

Revisiting the monolingual habitus



Conference

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➔ Room K0.02

Abstract

In this presentation I will discuss how useful it is to deploy the notion of the 'monolingual habitus' (cf. Gogolin 2002) for teachers at Dutch-medium schools in Brussels. These teachers habitually and sometimes severely impose a monolingual policy at school, as I will illustrate. But I will discuss data that reveal that when these teachers are invited to talk about their work, they commonly display views about language that are quite positive about multilingualism, and that they generally place multilingualism above monolingualism, in keeping with now widespread views about language. I will argue that teachers recruit both ideas (monolingualism and multilingualism) to defend or criticize the suitability of a monolingual school policy, and that, in other words, they possess the ideological ingredients of reproduction as much as those of criticism and change. The notion of the 'monolingual habitus' thus emerges as relatively one-sided, and this raises questions about other settings where it is applied.

Short bio

Jürgen Jaspers is Professor of Dutch linguistics at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB). He has published on classroom interaction, urban multilingualism, and language policy and ideology. He is editor-in-chief (with Eva Codó) of *Multilingua. Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication* and the author of *Monolingual policies in multilingual schools. Tensions, ambivalence and thinking teachers* (2024, Oxford University Press).