2 level have decreased in the 10-year period from 2007 to 2017 for both German L1 speakers and Italian L1 speakers, a sense of discomfort in using the L2 has increased for both groups who express a higher level of discomfort or anxiety (ranging from 'some anxiety' to 'much anxiety') when carrying out productive tasks in the L2. These tasks include 'engaging in a brief conversation', 'writing a brief text', and 'speaking the L2 outside the region of South Tyrol' (Abel, Vettori, and Martini 2017, 114–115).⁴ These findings signal the fact that the monolingual habitus of South Tyrol, with its system of linguistically separate schools, is not helping students enhance their language confidence or competence in the L2. The lack of hybrid spaces for translingual interaction inhibits students from using their language repertoires fully or flexibly for purposeful communication within the familiar and protective space of school, with a consequent negative impact on motivation and confidence in using the L2 outside educational contexts.

Table 1. Total minimum number of hours of language instruction over 5 years of primary education for official languages in South Tyrol.

Languages	German school board	Italian school board	Ladin school board
German L1	816	/	/
German L2	/	969	782
Italian L1	/	799	/
Italian L2	646	/	782
Ladin L1	/	/	340
English L3	176	311	176

Table 2. Language attainment levels of secondary school students in South Tyrol.

Kolipsi studies	Italian L2 competence (CEFR) by German L1 speakers	German L2 competence (CEFR) by Italian L1 speakers
2007	B1 = 46.0%	B1 = 50.2%
	B2 = 41.1%	B2 = 14.7%
	C1 = 9.9%	C1 = 5.3%
2017	B1 = 52.0%	B1 = 34.5%
	B2 = 21.7%	B2 = 13.8%
	C1 = 5.9%	C1 = 6.0%

As Gogolin notes, monolingual systems generally treat students as a homogeneous group by assuming they all share ‘the same social class, culture or ethnic group, and language.’ (1997, 40) Furthermore, Alber (2012, 400) claims that the segregated system of education from nursery to upper secondary school in South Tyrol ensures that ‘pupils [are] taught in their “mother tongue” by teachers of the same language.’ Such a linguistic separation and cultural homogenization presents a structural obstacle for implementing pedagogical practices that espouse more flexible forms of multilingualism, such as translanguaging (García, Lin, and May 2017), as well as the development of a genuine ‘multilingual mindset’ in teachers and pupils (Ibrahim 2019). Although South Tyrol espouses the European Commission’s vision of plurilingual citizens and embraces multilingualism as a goal of education, its policy of language separation does not encourage a flexible approach to multilingual education.

The construct of ‘one culture, one language’ implemented through the ‘one teacher, one language’ approach does not prepare young people to engage in translanguaging practices and gain confidence in using their linguistic repertoires, nor to navigate hybrid spaces of translanguaging contact, which may include contact with languages other than official ones recognized through legal frameworks in South Tyrol, such as heritage languages spoken at home. Studies by Rosenfield et al. (1981) and Feddes and Noack (2009) suggest that ethnically heterogeneous classes favour the development of interethnic friendships and, consequently, the development of children’s plurilingual and intercultural competences. However, language education in South Tyrol, as well as teacher’s initial education, does not, at present, take into account languages other than the official languages in the region, which are treated as distinct realities through the system of language separation.⁵

The disappointing outcomes in language performance at the end of secondary schooling indicated in the 2017 Kolipsi study have drawn attention to areas of language education that could be improved: first, the need to start L2/FL education earlier in order to enhance exposure to additional languages in the critical phase of language acquisition; second, the need to support teachers in improving the quality of input and interactions in the target language in early learning with effective strategies on the use of corrective feedback to assist young learners’ language development. Concrete interventions to address these two dimensions will be examined in section 3 below.

3. Language education for teachers in South Tyrol

Despite a widespread recognition of the importance of languages and language diversity in schools in Italy, many in-service teachers do not speak more than one language since competence in an additional language was not a formal requirement until recently. Teacher training for kindergarten and primary schools in Italy depends on a national policy implemented at the regional level. Teacher qualification for both kindergarten and primary schools in Italy requires a Master’s degree in Education, which is offered as a five-year degree programme and includes school-based traineeship activities.

Since the founding of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano in 1997, the Faculty of Education, located in Brixen-Bressanone, has prepared teachers for service through a programme of post-secondary, initial teacher training, as well as providing in-service training for teachers already employed

in schools. Beyond satisfying the degree course requirements for a MEd that qualifies them to teach in state schools, the policy of language separation in South Tyrol means that teachers seeking to work in the Province of Bolzano must also be eligible for service in one of the three distinct school authorities; this requires that teachers be mother-tongue speakers of the main language of instruction.

Consequently, upon enrolment in the MEd at Unibz, students are divided into the three distinct language groups – German, Italian, Ladin – based on their self-declared main language. Those who study in the Italian section of the MEd degree are qualified to teach Italian L2 in the German-language schools upon graduation and those who study in the German section of the MEd are qualified to teach German L2 in the Italian-language schools of the Province of Bolzano. Graduates are qualified to teach English as a foreign language (EFL) on the condition that they attain a B2-level certification (Global Scale, CEFR) in English by graduation.

Although the goal is to produce plurilingual graduates who can work as educators in the multilingual context of schools in South Tyrol, the educational approach maintains the practice of separating students according to their self-declared main language of use during the MEd; as such, they attend courses in separate sections with limited opportunities for integrated learning over the five years of study. This practice of grouping students by language reflects an institutionalization of the 'monolingual habitus' (Gogolin 1994, 1997) in South Tyrol whereby it is assumed that students identify their dominant language (i.e. German, Italian or Ladin) as the primary determinant of group affiliation. The separate but equal groupings mean that while multilingualism is pursued as a goal in teacher education, it is done mainly in monolingual realities.

3.1. In-service teacher training for language education

The Italian school authority, under the direction of Vincenzo Gullotta, recognized the need to address the poor language performance of school leavers through measures to support language education beginning at the pre-primary level in order to favour second-language acquisition already from an early age when learners are predisposed to learn languages. In 2019, the Italian school directorate approached the Faculty of Education, Free University of Bolzano, to conduct an analysis of second-language teaching in preschools under the Italian school authority and develop a training programme for in-service language teachers (German L2, English L3) to help them improve the quality of their language input and interaction strategies.

The LangApp project (Progetto di accompagnamento scientifico per la scuola dell'infanzia in lingua italiana. Osservare il language input nell'insegnamento delle L2 tedesco e L3 inglese), 2020–2022, focuses on analysing the quality of language input and classroom interaction strategies in order to identify and develop effective teaching methodologies for the development of German L2 and English L3 competences with very young learners (age 5) in local preschools. The articulation of the project into two distinct but parallel focuses (German and English) provides for an analysis of the specific training needed by preschool teachers to foster learning in the South Tyrolean context where the presence of German and English represents a linguistic richness for preschools, but also a challenge for ensuring the preparation of teachers in the multilingual context. In order to strengthen the quality of language input in L2, the LangApp project seeks to provide targeted teacher training interventions based on empirical data consolidated through scientific research in the field of language acquisition and L2 teaching and learning.

3.1.1. LangApp aims and rationale

It is widely accepted that successful language acquisition requires three key ingredients: comprehensible linguistic input (Krashen 1982), authentic communicative situations for meaning-focused instruction (Krashen 1985), and frequent exposure of pupils to rich language input by teachers (Ellis 2002) and through social interactions among learners and teachers (Long 1981, 2017). Common to these ingredients is an underlying recognition that early exposure to authentic

language in use is vital to language acquisition in childhood. Successful language acquisition begins at home (Vosoughi and Roy 2012; Zauche et al. 2017) and continues at preschool (Nickel 2014) and at primary school (Kersten 2018, 2021; Feilke 2012). Thus, in cooperation with parents and caregivers (Apeltauer 2007), teachers are called upon to support and promote the language acquisition of learners through best practices based on scientific research.

Drawing on this theoretical framework, the LangApp project aims to identify the qualities of effective ‘teacher talk’ in early learning (Kleinschmidt-Schinke 2018; Collins 1992). Oral input and interaction strategies by classroom teachers are examined through a cycle of lesson observations in order to identify the characteristics of classroom interaction that can best support second-language acquisition by preschool pupils. To this end, the specific communicative interventions and scaffolding necessary to render teachers’ language input comprehensible are identified in qualitative and quantitative terms (Thornbury 1996; von Raffler-Engel and Hutcheson 1975; Walsh 2006), using a customized observation sheet to guide teachers towards greater language awareness through self-monitoring, peer observation and reflection.

A central point of the project is to enable preschool teachers to work in interlingual groups for peer observation, exchanging ideas and feedback to form a community of best practice. Another central point is to allow the researchers a comparative analysis of the data collected on the quality of language input in the two languages (German and English) in South Tyrolean kindergartens.

3.1.2. *Research methods, procedures and instruments*⁶

The methodology of this small-scale study is primarily qualitative based on ‘a case study design [...] employed to gain a deep understanding of the situation and meaning for the teachers involved’ (Merriam 1998, 19); in particular, the methodology can be defined as a descriptive case study (Yin 2018). As regards the authors’ position vis-à-vis the present study, both were involved in the research design and implementation, but roles were divided according to expertise: one researcher closely followed the German L2 teachers and one the English L3 teachers, alternating this ‘insider’ role with that of external observer for the other group. In this way, a dual perspective was achieved, drawing on the ‘insider-outsider’ stance suggested by Hellawell (2006) as a heuristic device to develop reflexivity in qualitative research.

Two research questions frame the present study:

- (1) What kind of linguistic input and interaction strategies provide useful scaffolding for learning L2 German and L3 English in preschool contexts?
- (2) Is peer observation a valid tool for ongoing training and professional development of preschool teachers for L2 German and L3 English in schools?

Following an Action Research design (Reason and Bradbury 2007), the project seeks to define the specific competence training required by teachers working in South Tyrolean preschools to support the quality of their language input and interactions with young learners in German and English. The project is articulated in 4 phases [Table 3](#).

Designed for the quantitative assessment of the quality of language input in pre-schools, the ‘Input Quality Observation Scheme (IQOS)’ (Weitz 2015) was selected as an evaluative instrument for the LangApp study as it was proven to be a suitable tool in previous research carried out in the context of bilingual (German-English) kindergartens in Germany (Weitz et.al. 2010, 2015; Kersten 2018) and was scientifically validated through various pilot studies there with good results achieved in terms of validity, reliability and objectivity.

Through consultation with teachers in focus groups in the first phase of the action research cycle, the research team developed a customized instrument, the Language Input Observation Scheme (LIOS I),⁷ which introduces new elements into the research design, namely multilingualism rooted in the South Tyrolean context (German L2, English L3). At present, the LIOS I is being piloted

Table 3. Action research cycle in LangApp study.

0	1 – Teaching and observing	2 – Reflecting and planning	3 – Teaching and observing	4 – Reflecting and (re)Planning
Training for in-service teachers on evaluation of the linguistic input in L2 using the IQOS Focus group on IQOS instrument and its adaptation as LIOS I	Observation using LIOS I Evaluation of the quality of linguistic input in L2 using observation sheet	Reflection on language input by teachers involved Planning a teaching unit with the goal of maximizing opportunities for linguistic interactions and improving the quality of these	Peer observation using LIOS I Evaluation of the quality of linguistic input in L2 using observation sheet	Reflection & discussion of findings Evaluation of progress based on audio- & video-recordings. (Re)planning teaching unit for greater language awareness

in 4 state preschools in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano as an instrument to guide teachers in monitoring the quality of input provided in German L2 activities. The figure below illustrates how the LIOS I breaks down qualitative and quantitative characteristics of effective teacher talk, identifying specific criteria for the provision of linguistic input to young learners [Figure 1](#).

3.1.3. Data collection and expected outcomes

Coinciding with the precise timeframe of the LangApp project (2020–2022), the Covid-19 pandemic has made carrying out empirical research in schools very difficult, particularly in relation to onsite visits and classroom observations, thus necessitating modifications to the data collection procedures and delays in the timeline. At the time this article went to press, video-recorded lesson observations are still in progress, with transcription and data analysis to follow later in 2022. Although it is premature to discuss results of the study at this time, some preliminary findings from the German L2 data collection are indicated below.

Initial results from the observations with the Language Input Observation Scheme (LIOS I) indicate that a future focus in the training and further education of teachers should be on expanding their repertoire of feedback strategies (Nassaji and Kartchava 2021). Observations using the LIOS I instrument demonstrate that the linguistic input of teachers was rated lower than the mean average of 3.5 points on a five-point Likert scale in three key categories: ‘securing children’s understanding’ (3.45/5); ‘encouraging children’s output’ (3.36/5); ‘implicit corrective feedback’ (3.32/5). Furthermore, an initial quantitative evaluation of the feedback strategies reveals that more content-based feedback (53%) was provided than linguistic feedback (43%), revealing a tendency of teachers to focus on content rather than form. Compared to input-providing strategies, the output-promoting techniques are rarely used: for example, the output-promoting categories ‘elicit’ and ‘clarification requests’ together account for only 17% of the observed linguistic feedback and 8% of the total feedback provided. In fact, the output-promoting variant of ‘elicit’ represents just 3% of the total observed feedback (Asgari and Zanin [forthcoming](#)).

The development of the Language Input Observation Scheme (LIOS1) in the first phase of LangApp research enables the projection of several expected outcomes of the study. The expected outcomes of the LangApp project in relation to language teaching are threefold: (1) improving input and corrective feedback strategies of language teachers; (2) raising language awareness among teachers participating in peer observation; (3) empowering the emergence of language rich episodes through effective planning of interactive lessons in second/foreign language teaching. The use of a reference frame and checklist to monitor input strategies aims to heighten awareness among practitioners of how to engage all pupils through communicative strategies. The goal is to ensure that no child is left behind with regard to language acquisition by maximizing children’s exposure to authentic language stimuli in order to assist language appropriation processes (Missaglia 2008; Piennemann 2008).

LIOS I	Name of researcher:	
	Name of the kindergarten:	
Observation	Date	
	Situation	
	Activity	
General information	Duration	
	Number of children	
	Average age of children	
	Number of Italian native speakers (children)	
	Number of German native speakers (children)	
	Number of bilingual children	
	Number of children with other mother tongues	
	Number of participating teachers with L1 (Italian)	
	Number of participating teachers with L2 (German)	
	Activity, focus on A: form, B: form (communicative context), C: meaning	
Teaching unit: topic		
Preliminary work with the children on the topic		
Rating scale: very low: 1, low: 2, medium: 3, high: 4, very high: 5, not applicable: n.a.		
Input Quality	Appropriate manner of speaking (rate of speech, intonation)	
	Syntactic variety and complexity	
	Lexical variety and idiomatic speech	
	Formulaic language for kindergarten routines	
	Verbal response to children's interaction	
	Focus on early literacy	
	Sum of points: Input characteristics	
L2 quantity	L2 amount	
	Sum of points: quantity	
Securing understanding	Contextualization (internal and external)	
	Explanations and comparisons	
	Securing children's understanding	
	Sum of points: Securing understanding	
Response to children's output	Encouraging children's output	
	Implicit corrective feedback	
	Absence of explicit correction / compulsion to repeat correctly	
	Sum of points: response to children's output	
Sum of children's reactions	Children listen	
	Sum of children's reactions	

Figure 1. LIOSI based on IQOS (Weitz 2015).

By using the LIOS I, teachers gain language awareness through self-monitoring and reflection, deepening their understanding of how to embed L2 activities in classroom communication. The tool guides them towards greater language awareness through enhanced noticing of language-

rich moments in classroom interactions, a heightened attention to the quality and quantity of the L2 input they provide pupils, and more detailed lesson planning to unlock the potential for rich language episodes to emerge in L2 contexts. Moreover, when the tool is used for collegial, peer-to-peer observations among teachers, a guided, micro-structured analysis of teaching practices in L2 can provide meaningful feedback for ongoing professional development.

In these ways, the LIOS I is an indispensable instrument to support teachers in developing an awareness of various factors that can enrich their language input with young learners in multilingual public preschools in South Tyrol where Italian is the L1, German the L2, English is taught as a L3, and various heritage languages of migrant children are also present. Since German and English are stress-timed languages whereas Italian is a syllabic language, teachers must understand how to modulate intonation and prosody to make language input comprehensible to learners given the variety of languages present in the classroom. Given the complexity of this rich linguistic landscape, preschool teachers require training on how to make linguistic input comprehensible to all learners.

Furthermore, the LIOS I is an instrument that can provide ongoing support when used for self-reflection and for collegial observation and feedback. Research on peer observation demonstrates the benefits for teachers of becoming reflective practitioners through analysis and discussion of situated learning experiences (Lave and Wenger 1991). The LIOS I used in peer observation can help them attain the following intertwined objectives: first, *knowledge* – to understand the various strategies for providing high quality language input in the target language (TL) and share this knowledge; second, *professionalization* – to increase the linguistic awareness of all teachers involved and develop a permanent language-sensitive orientation in pedagogical practice; third, *community of practice* – to reinforce knowledge sharing among peers through ongoing interaction in order to continue growing professionally and improving language practices across the school (Wenger 1998).

4. Conclusion

South Tyrol is a crucible in which local languages and cultures meet, but do not necessarily merge. While seeking to recognize the linguistic and cultural uniqueness of the region, efforts to preserve its monolingual habitus through a linguistically segregated approach to education go against pedagogical and linguistic theories of multilingualism which favour an integrated approach to languages (Duarte and Günther-van der Meij 2018). The divided approach to schooling which separates students on the basis of language has not favoured the language development of its young people, as indicated in performance results examined in section 2.2 above. Moreover, linguistic separation is increasingly at odds with the reality in schools of students with plurilingual repertoires and the challenges of integrating those who have neither German nor Italian as a L1, a consequence of increased mobility and migration in the region. How then to accommodate 'linguistic superdiversity' (Duarte and Gogolin 2013) in an education system vested in preserving a monolingual habitus?

Raising language awareness in teacher education is key to any possible solution. Language awareness, which refers to explicit knowledge about language and a conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use (Carter 1990, 2003), has been strongly advocated as an essential component in teacher education (James and Garrett 1992; Wright and Bolitho 1993), but it is harder to achieve in the context of language separation. As Ehlich and Rehbein established more than three decades ago, school is an institution based on language learning across the curriculum (1986, 172). In fact, the European Commission (1996, 2012, 2019) actively encourages a recognition of language learning as fundamental to *all* courses of study at *all* levels of education, and recommends increasing general language awareness in schools, with the ultimate goal of improving language-learning outcomes. Specifically, it acknowledges the importance of 'looking at the various ways language is used in the classroom and the vital role language plays in learning and understanding subject content.' (EU Commission, 2019)

Teacher education is the disruptive means for change since teachers are agents in shifting mind-sets and shaping school culture, from micro-level classroom practices to macro-level language-in-

education policies. All pre-service and in-service teachers would benefit from increased language awareness and the opportunity to participate in courses and training that focus on strategies for effective language input to support classroom interactions. The LangApp project is a first step in this direction, but further longitudinal research is needed to measure learners' L2 acquisition over time (input-intake-output cycle), focusing on their productive control of L2 in the output phase of acquisition in relation to the input received. In fact, rich language input does not present itself as a short-term initiative but, instead, as the actual basis for language learning, a process that takes no less than ten years in the L1 (Klein 2007, 137). The present study needs to be validated through further testing and subsequently expanded to primary school and secondary school, with training and support offered to teachers at all educational levels on strategies for effective linguistic input and corrective feedback with older pupils in language education.

Notes

1. According to the sociologist Roland Robertson (1995), 'glocalization' refers to the co-presence or simultaneity of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in social and economic practices. The goal of plurilingualism in South Tyrol and the institutionalization of a monolingual habitus through the education system reveal a fundamental tension between universalizing and particularizing conceptualisations of multilingual education.
2. For additional information on the Ladin school system, please see <https://www.micura.it/en/encounter/ladin-culture/schools-in-the-ladin-valleys>.
3. For a detailed breakdown of number of hours of instruction per language per year level in South Tyrolean primary education, see Gross and Mastellotto (2021).
4. These lines represent the authors' English translation of the descriptors from the Kolipsi study (2017) published in German and Italian.
5. In the context of South Tyrol, the strong focus on official languages and cultures in schooling – Italian and German (majority status) and Ladin (minority status) – as an effort to preserve and promote the region's particular language habitus can be seen to hinder a wider recognition of language diversity, especially vis à vis the heritage languages of migrants, signalling a fundamental tension between the local and translocal/global dimensions of multilingualism. For further analysis, see Gross and Mastellotto (2021).
6. Written consent from all research participants (teachers and pupils) was obtained by the researchers prior to data collection in schools. The consent forms were in conformity with EU ethical conventions for research on human subjects and approved by the Free University of Bolzano's ethical committee.
7. LIOS I was developed and piloted by the Unibz team (Renata Zanin, Lynn Mastellotto, Marjan Asgari) as part of the LangApp project.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Lynn Mastellotto is a Researcher in Educational linguistics, English language, in the Faculty of Education, Free University of Bolzano. Her research focuses on multilingualism in education, teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), content and language integrated learning in schools (CLIL) and at university (ICLHE), and teacher education for inclusive learning in plurilingual and intercultural educational contexts.

Renata Zanin is an Assistant Professor in Educational linguistics, German language, Faculty of Education, Free University of Bolzano. Her research interests are multilingualism, didactics of German L2, bilingual teaching and learning in schools (CLIL) and universities (ICLHE). As the Rector's delegate, she developed and implemented the multilingual language strategy across faculties for the Free University of Bolzano.

ORCID

Lynn Mastellotto  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4184-0087>

Renata Zanin  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1133-7576>

References

- Abel, A., C. Vettori, and E. Martini, eds. 2017. *KOLIPSI II: Gli studenti altoatesini e la seconda lingua. Indagine linguistica e psicosociale. / Die Südtiroler SchülerInnen und die Zweitsprache: eine linguistische und sozialpsychologische Untersuchung*. Bolzano: EURAC Research Institute of Applied Linguistics.
- Alber, E. 2012. "South Tyrol's Education System: Plurilingual Answers for Monolingual Spheres?." *L'Europe en Formation* 1 (363), 399–415. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-l-europe-en-formation-2012-1-page-399.htm>.
- Apeltauer, E. 2007. "Das Kieler Modell. Sprachliche Frühförderung von Kindern mit Migrationshintergrund." In *Deutsch als Zweitsprache*, edited by E. Apeltauer, and B. Ahrenholz, 111–134. Freiburg im Breisgau: Fillibach.
- Asgari, M., and R. Zanin. *forthcoming*. "Förderung der Interaktionskompetenz von Pädagog*innen während DaF-Aktivitäten im Kindergarten." In *Interaktionskompetenz fördern. Info DaF Themenheft. Informationen Deutsch als Fremdsprache*, edited by E.M. Betz, T. Huth, M. Schart, and B. PublisherLoc: Publisher-Name.
- Autonomous Province of Bolzano. n.d. Constitution and Agreements. <http://www.provinz.bz.it/this-is-south-tyrol-constitution-and-agreements.asp>.
- Barcelona European Council. 2002. Presidency Conclusions, 15 and 16 March 2002. SN 100/1/02 REV 1, p.19.
- Blackledge, A., and A. Creese. 2012. "Multilingualism: A Critical Perspective." *Journal of Language Identity & Education* 11 (4): 283–287.
- Blommaert, J., and A. Backus. 2013. "Superdiverse Repertoires and the Individual." In *Multilingualism and Multimodality*, edited by I. de Saint-Georges, and J.-J. Weber, 11–32. New York: Springer.
- Bourdieu, P. 1979. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Trans. by Richard Nice. Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Carter, R. 1990. *Knowledge About Language and the Curriculum*. Sevenoaks: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Carter, R. 2003. "Language Awareness." *ELT Journal* 57 (1): 64–65. doi:10.1093/elt/57.1.64.
- Cenoz, J. 2013. "Defining Multilingualism." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 33: 3–18.
- Collins, R. 1992. "The Romanticism of Agency/Structure Versus the Analysis of Micro/Macro." *Current Sociology* 40 (1): 77–97.
- Conteh, J., and G. Meier, eds. 2014. *The Multilingual Turn in Languages Education: Opportunities and Challenges*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Coyle, D., P. Hood, and D. C. Marsh. 2010. *CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Duarte, J., and I. Gogolin, eds. 2013. *Linguistic Superdiversity in Urban Areas*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishers.
- Duarte, J., and M. Günther-van der Meij. 2018. "A Holistic Model for Multilingualism in Education." *EuroAmerican Journal of Applied Linguistics and Languages. Special Issue: Translingual and Multilingual Pedagogies* 5 (2): 24–43.
- Ehlich, K., and J. Rehbein. 1986. *Muster und Institution: Untersuchungen zur Schulischen Kommunikation. Kommunikation und Institution 15 Series*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Ellis, N. C. 2002. *Frequency Effects in Language Processing: A Review with Implications for Theories of Implicit and Explicit Language Acquisition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- European Commission. 1996. *Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society*. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8722c9fb-71da-435f-94b6-33aab67eb081/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>.
- European Commission. 2012. *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0669>.
- European Commission. 2019. *European Council Recommendation on a Comprehensive Approach to Teaching and Learning of Languages*. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C_.2019.189.01.0015.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AC%3A2019%3A189%3ATOC.
- Feddes, A. R., and P. Noack. 2009. "Direct and Extended Friendship Effects on Minority and Majority Children's Interethnic Attitudes: A Longitudinal Study." *Child Development* 80 (2): 377–390.
- Feilke, H. 2012. "Bildungssprachliche Kompetenzen – fördern und entwicke." *Praxis Deutsch* 233: 4–13. Seelze: Friedrich Verlag.
- García, O., J. Kleifgen, and L. Falchi. 2008. *From English Language Learners to Emergent Bilinguals*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED524002>.
- García, O., A. Lin, and S. May, eds. 2017. *Translanguaging in Bilingual Education. Bilingual and Multilingual Education. Encyclopedia of Language and Education*. New York: Springer.
- Gogolin, I. 1994. *Der monolinguale Habitus der multigualen Schule*. Münster: Waxmann.
- Gogolin, I. 1997. "The 'Monolingual Habitus' as the Common Feature in Teaching in the Language of the Majority in Different Countries." *Per Linguam: A Journal of Language Learning* 13 (2): 38–49. <https://perlinguam.journals.ac.za/pub/article/view/187/298>.
- Gross, B., and L. Mastellotto. 2021. "Approaches to Diversity: Tracing Multilingualism in Teacher Education in South Tyrol, Italy." In *Preparing Teachers to Work with Multilingual Learners: International Perspectives*, edited by M. Wernicke, S. Hammer, A. Hansen, and T. Schroedler, 123–146. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Hellawell, D. 2006. "Inside-out: Analysis of the Insider-Outsider Concept as a Heuristic Device to Develop Reflexivity in Students Doing Qualitative Research." *Teaching in Higher Education* 11 (4): 483–494.

- Ibrahim, N. 2019. "Children's Multimodal Visual Narratives as Possible Sites of Identity Performance." In *Visualising Multilingual Lives: More Than Words*, edited by P. Kalaja, and S. Melo-Pfeifer, 33–52. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- INDIRE (Istituto Nazionale Documentazione Innovazione Ricerca Educativa). 2018. *Neoassunti 2017-2018*. <http://www.indire.it/progetto/formazione-docenti-neoassunti-201718/>.
- James, C., and P. Garrett. 1992. *Language Awareness in the Classroom*. London: Longman.
- Kersten, K. 2018. TIOS - Teacher Input Observation Scheme. L2 Input Rating Schedule. *Studies on Multilingualism in Education*, 4. Hildesheim: Hildesheim University.
- Kersten, K. 2021. "L2 Input and Characteristics of Instructional Techniques in Early Foreign Language Classrooms: Underlying Theory and Pedagogical Practice." *The European Journal of Applied Linguistics and TEFL* 10 (2): 27–59.
- Klein, W. 2007. Spracherwerb innerhalb und außerhalb der Schule. In *DA Jahrbuch 2007*, 134–144.
- Kleinschmidt-Schinke, K. 2018. *Die an die Schüler/-innen gerichtete Sprache (SgS): Studien zur Veränderung der Lehrer/-innensprache von der Grundschule bis zur Oberstufe*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Krashen, S. D. 1982. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Krashen, S. D. 1985. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. Boston: Addison-Wesley & Longman.
- Lave, J., and E. Wenger. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Long, M. H. 1981. "Input, Interaction and Second Language Acquisition." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 379 (1): 259–278.
- Long, M. H. 2017. "Interaction in L2 Classrooms. Teaching Speaking and Pronunciation Research on Teaching Speaking." In *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*, edited by J. I. Liontas. John Wiley & Sons. Wiley Online Library. doi:10.1002/9781118784235.
- Mastellotto, L., and R. Zanin. 2021. "South Tyrol and the Challenge of Multilingual Higher Education." In *EMI and Beyond: Internationalising Higher Education Curricula in Italy*, edited by L. Mastellotto, and R. Zanin, 215–239. Bozen-Bolzano: Bolzano University Press.
- May, S., ed. 2014. *The Multilingual Turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL and Bilingual Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Merriam, S. B. 1998. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Missaglia, F. 2008. "Simulierte Emotionen im Phonetikunterricht." In *Vivere l'intercultura – gelebte Interkulturalität. Studi in onore di Hans Drumbl*, edited by A. Hornung, and C. Robustelli, 213–223. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.
- Nassaji, H., and E. Kartchava. 2021. *The Cambridge Handbook of Corrective Feedback in Second Language Learning and Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nickel, S. 2014. "Sprache & Literacy im Elementarbereich." In *Handbuch frühe Kindheit*, edited by R. Braches-Chyrek, C. Röhner, H. Sünker, and M. Hopf, 663–675. Budrich: Leverkusen.
- Pienemann, M. 2008. "A Brief Introduction to Processability Theory." In *Processability Approaches to Second Language Development and Second Language Learning*, edited by J.-U. Keßler, 9–30. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Reason, P., and H. Bradbury, eds. 2007. *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research. Participative Inquiry and Practice*. 2nd ed. London: Sage Publishers.
- Robertson, R. 1995. "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity." In *Global Modernities*, edited by M. Featherstone, S. Lash, and R. Robertson, 25–44. London: Sage Publishers.
- Rosenfield, D., D. S. Sheehan, M. M. Marcus, and W. G. Stephan. 1981. "Classroom Structure and Prejudice in Desegregated Schools." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 73 (1): 17–26.
- Thornbury, S. 1996. "Teachers Research Teacher Talk." *ELT Journal* 50 (4): 279–289.
- von Raffler-Engel, W., and R. H. Hutcheson. 1975. *Language Intervention Programs in the United States 1960-1974: Theoretical Issues, Experimental Research and Practical Application*. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Vosoughi, S., and D. Roy. 2012. "A longitudinal Study of Prosodic Exaggeration In Child-Directed Speech." *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Speech Prosody*. <https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/80790>.
- Walsh, S. 2006. *Investigating Classroom Discourse*. London: Routledge.
- Weitz, M. 2015. *Die Rolle des L2-Inputs in Bilingualen Kindergärten. Inquiries in Language Learning*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Weitz, M., S. Pahl, A. Flyman Mattsson, A. Buyl, and E. Kalbe. 2010. "The Input Quality Observation Scheme (IQOS): The Nature of L2 Input and its Influence on L2 Development in Bilingual Preschools." In *Bilingual Preschools. Vol. I: Learning and Development*, edited by K. Kersten, A. Rohde, C. A. K. Schelleter, and A. Steinlen, 5–44. Trier: WVT.
- Wenger, E. 1998. *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wright, T., and R. Bolitho. 1993. "Language Awareness: A Missing Link in Teacher Education?" *ELT Journal* 47/4: 292–304.
- Yin, R. K. 2018. *Case Study Research and Application: Design and Methods*. 6th ed. London: Sage Publishers.
- Zauche, L. H., A. Darcy Mahoney, M. S. Zauche, A. Weldon, and J. Stapel-Wax. 2017. "The Power of Language Nutrition for Children's Brain Development, Health, and Future Academic Achievement." *Journal of Pediatric Health Care* 31 (4): 493–503.