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EDITED BY
Elsie L. Olan,
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REVIEWED BY
Anna - Stetsenko,
The City University of New York, United States
Anna Becker,
Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland

*CORRESPONDENCE
Josefine Wagner
✉ josefine.wagner@uibk.ac.at

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Together or separate? Tracing classroom pedagogies of (un) belonging for newcomer migrant pupils in two Austrian schools

Josefine Wagner[1]*, Nikolett Szelei[2], Irma Eloff[3] and Emmanuel Acquah[4]

[1]Department of Teacher Education and School Research, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria, [2]KU Leuven, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Leuven, Belgium, [3]Department of Educational Psychology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa, [4]Faculty of Education and Welfare Studies, Åbo Akademi University, Vaasa, Finland

Even though receiving newcomer pupils in schools is not a new phenomenon, many education systems grapple with finding adequate schooling arrangements that foster belonging and inclusion. Over the years, policy-makers and school practitioners seem to echo recurring dilemmas in terms of what language support models may promote optimal inclusion, and whether and how to support the language of schooling while also building on students' cultural and linguistic repertoires. In this article, we present classroom observations from two Austrian primary schools that implemented German language support in two distinct ways. School 1 implemented pull-out classes, whereas School 2 used a model of individualized learning for all students in the mainstream classroom. Utilizing the cultural-linguistic aspects of 'belonging' in pedagogical enactments, we analyze how teachers' instructional strategies to organize curricular learning for newly arrived migrant pupils set conditions for pedagogies of (un)belonging in the classroom. Findings show that pedagogies of (un)belonging seemed to be formed via chains of patterned interactions, activities and utterances based on three key logics: marking students' 'fitness' to the mainstream classroom, creating cultural (in)visibility, and as creating language hierarchies. While the two classroom practices remarkably differed in how they enabled German language learning and fitting to mainstream pedagogical norms, both seemed to uphold monolingualism and monoculturalism. Recommendations are given in order to expand narrow notions of belonging in educational policy and practice.

KEYWORDS

newly arrived migrant pupils, classroom organization, language support, cultural and linguistic diversity, belonging, ethnography, classroom observations

1 Introduction

Even though receiving newcomer migrant pupils in schools is not a new phenomenon, many education systems grapple with finding adequate schooling arrangements that foster a sense of belonging and inclusion. We use the term 'newly arrived migrant pupils' to signal primary school aged children who recently arrive to Austria for a variety of reasons, and who, at the moment of entering school, are at risk of social and educational exclusion due to a language mismatch between the language of schooling and their own linguistic repertoires.

Student identities that might be tied up with aspects of transnational movement, such as migration, refuge, and asylum, seem to be subsumed under the concept of being someone who is an 'insufficient German language-speaker.' As there is no clear-cut policy definition of newcomer pupils, we trace how students become addressed through the program of German support classes and courses, initiated by the Austrian education ministry. This program is a dual approach to provide extensive learning opportunities for German in fixed classes or flexible courses. A residential status of any kind is no pre-requisite. Instead, all students can be screened for insufficient German proficiency based on an 'Austria-wide, unified and standardized test procedure'.[1] While most foreign-born citizens in Austria are Germans, these language measures apply largely to students whose mother tongue is not German and who have migrated to Austria as refugees. The strongest increase in migrants was observed between 2011 and 2015 in the category of 'refugee migrants' from Syria (90.3%) and Afghanistan (76.6%) (Statistik Austria, 2021, p. 27–28). Forced migration was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic 2020/21 and then again accelerated by the war in Ukraine at the beginning of 2022. Among EU countries, Austria currently holds the 11th highest migration quota (Statistik Austria, 2021, p. 36).

While a sense of belonging is a key component for all students in educational inclusion and wellbeing (Theron and Liebenberg, 2015; Blignaut et al., 2022), the development of this feeling is a challenging journey for newly arrived migrant pupils. In particular, issues of linguistic and cultural misrepresentation, unequal learning opportunities and outcomes, stereotyping, discrimination and racism still occur in schools (Council of Europe, 2017; UNESCO, 2018; Szelei et al., 2019, 2021a,b). Moreover, educational research and practice often approaches migrant students through a deficit lens focusing on 'shortcomings' related to the language of schooling instead of recognizing the full scope of rich knowledge they possess (Stevens, 2009; Szelei et al., 2021a,b).

In Austria there are tendencies of migrant students' overrepresentation in lower qualifying schools: most students who do not speak German as their first language are placed in special schools (*Sonderschule*).[2] Hence, in 2019, migrant students were twice as likely to be segregated in special schools due to being labeled with a learning disability than they were likely to attend an academic secondary school which qualifies students for accessing higher education (Statistik Austria, 2019, p. 46). Zooming in on the parameter of heritage languages, most four- and five-year-old children who do not speak German as a mother tongue, speak Turkish or Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) (*Ibid.*, p. 47). Students who represent either of these two language groups are twice as likely to be found in special schools than in mainstream primary education (*Ibid.*). Furthermore, 73% of students with a Turkish background as well as 80% of students from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq are more likely to continue secondary education at a school that does not award the *matura* degree.[3] They either attend special schools, which do not award any graduation diploma that qualifies for further studies, or vocational schools (Statistik Austria, 2023, p. 46).

In the context of these structural inequalities, teachers' classroom pedagogies are key in creating the context for newly arrived migrant pupils to feel belonging (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020; Lang and García, 2023). Therefore, in this article, we approach belonging as a pedagogical concept (Edgeworth and Santoro, 2015; Comber and Woods, 2018; Dadvand and Cuervo, 2019), and as a pathway to potentially reducing inequalities for newcomer migrant pupils (DeNicolo et al., 2017). While much research confirms that positive interpersonal relationships with teachers, and teachers' actions that provide social care are cornerstones of belonging for newcomer migrant youth (DeNicolo et al., 2017; Amina et al., 2022; Martin et al., 2023; Sutton et al., 2023), less research focuses on how teachers' instructional strategies to organize curricular learning set conditions for (un)belonging. This is an important link to further investigate since some studies note that newcomer migrant students may feel socially connected to their schools, and at the same time, detached from curricular learning in the classroom (Amina et al., 2022).

Therefore, educational policy and school practitioners continue to face the dilemma of how to support curricular learning, which predominantly happens in the language of schooling, while creating an environment that builds on the diverse cultures, languages and knowledges that pupils bring to teaching and learning (Omidire, 2019; Hudson et al., 2020). While this dilemma is often presented in policy discourses as a clash between two incompatible educational missions, studies with newcomer youth show that both are important for being able to develop a sense of school belonging (Anderson et al., 2023; Martin et al., 2023). These insights indicate that the policy dilemma may reflect an artificially juxtaposed binary, and that both need to be addressed in teachers' classroom practices. For this reason, we will analyze teachers' instructional strategies of curricular learning in the classroom with a particular attention to opportunities for German language learning and expression of own cultural and linguistic identities and knowledges.

Furthermore, across Europe, language support systems in school education are highly fragmented. Education systems have been implementing different models for enhancing the language of schooling (e.g., separate reception classes for newcomers, pull-out classes, individual support in or out of the mainstream classroom, etc.), but their outcomes in terms of inclusion remain highly debated (Rodríguez-Izquierdo and Darmody, 2019; Gitschthaler et al., 2021; Tajic and Bunar, 2023). Over the years it has become evident that it is

1 BMBWF (2024). https://www.bmbwf.gv.at

2 In Austria there are nine different types of special schools that educate students with a certain special needs profile (learning, visibly impaired, blind, audibly impaired, deaf, motor physically impaired, speech impaired, behavior (*schwererziehbar*), severely impaired). It is important to note that students whose mother tongue is not German have often qualified for special schools because of special educational testing procedures that require a certain German language proficiency. Therefore, government publications highlight that "German language proficiency is NOT AT ALL (*sic*!) a reason for referral to special schools" (AMS/Arbeitsmarktservice (Labor Market Service), 2017, p. 13). Placing a majority of migrant students in special schools evokes the impression that multilingual children are more likely to be less educable than native kids and it also creates a generation of migrant children that cannot easily participate in the labor market because attending special schools does not qualify for vocational training.

3 The *matura* degree is comparable to a high school diploma which enables graduates from secondary education to attend academic higher institutions.

not simply a physical allocation of students in the same mainstream class that would solely indicate inclusion, and that more integrated models may also create a sense of (un)belonging or exclusion (Eloff and Kgwete, 2007; Du Toit et al., 2014; Szelei et al., 2021a; Tajic and Bunar, 2023). Therefore, 'together or separate?' is a question to be posed in any structural model of language support through a close examination of how teachers' classroom instructions of curricular learning set conditions for belonging.

Consequently, the aim of this study is to provide further insights into pedagogies as vehicles of (un)belonging for newcomer migrant pupils through analyzing teachers' instructional strategies of curricular learning in the classroom, and in the context of two different institutional language support models. We present findings from classroom observations with four teachers in two primary schools in Austria that organized German language support for newcomer migrant pupils in two distinct ways. School 1 implemented pull-out classes, whereas School 2 used a model of individualized learning for all students in the mainstream classroom. Similar to other studies in this regard (Tajic and Bunar, 2023), our aim here is not to determine which language support model is 'more effective' for belonging, but we rather regard these structures as underpinning contexts of teachers' classroom practices. We ask: How do teachers organize curricular learning in the classroom for newly arrived migrant students to provide German language support? How do teachers' instructional strategies provide opportunities for cultural and linguistic self-expression? What are the similarities and differences between classroom practices operating within different models of German language support?

Our study offers empirical insights to further nuance understandings of pedagogies of (un)belonging for newcomer migrant pupils particularly related to curricular learning in the classroom. While we point to crucial differences in how classroom practices enabled German language learning in view of belonging, findings also show that even 'innovative' and 'new' pedagogical norms seemed to be rooted in 'old' cultural and linguistic norms that uphold monolingualism and monoculturalism. Recommendations are given in order to expand narrow notions of belonging in educational policy and practice.

2 Theoretical perspectives and literature review

2.1 Belonging among newly arrived migrant pupils in schools

While the definitions of 'belonging' are numerous and divergent, we here approach it as a pedagogical concept (Edgeworth and Santoro, 2015; Comber and Woods, 2018; Dadvand and Cuervo, 2019), manifesting in educational relationships (Martin et al., 2023) in the classroom context as teachers organize curricular learning. Edgeworth and Santoro (2015), p. 423 call the 'pedagogies of belonging' teaching practices that construct all students as belonging to a school community. Teachers are key actors in this since they design and enact (un)belonging in the classroom via their curricular, pedagogical, and social practices (Edgeworth and Santoro, 2015; Comber and Woods, 2018; Dadvand and Cuervo, 2019; Anderson et al., 2023). In other words, teachers' pedagogical decisions and practices in how they organize social and curricular learning may set conditions for newcomer migrant students to feel (un)belonging (Comber and Woods, 2018; Picton and Banfield, 2020). For example, allowing newcomer migrant students to socialize during lessons, flexibly grouping them with many of their peers, promoting the use of home languages and actively stopping cases of peer discrimination play a crucial role in belonging (DeNicolo, 2019; Picton and Banfield, 2020; Lang and García, 2023). Furthermore, the importance of cultural and linguistic recognition, positive relationships with peers and teachers, and a school environment free from bullying and discrimination has been repeatedly evidenced in previous research (Due et al., 2016; DeNicolo et al., 2017; Wissing et al., 2019; McInerney, 2022; Martin et al., 2023; Sutton et al., 2023).

Moreover, while many studies shed light on rather the social aspects of belonging, schools are not only contexts of socialization, but also, curricular learning. As Comber and Woods (2018) note, the concepts of learning and belonging are closely intertwined in a school context, in how knowledge is produced, and how students connect with their peers and teachers. Therefore, academic belonging (Lewis and Hodges, 2015; Pendergast et al., 2018), a sense of belonging to a learning community, or to a place where curricular learning occurs is equally important when conceptualizing school belonging. As such, creating a sense of social bonding and a learning environment where all students are seen as capable learners and newcomer migrant students have the opportunity to experience and show their academic skills and success are equally important (Edgeworth and Santoro, 2015; Picton and Banfield, 2020).

Academic belonging is, however, often overlooked in the literature capturing the experiences of newcomer migrant students. Highlighting this discrepancy, Amina et al. (2022) find that newcomer migrant students felt much connected during social activities in out-of-classroom settings in schools, but felt yet 'invisible' and alienated during subject lessons in the classroom. For this reason, we aim to add more empirical insights into how curricular learning is organized in the classroom and discuss instructional strategies through the lens of belonging. In particular, we analyze how German language support is organized and how students' cultural and linguistic repertoires are addressed in teacher-enacted classroom instruction.

Inevitably, single classrooms and teachers are often embedded in structures of inequalities (Picton and Banfield, 2020) and rigid pedagogical norms that may be difficult to overcome only by individual teacher's actions. For example, in Lang and García's (2023) study, while a teacher was able to create a more inclusive classroom environment, the dominance of the language of schooling, and the privileged status of speakers of dominant languages were not possible to negotiate by micro-level actions in the classroom. Monolingualism and monoculturalism are deeply rooted ideologies that often permeate pedagogical actions and teachers' beliefs in the classroom in Austria and elsewhere around the world (e.g., Gogolin, 1991; Santoro and Forghani-Arani, 2015; Alisaari et al., 2019; Szelei et al., 2019; Herzog-Punzenberger et al., 2020; Gitschthaler et al., 2021; Szelei et al., 2021b). Yet migrant students take up agency to find or create ways to belonging in a new school environment (DeNicolo et al., 2017; Dryden-Peterson, 2022). Therefore, we here situate teachers' pedagogies in their structural contexts as well as within the teacher-pupil relationship in the classroom. In particular, we focus on the language support models and the cultural and language norms that newly arrived migrant pupils inhabit in the classroom and trace pedagogies of (un)belonging.

2.2 Language support models for newly arrived migrant pupils in Austria

As noted above, the organization of language support models remains a dilemma in policy and practice across Europe. CCrul et al.'s (2019) comparative study of different language support systems find that a swift transition to mainstream classrooms increases chances for newly arrived migrant students' academic success, and staying in separated classes for an extended amount of time usually leads to absenteeism and drop-out. While scholarly studies are in favor of more integrated models in general, previous research also highlights that it is not only the structural model of language support that solely define greater inclusion, and that any organizational model may present with inherently contradictory practices characterized by the simultaneous presence of exclusion and inclusion (Terhart and von Dewitz, 2018; Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2020; Szelei et al., 2021a,b; Tajic and Bunar, 2023). Furthermore, while policy and practice strongly emphasize the need to finding 'solutions' to best support the language of schooling, the maintenance of home languages is somewhat overlooked (Rodríguez-Izquierdo and Darmody, 2019). As noted above, these dilemmas that policy-makers and school practitioners articulate are overly one-sided, and newcomer migrant youth emphasize the importance of both being able to effectively learn the language of schooling while seeing one's cultural and linguistic knowledges reflected in schools (Anderson et al., 2023; Martin et al., 2023).

In the past, Austria has grappled in different ways with its growingly diverse student population. While formerly, the spirit of 'foreigner pedagogy' (*Ausländerpädagogik*) prevailed, intercultural education has taken its place over the years and fostered the spirit of a more democratic engagement with the 'other'. Formerly, migrant students in Austria were educated in their native languages and received religious education according to their own faith as it was expected that these students would return to their home countries when their parents' 'guest labor contracts' ran out. These practices were common in the 1970s and 1980s. In the meantime, 'foreigner pedagogy' has received great criticism as it was assumed to be segregationist. 'Foreigner pedagogy' blamed school failure on presumably lower cultural, cognitive, and financial capital prevalent among migrant families, instead of taking into view discriminatory practices found in schools and other institutions of governance and power. Today, intercultural education is deemed a pedagogical paradigm that applies to the general Austrian core curriculum. Hence, 'a specific pedagogical task of the primary schools arises where it can enable intercultural education for children with German and those without German as a mother tongue' (Lehrplan der Volksschule, 2005, p. 8). While this 'task' goes beyond language acquisition, integration policies continue to exercise intercultural education through the priority of German language skills.

The 2018/19 school year has seen the introduction of an intense linguistic strategy that the country applies to achieve swift integration of newcomer migrant students to its mainstream educational institutions. Formerly, children received extra German lessons, called *Besonderer Förderunterricht Deutsch (BFU)* as a pull-out mechanism during the regular teaching schedule. As a response to poor testing results of migrant students and the influx of refugee children since 2015 (BMBWF, 2019, p. 4)–according to the Conservative government of ÖVP (Austrian People's Party) and FPÖ (Freedom Party Austria)–Austria decided to administer a two-track system of language acquisition that was either based on German support classes (*Deutschförderklasse*) or German support courses (*Deutschförderkurs*) (see also: Erling et al., 2022). According to students' test results, they either study 15 hours of German in a separate class unit of German learners or in a course that offers 6 h of German, taking place parallel to regular lessons (BMBWF, 2019, p. 7). These German support classes contain students of different year groups, class units and even types of schools. It is not a priority to foster a community spirit in the classes as the strategy highlights (BMBWF, 2019, p. 25). As it is only a temporary arrangement, it is comparable to an intensive training class in which developing a sense of belonging receives less attention than language progress. It must also be noted, though, that the Austrian education system continues to place attention on migrant students' first languages as part of the regular teaching schedule. Currently, 26 languages are offered across Austria to support students in acquiring their mother tongues, including Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Pashto, Persian, Hungarian, Somali etc. (BMBWF, 2019, p. 22). This multilingual strategy is geared toward 'promoting a multilingual identity development'.[4] Which languages are offered in which types of schools, however, remains a highly localized responsibility that we cannot currently judge in terms of success rates and effects on children's wellbeing and sense of belonging. However, it can be inferred that many children in Austria have experiences with different language promotion strategies with strongly varying access to these and levels of engagement. However, as one in seven students has a parent that was born outside of Austria and one in four speaks a different language than German at home (Gruber, 2019, p. 147), it can be summarized that linguistic diversity is an integral part of Austria's student population and a common phenomenon for teachers.

3 Research objective and questions

The overall aim of this study is to examine how teachers' instructional strategies of organizing curricular learning in the classroom set conditions for pedagogies of (un)belonging. More specifically, we ask:

- How do teachers organize curricular support in the classroom for newly arrived migrant students to support German language development?
- How do teachers' instructional strategies provide opportunities for cultural and linguistic self-expression in the classroom?
- What are the similarities and differences between two classroom practices operating within two different German language support models?

4 Methodology

4.1 Classroom observations

This article is an outcome of the EDiTE (European Doctorate in Teacher Education) research project in which the first two authors

4 www.schule-mehrsprachig.at

conducted qualitative school research in Austria. We select a subsample of two public schools for the sake of this article since (1) they taught newly arrived migrant students, and in general, a culturally and linguistically diverse student population (2) they opted for different models of language support that offered unique opportunities to explore in terms of how teachers navigate these structures. Fieldwork was conducted by the first two authors at different timepoints between 2017 and 2018.

The key method applied during fieldwork was classroom observation. We here understand observation as 'the act of perceiving the activities and interrelationships of people in the field setting through the five sense of the researcher', and 'noting down' these perceptions 'for scientific purposes' (Angrosino, 2007; p. 37 and p. 54). The aim of observations is to delineate and understand patterns or trends reflected in individual behaviors or social practices related to the research questions (Angrosino, 2007; Given, 2008). Here, we aimed to discern teachers' instructional strategies when organizing curricular and social learning for newly arrived migrant students in given cultural and linguistic norms of classroom pedagogies, as precursors of pedagogies of (un)belonging. The advantage of being an observer in these settings is that we were able to take note of instructional strategies of learning in the classroom, and how language support models were interpreted by educators through phrasing and enactment of instructions as well as how students responded to these pedagogic interventions that were employed by their teachers.

We performed observations in two distinct ways. The first author followed an ethnographic approach (Erickson, 2004): she participated in classroom scenarios and became integrated in students' activities, such as reading with them, checking their homework, and being called on by the teacher. The second author maintained some distance from the classroom interactions and pursued a qualitative observational study (Given, 2008). Hence, the second author conducted observations aiming at the least disruption of classroom interactions possible. She often stayed in the back of the classroom or at a point where she had a broad view on the learning environment. Her role as a researcher was made clear to the whole class. She also took up informal conversations with teachers and pupils during the breaks.

During the observations the authors made *in-situ* notes that they then wrote out, following the principles of thick descriptions, into fieldnotes and analytical memos (Emerson et al., 1995). We also documented information that the school provided about itself through its online presence, the way it decorated its representative spaces like the entry hall or the classroom walls (Wagner, 2021). They were enriched by interviews with educators, teaching assistants as well as school leadership. The names used in this article are pseudonyms.

The two authors, conducting fieldwork, are not native to the schools' neighborhoods. However, one shares the language of classroom instruction, and the other was a second language learner of German at the time of research, such as the students that we focus on in this piece. By combining the data that the two separate studies provided, the authors generated diverse insights into the language and social practices in the classroom which have become an integral part of Austrian teaching and learning settings. The initial findings were then presented to author 3 and 4 who are affiliated with different language groups and gave their feedback on the findings presented here. Author 1 and 2 have both been teachers before and, therefore, must remain cautious of 'surface familiarity with the classroom,' as Erickson writes, in order to still be able to 'make the familiar strange and visible' (2010, p. 323).

4.2 Data analysis and interpretation

We each amassed a substantial amount of data that we then interpreted through the principles of analyzing ethnographic data (Erickson, 2004). While our methods of observation were different, both our fieldnotes speak to the 'the full range of activities and social situations that take place in the setting' with regard to language use, language policies, cultural and language habits of the schools that we visited (Erickson, 2010, p. 321). Therefore, we combine our data for the sake of bringing in two angles into the analysis of classroom activities pertaining to the same issues of language policies and (un) belonging in the classroom. For both studies we follow what Frederick Erickson recommends as to go from 'whole to part' meaning to engage with data in the way it naturally appears in social interactions and then to zoom in on the microscopic detail of the given situation (Erickson, 2004, p. 491). Therefore, we have read the entire material several times to become familiar with the whole dataset. Then, we identified data that reflected practices and routines of German language support, cultural expression and home languages in teachers' classroom practices. We have moved from descriptive analysis to theoretical analysis (Angrosino, 2007) as we first developed a thorough descriptive understanding on the reported and observed practices, and then we identified patterns across the dataset. The identification of patterns happened via comparing and contrasting teachers' instructional actions, pedagogical activities and interactions with students in the classroom, as well as statements made about the same issues in the interview material (Angrosino, 2007). The identification of patterns happened by following the logic of the research questions (teachers' instructional strategies regarding German language support and cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom), and patterns were identified as those chains of events, interactions and statements that typically described the teachers' practices during the time of this fieldwork.

We have first identified these patterns in the two school settings separately, and then contrasted and compared them to be able to respond to research question 3. Finally, we have reviewed these findings altogether (similarities and differences in teachers' instructional strategies) by interpreting them through the pedagogical concept of belonging. This means that we have interpreted the patterns found in the empirical material in terms of how they informed theoretical understandings on pedagogies of (un)belonging.

We organize the findings sections as per three theoretically driven categories, namely: 1. (Un)Belonging as marking 'fitness' to the mainstream classroom 1. (Un)Belonging as creating cultural (in)visibility 3. (Un)Belonging as creating language hierarchies. We narrate the findings of each category by giving holistic descriptions of thickly contextualized events and statements. Erickson recommends to look for 'the biggest shifts in activity within the interactional occasion as a whole' (*Ibid.*). We identified patterns as they were formed by repeated corresponding chains of events, interactions and statements. We narrate specific events that we identified as a sensible unit of interaction that spoke to the patterns we observed as a whole. This was how we decided which entities to portray and highlight in this article.

5 Research context and schools

Both schools were situated in an Austrian city and provided primary education to over 200 students, respectively. School 1 was located in the outskirts of the city in a predominantly low-income area. The school

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reflected high diversity in terms of students' migration trajectories and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It pursued a system of pull-out classes for German language support whereby newly arrived migrant students stayed for their assigned mainstream classes for some subject lessons, and then pulled out to attend German support classes. The concept of 'push-and pull-out' has been referenced widely as a way to describe strategies that schools apply to move students into different settings, thereby exercising pressures that we seek to critically examine here (Jordan et al., 1994; Demo et al., 2021, p. 2). In this school, Wagner interviewed and observed (50 hours) two teachers (Kate and Amy) of the same class. It was a fourth-grade group of 19 children in which two pupils spoke German as their mother tongue. The other classmates spoke a variety of different languages from English, BSC, Turkish to Arabic. Some students had recently arrived, while others had parents who were born abroad but had completed their mandatory education in Austria. The group was educated under the strategic program of the 'English classes' meaning that all students received extra English language input. As a group that was considered academically driven, students studied regular lesson content in German while some students had support German classes and all of them did extra work in English. This way, the school hoped to add a level of expectation and curricular advantage that would enable higher performing groups to stand a better chance at academic secondary education.

The school in which Szelei conducted research (School 2), was situated in the center of the same Austrian city in a predominantly middle-high income area. More than half of the pupils came from homes where another language than German was spoken. Out of the families coming from abroad, about half were families with a high formal education degree, and the other half were illiterate, according to the school principal. This school implemented their own innovative pedagogy whereby each student followed their own personal learning plans during curricular learning, facilitated by two classroom teachers. Here we specifically analyze classroom practices in School 2 with regards to newly arrived migrant students. In School 2, supporting the development of German language for newly arrived migrant students was directly integrated within the classroom setting via personal learning projects, therefore, no pull-out classes were implemented. Thus, School 2 was unique to explore, since this type of language support model is barely ever considered, nor analyzed in scientific studies due to their overwhelming absence in public schooling. Additionally, School 2 organized English subject learning in all classes, as well as launched some Italian-German bilingual classes within the school. Szelei conducted interviews and observations (20 hours) with two teachers (Christine and Paul) of one multigrade class of altogether 22 children. This class was selected as about half of the students spoke other languages than German at home. At the time of observations, two children were newly arrived migrants from Syria (1 and 2 years in Austria), and another 6 had parents coming from countries other than Austria (England, Russia, Armenia, Mongolia and Turkey). This class followed the German language curriculum as language of instruction, and was not part of Italian-German schooling.

6 Findings

6.1 (Un)belonging as marking 'fitness' to the mainstream classroom

In seeking responses to research question 1, patterns regarding teachers' instructional strategies of German language support were related to how practices included and marked newly migrant students as fitting or unfitting into regular teaching norms in the classroom. The two classrooms we observed presented with two fundamentally different approaches in this regard.

In School 1, teaching practices followed a traditional teacher-centered approach that presented with the norms of teaching the same curriculum, and emphasized the importance of students advancing in the same pace and time. When it came to German, the language of regular instruction, the school policy, as advertised on its website, advocated for a strict German-only policy on its premises and educators were adamant about adhering to this rule during classes as well as during recess. Structured language support for newcomers took place in pull-out classes while the rest of the group continued with regular class work. While there was ritualized language support offered to the fourth graders, it was at times difficult to tell what were the criteria for being entitled to German language support. Throughout the observations, a practice of arbitrary allocation of students to BFU lessons emerged with a certain vagueness of the rationale about who and when could attend these lessons.

> 'The lesson starts. The German support teacher comes in and reads out the names of six girls. They have to get up immediately and follow the teacher out of the room for extra German class. The girls protest but the German teacher raises her voice and says she doesn't want to hear any complaining. The girls leave the room. (Fieldnote, March 3, 2017)'

Protest against leaving the mainstream classroom indicated students' discomfort with this teacher-made decision that may have occurred for a variety of reasons. For example, the students may have preferred to stay with their classmates/classroom teachers or German language support lessons might have been less engaging than learning in the mainstream classroom. In any case, teacher decision on the allocation of particularly these six pupils was not clarified, neither negotiated with the pupils involved. Even though the pupils somewhat resisted the teacher's decision, in this moment there seemed to be no room for dialog with the pupils about their learning trajectories regarding BFU, or explaining why the teachers believed this was an adequate instruction for these pupils.

This arbitrariness of pupil allocation to BFU and vagueness of who and when qualifies for German language support is further evidenced by the following scenario that occurred between Amy (teacher) and Aicha, a Kurdish-Austrian pupil who struggled with her German exams although she had a good command of the language in general.

> 'The teacher for extra German enters the class, eight children will work with her today. The class teacher tells me and the German support teacher to give her numbers between one and 19. According to these numbers that we call out in turn, the names of the children are determined who will accompany her. … The kids watch us while they hear the number and the teacher checks in the students' list whose name is linked to the given number. After the names are called, the respective students get up and follow the teacher out of the room. The rest of the class receives special puzzles and riddles today to practice spelling and arithmetic. Aicha has difficulties. Her teacher pulls up a chair and sits next to Aicha to check on her. Aicha reads out loud: "A bird lives in the birdcage." She stops, turns around and looks for help. She turns back to her worksheet and asks: "Is there sand in a birdcage?" The

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> teacher says: "Yes, so the shit can be better soaked up." Aicha talks in a very loud voice. The teacher shouts back: "Not so loud!" Aicha finishes reading the text. The teacher says: "One task is no task, do the next one." (Fieldnote, June 29, 2017)

In this fieldnote, pupil allocation happened via a lottery of numbers between one and 19. This type of selection adds to the arbitrary nature of pupil allocation, as well as indicates a possibly rather generalized German language support curriculum over a pupil-centered approach. While eight pupils have been chosen randomly, Aicha was not among them during that lesson. Her chance of having structured instruction and support to acquire German language proficiency then had to wait until the next week. As Aicha stayed in the mainstream classroom, she received a worksheet exercise for reading and comprehension, while the rest of the class worked on something completely different. Amy monitored Aicha's work, and teacher instruction seemed to be also restricted to the worksheet exercise.

The practice of random allocation of pupils to BFU support lessons raises questions about who is entitled to receive this type of German language support. Kate explained that because her group was academically higher performing than other groups in this school, her students were only entitled to extra German lesson once a week. They also had a commitment of keeping these support groups small, so teachers had to decide who got to profit from this service each week, and not everyone could take this opportunity every week. Other groups had four or five BFU hours a week, she said, because on average those students were less proficient in German than the pupils in her class. This structural condition presented remarkable challenges for Amy's and Kate's work in the mainstream classroom. Kate noted:

> 'almost nobody was a German native speaker and so it would be much nicer if we had a lot more BFU lessons or more teaching assistants because it is often challenging linguistically. However, our group is not as bad compared to the other groups.'

On the other hand, School 2 implemented a specific pedagogical model in which each student followed their own individual learning plans, facilitated by two teachers. The classroom environment was rich in diverse learning materials, objects and tools to facilitate learning, and the students could freely choose where (inside the classroom or outside on the corridor) and how they worked during the lessons. The teachers' role was to provide individual support and scaffold the learning of each student based on individual needs and learning plans. This personalized learning support was rooted in the school's vision on viewing all children as unique individuals, therefore, the specific cases of newly arriving migrant students were equally regarded as a part of universal uniqueness. Therefore, newly arrived migrant students were not seen as extraordinarily different, since individual differences were at the core of normalized pedagogical actions in this school. Christine and Paul appreciated cultural and linguistic diversity since, in their views, it created a richness for children, but also a demanding pedagogical task for teachers. For instance,

> 'I think it's for all children a positive thing. But for teaching it's more difficult, of course. But as we do personal learning, it's just another point more to do.' Christine

> 'It's a lot of work, we have to say it. It's really a lot of work, it costs much of time, but you should. If you really want this, you have to do this.' Paul.

The teachers had strong academic expectations toward each student, and while they were highly flexible in how students reached their learning goals, students were expected and facilitated to progress quickly. Christine and Paul regarded newly arriving migrant pupils as capable of reaching the same goals as any other pupil in class. They strongly focused on reaching high level reading and comprehension skills in German, as well as that newcomer migrant pupils were able to get along in everyday life and social interactions in German.

School 2's approach to personalized teaching-learning meant that there was no single way of teaching curricular content. Instead, Christine and Paul's mainstream classroom was characterized by the facilitation of multiple individual learning paths instead of one-way frontal teaching. Whole-class moments remained for starting the day with morning circles and for other social activities, but not directly for curricular learning. The next fieldnote shows how this personal learning is organized and scaffolded by Christine in the case of Adam, a newly arrived refugee pupil from Syria. Adam has lived in Austria for less than a year and just started schooling a couple of weeks ago in Christine and Paul's classroom, therefore, was new to the school, German language, and Austria in general.

> 'Christine noticed that Adam was wondering around, not knowing what to do. Christine stepped next to him. 'Spielen? (*Playing?*)' Adam asked Christine, pointing to the animal objects on the shelves. 'Not playing, working' said Kathrin. 'Take a small mat. Ok, let us sit' and they went out to the corridor. Kathrin wrote words on pieces of paper and put them on the mat. Adam went back and forth between the animal display and the mat, and organized the objects around the words. For example, he took a tree and put it next to word *Baum* (tree), a pig next to the word *Schwein* (pig), and so on. As Adam was getting on well, Christine went to circle around other children in the corridor. As she left, Adam stopped working. Christine noticed, returned and asked questions to learn the new words about animals in German. She explained the words in simple German sentences, using the objects. Then she put new cards on the mat with the categories 'animals' 'people' and so on written on them. Christine then explained that in German some words start with lower-case letters, and some with capitals. Now Adam's task was to write the names of the objects organized in columns (animals, people, plants, etc.) with the correct spelling. Adam went back to the classroom to fetch his notebook, sat on the mat and started copying the words independently.' (Fieldnote).

In this fieldnote, Christine scaffolded Adam in learning new vocabulary and spelling in German. We witness a moment of curricular teaching-learning in which Adam stayed within the 'mainstream' classroom setting, however, here 'mainstream' was characterized by each student getting on their own tasks. In this context, Adam did not stand out as very different with his German language skills. In fact, parallel spaces were created for all students where they could study according to their own agenda, scaffolded by the teachers. This way, the curriculum became multi-faceted and personalized to pupils' needs (subjects, levels, learning material and

resources) in the same educational space. Consequently, Adam's personal curriculum fit into the class schedule without disrupting existing teaching-learning norms, since teaching according to individual needs was the 'new norm'. Adam was also active in the learning process as he worked with objects and attempted to write independently. Autonomy was not established right away, but with Christine's initial guidance and monitoring, Adam was able to be engaged in the task independently toward the end. This moment seems powerful in enabling German language learning and belonging to a learning community. The student was provided ample materials as well as teacher guidance to develop German language skills. The student was also regarded as a capable learner and was expected to work, just as anyone else in the classroom. Importantly, no labeling or separated instruction took place based on German language proficiency, and it was the responsibility of the classroom teacher to support newly arrived migrant pupils, rather than specialized personnel.

6.2 (Un)belonging as creating cultural (in) visibility

Responding to research question 2, we also identified patterns regarding how students' own cultural repertoires and identities were reflected in teachers' classroom practices. At the level of symbolic recognition, we observed in both schools a general appreciation of cultural diversity, and symbols of diversity made visible in the entry halls (e.g., 'welcome' had been written on papers decorated by students and fixed on a rope that was hung across the entry hall in School 1, and flags of different nationalities were hung up in the hall of School 2). However, the two classroom practices differed in how explicitly they addressed students' cultural repertoires in classroom activities.

At School 1, Kate explained that last year, the school had put on an event where each year group was asked to design a cook book with recipes that the students wanted to contribute to the book. Other groups had presented traditions and customs on posters. And yet another group presented dances. Kate remembered that students were showing these different projects to each other throughout the past school year. She regretted that this year there was little time for valuing each other's origins and remarked:

> 'I am sorry that we have so little time for these projects. Because they have such linguistic weakness, everything takes so much longer and but we need that time to teach the core curriculum. And if you constantly go on trips and do little projects, time is missing elsewhere. And that's a shame. Because I have the feeling that from a social standpoint they really need that but time is missing. It's this vicious cycle.'

While German language support was important in order to communicate content, it seemed that teachers were also aware of the social aspect of learning together in which cultural diversity could be brought in for real progress to take place. Amy confirmed that the project 'My roots' had taken place during which students practiced a greeting in each respective language and a song, accompanied with slideshows that the students had prepared. Students were proud of their identity, Amy stressed. She felt it was important that students felt at home in Austria:

> 'These are their roots but their homes are in Austria now.'

In School 2, Christine and Paul also placed great emphasis on children feeling empathy, socializing with and caring for each other. Therefore, another pattern that reflected their instructional practices were activities performed as a group. For example, Christine and Paul started the day with a morning circle activity where they went through the routines of the day, and the teachers also set aside time in their weekly curricular plan to address social and emotional competence development via group activities and games. Social interactions among students also occurred during the lessons, for example, when students finished with their own tasks and have chosen to help another student or join another free activity (e.g., reading or playing educational games). Depending on the students' personal learning objectives, it was possible to work in pairs or in groups during curricular learning, but learner autonomy and individual ability to tackle tasks remained of foremost importance.

However, cultural diversity played a hidden part in these moments of social activities. During the time of this fieldwork we have not observed any strategies that directly addressed cultural diversity as the focus of teaching-learning instruction. However, teachers noted that they took up conversations about different cultural habits, and that via social interaction and group activity, mutual cultural exchange occurred between children which was seen as a positive reality within these schools. For example:

> 'And for her *[a new student]* now, as she is not so long in Austria, it's sometimes difficult to understand that *[habits in Austria]*. But it's not a problem that we are talking about. And so, the children from Austria learn that in another culture it's another habit. But that's not a problem! It's a thing you need to talk about, but you learn much things from another culture.' Christine

The learning environment, on the other hand, contained some cultural artifacts, for example, there were flags from different countries hung in the main hall, and the classroom itself had some representation of different countries in books, maps, globes, and a flag flipbook that children could freely use to interact with and learn from. The next moment shows how Adam, after having finished his personal task during curricular learning, picked up the flag flipbook and engaged with his peers in social interaction.

> 'Adam and three other boys sat in the reading corner, comfortable on pillows, browsing books and objects around them. Adam looked at a flipbook that consisted a flag of a country on each page. He started a game with the other boys around him. He showed a flag to them and ask in German 'What is this?', and the other boys guessed. Adam was very confident taking a leading role and guiding this interaction himself. When someone guessed well, Adam gave a point by pointing to the person with his hand and showing the number of points on his fingers. He flipped lots of flags: Albania, Norway, Italy, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Belgium, Greece and so on. When the three boys hesitated, Adam helped by telling the first letter of the country. 'R…' he said. 'Russia?' asked the boys. 'Ro…' Adam continued. 'Romania!' 'guessed the boys finally correctly. Fieldnote

In this fieldnote, Adam and his classmates engaged in a moment of social interaction born out of their own interests, and the learning environment and materials that Christine and Paul provided in the classroom. The children spontaneously and autonomously engaged in learning associations between flags and countries around the world while interacting with each other. Notably, Adam took lead despite being new to the German language, and was able to navigate the whole social scenario by using hand gestures, simple German sentences, and the tool of the flipbook. Therefore, Adam had the opportunity to be positioned as a successful learner and organizer of social moments. While it would have been possible to strengthen cultural exchange through this moment, students' own knowledges and experiences with cultural belonging and migration remained uncovered. Neither the teacher demonstrated explicit actions against peer discrimination and racism, but rather focused on prevention via the above described social activities. These practices may signal that, if learning instruction does not address cultural diversity explicitly and via a direct collaboration with newly arrived migrant students, it remains hidden in dominating pedagogical norms of the classroom.

6.3 (Un)belonging as creating language hierarchies

The third key node was how classroom practices reflected linguistic diversity, and particularly, students' home languages. In this regard, we have found two patterned practices across the two classroom settings. One was related to explicitly addressing and valuing the maintenance of home language in out-of-classroom activities, and, on the other hand, reinforcing the domination of German and English.

At School 1, fostering students' home languages seemed to be as important as learning German. The fourth graders had access to heritage language lessons provided by the school on its own premises for those who wanted to learn Turkish and Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian. These lessons were offered in the afternoons so that the rest of the students could go home. Amy was convinced that lessons in heritage languages were very important also with regard to learning German:

> 'Native lessons in Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian are every Friday afternoon and Turkish is usually in the afternoon as well, it depends on the schedule. And that is also received well [by the students]. In my opinion, children who attend native lessons also do better in German. There are great differences between speaking and writing. Children who do not speak clearly can still write relatively well. So they do learn the technique [of the language].'

Hence, this 'double approach' worked in the students' favor, in Amy's thoughts. Placing both attention on the students' home languages while studying German in general education and occasionally through extra German support classes was a remarkable pedagogical vision in School 1 regarding linguistic diversity. However, heritage language instruction occurred out of the mainstream classroom, performed by heritage language teachers, and mainstream classroom teachers seemed to build little on students' home languages during curricular learning in the classroom.

Teachers in School 2 were also appreciative of students' home languages, and they have also closely considered students' language backgrounds when designing German curricular learning. However, home languages were rather seen as in how they may influence the acquisition of German learning, and similar to School 1, little explicit visibility was provided during classroom instruction. In School 2, home languages were one part of student diversity, and therefore, did not seem to receive a more accentuated attention in the development of pedagogical vision than any other dimension of diversity.

Therefore, both classroom practices seemed to focus on German language through a monolingual approach during classroom instruction, as well as the domination of English emerged. While English is a subject that students in Austria study as a regular subject lesson during primary education, the involvement of English was not restricted to those hours in the classes we observed. In both schools, students received lessons in English as a foreign language and English language was somewhat present in the daily classroom interactions too, and regarding it more organically as part of the general curriculum.

At School 1, English received a special place in the curriculum. While it was the mother tongue of a handful of students from Central Africa, it was, unlike Kurdish or Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian, interwoven throughout the school day. On some mornings, the teachers practiced a routine of reading out the date of the day in English. In other instances, students had to open their German textbooks and the teachers announced page numbers in English. Some of the books in the 'book corner' were in English and students were encouraged to flip through them in their free time. English was treated as a language of prestige that received attention during the prime hours of the schedule. Other home languages remained compartmentalized for afternoon education. Amy explained the reasons behind her group being an 'English class' and linking it to their general abilities to perform higher than the other students in the school:

> 'We are an established 'English class.' So we offer an extra focus on English because the students seemed to have shown during their entry exams into the school that they were capable of learning yet a third language.'

Students were encouraged to use English as a general education language which placed some of the students at an advantage while others remained with their mother tongue in the afternoon classes. While the reading corner had English classics like the 'The very hungry caterpillar' by Eric Carle, there were no Turkish or Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian books. German and English were to be spoken and practiced communally in written and spoken word, while other languages remained a private endeavor.

Similarly, in the classroom of Christine and Pauline at School 2, there was a student with English as home language, however, there were many others with other languages. Apart from English as a foreign language lesson, Christine and Paul also used English occasionally during classroom interactions, for example, in the morning circle.

> 'The students and teachers set in a circle on the mat in the middle of the classroom and talked about the date of the day, the season, and the weather. Paul leads the activity by posing questions to all students, and calling on them to answer. He also calls children to the whiteboard to write the date, and select the right pictograms for the weather. With each answer, Paul asks for the reply also in

> English. 'Now in English. Who knows what is the day?' And there are bilingual sentences on the board for the weather 'Es ist kalt/It's cold' 'Es ist sonnig/It's sunny" Fieldnote, Paul

While the prominence of English was not as established as in School 1, a hierarchy of languages in curricular learning was also evident in School 2. English has somewhat entered daily interactions, and other classes of the school received structural bilingual education in Italian-German. This approach is somewhat contradictory to the school's vision on valuing each aspect of a student, but home languages becoming rather invisible when focusing on German, Italian, and English as named languages in curricular learning.

7 Discussion

In this study we explored teachers' instructional strategies in classroom practices that were underpinned by two different models of German language support. We specifically analyzed instruction in terms of German language support, cultural expression and the use of home languages in curricular learning, and we have identified similarities and differences between two classroom practices. Focusing on the cultural and linguistic aspects of belonging in curricular learning, (un)belonging as a pedagogical construct seemed to emerge from a chain of instructional strategies that marked newly arrived migrant students' 'fitness' to the mainstream classroom, created cultural (in)visibility, and language hierarchies.

The two classroom practices presented remarkably different approaches in how they organized German language support in or out of the mainstream classroom, and consequently, how newly arrived students were marked as belonging or not belonging to predominating pedagogical norms. Importantly, School 2 did not only provide 'belonging' by physically placing newly arrived students in the same classrooms as others, but by changing its entire pedagogical approach for all students in which everyone followed their own learning paths as the new norm of the mainstream. Similarly, it is not only the pull-out mechanism of German language support that deemed students unbelonging to the mainstream classes, but teachers having to arbitrarily decide who benefit from that learning support, and who remains physically included yet marked in the unchanged mainstream classroom. These empirical insights to better understand the role of pedagogical enactments related to providing adequate learning opportunities in the language of schooling, which newly arrived students elsewhere report to be key in achieving a sense of belonging.

While the two classroom practices were largely different in how they organized German language support, they were somewhat similar in their pedagogical uptake of students' cultural and linguistic knowledges, identities and experiences. By making cultural diversity rather invisible or pushed to tokenistic activities – food and festivals (Meyer and Rhoades, 2006), these schools seemed to give lesser chances for newly arrived migrant students to see their backgrounds and experiences reflected in curricular and social learning in the classroom. While surface level insight into a given country through songs, recipes, dances, and phrases, or random cultural exchange via social interaction was noted, students' authentic relationships with their transnational identities remained in the background. This finding corresponds with many others that report similar tendencies (e.g., Szelei et al., 2019), however, we importantly correspond here with studies on belonging, and add that this cultural (in)visibility may have a direct impact on students' feelings of (un)belonging.

Furthermore, both schools seemed to opt for following 'monolingual principles' (Gitschthaler et al., 2021, p. 5) which (Hornberger and Johnson, 2014) make out as teachers exhibiting political power over their students. Monolingualism was reflected by emphasizing German language acquisition through German-only instruction, and by establishing the dominance of German and English (School 1), German, Italian and English (School 2), while home languages remained pushed to out-of-classroom activities. Home languages occasionally entered the classroom via tokenistic activities or by paying attention to students' backgrounds when designing tasks for German language development.

Tied to the monolingual approaches adopted by the two schools studied are language hierarchies. Schooling practices in both schools reflect unconscious hierarchies of languages, positioning the German and English languages as more valued and ethically minoritized languages or migration-induced multilingualism as less valued (Von Esch et al., 2020; Putjata and Koster, 2023). Across the two schools, the domination of German and English was evident. In School 1, English was tied into the curriculum and teachers had stacked the 'book corner' with books in English even if none of the interlocutors was 'Anglo.' Similarly, in School 2, English use was explicit in interactions albeit occasionally. This points to linguistic hierarchies and separate spaces for different languages especially minoritized languages within these schools (Young, 2014). This conscious or unconscious promotion of some languages over others deserves attention as past studies indicate that teachers' multilingual practices can negatively affect the development of multilingual children and their educational success (Gomolla, 2017; Putjata, 2018, 2019) while truly embracing multilingualism such as employing translanguaging practices in classrooms can have positive affects for students' well-being and belonging (Duarte and van der Meij, 2018). How teachers teach and the professional choices they make in the classroom setting are tied to their language ideologies and cultural beliefs. In a recent study of teachers' beliefs and attitudes about multilingualism (ideas about the value of different languages and their role in everyday teaching and learning processes) in the German state North Rhine-Westphalia, (Putjata and Koster, 2023) found that despite differences in school language policies, professional biographies and multilingual upbringings, teachers in monolingual and bilingual schools reproduced monolingual normative perceptions. Even teachers at bilingual schools focusing on European languages deem migration-induced multilingualism as less important.

Turning from the European level back to the state-level, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung*) evaluated the implementation of the German support model, presented in this piece, in October 2022 (see: Spiel et al., 2022). In this report, survey data from 93 schools and 693 participants, including German language support teachers (167), principals (80) as well as primary school teachers (446) responded to the questionnaire (2022, p. 7). The report comes to the following conclusions: It is of paramount importance that educators who provide German support classes and courses are actually trained in teaching German as a second language. In fact, the survey highlights that German support should only ever be taught by 'experts in German as a second language' (p. 22). None of the practitioners, showcased in this text, were specifically-trained to work with children who were in the process of acquiring

German language skills. Moreover, schools seem to be asking for more flexibility to handle how long students can remain either in German support classes or courses. German support classes and courses were generally considered negatively by the respondents who preferred 'integrative instead of segregated' education of multilingual students (*Ibid.* 2022, p. 22 and p. 25). This finding reflects some of the discontent that students expressed in our materials who protested against being pulled out of the mainstream classroom and indicates that teachers are sensitive to their students' unease around temporary segregation. The evaluation also shows that research participants preferred smaller groups and more flexibility when it comes to the number of hours that students spent in separate settings. Looking ahead, then, we want to advise to strive less for a unified approach to newly arriving students as these approaches perpetuate disparities among children and produce high levels of fragmentation in the way that children may feel a sense of belonging to their new environments, as we have shown in this study. Instead, we suggest a flexible approach that focuses on the individuals at hand and allows teachers of German as a second language to foster communal as well as linguistic practices, that are suitable for the specific setting.

In closing, we want to point to the strengths of this study which include the extensive use of direct observations, prolonged engagement at the sites of study, linguistic diversity in the researchers conducting the data analysis and a clear delineation of the place of research. In terms of limitations, the study may have benefited from more extensive details on biographical variables in the child participants, such as initial levels of German-language proficiency, adverse childhood events prior and during migration and socio-economic status. Additional data collection and analysis on *written* language proficiency in child participants may also have been insightful.

Nonetheless, the study contributes to complex and nuanced understandings of the phenomenon of classroom pedagogies and curricular support for newcomer migrant pupils in schools. The study also connects the notion of 'belonging'/'(un)belonging' to the micro-decisions that teachers make in classrooms on a daily basis. Furthermore, the study forefronts the importance of visible inclusive practices, yet it simultaneously agitates for increased sensitization on the underlying curricular dynamics that constitute an inclusive learning environment. Visible inclusive practices, such as the content of 'Welcome' posters and the portrayal of national flags, are evident in the schools in this study. This can be expanded to also include celebrations such as diversity days, regularly reviewing learning materials and learning basic conversational phrases in a multitude of languages. For example, poems, rhymes, songs, dance and music, from a variety of cultures, as well as audio-taped books in a variety of first languages can be used as resources that reflect the interests and perspectives of all students. Through these materials, characters from different places around the world can be introduced to children in non-stereotypical roles. In terms of building language proficiency, bilingual dictionaries can be developed based on these materials and used to address many different experiences that children in the given classroom may relate to. Eventually, it is left to point out that Austrian schools have been highly diverse for decades and even centuries, and that newly arriving migrant students simply indicate how valuable an approach to valuing this diversity could be. Instead of reshuffling classrooms and reinventing a course structure, we want to end with the question addressed at policy and practice alike: What would a curriculum look like in which linguistic and cultural diversity was the norm and not an inconvenience? The current study traced classroom pedagogies of (un)belonging in Austrian schools, and while not generalizable, the findings may potentially resonate in schools around the globe. Migration is a continued, global phenomenon and the pedagogies, and concomitant experiences of (un)belonging found in this study, may be present elsewhere, too.

Data availability statement

The datasets presented in this article are not readily available because the data remains under EU privacy protection policy for research with vulnerable individuals. Requests to access the datasets should be directed to edite.eu.

Ethics statement

The studies involving humans were approved by Research Executive Agency (REA). The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

JW: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – original draft. NS: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – original draft. IE: Writing – original draft. EA: Writing – original draft.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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