

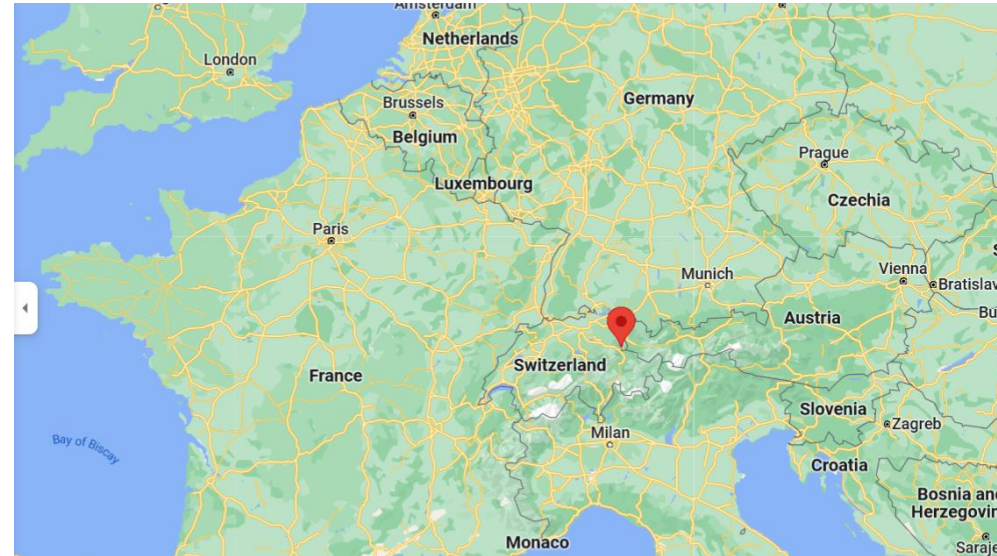
Multilingualism in vocational education and training:

Case study from Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein

Mehrsprachigkeit in der beruflichen Grundbildung:
Eine Fallstudie aus der Schweiz und dem Fürstentum Liechtenstein

Le plurilinguisme dans la formation professionnelle:

Une étude de cas en Suisse et dans la Principauté du Liechtenstein



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- AILA 2023



University
of Exeter

bzbs.

movetia

Austausch und Mobilität
Echanges et mobilité
Scambi e mobilità
Exchange and mobility

What languages are needed
or are an advantage in these
11 technical VET
programmes?

information technologists

electricians

carpenters

hairdressers

metal builders

bricklayers

painter/decorators

design engineers

mechanical engineers E&G

joiners/carpenters

Research interest and gap

Informal observation in Switzerland

Apprentices in trade and technical apprenticeships are often multilingual.

Lack of research internationally:

- Languages used in production/building sites, workshops etc.
- The role of languages in apprenticeships.

Source: Coray & Duchêne, 2017

From research we know that

Languages play a role in terms of...

The economy of a country

- (Language Strategy 2020)
- Recruitment of apprentices (Stamm, 2013)

A company's external links (export, sales, customer relations)

- Tibrewal (2021)
- UKIT (2014)
- CBI (2019)

A company's internal links (productivity, safety, social interaction)

- Coray & Duchêne (2017)
- Meier & Smala (2021)

Language socialisation

(Moore, 2005; Duff & Talmy, 2011)

- Language socialisation can be understood as “**meaningful action** that occurs routinely **in everyday life**, is widely **shared by members** of the group, has **developed over time**, and carries **normative expectations** about how it should be done” (Moore, 2005, p. 72).
- Thus, educational environments socialise learners into seeing the world in a certain way through every-day practice, which is based on **prevailing ideologies** (Duff & Talmy, 2011), as for instance the preference for monolingual or multilingual practice.
- **We examined:**
 - Language reality in everyday work
 - Attitudes and expectations
 - Work and social practices
 - language learning opportunities, interests and satisfaction
 - Views on language education in VET

Research questions

Which languages do learners bring to vocational education and training?

How do learners develop and use their languages during vocational training?

What role do languages play in the linguistic socialisation of learners in different professions?

How can adequate language education be incorporated into vocational courses?

Research design

Phase 1 (Jan – Oct 22):

- Survey with Learners in 11 professions (n=674)
- Quantitative analysis
- Intermediary report in German (summary in English)
- Website

Phase 2 (Nov 22– July 23):

- Discussion of first results (teachers, companies, universities, etc.)
- Survey with stakeholders (n=86)
- Qualitative analysis of open-format responses from both surveys
- Final report in German and English
- Informal feedback through presentations regionally and internationally

Phase 3 (July – Dec 23):

- Dissemination
- 2 articles
- Website: <https://sites.exeter.ac.uk/m-voc/>

(RQ2) Large differences in how language use in companies is perceived by learners



Learner perceptions of languages used in the companies



- International orientation: English + others
- Multilingual orientation: many languages
- Monolingual orientation: German

26 languages
other than
German
heard/used
at work
(survey Q11)

246 (36.5%)
heard/used
German only



RQ3) How do learners
say they use their
languages?





operative
cognitive
social
emotional

inspired by Filliettaz, 2022

Learners use languages for four
main reasons

Operative function of language(s)

Definition	Example uses of language(s)	Potential risks
One or more languages are used to get things done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A label or a plan is read in English in order to understand information and to be able to get something done.• Something is explained in a language that is understandable and adapted to the level of another person, so that the information is understood.	Failure to understand this can lead to mistakes that can cause damage and pose a safety risk.

Languages used to get things done

Explain the meaning of an English email to the line manager.

(Joiner)

"Certain shampoo names are English. And then there are those who don't know English and then they sometimes confuse the shampoo. And that's actually a really stupid thing, but if you know English, then you can't mix it up.

(Hairdresser)

Social function of language(s)

Definition	Example uses of language(s)	Potential risks
One or more languages are used to include or exclude people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An understandable language is used to explain what had been discussed in another language in order to involve someone in the conversation.• Spanish is spoken with a private client to build trust.• In the canteen, colleagues speak in a language that others do not understand and exclude them from the conversation.	In cases of knowingly or unknowingly exclusionary behaviour, employees cannot perform effectively in work situations because, for example, they are insufficiently informed about the work plan and thus cannot contribute their knowledge. Exclusion can also lead to tension and conflict, which can be detrimental to the working atmosphere and morale.

Languages used to build/maintain relationships.

Even for no reason, I go to that person and say, you know, what just happened and tell the joke [that was told in another language] so that it doesn't cause upset." (design Engineer)

"I have often been able to relate to clients through my Spanish and English skills!".

(Electrician)

Cognitive function of language(s)

Definition	Example uses of language(s)	Potential risks
One or more languages are used to generate deeper understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instructions are read in German and English to ensure understanding.• A person translates for customers to clarify their needs.• An employee is supported in their learning of German or another language.	Monolingual access can 1) lead to limited or superficial understanding, which can have a negative impact on the quality of work, and 2) prevent the possibility of learning a language.

How are languages used to generate understanding?

«For example, if you get an error message from different programmes. They are usually in English. And there, of course, it helps if you can decipher them. And then you understand what you have to do or what the problem is.»
(Information technologist)

"In German, there was only a small explanation of how the component works. All the dimensions and the assembly instructions were all in English."
(design engineer)

Emotional function of language(s)

Definition	Example uses of language(s)	Potential risks
One or more languages are used to express feelings, interest and belonging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jokes are made in a common first language.• Special expressions and songs are learned from each other in different languages.• Language skills are recognised and/or valued by superiors.• Learners are proud of their language skills and are motivated to use them.	<p>Lack of opportunities to use languages and lack of recognition can negatively affect motivation to learn languages.</p> <p>Language bans can negatively influence the sense of belonging and impose monolingual identities.</p>

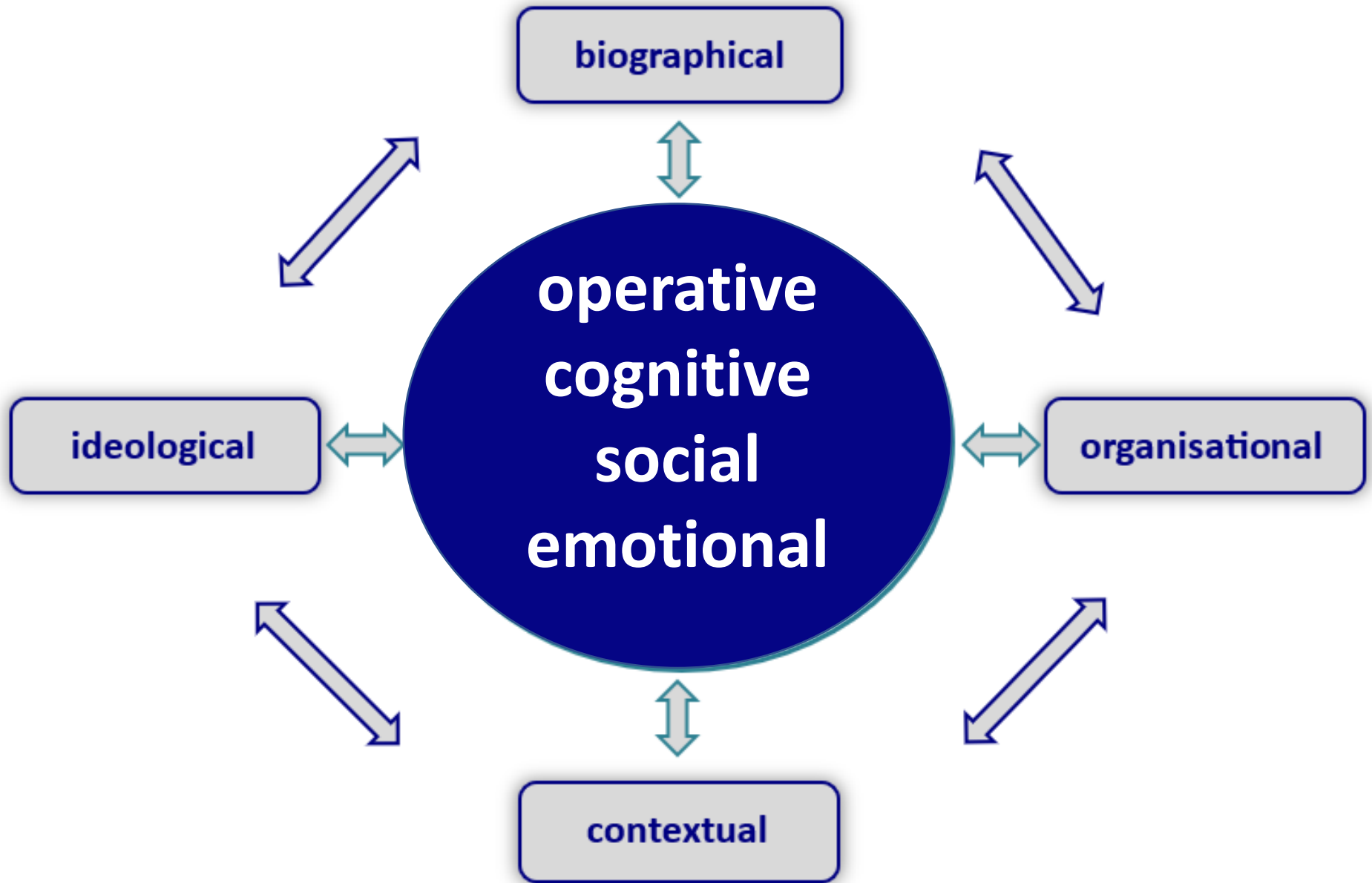
How are languages used to express belonging, etc.

"It's just like a part of me. So I'm just proud that I can speak Russian."

(hairdresser)

"Among Turks it feels good to be able to speak Turkish because the emotions are more recognisable."

(IT technologist)



Our case study made visible that...

- technical apprentices bring a great multilingual potential to VET
- Learners can potentially use their multilingual repertoires to get things done, to relate to customers and colleagues, to create belonging and a positive work climate, and to prevent mistakes.

However - experiences, opportunities, attitudes and ambitions are highly diverse, and not all learners can develop relevant language awareness and mediation skills that seem to be important in contexts where people with different languages come together.

In view of increasingly globalised economy, we make recommendations of how our future skilled professionals can be prepared in more consistent ways for work in multilingual teams and international work situations.

Recommendations for bzbs

Organisation

- All learners should be given opportunities to use/develop their language repertoire
- Create a regular update of all extra-curricular language-learning and mobility experiences.
- Coordinate communication of opportunities between learners, companies and the college.

Pedagogy

- Build language awareness into the wider curriculum.
- Develop multilingual language coaching (impossible to offer language education that fits all)

Recommendations for companies

Language learning support

- All learners should be given opportunities to use/develop their language repertoire
- Language use and ambitions could form part of work appraisals for learners (e.g. ELP)

Recruitment

- All suitable learners should have access to apprenticeship places, regardless of their language background.
- If prospective apprentices know that they can develop their language repertoires during their VET, apprenticeships may become more attractive

Recommendations for research

Development and trialling of teaching methods

- Development and research related to **multilingual coaching**
- Develop and research **language awareness** for VET

Empirical research/theory building

- **Empirical testing** of how factors (contextual, ideological, biographical, organisational) influence language behaviour
- **Further case studies** on language learning and use in technical occupations and trades
- Examine ways in which language background might be a criterium in the recruitment of learners.

Next steps



- Finalise reports
- Submit academic articles
- Develop new research projects

Use QR code →

- if you would like to receive updates on the m-voc project.
- If you are interested in future research projects.

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