



# A Norwegian perspective: Student teachers' orientations towards cultural and linguistic diversity in schools

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Student teachers express positive attitudes towards diversity.
- Student teachers are critical of how schools organize second-language learning.
- Student teachers are uncomfortable talking about race and colour.
- They express responsibility for second language learners, and request more knowledge.

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## ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative study about Norwegian preservice teachers' orientations towards teaching in multilingual and multicultural classrooms – contributing to global research in this field. The theoretical approach, and tool for analyses, is a framework for Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy developed by Lucas and Villegas (2013). Main findings are that preservice teachers express value for linguistic diversity and a reflective discussion about the relation between identity/language and culture. Talking about race and colour is, however, uncomfortable. Suggestions for further development in Initial Teacher Education are given, and also suggestions for further research.

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## 1. Introduction

In most classrooms around the world, we find pupils who are learning the school language as a second (or additional) language. This is not a new situation, but global migration processes have increased the number of pupils in this situation. According to numbers from the [International Organization for Migration \(2018\)](#), the number of migrants in the world was the highest ever registered in 2015: 244 million people. This will influence the demographics of pupils in schools. Tamer (2014) in Paine, Aydaorova and Syharil (2017) states that in the US one in four schoolchildren is now an immigrant or born by immigrants. The numbers in many European countries are also increasing ([Contini & Herold, 2015](#); [Coronel & Gomez-Hurtado, 2015](#)). In Norway, where this study is situated, the numbers of migrant children (young people) or children born by migrants was 102,900 at the end of 2016. This is equivalent to 16% of this age group in total, and is an increase of 7%

from 2008 ([Steinkellner, 2017](#)).

Migration processes make up a central globalization factor that influences teacher education ([Paine, Aydaorova & Syharil, 2017](#)). Teacher education programmes around the world need to prepare teachers to work and teach in multilingual and multicultural classrooms, and teachers need to be prepared to support second language learners. However, studies indicate that even though many teacher education programmes have included learning outcomes about teaching in multicultural and multilingual classrooms, teachers do not perceive that they are sufficiently prepared ([Paine et al., 2017](#)).

Research and theory on how we can better prepare teachers for linguistically diverse classrooms has increased over the past decades, and a framework that has been developed through such studies is the linguistically responsive pedagogy framework ([Lucas & Villegas, 2013](#)). This framework highlights orientations, knowledge, and competences that are most important for teachers working with second language learners in their classrooms. Recently, [Tandon, Viesca, Hueston & Milbourn \(2017\)](#) applied the framework in a study where they analyzed 36 student and novice

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teachers' perceptions and understanding of linguistically responsive teaching after finishing their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in a US context. They found that 11% of their informants showed sociolinguistic awareness, 25% demonstrated that they valued linguistic diversity and 22% demonstrated an inclination to advocate for multi-language learners (Tandon et al., 2017, p. 159). These concepts will be explained in more detail below.

Since the linguistically responsive pedagogy framework is in line with main goals for ITE in Norway, we have chosen to use the framework as our theoretical and analytical approach when we focus on how ITE in Norway prepares candidates to work in classrooms that are characterized by diversity in languages and cultures. Our focus is on student teachers' orientations, the value teachers place on diversity and how they see their role in this work. In plans and curriculum for Norwegian ITE, we can find goals and learning outcomes related to multilingual and multicultural education (Ministry of Education and Research, 2010a), but we know little about the outcomes of teacher education. In this article, we will present results from a qualitative study among student teachers in their final year of ITE at three institutions in different parts of Norway. Before we present our theoretical approach and the framework of Lucas and Villegas, we will provide a brief description of the Norwegian national curriculum and regulations for second language learners in schools and the national regulations and guidelines for ITE.

### 1.1. *The context: plans and regulations for schools and ITE*

The Education Act for primary and secondary schools in Norway (Opplæringsloven, 1998) states that all pupils have the right to get an education according to their ability. For minority language pupils (which is the concept used in judicial school documents), the Education Act §2.8 also states that pupils have a right to special instruction in Norwegian as a second language until they achieve a level where they can follow ordinary class teaching (i.e. in Norwegian). If they receive adapted language education in Norwegian, they also have a right to mother-tongue instruction and/or bilingual support. Mother-tongue instruction is often offered outside ordinary class hours. This special right is dependent of an individual assessment of the pupil's language competence in Norwegian:

The municipality shall map what skills the pupils have in Norwegian before it is decided whether to provide adapted language education. Such mapping shall also be conducted during the education for pupils who receive adapted language education according to the regulations, in order to assess whether the pupils are sufficiently skilled in Norwegian to follow the normal school education (Education Act, §2.8, English version).

Newly arrived pupils can stay for up to two years in special introductory classes before transferring to their local Norwegian medium school.

An evaluation of these introductory classes and special instruction in Norwegian (Rambøll Management, 2016) expressed some concern about the level of knowledge among school leaders, and consequently, about how teaching for new second language learners is organized and carried out. In addition, the evaluation pointed out that the concept "sufficiently skilled to follow normal education" is far too vague and difficult to operationalize to depict an adequate threshold level for transfer to a home school (Rambøll, 2016). The Ministry of Education has made material to support schools in their assessment of multilingual pupils' language competence in their first language and in Norwegian, but they are not mandatory to use. Some municipalities have made their own test-material, and there is a danger of assessment material not

being properly validated.

Students enrolling for teacher education for the compulsory school years (grades 1–10) in 2013, which is when the sample of students in our study commenced their teacher education, could choose between two four-year integrated and concurrent BA programmes: One programme for grades 1–7 and one programme for grades 5–10. (Starting in 2017, teacher education for the compulsory years is now two 5-year integrated and concurrent MA programmes.) The teacher education programmes have national framework plans stipulated by the government, and national guidelines with learning outcomes for each subject area at 30 ECTS level. The national guidelines are developed by teacher educators and are agreed on by the National Association of Teacher Education. (ECTS is a common European credit system, 60 ECTS is equivalent to a full time one-year study.)

The Teacher Education Regulations (Ministry of Education and Research, 2010a, §2) stipulate that all student teachers must be prepared to teach in a diverse society. The multicultural perspective is highlighted as one of nine perspectives that should characterize teacher education for the future (Ministry of Education and Research 2010b, chapter 3.2). Furthermore, as an overview provided in another paper demonstrates (Egeli & Thomassen, 2015) all subjects in ITE highlight learning outcomes related to multicultural issues, and curriculum plans for local institutions do not vary much from the National Guidelines. The learning outcomes are related to knowledge (e.g. knowledge about students with multicultural and multilingual backgrounds), skills (e.g. be able to plan, conduct and assess teaching in multicultural learning environments), and orientations (e.g. develop an understanding of culture that takes the multicultural reality seriously).

For schools as well as for teacher education, it is important to know more about the newly qualified teachers and what orientations and knowledge they have when they start working. In this paper, we will specifically take a closer look at orientations expressed by pre-service - teachers in their fourth and final year of ITE.

## 2. Theoretical approach and analytical framework

We understand the term orientation as a students' positioning, where they might be heading. Orientation is an act of orienting, an act of finding a position. It can be regarded as "inclinations or tendencies towards particular ideas and actions, influenced by attitudes and beliefs" (Richardson, 1996 in Lucas & Villegas, 2010, p. 302). In this way, orientations is a dynamic concept. This is an important aspect of the term and for our study. Student teachers are finding their way in very complex systems and in multiple contingencies. When we use the term orientation, we wish to express that student teachers are at a starting point in their careers, and their attitudes are not perceived as rigid or fixed. The term orientation indicates that attitudes might be moving in a given direction, but this direction might also change.

The three orientation points described in the framework by Lucas & Villegas (2013) capture important areas that resonate with the framework and guidelines for ITE in Norway, and we have therefore chosen to use these as a starting point for our analyses. The three orientations are sociolinguistic consciousness, value for linguistic diversity, and inclination to advocate for English Language Learners – in our study: Norwegian Language Learners. We will explain each in more detail in the following paragraphs.

### 2.1. *Sociolinguistic consciousness*

Sociolinguistic consciousness is defined as "an understanding of how culture, language and identity are deeply interconnected and awareness of the socio political dimensions of language use and

language education” (Lucas & Villegas, 2010, p. 303). Lucas & Villegas (2010) underline the importance of understanding how pupils’ languages reflect their home culture and that they do not leave their language at home. This is also a main point for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014). As Malo-Juvera, Correll & Cantrell (2018) express it:

Culturally Responsive Education focuses on helping teachers construct conceptual links between school content and students, primarily by making connections to their student’s prior knowledge and experiences by incorporating aspects of culture as part of the instructional process (Malo-Juvera et al., 2018, p.146).

They also point to the importance of developing critical perspectives.

Critical perspectives are prominent in another aspect of sociolinguistic consciousness, in what Lucas and Villegas have called socio political awareness. This is an understanding of the socio political context of schooling, the understanding of how a dominant language group has power in the school context, and how disempowering pupils’ first languages can have possible discriminatory effects (Nieto, 2002 in Lucas & Villegas, 2010, p. 303). This point overlaps to some extent with the orientation called value for linguistic diversity (see below), but within sociolinguistic consciousness, the emphasis is on the political aspects of language use and language politics. Critical Multiculturalism (May & Sleeter, 2010) is also concerned with the importance of student teachers’ awareness of power in the educational contexts, and how this power relation can be played out in everyday actions and in choice of vocabulary. The power element is also a factor when it comes to organizing a school system and the distribution of resources. Lucas and Villegas (2013) emphasize the importance of student teachers being aware of these elements of power/discrimination, use of different languages in education, and that the student teachers are aware of their own beliefs about these matters.

In our analyses, we have chosen to operationalize sociolinguistic consciousness as utterances about language/culture/identity, utterances that show critical awareness of how teaching is organized and resources are distributed. Choosing assessment forms that ensure that multilingual pupils are not evaluated as monolingual pupils can also be seen as sociopolitical awareness (Cummins, 2000; Egenberg, 2016; Øzerk, 2016), but we have chosen to categorize this under the orientation inclination to advocate for ELL. The importance Lucas and Villegas put on student teachers having an understanding and positive attitude to pupils’ home language we have chosen to code under the category value for linguistic diversity.

## 2.2. Value for linguistic diversity

The next orientation, value for linguistic diversity, is defined as “... belief that linguistic diversity is worth cultivating and accompanying actions reflecting that belief” (Lucas & Villegas, 2013, p. 5). A multilingual awareness and valuing is regarded as essential (see also Garcia, 2008) because a positive view on linguistic variety can contribute to create a trusting relationship between pupils and teachers (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). Taylor and Sobel (2011) as well as Gay (2010) point out how important it is to value and include pupils’ backgrounds in teaching. Second language learners may also profit more from good classroom learning environments than native speakers do (Bakken, 2014).

Teachers’ sensitivity, or how teachers consistently demonstrate awareness and responsiveness to children’s current academic and emotional abilities and needs, is one characteristic of quality interaction in classrooms (Pianta, LaParo & Hamre, 2008). To be responsive in multilingual classrooms entails showing respect and

interest for pupils’ first language. Lucas and Villegas (2013) also argue that a lack of understanding of pupils’ linguistic repertoire can lead to lower expectations for multilingual pupils, and result in practice that provide no challenges for the learners. Other researchers, such as Cummins (2000), Øzerk (2016), and Engen and Kulbrandstad (2004) also corroborate this.

We operationalize this orientation by identifying utterances that value language in general, attitudes towards multilingual competence and utterances concerning language diversity connected to pupil - teacher relationships. Assessment of multilingual pupils will be categorized under the third orientation: inclination to advocate for English language learners.

## 2.3. Inclination to advocate for Norwegian language learners

The definition of this orientation is “... understanding the need for action to improve ELL’s access to social and political capital, and the willingness to do so” (Lucas & Villegas, 2013, p. 5). This concept is further operationalized as actively working to improve one or more aspects of ELL’s educational experiences (Lucas & Villegas, *ibid*). Active work can be to take on tutoring ELL’s, creating parent groups, encouraging professional development among colleagues on how to teach ELL, etc. Speaking up and challenging fairness in testing, and campaigning for legislation are also aspects that are mentioned (see also Danbolt et al., 2010; Egenberg, 2016), and this is a main reason for placing assessment and testing under the third orientation.

Some of these factors are more relevant for qualified teachers working in schools than for student teachers, but in our analyses, we will see if there are utterances that indicate a critical awareness of teaching practices or testing that may not provide equity in learning opportunities. We will also investigate whether there are elements of taking practical action during students’ field practice periods. Finally, this orientation also includes an understanding of ELL teaching as everyone’s responsibility (all teachers). In our analyses, the language in question is of course Norwegian, and we will therefore use the abbreviation NLL (Norwegian Language Learner, as we have shown in the heading of this paragraph).

## 2.4. Research questions

The overarching research question for this study is: Which orientations are prominent among Norwegian fourth year ITE students? Underlying questions are: Do they express orientations related to sociolinguistic consciousness, value for linguistic diversity and inclination to advocate for NLL? Are there other orientations that are also evident among Norwegian student teachers? What characterizes their orientations?

## 3. Method and analyses

### 3.1. Design

The study has been approved by the Norwegian centre for research data and is in compliance with national ethical standards. Participation in the interview study was voluntary, the students signed a form where they confirmed that they willingly participated in the study, that they knew the purpose of the study, how the data would be used, and they could pull out at any time.

The interviews were conducted among fourth year ITE students at three higher education institutions (HEIs) providing ITE programmes for grades 1–7 and grades 5–10. The three HEIs represent different sizes (number of students enrolled in the programmes), and the number of pupils with multilingual backgrounds in the surrounding schools also varies. For the sake of anonymity, we will withhold names of institutions and will not include a description of each HEI.

### 3.2. Sample

The first author contacted all three HEIs with information about the project. The gatekeepers we contacted and asked to assist us in sending out information about the project, were teacher educators for the 4th year and a field practice coordinator. The students were approached by posting information on their digital learning platforms, and at one HEI following direct contact from one teacher educator to four potential informants [Table 1](#).

### 3.3. The interview guide and interview settings

The interview consisted of three parts. The first part consisted of questions about background information about the students, their multicultural experiences (Example: Have you lived abroad? Do you speak different languages? Do you have friends with different cultural and language backgrounds?), and their choice of different subjects in their ITE.

The second part investigated topics like laws and regulations for second language learners, instructional methods in the multilingual classrooms, language assessment, and about cooperating with mother tongue teachers. Examples: I am knowledgeable about legal rights of multilingual pupils; I know methods that increase learning opportunities for multilingual pupils, I know methods that recognize pupils' language/religion/culture as a resource. These are all areas that had been included in a national survey carried out among a representative sample of fourth year students in all ITE programmes in Norway and are related to the national curriculum. The national survey investigated the implementation of the 2010 curriculum for ITE. In our interview study, we asked our respondents how they thought other fourth year ITE students had answered these items, and how they would score their own knowledge on the

same items. Our intention was to dig a little deeper into each of these areas in an attempt to understand more about student teachers' orientations as they graduate from ITE.

The third part included two tasks developed by the RISC centre in the UK, working with global citizenship education [Reading international solidarity center \(RISC\), 2015](#) and an example of an interlanguage text written by a second-language learner (this part of the interview will not be part of the analyses for this article).

The RISC centre has developed many different exercises for use among pupils in different age groups to get them to reflect about diversity and cultural differences. The aims for using the RISC tasks were both to present the student teachers with some hands-on material developed for use in class when teaching about diversity issues, and to understand their reflections on this material, and how they would/would not like to use material like this in their teaching. The second aim was to open up that talk and try to understand more of the students' reflections (orientations) to diversity/multicultural classroom than it is possible to obtain through direct questioning. In this part of the interview, there was a short introduction to RISC (what their work is about); then the tasks were explained in relation to classroom work, and finally, the students were asked a rather open question: "What do you think of this task?"

The first task included is called "Who would you choose to be your friend?" and consists of several pictures of children (both boys and girls) whose appearances would be classified as Asian, Black, and White. Children are asked to pick whom they would choose as their friend. The teacher marks with stickers which pictures were chosen the most. This exercise is intended to be used to discuss what makes us choose the way we do. The aim is to get pupils aware of possible prejudices related to both gender and ethnicity. Examples of photos (retrieved from the open access toolkit):



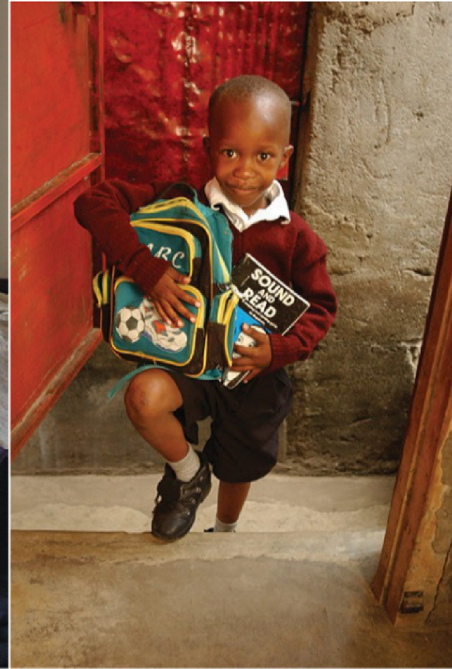
**Table 1**  
Overview of participating students, HEI size, ITE programme, subjects chosen and interview duration.

Name	Institution size	ITE programme	Subjects chosen	Interview duration
Elisabeth	Small	5–10	Norwegian, English, Religion, Social science, Physical Education	50:34
Fiona	Small	5–10	Mathematics, Religion, Physical Education	48:42
Greta	Small	5–10	English, Religion, Physical Education	47:09
Anna	Middle	1–7	Norwegian, Mathematics	37:40
Betty	Middle	1–7	English, Norwegian, Mathematics, Religion	47:46
Christina	Middle	1–7	English, Norwegian, Religion	44:52
Dina	Middle	1–7	Norwegian, Science – Home economics	40:34
Hanna	Large	1–7	Norwegian, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education, Extra pedagogy subject	31:57
Ingrid	Large	1–7	Norwegian, Mathematics, Religion, Physical Education, Extra pedagogy	49:56
June	Large	5–10	Mathematics, Religion, English	51:43
Karen	Large	1–7	Norwegian, English, Art, Extra Pedagogy with focus on Inclusion	47:01



[www.toolkit.risc.org.uk](http://www.toolkit.risc.org.uk)

The other exercise we included is “What’s the same? What’s different?” This includes pictures of children whose appearance, clothing and surroundings suggest that they are taken in different parts of the world. The pictures include signs of different activities or artefacts – one child has a new school bag with a soccer decoration, one child is reading a book, one is playing with a kite, one is holding a bird and so on. The aim of this exercise is to get children to identify similarities between themselves and children living in other parts of the world more than differences.



to the question “which utterances are indications of this orientation?” The types of utterances that were categorized within each concept is depicted below in [Table 3](#):

#### 4. Results

We will present results for each orientation and discuss results related to other possible orientations that emerge in the data. There are five areas of importance that we draw from this material and which we will present in more detail.

[www.tookit.risc.org.uk](http://www.tookit.risc.org.uk)

The first author conducted the interviews. The interviews were held in different spaces at the different HEIs, both in offices and in secluded areas that were not offices. The interviews were held in Norwegian. All interviews were transcribed completely (in Norwegian) by the first author. A digital recorder was used and the sound quality was good.

#### 3.4. Analyses

As shown in table one, the interviews lasted from 32 min to 52 min. In total, this makes about 8 h and 33 min. A total of 150 pages make up the transcribed data. The transcribed interviews have been read through and analyzed at different stages. The method for analyses can be described as a theoretical driven content analysis (Hsieh & Channon, 2005), as we have used the categories from the Lucas and Villegas framework as a tool for our analyses. We have identified six stages of analysis, each stage with its guiding question, as reported in [Table 2](#):

Through this process of reading and re-reading with guiding questions and using the framework, we ended up with a categorization of utterances that is based on the Lucas and Villegas framework. Each concept needed to be operationalized in relation

#### 4.1. Sociolinguistic consciousness

All eleven student teachers (informants) show awareness of culture, language and identity. Informants are aware that language is a part of the pupils’ identity, and they should not be “... robbed of their own language and their own identity. You do not leave your culture or your language at the threshold” (Christina). Several of the informants express a view of culture as something we all have, not only connected to others. They talk about how they themselves are part of different cultures during their daily life. This view is especially expressed by informants who have chosen Religion as a subject. They also express an understanding of how cultures and religions are related to group and individual factors, and the need to see the individual not only as a representative for a certain group. As Dina said: “It is important to see the pupil as a person, then – not just as a second language learner – they are kids or pupils – even though they have other languages.”

When asked if they had friends or daily contact with people from different ethnic groups, answers vary. Some informants reported that they did not have much contact with people of different cultural and language background than “Norwegian” (this is the word informants used, we interpret this as ethnic, white Norwegian – and that is why we have put it in inverted commas). Some informants commented that they were not aware of nor define

**Table 2**  
An overview of the six analytical stages involved in this study.

Stage	Guiding question	Actions	Validity
Stage one	What is this about?	Reading through all transcripts to get acquainted with the material.	
Stage two	Where do students mention the three categories?	Identify all utterances that appear to be related to the operationalization of the three orientations	Author two is involved in discussing initial identifications
Stage three	Are all of these utterances that are identified relevant for the categories?	Critical re-reading and re-examining of initial findings	Author two is involved in discussing the re-reading.
Stage four	Are there any patterns? What are these initial results telling us about students' orientations?	Meta analysis investigating possible patterns within or across HEIs, subject areas, topics.	Author two is involved in discussing the re-reading.
Stage five	Are there utterances OUTSIDE the framework? Are the students expressing other orientations that are not covered by the three in this framework?	Re-reading the interviews to look for other topics that are not included in the three orientations.	Author two is involved in discussing the re-reading.
Stage six	Can I identify saturation? Are there areas where students responses do not add on, but rather corroborate each other?	Re-reading within categories to establish whether the number of students included in this study is an important limitation.	Author two is involved in discussing the re-reading and conclusions.

people in such terms. Diversity is just a part of the normal Norwegian society of today. "I think that we are getting so used to it, that it isn't something that you notice or think about," June expressed.

However, the informants are also aware of differences, and especially concerning clothing. People who dress differently stand out as different. June's comment is characteristic for the group of informants: "They are the ones you first think about (students wearing hijab - authors' comment) but there should be more of them – because they are needed!" What she is referring to here when saying "they are needed" is that there are not so many students in teacher education from different language and cultural contexts, and she expresses a positive view that diversity in teachers' background would be a positive asset in the school community.

All eleven informants express awareness of system factors that they are critical of, and criticism of teaching practices is evident in the group. Much of the critique that informants raise is related to observations or experiences made during field practice (students have 100 days of supervised field practice at collaborating schools during their four years of ITE).

The informants' critique often targets a mismatch between plans and reality. They are aware of the high standards set nationally and the goals for quality education for all. Yet they also experience a lack of resources and a lack of time to achieve the high standards. Six informants are for instance critical of the use of mother tongue teachers in schools. They know little about their work and have little opportunity to get to work with them. They comment that mother tongue teaching may not be available because of lack of resources or problems finding a teacher. Another

issue is that it can be difficult for teachers to collaborate with mother tongue teachers because they are responsible for children at several schools. One informant had also experienced that the scheduling of mother tongue teaching made the second language learners miss other important lessons. Another informant had experienced a mother tongue teacher who taught in ways that the informant perceived as not benefitting the pupils' learning. This informant questioned how to ensure that mother tongue teachers are qualified for the job they are doing. The informants also report from field practice that they have seen examples of second language learners that are "just put into classrooms" (seemingly with no plan or extra resources given). In addition, some teachers are perceived as tired and lacking knowledge in what to do with second language learners.

Student teachers in our sample also experienced a lack of power or influence during field practice because they are "only students". They do not have the power that fully qualified teachers have, and what they think or observe is not as important as what other teachers see or think. They are also in a power relationship with their field practice teacher (their supervisor), and find that it can be difficult to be critical of classroom practices since they will, in the end, be assessed by their supervisor and will get a pass/fail assessment for their field practice period.

#### 4.2. Value for linguistic diversity

Utterances seen as expressions of positive attitudes towards languages in general are found in eight interviews. The student teachers use positive words when they talk about languages and different languages, such as fun, exciting, interesting, resource. This

**Table 3**  
Analytical framework for analyses of interview data. Based on Lucas & Villegas 2010, 2013.

Orientation	Definition	Operationalization: Utterances related to ..
Sociolinguistic consciousness	An understanding of culture, language and identity are deeply interconnected and awareness of the sociopolitical dimensions of language use and language education	<i>Culture/language/identity</i> <i>Critical awareness of system factors concerning teaching NLL</i>
Value for linguistic diversity	Belief that linguistic diversity is worth of cultivating and accompanying actions reflecting that belief	<i>Language/power</i> <i>Value for language diversity in general</i> <i>Pupils' home/first language and use of that</i> <i>Pupil/teachers relations - sensitivity</i>
Inclination to advocate for Norwegian language learners	Understanding the need for action to improve NLL's access to social and political capital and educational opportunities – and willingness to do so	<i>Seeing the NLL as their responsibility</i> <i>Taking Practical Action in field practice to support NLL/extra- curricular activities related to NLL)</i> <i>Challenging fairness in testing</i> <i>Critical awareness of unfair teaching practices for NLL</i>

also explains why some informants have chosen language as a subject in ITE. Some of the informants also comment that to have knowledge of different languages is a part of living in today's global world, and it is something we all can benefit from.

The next point in this orientation has to do with attitudes towards pupils' home languages and how they can be used in school. We found utterances related to this point in all 11 interviews. The utterances can be grouped into different sub-categories: the positive value the first language has for the pupil and how this can be appreciated, how schools can make multilingual practices visible, and how first languages can be used in the learning process.

There are also a couple of informants who have experienced that it can be annoying if teachers stress the first language too much in class. This may have to do with pupils wanting to blend in, and the attention given to the other language and culture – no matter if the intention is purely positive – can be seen as stressing the otherness of this pupil.

I had one (pupil) in my class at school who HATED it, when teachers or others said – how do you say this in Pakistani (informant's own choice of word) and it was no fun for her .... Get to know your pupils very well before you start asking things like that – but you can absolutely use it as a resource, I think (Ingrid).

One informant also tells a very different story from field practice where they met a teacher who was not interested in the pupils' first languages at all. This student teacher experienced that pupils had negative attitudes to their first language and were shy to use it in class. "It was so uncomfortable, they were like – they didn't want to speak their first language in the classroom, it was almost as if they were ashamed" (Fiona).

Pupil – teacher relations are talked about in 6 of the interviews. There are some general comments on how important it is to get to know your pupils, their interests, languages and so on to build good relationships that are important for the class environment and the learning process for each pupil. Cooperation with mother tongue teachers are mentioned as important for building good relationships with both pupils and parents, because mother tongue teachers can (via the families' first languages) be able to gather important information about pupils that teachers who do not know the pupils' first languages have a possibility to do. One of the student teachers in our sample describes how she learnt some words in different languages and how powerful this was in building relations:

I have had very good experiences learning words in other languages – just to know words like "hi"; and "bye" – as simple as that in other languages (...). I worked in a summer school too, with a lot of diversity, but the children light up at once, even if they don't know you as soon as you say "Hi" in their language, then – Wow, here's someone who knows my language, and that opens a whole world, for the children. (June)

#### 4.3. *Advocating for Norwegian language learners (NLL)*

Responses to questions about what they would do to support pupils with a different first language than Norwegian, indicate that all student teachers are aware of their responsibility. None of the student teachers questions that responsibility or sees it as not central to their job as teachers, for instance by expressing that a specialist should rather take on that responsibility. However, some of the informants specifically mention that they would need to seek advice from specialists, resource teams at schools and the principal.

This points to the importance of knowledge about second language learning and multilingual pupils and indicates an awareness among the student teachers that they need to learn more and to access experts.

When discussing the RISC task "Who would you choose to be your friend?" the first reaction from several informants was that they did not like this kind of task and would be very sceptical about using it in class. A main reason for this was that they would not like children to choose a friend by appearance. This goes against values they would promote in school. Student teachers also voiced a concern for pupils with a different ethnic appearance than the majority white pupils. They might feel exposed if children with a similar appearance to them were not chosen. This could create a very difficult situation for them. Some of the student teachers' first reactions to this task are:

My fear of what the answer would be – which attitudes do students bring – frightened that the outcome might be stereotypical and an answer that is not about inclusion. (Anna)

You should have some way to check your students' attitudes, because they can have many strange attitudes from their parents, and if you have a class where there are few minority students and you have a judgmental attitude, it may not be the smartest task – but if there is a good class environment ... (Ingrid)

A dark skinned person may have chosen (a child of that colour) as a friend – a more multilingual class would perhaps not care much about colour, but – what should I say – a white class may have chosen the white children. (Hanna)

They are all kids who smile nicely, they could have been chosen to be someone's friend, but (this task) may cause some off-hand remarks (authors' comment: our interpretation is that this refers to remarks of a more negative kind). (Fiona)

Some of the informants comment that we tend to choose someone who resembles us. The interviewer did not problematize these reactions much, but more often supported the informants in their reflections. This can indicate that there was a shared understanding between interviewer and interviewees of classrooms in Norway that are still predominantly white.

The informants saw this task as problematic because it also went against their goal of creating safe, warm, and inclusive classroom environments. On the other hand, two informants commented that maybe our reaction to this kind of task is the adult way of looking at it, and that children may not react in this way at all. Children might choose based on gender, or things like the nicest smile etc. However, the student teachers would still be reluctant to use the task. The quotes from the interviews show perhaps more worries about what kinds of attitudes would be brought up, than an opportunity to get to work with these attitudes.

There was, however, one informant who had taken a course on international relations, who was more positive. She commented: "We talked a lot about intercultural competence, and this is spot on as to how you have to be aware of your own attitudes and values, so it is really – I think that if the conclusion is how you do not choose this one (this child) or that one (that child), then I think that it can be a good way to build awareness." (Karen).

The other RISC task, with children doing different activities, did not cause these strong reactions, but was considered much more adequate and tempting to use in class to get children to reflect upon similarities and differences. In this task, pupils would be more preoccupied with the activities that the children in the photos were doing, not the appearances of the children. One informant brought

up another issue:

I have to say, that I still think that – there is a boy who looks like he perhaps is from Africa, and that makes me think – it looks like, oh – this boy may be poor and is sitting outside a house that is in poor condition, but ... I may have some more reflections and another background, and a little more knowledge, but I don't think this is something the children would notice. (Diana)

Her self-reflective comment, where she is aware that she might have attitudes that make her first think of problems and poverty when she sees this picture, but that pupils may not, can also be an indication of the value of tasks of this kind for teacher education.

#### 4.4. Other aspects not covered by the framework: critique and suggestions for ITE

In our analysis, we were also interested in finding out what else students said that could not be categorized in one of the categories in the Lucas and Villegas framework. Mainly, these utterances can be categorized as critique and suggestions for ITE.

A main critique that the informants voice is the lack of hands-on learning. The national framework plan and guidelines highlight the importance of preparing student teachers to work in diverse schools, with children who have many different first languages and with a plentitude of cultures. This is addressed in ITE programmes, but the informants express a lack of actual preparation on how to teach multilingual pupils. Some comment that the topic has been taught in a more superficial or theoretical way – they do not have concrete tools, nor do they feel well prepared and equipped to go into the multilingual classroom. They point at the need for teacher education to be more practical, to discuss cases and real practices in school.

Although it was Karen who had taken a course on intercultural relations and was interested in the first task in a way that the others were not, it was Diana who voiced concern for how teaching in ITE could be too politically correct in the sense that real problems or prejudices were not dealt with. “You may feel a little uncomfortable, a little awkward actually, when talking about it, because you are afraid to say something wrong.” (Diana) Diana continues to explain:

I have to say that I am not very pleased with how much we have been doing it (learning about multilingual and multicultural education), because – also in pedagogy, when we have discussed multicultural issues, the focus has often been on restrictions in Islam – it is so easy to end up there ... and then one says, maybe some will wear more clothes and things like that, and this and that - and swimming lessons are so terrible – but we should just talk with the parents, and that's it, in a way – but it is also difficult to go more in depth, because, as I mentioned earlier – you have to adapt it to each person individually. (Diana)

This quote points to the lack of more in depth talks about multicultural issues, arriving quickly at a problem, suggesting a solution “and then we are done ...” Diana tells us about lessons that are perceived as more superficial, where they are unable to get below a surface level of problems and solutions that are dealt with in a very light-hearted manner (talk to the parents/adapt individually), but that Diana is apparently very aware of the complexity within.

The main point that surfaces when the informants reflect on

experiences from field practice is variation. Some have been in very multilingual classrooms, some have not. Some have met teachers they regard as extremely good teachers; others have met teachers that are perceived as not caring or having attitudes about pupils that students react negatively to. The informants report invisible mother tongue teachers, and meetings with individual pupils that really make an impact. More extensive discussions after field practice could bring out the variation in experiences that student teachers have and can provide a foundation for deeper discussions and reflections. Practices of this kind can enable student teachers to place their experiences in a wider context, relate to theoretical concepts and build a foundation for critical reflection. The informants in our sample commented that they could be reluctant to discuss experiences with their field practice teachers who would, in the end, assess them. This is an important issue to be aware of and to address.

## 5. Discussion

We can summarize our main findings in these points:

1. Student teachers in our study express positive attitudes towards language diversity, a reflective understanding about the connection between culture/language and identity and how to use this as a resource in class.
2. Student teachers are critical towards how teaching NLL is organized, and the organization and cooperation related to first language teaching (mother tongue teachers).
3. Student teachers express a concern for inclusion and are aware of possible racist attitudes pupils of colour may meet in school but are uncomfortable talking about this.
4. Student teachers express responsibility for NLL, but report that they would need support from the whole school system in teaching NLL.
5. Student teachers are critical towards ITE concerning how they are prepared to teach in multicultural and multilingual classrooms.

A main conclusion is that the student teachers are very positive to language diversity and multilingualism. The orientation “value for linguistic” diversity as it is defined by Lucas & Villegas (2013) and “multilingual awareness” (Garcia, 2008) can be seen as strongly expressed by our informants. Explanations for these positive orientations may be found in the resource perspective in the Norwegian Curriculum for ITE and the teaching they have received, but the self-selection of especially interested student teachers in this study could also play a role.

Informants in our sample also expressed a nuanced and balanced reflection on the concept of culture. This differs from findings in a previous study with student teachers in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of ITE [author]. In the previous study, a result was that 2<sup>nd</sup> year students tended to discuss culture as artefacts or music, food, dance, something the other possessed. The 4<sup>th</sup> year student teachers in the current study express more reflection on culture as something we all have in different forms, and that one should be careful how to use a pupil's home culture in class. They commented that, of course it can be a valuable resource (as Culturally Responsive Pedagogy highlights), but a risk is that it can create a feeling of otherness among NLL pupils. In this way, they expressed the closely connected language/culture/identity that Lucas and Villegas (2013) see as important. Unfortunately, this is not a longitudinal study with the same student teachers, so we cannot say whether the students have developed more knowledge during their time in ITE; or whether the 4<sup>th</sup> year students just have more knowledge and interest in the topic. We also cannot know how these orientations



will manifest themselves in practice when the student teachers start working in schools.

Another interesting result was the way some of the informants described that people with other cultural backgrounds or languages are simply a part of how they see Norway today. Having a different first language or skin colour is not so special any longer, they say. These attitudes may tend towards what Kubota (2004) refers to as liberal multiculturalism. This is described as an attitude that we are the same or difference blindness as Kubota calls it. The reflections informants had on the importance of not over - focusing pupils' different backgrounds can have a negative effect if one disregards the real differences in the way colour, discrimination and power are played out in our societies and schools.

The first Risc task was one way to gain more insight into how students reflected on race and colour. Firstly, most informants reacted to the task because they were concerned that friendship should not be related to appearance. Then, there was a concern that the pictures of children not classified as white might not be chosen as friends, because we tend to choose people who resemble ourselves. The way the informants (and interviewer) reacted, can indicate that whiteness still is the norm, and pupils of colour are the others: marginalized groups that are defined in contrast to the white norm. Fylkesnes (2018) has studied how the term "cultural diversity" is used in teacher education research discourses, and she argues (based on critical whiteness studies) that "Despite attempting to promote social justice, researchers are actors who produce a discursive ideology of White supremacy" (Fylkesnes, 2018, p. 24). This critical lens gives important room for self-reflection. On the other hand, the concern that the student teachers show for pupils that can be vulnerable due to being in a minority situation can also be regarded as care and awareness of inclusion.

The interviews give the impression that there is an uncomfortableness about how to talk about race and colour. These are difficult issues, and perhaps, when these issues are avoided or not discussed critically within teacher education (and during field practice), this is a reflection of teacher educators' own personal uncertainty or fear of failure. If uncertainty is a main reason, this could be due to lack of knowledge and competence to teach and reflect conceptually on the topic of racism in schools, or it could be due to an inclination to avoid the risk of venturing into uncharted waters (see Giddens' theory of uncertainty and risk, e.g. Giddens, 1999) and instead to hold on to established routines and knowledge practices.

Uncertainty has long been described as endemic to teaching (Lortie, 1975). An awareness of uncertainty can have a negative effect (e.g. create a fear of failure which can lead to non-action) but can also be a prerequisite for learning (e.g. Dewey, 1933). As we see it, a main challenge for teacher education is still to prepare teachers for uncertainty in ways that help develop a professional stance [author] but that requires that teacher educators can approach such core uncertainties as questions of power and race.

For countries such as Norway (and many other countries and areas worldwide), multilingual classrooms is a fairly new phenomenon, and many of the teachers in teacher education have little or no experience of their own and also do not necessarily have the opportunity to do research in schools. Continuing professional development for teacher educators is an important issue to raise, to identify, and to develop within higher education.

Compared to results presented by Tandon et al. (2017), we do not find the same degree of anxiety for teaching second language learners in our study. The student teachers we interviewed express nevertheless, that knowledge of teaching of multilingual learners must be embedded in the whole school system. These findings seen in relation to a lack of knowledge among school leaders that was

reported by Rambøll Management (2016) may cause concern.

Data on aspects not directly related to the framework, reveal that the informants raise both critique and suggestions for ITE. This could also be interpreted as student teachers having a political awareness of system factors. The student teachers especially express the need for being shown the link between the theories and how to implement and use these in the classroom (didactics). To combine theory and action is also a vital point in the Linguistically Responsive Framework, and it is an age-old critique of teacher education. Addressing this issue requires that teacher educators can let go of existing practices and routines and try to think creatively out-of-the-box in search of new pedagogical practices.

The Linguistic Responsive Pedagogy framework provided us with a tool to categorize students' orientations. Although, as mentioned above, there can be problems using a framework for teaching and learning as a framework for analysis, we found the categories very useful. The orientation principles overlapped to some extent, and it was necessary to operationalize them further for our analyses.

## 6. Implications for teacher education

A main issue that arises from our study, is a need to open up for discussions of uncomfortable questions, or to take uncertainty seriously as an endemic aspect of education and a personal factor also in the case of multilingual and multicultural classrooms. Diversity is a difficult concept and can involve practices that are challenging. Examining and being aware of our own beliefs can be painful, especially when this leads to an awareness of attitudes we did not know we possessed.

However, accepting uncertainty does not mean that we do not have methodological protocols, artefacts, tools, or theories that can provide input for critical reflection. The framework presented and used in this article is one such example, along with theories about race, whiteness, Critical Multiculturalism, and more. As mentioned above, we cannot expect teacher educators to have the kind of in-depth knowledge and experience needed without the possibility to conduct research and/or be in schools and both learn continuously from ongoing school practices and be able to contribute to the further development of schools. Continuing professional development for teacher educators is an important concern.

Students are in need of possibilities to try to test different methods of communication and instruction to enhance second language learners' possibilities in class and in school. This study indicates that critical reflection and testing of different methods is not equally distributed among student teachers and in field practice schools. Some student teachers do not have field practice in schools that they characterized as representing diversity, and yet this is expected of teacher education. How can teacher education programmes guarantee quality field practice in schools that also represent more diversity?

## 7. Limitations and further research

This study is based on a small sample of student teachers from three HEIs. The informants are all self-selected. A limitation is therefore both the number and the method of selection. The method of selection is, however, impossible to change since participation in research must be voluntary. The number of participants could have been higher, and in a future study it would be interesting to have higher numbers also for the sake of comparison. This study has not posed questions of comparison. Instead, we were interested in securing a population that was not just from one HEI, and chose to opt for three of varying sizes (which represents a geographical spread). The varied experiences the student teachers

report especially from field practice can make it difficult to argue for the element of saturation described by Kvale (1997). On the other hand, it is a strength that the student teachers come from different ITE institutions in different parts of Norway, and do not just represent learning experiences from one ITE. The data can therefore be substantial enough to provide answers to our research questions.

Another limitation, which is common in all qualitative research conducted in one language and then translated to another, is that subtleties can be lost in translation. In this study, two researchers have worked on the translations and have agreed on the best possible alternatives.

The present study has shed some light on orientations among a group of fourth year students as they venture into teaching. We highly recommend that a new research study implements a longitudinal design which can both study the development of orientations and practices, and through this, can also shed more light on what teacher education and continuing professional development for teachers can address to enhance education for second language learners.

### Author statement

The corresponding author (Wenche Thomassen) is responsible for ensuring that the descriptions are accurate and agreed by the authors.

This article is a joint product.

The first author, however, (Wenche Thomassen), is particular responsible for introducing and explaining the theoretical approach for the article and the use of this theoretical approach as a tool for analysis and discussion. The first author has carried out the initial analyses.

The second author (Elaine Munthe) has especially contributed in the method part of the article, to validate analyses and co-creating tables and discussion.

The editing of the article is a joint effort.

### Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103151>.

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