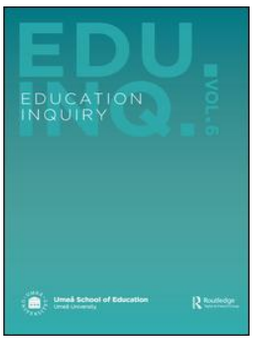

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Education Inquiry

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/zedu20

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To cite this article: Carina Hermansson , Annika Norlund Shaswar , Jenny Rosén & Åsa Wedin (2021): Teaching for a monolingual school? (In)visibility of multilingual perspectives in Swedish teacher education, Education Inquiry, DOI: 10.1080/20004508.2021.1885588

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2021.1885588

Published online: 14 Feb 2021.

EDUCATION INQUIRY
https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2021.1885588

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Teaching for a monolingual school? (In)visibility of multilingual perspectives in Swedish teacher education

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the knowledge about linguistic and cultural diversity that is delineated in the syllabi of teacher education programmes for pre-, primary and secondary schools at two Swedish universities. A quantitative search for 14 chosen keywords preceded a closer analysis of the concepts **language** and **cultur**, when using truncation, in 192 syllabi. This showed that linguistic diversity was to a certain extent evident, mainly through the subjects Swedish and English, while for one university cultural diversity was mainly identified in the syllabi of Educational Work and English. If knowledge about linguistic and cultural diversity is limited to language subjects, and to some extent to pre-school and earlier school years, the risk is high that student teachers are not prepared to support equity in education for multilingual and non-dominant groups. Thus, we find that students studying the current Swedish teacher education programme are unlikely to be well equipped to meet the challenges related to creating equal educational opportunities for students in situations of linguistic and cultural diversity.

KEYWORDS

Teacher education; multilingualism; Sweden; linguistic diversity; cultural diversity

Introduction

Social life in the twenty-first century is characterised by mobility (Blommaert, 2010) and superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007) as well as instability and social inequality (Faist, 2013). Formal education in Sweden and several other European countries is, however, regulated by national and local policies founded on an ideology of one national language and a monolingual bias. The contradictions inherent in this juxtaposition find their expression in the form of, for example, compulsory Swedish schools that are organised as monolingual spaces, despite the diverse cultural and linguistic repertoires of the students and teachers. In this article we raise questions about which knowledge and competences are constructed as legitimate for teachers in twenty-first century Sweden by exploring the qualifications associated to linguistic and cultural diversity that are described in the course syllabi of the Swedish teacher education programmes for pre-, primary and secondary schools.

Drawing on research in language education policy for migrants (Hyltenstam & Milani, 2012) and educational policy (Paulsrud & Zilliacus, 2018; Zilliacus, Paulsrud, & Holm, 2017) we direct greater attention to a systematic and informed development of

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syllabi for teacher education programmes, including multilingual and intercultural perspectives, that can guide teachers through their work with the linguistically and culturally diverse school of contemporary times. Despite a tradition of migration to Sweden, and several adjustments made to the Swedish education system since the 1970s in order to fulfil the needs of immigration policies (Hyltenstam & Milani, 2012), increasing levels of immigration in recent years, with a peak in 2015, have highlighted a lack of knowledge and competence among teachers in Sweden regarding work with students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Hyltenstam and Milani (2012) suggest that new professional groups, such as mother tongue teachers (then called home language teachers) and teachers of Swedish for immigrants,[1] have been developed as a result of the immigration policy that emerged during the 1970s. In similar ways, the rise in migration to Sweden during the 2010s made the situation for schools and teachers acute. Teachers' lack of competence in working with students from a migrant background was presented as part of the problem (SNAE [Swedish National Agency for Education], 2016).

In 2012 the Swedish government initiated an inquiry aimed at improving education for newly arrived students (Swedish Ministry of Education, 2013). In its report the inquiry noted that students who migrate to Sweden after the age of seven are less likely to fulfil the requirements to enter Upper Secondary school [gymnasieskolan] than other students. Since 2013 the Swedish government has invested in in-service training for teachers to develop their competence in working with students who have recently immigrated to Sweden and have languages other than Swedish as their dominant language.

The Swedish government has been particularly concerned with a group they have defined as *newly arrived* [nyanlända]. Several in-service courses for teachers to support the young people within this group have been launched by the Swedish National Agency for Education, SNAE [Skolverket]. The term *newly arrived students* [nyanlända elever] emerged as a result of specific input from the Swedish government, such as its ordinance for reception for residence of some newly arrived immigrants for settlement (Swedish Ministry of Employment, 2010). In this context, the notion of newly arrived referred to a person included in the act about establishment for some newly arrived immigrants (Swedish Ministry of Employment, 2010). In relation to education, a review of the research on newly arrived students in Swedish schools was published in 2010 (Bunar, 2010). A major finding was the lack of research concerned with this category of students. Since its introduction, the term "newly arrived student" has been used mainly in Swedish official discourse, particularly in relation to education. The Education Act (Swedish Ministry of Education, 2010) states that a newly arrived student is one who has lived abroad, who is now living in Sweden, and has commenced his or her education in Sweden after the start of the autumn term in the year they turned seven years old. A student is no longer considered newly arrived after four years of schooling in Sweden (Swedish Ministry of Education, 2014/2015, 2010, Act 3 Chapter 12a§).

In 2018, 26% of all students starting their first year of compulsory school in Sweden (a pre-school year for children aged 6–7) were categorised as using a language other than Swedish in the home setting (SNAE [Swedish National Agency for Education], 2012). Hence, all teachers in Sweden most likely teach in classrooms with students from

diverse linguistic backgrounds. Thus, this article focuses on teacher education and the knowledge and competences this education constructs as legitimate in relation to mobility and diversity. The article builds on a study of the syllabi for courses in five different teacher education programmes (pre-school, primary school years P-3 and 4–6, secondary school years 7–9 and upper secondary school) at two universities in Sweden. The following research questions have guided the study:

(1) To what extent is linguistic and cultural diversity identified in the course syllabi?
(2) What qualifications regarding linguistic and cultural diversity are identified in the course syllabi?
(3) What differences between the programmes and subjects themselves regarding linguistic and cultural diversity become apparent from the analysis?

Teacher education in Sweden

Teacher education in Sweden is provided by state-mandated universities and regulated by the Swedish Higher Education Act (Swedish Ministry of Education, 1992) and the Higher Education Ordinance (Swedish Ministry of Education 1993). These in turn regulate the Qualifications Ordinance that states the requirements for the different classifications of teacher qualifications. Carlson and Rabo (2008), in their work on Swedish teacher education, explore how diversity on issues like class, gender and ethnicity, which were perceived in a positive light in the official discourse at the time, was interpreted, negotiated and performed in teacher education.

Paulsrud and Zilliacus (2018) and Zilliacus et al. (2017) argue, based on a study of teacher education in Finland and Sweden, that linguistic diversity on a societal level has not been reflected in the content of teacher education, and they highlight that Sweden lacks explicit directives in regard to language policy in education. By interviewing teacher educators and students in teacher education programmes they showed there was a lack of instruction in multilingual and intercultural pedagogy in the programmes. Bayati (2014) showed how student teachers with a migrant background experienced racism and discrimination during their education. Similarly, Bigestans (2015) showed how teachers with a migrant background felt that their authority as teachers was questioned because of their status as L2-speakers of Swedish.

In Sweden, higher education is part of the public sector and is free of charge for citizens of states that are included in the Agreement on the European Economic Area (and citizens of Switzerland). The Swedish parliament decides which higher education institutions shall exist (Swedish Ministry of Education, 1992). The context for the study presented here is the teacher education programmes at two Swedish universities. The outcomes of the programmes are regulated nationally in The Higher Education Ordinance, Annexe 2 (Swedish Ministry of Education, 1993).

Swedish teacher education is mainly organised into programmes, one each for, respectively, pre-school teachers, pre-school classes to grade three, grades three to six, grades seven to nine and upper secondary school (gymnasieskolan), which is comparable to upper secondary school in the British school system. In Sweden, classes from pre-school through to grade nine are compulsory. In this text we will use the official

English descriptions of these programmes as set out in the Swedish Council for Higher Education Translation of Qualifications Ordinance: Teachers for Pre-school Education, Primary Education and Upper Secondary Education. The pre-school teacher programme is 210 ECTS over 3.5 years, the programmes for primary education P-3, 4–6 and secondary education 7–9 are 240 ECTS over four years, while the programme for upper secondary education is 300 ECTS over five years.

Sweden has had an explicit Language Act since 2009. Its purpose is to "specify the position and usage of the Swedish language and other languages in Swedish society" (Swedish Ministry of Culture 2009). This Act sets up Swedish as the principle language in Sweden and gives the public sector a special responsibility for the use and development of Swedish. Thus, institutions for higher education, such as universities, with their responsibility for teacher education, are given an important role regarding the Swedish language. The passage of the Language Act prompted a public debate in which higher education and research were positioned as domains of English dominance at the expense of Swedish (Boyd & Huss, 2001; Salö, 2010). Still, the Language Act is open to interpretation and there are local policies regarding language use at some universities (Hult & Källkvist, 2016a, 2016b).

If we turn to the North American context, there is, according to Lavery, Nutta, and Youngblood (2019), considerable variation in the training that student teachers in the U.S. receive in how to teach students who are English language learners. In more than fifty percent of states, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) training is not required for teacher candidates; in states where ESOL training *is* required, there is considerable variation in relation to the content and quantity of the training.

In relation to linguistic diversity in higher education, Mazak and Carroll (2017) have edited a volume that explores the framework of translanguaging in higher educational contexts in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. Drawing on the research presented in the volume, Carroll (2017) argues in the concluding chapter that if translanguaging practices in non-dominant languages are used in higher educational contexts, those practices will sooner or later affect language policies in primary and secondary education and raise the status of non-dominant languages there.

Theoretical and methodological framework

This study takes Foucault's understanding of power and knowledge as interdependent as its point of departure. Foucault brings into focus the unequal access to discourse in society and how education has developed as an institution to reproduce but also to transform power relations (1982, 1993). Discourses are never just reflections of power relations; it is through discourse that power is produced and negotiated. This raises the question of how, by which means and to what effects power is exercised (see also Fejes, Dahlstedt, Olson, & Sandberg, 2018). Drawing on a Foucauldian perspective, Edwards (2008, p. 31) suggests that "[d]iscourse is constitutive of knowledge, rather than simply the neutral expression of something outside language" and hence, it "defines the domain and produces that object of knowledge within that domain". From this perspective, it is important to analyse the knowledge and competence that is constructed as legitimate, especially in relation to the mobility and diversity which characterises the twenty-first century.

As a result of an increased awareness of the multilingual and multicultural processes that have emerged following increasing global mobility, efforts have been made to create new ways of understanding and analysing language practices and the role of language in varied social processes such as education. Blommaert (2010) has developed what he calls *a sociolinguistics of mobility* through what has been called *the multilingual turn* (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014), where mobility, change and complexity have replaced earlier views on the stability of language (Blackledge & Creese, 2014; Blommaert & Rampton, 2012). Contrary to previous views on the desirability of linguistic homogeneity, often called a monolingual view or bias, researchers such as Gal (2006), Makoni and Pennycook (2007) and May (2014) argue that even the idea of language itself is founded on European notions of nationalism and colonialism. As Otheguy, García and Reid (2015, p. 291) explain:

> Languages are not true linguistic entities because their boundaries are established on non-linguistic grounds. Rather, they are groupings of idiolects of people with shared social, political or ethnic identities that, once so grouped, are described using linguistic terms that tend to give the mistaken impression that the grouping was based on linguistic grounds in the first place.

Following this line of argument, a critical perspective on multilingualism in relation to education forms the basis for this article. This critical perspective includes paying attention to power relations, raising questions about the linguistic and cultural resources that are identified (and those that are not) and what ideologies related to multilingualism are expressed. By analysing the content of the syllabi for teacher education programmes we will thus examine the construction of legitimate knowledge for student teachers with a focus on linguistic and cultural diversity.

Material

The material analysed as part of this study consists of the syllabi for courses delivered at two Swedish universities, Uni A and Uni B, in the Pre-school Teacher Programme, Primary School Teacher Programme years P-3 and 4–6, the Secondary School Teacher Programme 7–9 and Upper Secondary School Teacher Programme. Both these universities have medium-sized teacher education departments but are located in different parts of the country. In Sweden, university teacher education programmes for pre-school, P-3 and 4–6 are relatively similar and there is little opportunity to specialise. Regulations for education programmes are subject to regular change by the education authority; the programmes analysed here follow the regulations implemented in 2010 when a reformed teacher education programme was put into place.

In the programmes for Secondary School and Upper Secondary School, student teachers can choose to specialise in two or three subjects. For Secondary School 7–9, student teachers choose one subject to start with and then add a further two subjects. For Upper Secondary they choose one initial subject and then add another later on. Hence, for the analysis conducted for this study we chose the syllabi for all courses included in the programmes for pre-school, P-3 and 4–6. For grades 7–9 and Upper Secondary programmes we chose the syllabi of all the common courses that were studied by all student teachers, regardless of subject specialism or university attended.

These common courses are organised under subject related areas such as *Educational Work*, *Educational Science*, or *General Education Area* at each of the universities. For our study we chose to examine the courses in *Educational Work* that were taught at both universities (equivalent to 90 ECTS). We then added 75/96 ECTS of Swedish (with the first number representing the ECTS from Uni A and second number those for Uni B) and 75/60 ECTS of Mathematics for 7–9. For Upper Secondary we used a combination of syllabi from English (120/90 ECTS) and Physical Education (90/96 ECTS). The rationale for choosing these subjects was that we wanted to have a broad distribution of subjects. In reality, student teachers in 7–9 are not allowed to combine Swedish and Mathematics, but 90 ECTS Swedish can be combined with 45 ECTS in each of two other subjects. However, we found that the combination of subjects would be more comparable if at least 75 ECTS were included from each subject. Furthermore, we found that Swedish, English, Mathematics and Physical Education served as good representatives of the different subjects taught at this level. The number of syllabi included in the study, therefore, is displayed in Table 1. The reason for not choosing natural science or social science was that they are made up of a combination of several sub-subjects; for natural science this includes chemistry, biology and physics, and for social science it includes history, religion, geography and civics. Individual universities are able to organise this part of the teacher education programme differently and thus we found there was a high risk that variation in the distribution between each sub-subject would influence the results in undesirable ways.

The difference in the number of syllabi between the two universities reflects the number of ECTS covered by the various courses. In total 192 syllabi were included in the analysis. As a first step a frequency analysis was made of selected words in all the documents in order to illuminate the frequency of central concepts related to linguistic diversity. As displayed in table 2, the concepts chosen were: *multiling** (flerspråk*), *biling** (tvåspråk*), **cultur** (kultur*), *poly** (mång*), *multi** (multi*), *mono** (mono*), *integration* (integration), *identity* (identitet), *ethno** (etni*), *inclusion* (inkludering), *newly arrived* (nyanländ), *second language* (andraspråk*), *mother tongue* (modersmål) and **language** (*språk*). These 14 concepts were chosen because they are, in our experience, commonly used in Swedish contexts where education and linguistic diversity are dealt with. As there is a high frequency of compound concepts in Swedish, some of the concepts were marked with *, meaning that any word compound including this part of the word was counted. *Newly arrived* (nyanländ) has become a frequently-used concept in Sweden in relation to L2 students and, as mentioned above, is related to certain regulations stipulated in the Swedish Education Act in force since 2016. *Mother*

Table 1. Number of syllabi analysed.

	Pre-school	Grade P-3	Grade 4–6	Grade 7–9	Upper secondary	Total
Uni A	15	18	17	14	16	80
Uni B	23	24	24	23	18	112

Table 2. Instances of selected concepts.

Multiling*	Poly*	Multi*	Identity	Ethno*	Inclusion	Second language
19	26	14	26	31	23	17

tongue (modersmål) is also a frequently-used concept in Swedish, dealing as it does with students who interact in languages other than Swedish in their homes. Since 1997 the state has mandated that instruction in languages used by students in their home settings is called "mother-tongue tuition" and not "home language instruction". Hence, the concept *mother tongue* is often used in educational settings to refer to languages other than Swedish and foreign languages (OECD, 2019). Therefore, terms such as *heritage language* and *home language*, sometimes used in an international research context, are rarely used in contemporary Sweden.

On a basic level, the syllabi at both universities are constructed in a similar manner. This comprises the central content, objectives and forms of assessment. There is a difference in the syllabi of the two universities in the sense that the syllabi of Uni A are less extensive and thus include a smaller total number of words than the syllabi of Uni B. The reason why the number of syllabi from Uni B is 112, while only 80 are from Uni A, is that some of the syllabi from Uni A cover more ECTS. Thus, the sum of ECTS considered from each university is the same. As the two universities will not be directly compared, this has no direct bearing on the analysis. The lists for required reading have not been included as they are not as clearly connected to the expected content and outcomes of the courses and are thus more difficult to analyse quantitatively. Lists for required reading are also revised more often than course syllabi. In Swedish higher education, the juridical framework for courses are the course syllabi and for professional programmes such as teacher education, course syllabi are combined with the programme syllabi. The syllabi both for programmes and courses are produced and regulated locally according to the Higher Education Ordinance (Swedish Ministry of Education, 1993) The Higher Education Ordinance states that a course should have a course syllabus and "[t]he course syllabus shall indicate the following: the cycle in which the course is given, the number of credits, objectives, specific entry requirements, how student performance is assessed and any other regulations required" (section 15).

The syllabi are therefore texts where the core qualifications and knowledge that student teachers are expected to acquire during the programme are expressed. The texts displayed in the syllabi in the form of content, learning objectives and teaching arrangements may be expected to express the core of the courses. In the syllabi from Uni B, the section *Teaching arrangements* [Undervisningens upplägg] is also important in this regard, while the syllabi from Uni A are more concise. In order to answer the research questions, our analysis of the syllabi will begin with these 14 concepts.

Analysis

In order to grasp not only frequency but also the palpable and concealed meanings of multilingual perspectives in Swedish teacher education, both quantitative and qualitative analyses were carried out. As a first step, a plain word search was done by scanning the 192 syllabi for the 14 chosen concepts in order to answer the first research question about the extent to which school students' linguistic and cultural diversity is described through course syllabi in these teacher education programmes. During this first step the researchers worked in pairs focusing on one university each, but also met continuously to discuss issues that arose.

As a second step, a qualitative analysis of the two most frequently used concepts, **language** and **cultur** using truncations, was made to answer the second and third research questions regarding qualifications regarding linguistic and cultural diversity identified in the syllabi, and regarding differences between the different programmes and subjects that arise through the analysis. The concept **language** using truncations included words like *multiling** (flerspråk*), *biling** (tvåspråk*) and other compounds including **language* (*språk*), such as *second language* (andraspråk*). The concept **cultur** (*kultur*) with truncations embraced *sociocultural* (sociokulturell) and *popular culture* (populärkultur). The search for patterns within the occurrences of these variations of **language** and **cultur** was carried out through a qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000) to provide a deeper understanding of how multilingual perspectives are presented in Swedish Teacher Education. In the initial phase, the researcher identified meaning units and coded to determine how language and various concepts linked to linguistic and cultural diversity were conceptualised. Then, these meaning units and codes where discussed between the researchers with the aim to determine and provide consistent results during the coding (Popping, 2010, p. 1068). Thereafter, the data related to the two concepts **language** and **cultur** were condensed at a slightly higher level of abstraction, in the form of an inductive category development, through process collaborative discussions involving all participating researchers (cf. Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Smagorinsky, 2008). The aim of these discussions was to answer the third research question about differences between the programmes and subjects themselves regarding linguistic and cultural diversity. The interpretations may be described as the result of an ongoing, flexible process in which rethinking, refining, expanding or rejecting codes and analytic areas played a part (Smagorinsky, 2008).

Findings

In the first calculation, the range of frequency extended from 904 for **language** and zero for *bilingual*. The concepts *mono*, newly arrived, mother tongue* and *integration* each occurred only once.

Bilingual and *mono*, with zero and one instance respectively, may be perceived as terms specific to contexts where knowledge related to second language acquisition and second language students is expressed. As none of the chosen subjects were specifically oriented towards this area, it is understandable that they did not appear frequently. However, we had anticipated the use of the word *newly arrived* to be more frequent. As shown above, the term *newly arrived* has become prominent in Swedish school discourse since 2010. The frequent use of the term in the documentation related to the in-service training programme launched by the SNAE, for example, and in materials produced by the School Inspectorate, could have been expected to have resulted in some evidence for this term in the course syllabi. We also find it notable that *mother tongue* and *integration* each occurred only once.

By far the most frequent of the chosen concepts was **language**, with 904 occurrences. Most of the instances were in the syllabi for the Swedish and English language courses. In the Pre-school programmes offered at both universities, courses are not directly related to specific subjects, but courses dealing with language development in children, interaction and literacy are managed by the Swedish language departments

and, thus, we perceived them as belonging this subject. At Uni B, each programme included a course in special needs education that was tailored to that particular context and level. In the course that accompanied the P-3 programme there were 15 instances of *language*, while there were no instances in Uni Bs other programmes. Other syllabi where **language** occurred were in the mathematics courses at Uni A for 4–6 and 7–9, although these mentions related to the students' own language development, and presupposed to be Swedish.

The number of instances of *multiling*, poly*, multi*, identity, ethno*, inclusion*, and *second language* is presented in the following table.

To summarise the results from this first step, of the 192 syllabi examined in this study the chosen word *biling** was not used at all and the words *mono*, newly arrived, mother tongue* and *integration* each occurred only once. The words *multiling*, poly*, multi*, identity, ethno*, inclusion* and *second language* were each used between 14 and 31 times. Two words that did appear frequently were **language***, with 904 instances, and **cultur***, with a total of 190 instances. These two concepts were further examined in the second step of the study, the results of which are analysed, below.

Linguistic diversity

Step two of our study is a qualitative analysis. Through an exploration of research questions two and three, we address the appearance of qualifications and the differences between programmes and subjects regarding linguistic and cultural diversity in the syllabi examined.

In the syllabi, linguistic diversity is expressed through the concept of *language* using truncations. As shown above, the concept **language*** occurred 904 times and most prevalently in the syllabi for Swedish and English. Discussion about language and learning languages is given most space in the syllabi for these subjects.

The syllabi of both subjects express a rather homogeneous use of **language*** and its various combinations such as "language development", "language skills" or "language use". When used in the syllabi for Swedish, these concepts imply that Swedish is the (one) language to develop; when it comes to English, the syllabi explicitly mention English as the (one) language to develop.

In a few instances, however, the concept **language*** is, in the syllabi of the pre-school teacher education programme at both universities, used in a broader sense of understanding language, a process which is described as using diverse linguistic resources. This is manifested, for example, when describing the importance of learning how "children's visual language and musical development interrelate with oral and writing language development" (Uni A). Thus, explicit links to a broader notion of human communication that requires diverse resources, such as pictorial language and music, is expressed.

Although there is a connection between *language* and a broader notion of human communication in the syllabi, the analysis shows that no detailed relation to a broader notion of multiple language systems (such as Syrian, Urdu or Shundi) is expressed, unless explicitly addressed through the concepts multiling*, poly* or multi*. For example, *multiling** is mentioned 19 times in the 192 syllabi, mainly in the Swedish syllabi. Interestingly, *multiling** is mainly used to refer to the pupils that the pre-service

teachers are expected to support (who may have multilingual backgrounds), and not in relation to the pre-service teachers themselves (who might adopt a multilingual approach to their teaching). In the English syllabi, multiple systems of languages are not explicitly mentioned. English is referred to as "a second language", the student teachers as "second language learners" of English and the courses as adopting a "second language perspective".

Linguistic diversity is also expressed through relations between language and identity. When stating, for example, that the pre-service teachers shall "describe and discuss how practices of language learning effect first and second language learners' language development" (Uni B, 4–6), the inference is that the future students will be either first or second language learners.

Furthermore, we find an understanding of the development of a first and a second language as parallel processes, for example in Uni A (P-3), where it is stated that the student teacher "shall show knowledge of theories about writing and writing development in a first and second language perspective". On the other hand, linguistic diversity is described as something that is external to monolingual students' linguistic development and thus as something that is added on top of their Swedish language development. This is exemplified in the syllabus of Uni B (4–6) which states that it will cover "[t]heories about emergent literacy and development of literacy as well as theories about literacy education and strategies; encoding, decoding and comprehension are treated on a basic level and are illuminated from a multilingual perspective". To our understanding, this "multilingual perspective" does not seem to be included in the "theories about emergent literacy" but is added separately at the end, as indicated by the use of "and".

To sum up, the analysis shows that qualifications about linguistic diversity are identified to a certain extent, mainly through the syllabi in Swedish and English. In Swedish, the concept **language** implicitly refers to the Swedish language and in a few cases to a broader notion of human communication, such as through pictorial, musical or body language. Only in a few cases do the syllabi refer to multiple systems of languages and contradicting views on linguistic diversity appear.

Cultural diversity

We now focus on the use of the concept **cultur** and questions about the different ways in which cultural diversity is represented in the different programmes and subjects. For the Pre-school Education programme at Uni A, **cultur** was used in courses focusing on art, music and movement and to refer to visual culture and intercultural perspectives. For the Primary Education programme (P-3 and 4–6), **cultur** occurred in courses in English, Swedish, Social Science and Educational Work at both universities. However, at Uni A it also appeared in one course in Natural Science stating an intention to cover different perspectives on the lives of people in history and in different cultures and environments. For Uni A, one Primary Education (P-3) course was specifically directed towards literacy, communication and learning in a multicultural school.

Regarding the Secondary Education programme and the Upper Secondary Education programme, **cultur** occurred in courses in Educational Work, Swedish, English, Mathematics and Physical Education (PE). The Secondary Education programme at

both universities used **cultur** in the syllabi for Mathematics. At Uni A this was through an objective in one course to contextualise instruction and learning in Mathematics from a cultural perspective and at Uni B this was expressed in the content as "the development of Mathematics in important cultural areas through history". For the Upper Secondary Education programme at Uni A **cultur** was found in the syllabi for Physical Education where it referred to a culture of movement as well as the idea of dance as both a physical activity and a form of culture.

However, most occurrences of **cultur** in the Upper Secondary Education programme were found in the syllabi for English (20 for Uni A and 27 for Uni B), where the concept was used to refer both to cultures from the English-speaking world and more generally to cultural studies and theory. One example was a course offered at Uni B named *Cultural and Social Studies* with a focus on English-speaking countries or areas. Students in the course were expected to show "knowledge about everyday life and culture in English-speaking countries". In a course in the later part of the programme, students were expected to "demonstrate in-depth understanding of social and cultural phenomena in English-speaking countries". At Uni A culture was represented most prominently in courses that concentrated on English literature, such as *Literature and Culture in English*, and more generic language teaching, such as the course *Language Learning and Teaching*. Regarding literature, students were expected to be able to "analyse basic connections between text and culture in the read literature" whereas on the learning and teaching courses the objectives stipulated students' "ability to work with culture in language teaching and use different sources as well as critically approach different interpretations of the concepts culture and intercultural competence".

For the Swedish courses offered within the Secondary Education programme, there were few occurrences of **cultur**: 3 for Uni A and 2 for Uni B, all referring to popular culture or cultural areas. Despite the fact that both English and Swedish are language-focused subjects, **cultur** was more frequently part of the content and objectives of courses in English compared to those in Swedish and represented in more diverse ways.

Of the courses offered in Educational Work, differences were noted between the two universities. At Uni B **cultur** occurred in syllabi for one of the courses named *Ethics, Democracy and Heterogenous Learning Environments*, which was offered in different versions to each of the programmes. Of the Educational Work courses provided at Uni A, there was no equivalent to this unitary approach. Instead, culture was mentioned in different courses through their references to intercultural perspectives, sociocultural theory and cultural pre-conditions. Hence, while Uni B had chosen to emphasise culture in one specific course, stating that "the goal is for the student to acquire tools to critically approach and to handle a learning environment characterised by cultural diversity", no similar objective or content was found in the syllabi for Uni A, besides referring to an intercultural perspective on educational leadership. Thus, qualifications in regard to cultural diversity were more explicit in Educational Work for Uni B than for Uni A. When categorising the use of *cultur* thematically, we found it was used to refer to: i) a multicultural school, students' diverse cultural backgrounds, cultural diversity, cultural identity and interculturality; ii) a school culture, involving teacher-student relations and relations between students; iii) as cultural expressions tied to

specific geographical areas, historical periods or status (for example, popular culture); and finally iv) sociocultural and cultural theory. These are not distinct categories but rather represent different perspectives on culture reflected in the syllabi. Since our focus is on cultural diversity, we will limit the following analysis to the mentions of *cultur* which relate to the first theme.

When discussing multicultural schools, the syllabi used the term **cultur** to refer to the potential conditions of a school, such as "a learning environment characterised by cultural diversity" (Uni B). It was also used to define the context in which a teacher should be able to "present, discuss, analyse and value the student's own as well as others' thematic works by acting as opponent on the texts, based on perspectives on text, communication and learning in a multicultural school" (Uni A). Teachers needed to learn about cultural diversity, as the syllabus for a course in Educational Work at Uni B pointed out, because students themselves ought to be able to show basic knowledge about cultural diversity, including issues surrounding gender, ethnicity, physical ability and the rights of children and young people. The ability to teach in a culturally diverse classroom is also mentioned in one English course at Uni B, stating that student teachers should be able to reflect on the content and approach of instruction in the contemporary classroom, which is increasingly characterised by multilingualism and cultural diversity. Guidelines on the content of the English courses at the two universities displayed a number of similarities. Syllabi at both universities mentioned the need to be aware of different "cultural expressions" in different English-speaking areas. However, this emphasis featured in almost all the courses in English given at Uni B, but at Uni A was only part of the English courses in the Primary School Education programme. The Upper Secondary Education syllabi at Uni A included objectives emphasising "cultural identity" and stressing the need for "transcultural" and "intercultural" approaches that would enable student teachers to "critically approach different interpretations of the notion of culture and intercultural competence". At Uni B there was a notable difference between courses in English in the Primary Education programme (year 4–6) that included objectives about language and literacy development in multilingual and multicultural societies and courses in the Upper Secondary programme that focused on cultural studies in English-speaking areas only.

In one course, relations between language, culture and identity were explicitly expressed through content dealing with language as "an expression of identity and culture" and "especially in relation to multicultural and multilingual learning environments in pre-school" (Pre-school Uni B). In courses in Educational Work at Uni A, "intercultural" is used to define a perspective in relation to the main subject, such as knowledge about educational leadership needed to be seen from an intercultural perspective.

In summary, qualifications regarding cultural diversity are for Uni B mainly described in one course in Educational Work that is included in all of the teacher programmes. At Uni A, however, cultural diversity is highlighted in terms of an intercultural perspective on the main content of different courses. Differences between the two universities were also found in regard to English, where in Uni A the syllabi included a more critical approach to cultural diversity, whereas in the English syllabi at Uni B cultural diversity was tied to culture in English-speaking areas. Compared to

linguistic diversity, which was mainly described in Swedish and English, cultural diversity was almost invisible in syllabi for Swedish.

Discussion

Through our two-step analysis, we have critically scrutinised how linguistic and cultural diversity was expressed in the syllabi of the five teacher education programmes at the two universities, and how this creates an understanding of the knowledge and competences that are constructed as legitimate for teachers. Our point of departure has been to analyse syllabi for the teacher programmes to explore how student teachers are prepared to work in a school characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity.

We were initially struck by the low frequency of 12 of the chosen 14 words, and particularly by the limited use of the concept *newly arrived*, given the frequent use of the word in in-service education programmes organised in Sweden by the SNAE. This seems to indicate that teacher education and in-service education are divergent and that there is a lack of continuity between teacher education and in-service education in respect to linguistic and cultural diversity. As such great efforts are put into promoting awareness of the linguistic and cultural diversity of students within the pre-primary and secondary school contexts on in-service training courses in Sweden, we find it remarkable that these concepts are not more highlighted in the investigated programmes. The knowledge that is emphasised through in-service training is clearly not positioned as important knowledge in the investigated syllabi. Although the SNAE in-service training has targeted teachers from all levels in all different subject areas, the concepts and perspectives it has promoted have not been reflected in the findings of the study. As was shown by Paulsrud and Zilliacus (2018), teacher educators express the importance of including questions about cultural and linguistic diversity in teacher education programmes, while claiming that they do not have the competence to deliver it and that it should be carried out by somebody else. Our study shows that very few syllabi explicitly include knowledge about cultural and linguistic diversity in school, either in a general sense or in relation to a particular subject.

In the investigated programmes, the main responsibility for the pre-service teacher's learning of and about language is carried by the courses in Swedish and English. The course syllabi for Swedish and English implicitly assume, when using the word language, that Swedish and English respectively are referred to. Other languages or language perspectives are not mentioned. This means that knowledge about language in relation to learning in other school subjects is not expressed as important for pre-service teachers studying Secondary Education 7–9 and Upper Secondary programmes who do not study these subjects and specialise in others. This means that student teachers who do not study Swedish or English do not learn about conditions for learning for newly arrived students and students who study through a second language. Thus they may be in need of the in-service training provided through the SNAE as soon as they have completed their exams.

Cultural diversity in Uni B is mainly treated in one specific course, which means that it is covered to some degree, although there is a risk involved with concentrating questions of diversity in one course that this may legitimate the implicitly monocultural (Swedish) norm adopted by other courses. Concentrating aspects of diversity in one

course also means that, should there be a perceived congestion of topics, this course could be easily exchanged with other content. Including an intercultural perspective in the specific content of different courses, as adopted at Uni A, results in the inclusion of aspects of diversity in the subject topic in a clearer way. This is mainly manifested in English and Educational Work, while in syllabi in Swedish, the cultural diversity of today's classroom is to a great extent invisible, except for some courses for pre-school and F-3. However, when cultural and linguistic diversity is one perspective among many, there is a risk that such knowledge and competences become addressed more superficially. In some cases, culture and language are related to each other, such as "multicultural language perception" (Uni B ENG 4–6), and "multicultural and multilingual environments for learning in pre-school" (Uni B, SW Preschool).

If knowledge about linguistic and cultural diversity is limited to language subjects, and to some extent to pre-school and earlier school years, the risk is high that student teachers are not prepared to support equity in education for multilingual and non-dominant groups. Considering the increased inequality and a gap between students born in Sweden and students with a migration background in Swedish compulsory schools (OECD, 2019; SNAE [Swedish National Agency for Education], 2020), the results of our study highlight the importance to educate teachers that are well prepared to support children and youth with various background. Our study indicates that students in the current Swedish teacher education programme are unlikely to be well equipped to meet the challenges related to creating equal educational opportunities in situations of linguistic and cultural diversity. This issue is critical also in relation to teacher education in a global context. However, the limitations of this study call for future research into how aspects of syllabi construction shape the content and practices of teacher education, and how linguistic and cultural diversity can be included in educational practices in teacher education.

Funding

This research was not supported by any research grants.

Note

1. Adult immigrants (16 years and older) who have received residency in Sweden but lack skills in Swedish, have the possibility study Swedish through the program Swedish for Immigrants (SFI), provided by municipal adult education. According to the syllabus "[m]unicipal adult education in Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) is an advanced language instruction that is intended to give adult immigrants a basic knowledge of the Swedish language. This tuition gives students with a mother tongue other than Swedish the opportunity to learn and develop a functional knowledge of a second language". (SNAE, 2012)

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Disclosure statement

For this article there are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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