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Evaluating the linguistic repertoire of pre-primary educators by means of language portraits

ABSTRACT. Developing plurilingual and intercultural awareness is an essential aspect of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) teacher training programmes in countries like Poland, with its population becoming more diverse linguistically. Plurilingual and pluricultural awareness can aid teachers in teaching early foreign languages efficiently and in working with children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. To achieve this goal, language portraits have been recognised as a useful tool in transformative and multilingual pedagogy (Coffey 2015; Hopp et al. 2020; Lau 2016) as they help educators become more aware of their linguistic repertoires and how they can use them when working with young learners (Prasad 2020; Soares et al. 2021). This study analyses language repertoires of 75 pre-primary educators utilising the technique of language portrait presented in the PEPELINO portfolio (Goullier et al. 2015). The content analysis of data indicates a vast repertoire of languages present in the teachers' lives; however, they are significant only in the emotional dimension and less in the cognitive and communicative ones. This finding is interpreted as a result of a solid monolingual ideology rooted in the teachers, lack of plurilingual and pluricultural awareness and thus foreseeing difficulties in teaching a foreign language or in linguistically diverse classes. Guidelines for ECEC teacher education are provided.

KEYWORDS: plurilingual awareness, pluricultural awareness, language portraits, the PEPELINO portfolio, foreign language, teacher education, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the recommendations of the European language policy documents (European Commission 2011), FL learning at the pre-primary level has been present in Poland since 2015. Because Poland is a dominantly monolingual country, in popular opinion, a very early start in an FL is seen as aiding plurilingual development by lengthening the overall period of FL exposure. In western Europe, however, very early FL instruction can be seen as enriching the

young child's linguistic multicompetence, as many children already grow up multilingually in the family and the kindergarten.

Teaching FLs early places new demands on Early Childhood Education and Care (henceforth: ECEC) teachers, who, in line with the Polish curriculum (Ministry of Polish Education 2017) and European guidelines, are to raise children's plurilingual and pluricultural awareness, thus laying grounds for future more intensive language learning. They are not language specialists, i.e. they have not graduated from language departments, yet the younger generation of ECEC teachers have at least a 12-year-long experience of FL education, and a university degree obliges them to pass an exam in an FL at B2 level, which seems to be an adequate communicative competence to teach a FL to very young learners. In terms of didactic preparation, the teachers have been required to attend post-graduate courses in FL teaching methodology, during which the PEPELINO portfolio (Goullier et al. 2015) can be used as a tool promoting reflective teacher development in respect of plurilingual and intercultural development. Language portraits are one of the techniques aiming to fulfil this goal.

This paper aims to report on the study of the participants' plurilingual and intercultural awareness conducted by means of language portraits among post-graduate ECEC in-service teachers at the Pedagogical University of Krakow[1]. In the light of other research, it is known that only teachers who are plurilingual themselves (Otwinowska 2017; Rokita-Jaśkow 2023) feel confident about their use of language and have higher degrees of intercultural competence, which are the required predispositions for teaching a FL by a non-specialist generalist teacher. In other words, if the teacher is to foster his/her learners' plurilingual and pluricultural skills, s/he should be made aware of his/her plurilingualism and trained with techniques that enhance such awareness and are easily transferable into the young learner's classroom. Language portraits as a reflective technique (cf. Glaser 2007) seem to serve this role.

2. LANGUAGE PORTRAITS IN EVALUATING PRULILINGUAL AND PLURICULTURAL AWARENESS OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATORS

Plurilingual and pluricultural awareness of European citizens is regarded to be a vital objective of European policy as it enhances mutual understanding and social cohesion, as shown in various documents (Recommendation R (98), 6 "Linguistic diversification" 1998, Recommendation 1539, 2001; Recommen-

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[1] The name of the Pedagogical University of Krakow was changed to the University of the National Education Commission, Krakow in October 2023.

dation of The European Parliament and of the Council of December 2006) and language policy guidelines (Beacco & Byram 2007). It is defined as "the ability to use languages for communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures" (Council of Europe 2001: 168).

Plurilingual awareness is a component of pluricultural awareness, as language is one aspect of culture. As it is stated further in the same document "plurilingualism has itself to be seen in the context of pluriculturalism. Language is not only a major aspect of culture, but also a means of access to cultural manifestations" (Council of Europe 2001: 6). Furthermore, plurilingual and pluricultural competence becomes a cornerstone of education in a multilingual and democratic society. The CEFR Companion volume (Council of Europe 2018) emphasizes the importance of learners as 'social agents' who should utilize all of their linguistic and cultural resources to actively engage in social and educational settings. This ability enables them to achieve mutual understanding, access knowledge, and continue to develop their linguistic and cultural skills. Plurilingual and pluricultural awareness can constitute individual propensities, acquired through experience of different languages and cultures. When these experiences come into contact in communicative situations, the interlocutors use intercultural competence, allowing them to compare and contrast their cultures with mutual respect and understanding (Glaser 2007). Yet, for this ability to develop the growth of plurilingual and pluricultural awareness is a prerequisite. As Perez-Peitx et al. (2019: 235) argue,

> Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism help create an individual who, in a particular communicative situation, is equipped with strategies to manage linguistic and cultural imbalance. These strategies allow the individual to develop a capacity to explore all available communicative resources, and to manage a wide field of knowledge and abilities, thus enhancing mutual understanding.

Plurilingual education of pre-service and in-service teachers bears the potential of the *mind-changer*, as Pinho (2019: 216) put it, as it is a "gateway to new ways of thinking, acting and be(coming)". It can start with reflecting on one's language learning history and different intercultural contacts' roles in developing the teacher's plurilingual identity. Self-perception as a plurilingual teacher can further yield such teaching practice in which teachers sensitise their learners to the similarities and differences between different languages and cultures (Rokita-Jaśkow 2023). Such practice can be particularly eye-opening in contexts where multilingualism is neither present in society nor emphasised in the curriculum

because it can prepare teachers for encounters with multilingual and multicultural learners. The teachers must change their attitudes toward such learners, appreciating their diversity and understanding "the sociopolitical dimensions of language use and education" (Lau 2016: 149).

Language portraits as an instance of visual narratives, which represent the semiotic approach to linguistic inquiry, have been recently appreciated as a potential technique for developing plurilingual and multilingual awareness in teacher education (Coffey 2015; Hopp et al. 2020; Lau 2016) and in working with multilingual children, whose linguistic repertoires can be fully recognised (Busch 2018; Obojska 2019; Prasad 2020; Soares et al. 2021). They consist in "colouring different languages in a body silhouette as a way of symbolically representing the embodiment of one's languages, revealing attitudes towards and socio-affective links to languages and bringing forward the linguistic and cultural diversity of students" (Soares et al. 2021: 23). In addition, the outline indicates an organization based on different body parts, which could be linked to familiar, culturally established comparisons like the head representing rationality, the abdomen symbolizing emotions, the heart signifying intimacy, and the hands representing social engagement (Busch 2021: 12–13).

The images can be interpreted through their multimodal features, such as, sizes, shapes, colours, colour saturation, perspectives, framing and composition (Kress & Leeuwen van 2006: 179–185), which enables dialogic interaction and interpretation of messages between different modes of information: the verbal and the visual. One mode is not a translation or illustration of the other but serves as a beginning point for a conversation and thus facilitates "the elicitation of (biographical) narratives" (Busch 2018: 6). Therefore, body image in a language portrait can serve as a form of autobiographical narrative (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004: 9), a frame for a metaphor (Busch 2018), "emotionally highly loaded representation of one's body in relation to others" (Busch 2021: 196).

As regards using language portraits in teacher education, Coffey (2015) notes their potential to foster future teachers' reflexivity as well as raise plurilingual awareness. He believes that "learning foreign languages in both formal and informal settings is closely tied to autobiographical experience and personal beliefs about language(s)" (Coffey 2015: 502). This approach seems to be justified as the teachers "sequential mastery of language features acquired in a predictable order" (Coffey 2015: 500) is no longer sufficient, as teacher cognition is built through various life experiences. In order to raise their plurilingual awareness, the teacher candidates are invited to reflect on their language learning histories by referring to metaphors that depict their emotions and embodiments of the languages experienced. At the same time, the teachers acknowledge that their

transformative function is limited. However, they should be treated as inquiry-based activities that enable the understanding of the roles that different languages play in society and allow for the "growth of a [...] sense of symbolic self, the development of his or her ability to take symbolic action and to exercise symbolic power" (Kramsch 2009: 199).

Conversely, Perez-Peitx et al. (2019) in their study observed that using visual narratives in the teacher education course results not only in the change of type of visual used from more concrete to a more symbolic one but also indicates a shift in the learners' understanding of the plurilingual competence.

To summarise, plurilingual and pluricultural competencies lie at the cornerstone of culturally and linguistically responsive and appropriate teaching, ensuring learners' inclusiveness, irrespective of their languages and cultures. Both pre-service and in-service teachers need to experience plurilingual education to open their minds and shape their beliefs and attitudes towards working with linguistically and culturally diverse learners, which is gradually becoming a fact in the increasingly multilingual society, as is the case of Poland. As aimed in the PEPELINO portfolio (Goulier et al. 2015, pre-primary educators of a foreign language have the capacity to play a crucial role in shaping young children's minds towards openness for diversity (Lau 2016), both realising the goals of early foreign language policy as well as helping multilingual and multicultural learners integrate into the new kindergarten environment at the same time

To date, plurilingual and pluricultural competencies of ECEC teachers in Poland have not been assessed, even though a foreign language is a part of the ECEC curriculum. However, these teacher competencies seem to be essential if they are to effectively instill similar mindsets in their child learners, and in the encounters of multilingual learners.

3. THE STUDY UNDERTAKEN

3.1. Research aims and questions

The study aims to determine the pre-primary teachers' plurilingual and pluricultural repertoires and associated meanings in the emotional, cognitive and communicative dimensions. Thus, the following research questions have been posed:

RQ 1: How diverse is the pre-primary teachers' language repertoire?

RQ 2: What meaning do pre-primary teachers attach to languages from their repertoire in the emotional, cognitive and communicative dimensions?

3.2. Participants

The study participants were in-service ECEC teachers who enrolled for postgraduate studies in TEYL methodology (n = 75) at the Pedagogical University of Krakow in the 2017/2018 academic year. Thus, convenience sampling was used. The respondents were all female, of whom 58% had no experience in TEYL prior to training, 32.5% had been teaching English to YLs for a year or two, and only 9.5% had been teaching a foreign language for more than two years. The mean length of teaching experience was about five months. This data shows that the participants were mainly young teachers who decided to participate in additional in-service training to obtain formal qualifications to teach an FL in the ECEC.

3.3. Research instruments and procedure

The data was obtained by employing the language portrait technique, one of the tasks in the PEPELINO portfolio (Goullier et al. 2015: 20). It was designed for reflective training of pre-primary educators in a FL. The portrait task aimed to encourage the trainees to reflect upon their own experience of languages and cultures around them, i.e., their plurilingual and pluricultural awareness. The participants were to answer the following guiding question: *Which languages and which language registers are important in your life?* They were given a silhouette (Goullier et al. 2015: 20) to complete with any colour(s) and drawing symbolising their linguistic resources in the figure. The participants were encouraged to make subjective choices of situations and events they have personally experienced and to relate to them by adding captions next to the visual representation, explaining the position and colour of the different languages in the diagram, either in English or Polish. Prompting questions relating to the emotional, cognitive or communicative dimensions were given, as suggested by Goullier et al. (2015: 21–22). The task was allocated 30 minutes.

Subsequently, the data elicited from the visual task has been analysed according to the methodology proposed by Prasad (2014, 2020). First, the number of languages indicated by the participants was calculated (RQ1). Next, the silhouettes were carefully examined by matching the languages, colours, their written accounts, and the position of the languages on particular body parts. This information was transferred into the Excel file. Finally, in line with the recommendation of Goullier et al. (2015), the captions were coded as either emotional, cognitive or communicative dimensions using the Nvivo 11 software. The thematic analysis of the codes and their references (Braun & Clarke 2006)

allowed the researchers to inquire into the roles the participants attach to the languages in their repertoire.

3.4. Study findings

The obtained results indicate a vast repertoire of languages present in the pre-primary teachers' lives (cf. App.1) in an apparently monolingual setting. The teachers attribute a significant role to Polish, their L1 (n = 75), English, L2, the language of instruction of the postgraduate course and the target language of instruction (n = 73), and to many other languages, which included those most common in the education system in Poland, i.e. German (n = 46), French (n = 39), Spanish (n = 31), Italian (n = 24), and Russian (n = 21). As for the other languages present in the language portraits, Latin – a "dead" language which is no longer spoken, has been recognised by 15 teachers. Next on the list were Norwegian (n = 4), Dutch (n = 3), Swedish (n = 3), Chinese (n = 2), Greek (n = 2), Ukrainian (n = 2). Finally, other languages, such as Croatian, Finnish, Georgian, Hungarian, Irish, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Slovak and Vietnamese, were mentioned only once. However, it must be highlighted that the significant role ascribed to a language does not coincide with the participant's level of proficiency in it.

As regards the importance attached to the languages in the emotional dimension, Polish, as the respondents' L1, evoked most emotional associations with the highest number of references (n = 62, 83%), which is demonstrated in Fig. 1.

In terms of metaphors occurring in the drawings, there were many profoundly moving beliefs, but one stood out in particular. More than half the participants (n = 39, 52%) drew a red heart for marking Polish on their silhouettes, indicating a solid emotional attachment to this language, which was further confirmed by short comments such as:

> Polish is my first language (P_02), I love it and I'm proud of it (P_12); It's my beloved language, defining who I am and where I come from (P_24); It's the language of my mother and the people I love (P_27); It's my beloved mother tongue which I have both in my heart and in my head (P_39); I feel good, safe and secure when surrounded by it (P_41).

The teachers expressed their patriotism and devotion to Poland as their motherland. In reference to Polish, regardless of the body part coloured, 60 teachers (85%) chose red to mark it in their portraits, which is commonly indicative of connotations with love.

The second language with many references (*n* = 44, 59%) was English. It was marked green, popularly considered the colour of hope, 20 times. Indeed, the teachers explained their choice by commenting: "Green – hope to overcome the blockage and use it" (P_21), "All I need is English" (P_43), I hope to learn it well" (P_67).

German, as the most frequently studied L3 in Poland, received the highest number of emotional references (*n* = 29, 39%), yet the majority of it with adverse connotations. 18 teachers marked German in black, one of them explaining that

> I used to learn it at school, but I don't have good memories of the teacher (P_03); It was a difficult language to learn (P_13); I learned German in school for many years, it always weighed on me because I was forced to learn it (P_26); I have mixed feeling about it as it is 'tough' and 'cold' (P_28), I don't like how it sounds (P_56).

On the contrary, French (*n* = 20), Spanish (*n* = 19) and Italian (*n* = 20) evoked rather positive emotions. French was connected with pleasing sounds and travelling: "I dream about visiting France (P_2); I have good memories from holidays in France and Belgium (P_17); French is romantic (P_18); I love singing in this language (P_34); I like listening to French because it sounds nice, although I don't know this language (P_55)." Similarly, Italian was associated with travelling, cuisine, and the beauty of the language and the country: "I like eating Italian food (P_12); I would like to go on holidays there (P_24); Italy is my favourite country (P_35). I want to move to Italy in the future (P_41); Italian is a beautiful, 'sunny' language" (P_56). Analogically, Spanish made the teachers think of the sun, sight-seeing, music and hospitality: "I would like to visit Spain (P_24); Sunny, friendly people (P_40); I dance salsa (P_51); I like holiday animations with Spanish songs" (P_73). A few teachers recalled their past experiences, e.g. "I remember watching Spanish soap operas in my childhood" (P_19). These languages were typically marked by warm colours like red, yellow and orange.

As regards other languages, Russian[2] received 8 references being associated with fond memories of youthful days when the participants used to study it at school. Latin, ancestral to the modern Romance languages, was indicated 6 times and also brought about fond memories of the teachers' school days. One participant admitted taking pride in the ability to read Latin inscriptions in churches while travelling.

The remaining languages (numbered 9–33 in App. 1) received single indications in the emotional dimension, which stemmed from unforgettable life

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[2] The study was conducted before the Russian invasion onto Ukraine in 2022, hence more positive views were held than are probably nowadays.

experiences, e.g. getting engaged in Greece, living in a given country for some time or having family members abroad and feeling nostalgic. Also, geographic proximity was noticed: "I live near Slovakia. I have much in common with this culture" (P_19). Two participants expressed their fascination with the Far East – its culture, history, style and languages, including the alphabetic-syllabic writing. One person had a father coming from Vietnam, thus marking Vietnamese in red and outlining the entire portrait likewise.
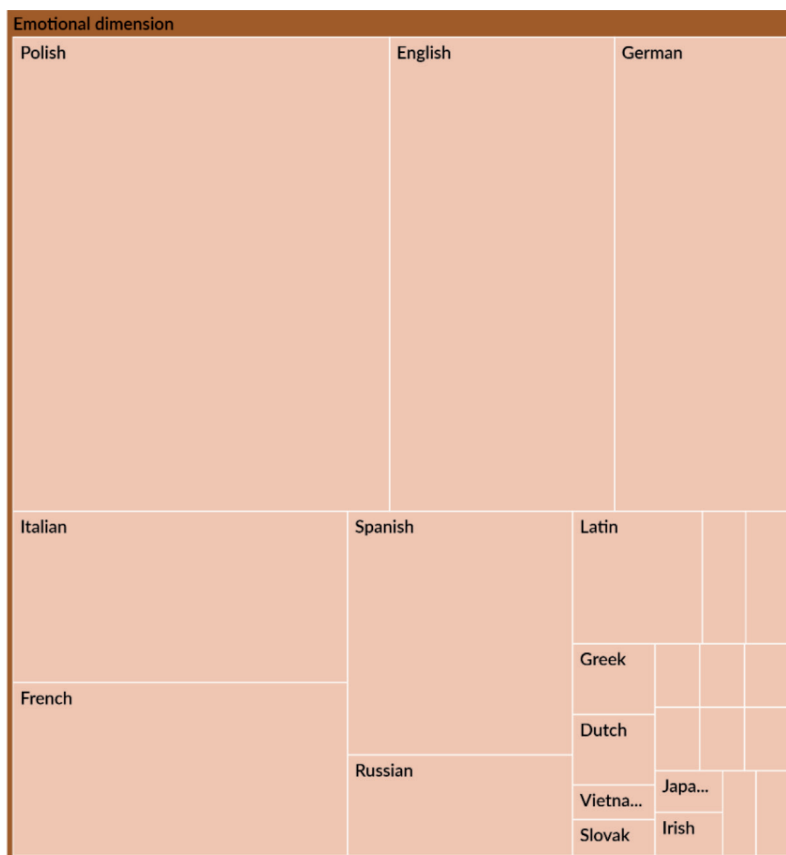

Figure 1. Hierarchical chart of codes (languages) in the emotional dimension
(performed with the use of Nvivo software)

Source: own data.

Figure 2 depicts the distribution of references (*n* = 195) to languages (*n* = 17) in the cognitive dimension. As demonstrated (App. 1, Fig. 3), English, the participants' target foreign language, was by far most frequently referred to and gained

60 indications. It was also most often marked on the head/in the brain ($n = 33$), which matches the popular metaphors of cognition and language (Quirk 2008).
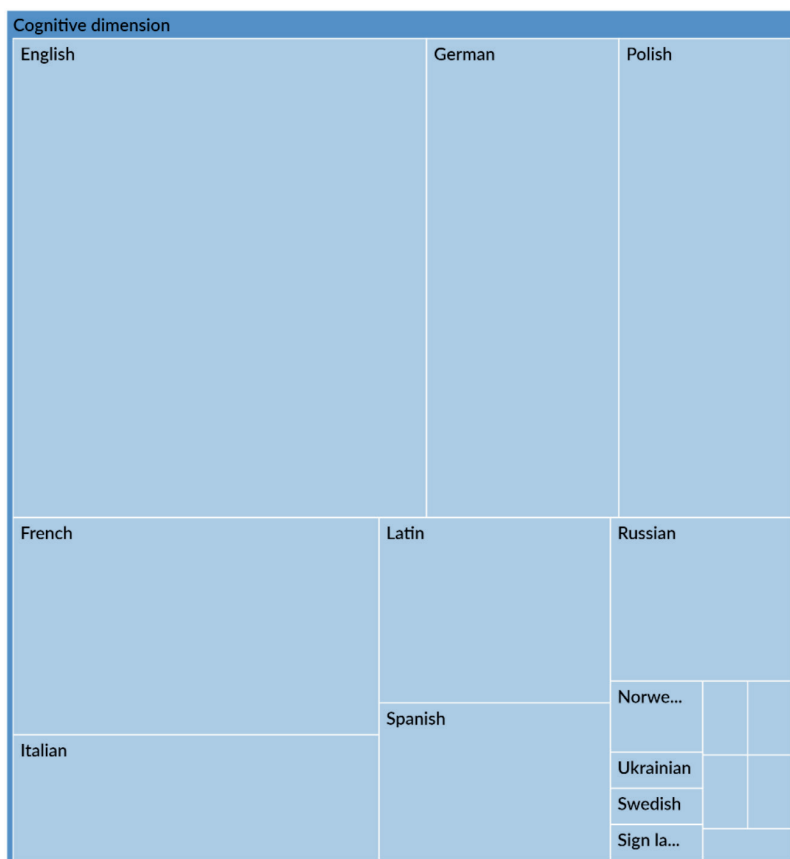

Figure 2. Hierarchical chart of codes (languages) in the cognitive dimension
(performed with the use of Nvivo software)

Source: own data.

The most common narratives indicated the participants' awareness of the need for further study and development of English as a foreign language, e.g.: "I would like to learn it well and it's always on my mind (P_04); English has been in my life all the time, enhancing my education (P_07); It's the language I want to learn well and my actions are heading in this direction" (P_74). As for the reasons why the participants view learning English as priority, they stressed occupational motives: "It's the language I need for work and I need to think about it (P_01); All the time I think about this language because I would like to

speak it well and teach children (P_16); It absorbs a lot of my thoughts, because it prepares me for university and work" (P_68). A number of participants admitted to being cognitively stimulated in English: "I enjoy solving English grammar tasks (P_23); I like reading English literature (P_30), I like listening to songs and watching movies in English" (P_72).

The second language in the ranking was German, indicated 28 times. Within the cognitive dimension it was mostly related to the participants' past school experience and abandonment of the continuation of learning:

> I used to learn German in high school (P_05); I used to know it quite well, but now I remember less and less (P_11); I used to learn it but I do nothing to maintain and develop it further (P_35); I've been learning it since childhood but with little success (P_38); Er hat es läuten hören, weiß aber nicht, wo die Glocken hängen [Eng. Lights are on but nobody is home – idiomatic] (P_44); I learned German many years but it's an albatross around my neck (P_47); It's not unfamiliar to me, but I do not associate a future with it (P_67).

Polish received 25 indications and was described as the language in which the participants think, read and write as native language users:

> I think in this language all the time (P_06); It's my mother tongue which I know best and through which I perceive the world (P_28); I use it when I'm reading books or for thinking (P_38); I love Polish literature and I like writing in Polish (P_40); Most of the knowledge I was able to acquire was conveyed in Polish (P_62).

French received almost as many indications (n = 24) as Polish, but in this case the motives provided were different. Analogically to German, French was associated with past educational experiences (both positive and negative) or the wish to learn it: "I have nice memories of learning it; I studied it at university, it was nice, but I don't remember much; I learned French for 6 years and I wanted to escape from it; For me it's a difficult language to learn and I'm sick and tired of it; I would like to learn it, especially for travelling".

The next group of modern foreign languages with a considerable number of indications in the cognitive dimensions includes Italian (n = 14), Spanish (n = 11), and Russian (n = 9). While Italian and Spanish were accompanied by narratives expressing a desire to learn them, mainly for tourism (e.g. "I would like to learn them to travel freely in these countries" (P_49), Russian evoked memories of learning the language in the past, but not using it any more (e.g. "It was so long ago that I don't speak it" (P_03).

Latin, with 13 references, was clearly distinguished in the cognitive dimension. Similarly to Russian, however, it was associated with formal study in the

past and not remembering much: "Panta rei [Eng. everything flows] – it's all water over the dam, a scarce level of knowledge" (P_02). The extinct Old Church Slavonic was referred to as "a nightmare" of Polish philological studies.

Languages numbered 9–25 in App. 1 received single indications in the cognitive dimension, most often expressing a wish to learn them. In contrast, languages numbered 26–33 were not taken into account at all.

As regards the communicative dimension, the participants made 97 references to 13 different languages in the communicative dimension, which also signifies the lowest score of the three dimensions. As shown in Fig. 3 and App. 1, English with 44 references was once again given special recognition.
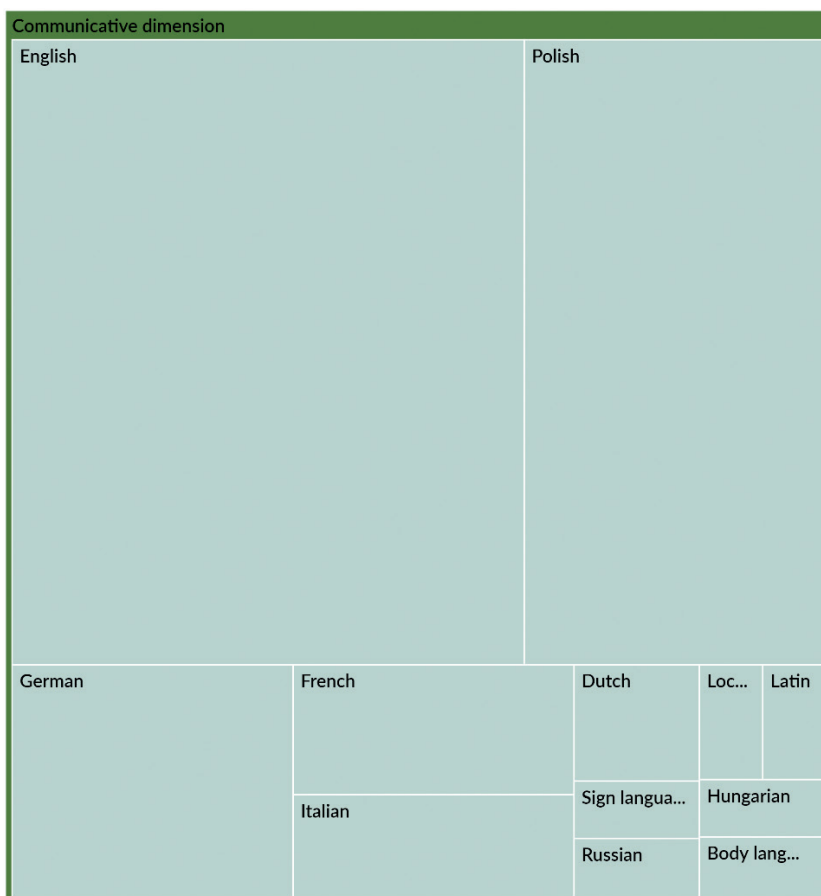

Figure 3. Hierarchical chart of codes (languages) in the communicative dimension
(performed with the use of Nvivo software)

Source: own data.

A recognition of the communicative function of English as a global lingua franca and a job requirement can be gathered from comments such as:

I wish I knew English on a level which would allow me to communicate freely in this language (P_08); I would like to speak this language fluently, because it is omnipresent and useful(P_10); It allows you to communicate with the whole world (P_14); It's my working tool (P_27); I use English very often to communicate with my friends from different countries and I want to be fluent in this (P_29); I use English in contact with my friends in the USA and when I go abroad to another country (P_50); Knowing English makes travelling easier (P_62); I like playing with children using English (P_64).

One person highlighted that mimicry, gestures and expression are vital in communication. Two teachers used metaphorical language and illustrative comparisons as stylistic devices to denote the communicative role of English. One compared English to trousers, explaining that you put it on when you need it. In the latter case, English was compared to the Sun, since both are indispensable. Mouth (*n* = 10), symbolising speech, was the participants' second choice regarding marking the language on a selected body part. If marked on hands (*n* = 5), the narratives clarified that English was a working tool.

The second most frequently indicated (*n* = 26) language viewed as a means of communication was Polish. Being native speakers of Polish, the participants explained that:

I live in Poland, so I speak Polish (P_09); I use it every day (P_14); It's automatic to speak it, without inhibitions (P_22); It's the language best mastered (P_34); I marked Polish on my hands, legs and one third of the head, (because just like these body parts I need the language for daily activities, the simplest communication and working with others (P_71).

Although Polish was the mother tongue for 100% of the participants, only one third mentioned it in the communicative dimension. It can be presumed that they might have subconsciously considered this aspect to be too obvious to discuss.

Further on, a significant gap in the number of references can be observed. Among modern foreign languages, German (*n* = 9), French (*n* = 5) and Italian (*n* = 4) received a modest number of mentions. As for German, again, the participants expressed contradictory views. On the one hand they claimed that knowing German was helpful, yet on the other that they did not necessarily like speaking it: "I learnt it for 9 years, but still the words stick in my throat (P_09); It's an ugly sounding language of orders, but it is needed like

English. I go there very often" (P_57). In all cases, the participants' wish to develop communicative competence in Italian was for travelling purposes: "I like travelling to Italy very much and I would like to learn Italian in a practical way" (P_42). French was associated either with tourism or living in a French-speaking country.

Other languages were sporadically mentioned, usually resonating the context of its use/contact, e.g.

> I was working in the forest in Sweden and I heard this language a lot, I was able to understand some expressions, which helped me to understand what I were expected to do (P_07); In the past I visited Belgium a few times, I have family there, and I would use French at that time (P_25);
> I love the Netherlands, the people. I lived there and I like speaking Dutch, although I have difficulties with pronunciation (P_46).

Sign and body languages were also referred to. Graphically, body language surrounded the whole silhouette and was captioned: "It's the expression of the whole body" (P_11), while sign language was marked on arms, hands and fingers and described as a "channel of communication" (P_69). One person referred to Latin, emphasising the continued use of specialised terms in medicine and law.

In reference to other languages, interesting observations can be made concerning additional elements drawn in some of the portraits. When narrating about Polish, one teacher drew a book next to the silhouette, symbolising her craving for reading in L1. A book was also added to a different portrait when describing Italian to pay tribute to Italian literature. An interesting visual metaphor was once used for Russian, marked as a shadow of the character – always present but not being paid special attention to. In the case of German, one teacher added a ball and chain binding one leg to represent a restraint in using the language.

4. SPECIMEN LANGUAGE PORTRAITS

For the paper, two language portraits (of teacher A and teacher B) with captions written in English were chosen as illustrations of the aforementioned observations. No matter the occasional mistakes, the captions are left in the original.
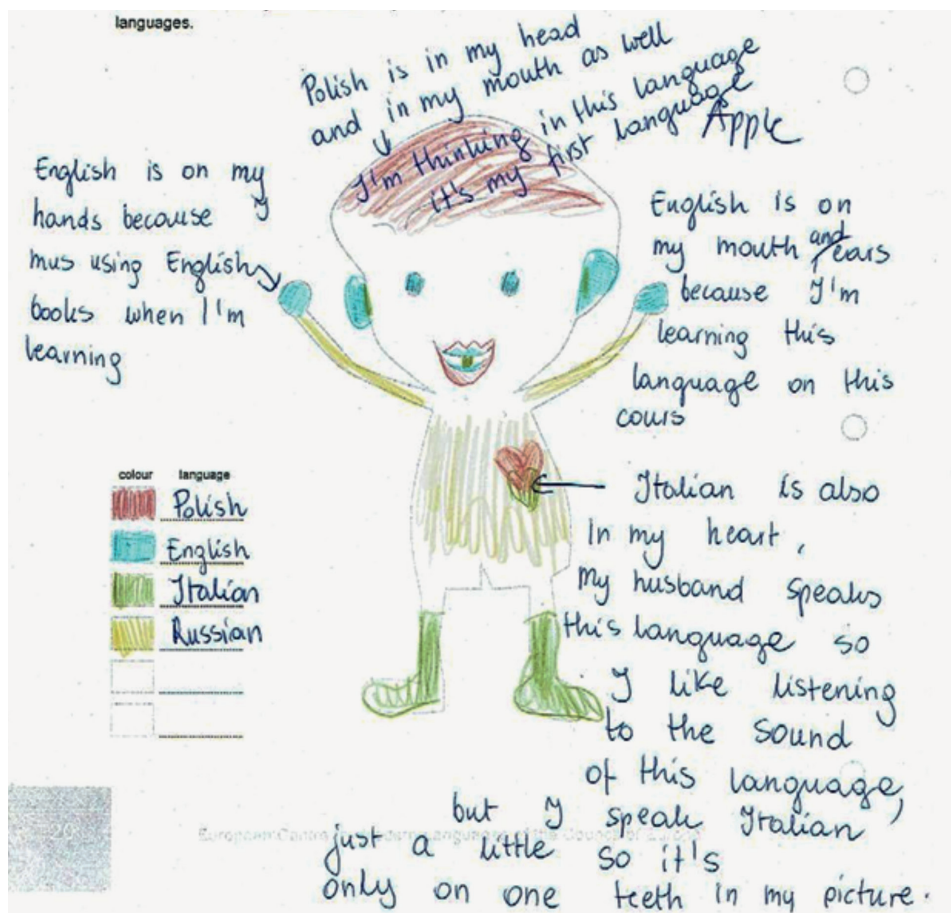
4.1. Language portrait 1 – Teacher A

Figure 4. Exemplary language portrait no. 1

Source: own data.

Teacher A explicitly identifies Polish, English, Italian and Russian and their pivotal roles in her life. Polish comes first, which is Teachers A's first language. It is represented by red and placed in the heart, head, and mouth. The heart represents the emotional attachment to the mother tongue, the head symbolises the cognitive processes ("I am thinking in this language"), and the mouth implies the communicative function of Polish. Italian is among the languages that Teacher A places in the drawing in her heart. She uses the metaphor of the

heart as a site for emotionality and intimacy, thereby referring to her family situation. Her husband speaks Italian, so she likes listening to the sounds of this language. However, Teacher A speaks Italian only a little. Therefore, it is graphically represented by one tooth, not the whole mouth. It is also marked on the legs, but Teacher A does not explain this choice. English is also relevant in Teacher A's life. In her account, it is essential, i.e. because of learning the language during the postgraduate course. The ears designate developing listening, while the mouth speaking skills. The fourth language present in Teacher A's life is Russian, marked in yellow on both arms. Unfortunately, no explanatory caption is provided.

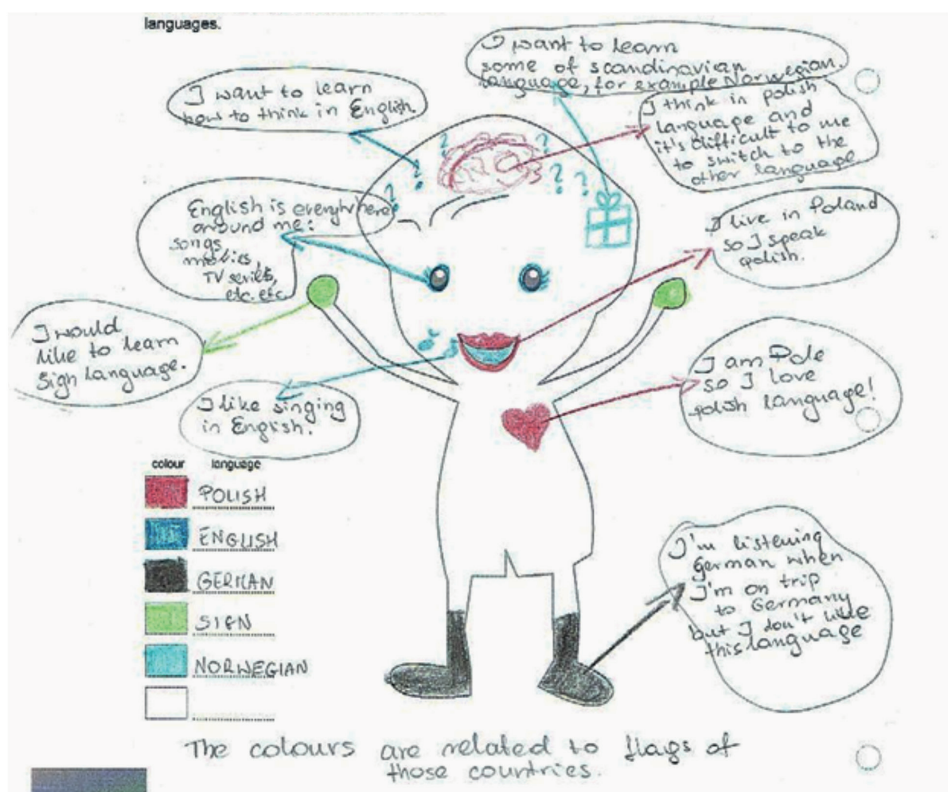## 4.2. Language portrait 2 – Teacher B

Figure 5. Exemplary language portrait no. 2

Source: own data.

In her portrait, Teacher B marks Polish, English, German and sign languages as present in her life. Except for the sign language, the colours are related to the flags of each country. In her account, Polish is the first and obvious choice, linked with the residential and emotional / patriotic domains: "I live in Poland, so I speak Polish" (red mouth); "I am Pole, so I love Polish language" (red heart). The teacher's mother tongue is also graphically represented in the brain, directly pointing to Polish's cognitive domain and thinking. Teacher B acknowledges difficulties in switching to another language but would like to learn how to think in English. The portrait expresses Teacher B's desire with question marks that surround the brain. Teacher B sees English as omnipresent, thanks to its use in songs, films, and television. Musical notes also represent the language on the portrait, as the author of the portrait enjoys singing in English. The portrait has a gift box on top of the head, representing Teacher B's interest in learning a Scandinavian language, possibly Norwegian. At the bottom of the picture, Teacher B evaluates the importance of German in her life. Although she listens to it while travelling to Germany, she does not particularly like the language. Finally, Teacher B acknowledges the importance of sign language and marks it in green on the hands.

5. DISCUSSION

In many contexts globally, multilingualism is part and parcel of teachers' and learners' everyday lives. Living near people of other cultures and languages combined with additional didactic training helps educators to develop plurilingual and pluricultural awareness (cf. Alisaari et al. 2019; Hopp et al. 2020; Kalaja & Melo-Pfeifer 2021). This is, however, not easy for those who have come into contact with other languages only through a formal study.

In answer to the first research question, the analysis of the language portraits indicated the diversity of languages present in the study participants' lives. In total, 33 different languages were mentioned, including sign language (App. 1), with Polish, English, and German being the top three languages, followed by French, Spanish, Italian, and Russian. These are the languages that have been present in education and do not always signify contact with speakers of those languages nor proficiency in them, which remains the sphere of dreams, desires and projections for the future. The participants were not language specialists, and despite learning English for at least 12 years at school and university, attaining native-like proficiency in it was still their unattained goal. In such a context, it is unsurprising that the common belief in the necessity of an *early start* in a FL finds fertile ground (Rokita-Jaśkow 2013). The respondents did not seem to be

particularly keen on learning other languages themselves if they were not present in education, even when they had such a natural opportunity, such as a foreign spouse. Thus, it would be an overstatement to say that the studied pre-primary ECEC teachers are plurilingual.

As regards the second research question, the in-service TEYL teachers showed a robust emotional identity associated with Polish, their mother tongue. In contrast, the cognitive and communication dimensions correspond to the most frequently taught languages in the educational setting, i.e. English as a lingua franca and the current subject of study in the TEYL course. Secondly, the respondents pointed to more languages (by 60%) in the emotional dimension than in the communicative one, which further endorses the view that languages exist in the sphere of aspirations rather than are used by the participants. This shows that the monolingual ideology is still deeply rooted in the teachers, which probably resonates with their earlier schooling experiences. The studied teachers were educated by dominantly monolingual subject teachers, aiming to achieve native-like proficiency in the target FL. Thus, pre-service ECEC teachers lacked confidence in using FLs and associated the possibility of attaining near-native-like foreign language command only by specialist language teachers. This ideology disempowers them from using the language in urgent situations, such as the need to communicate with a migrant foreign child.

These findings are in accord with previous studies (cf. Otwinowska 2017; Rokita-Jaśkow 2023), which indicate that even highly proficient FL speakers who have not had many contacts with speakers of other languages nor have known more than one foreign language and to high degree, find it challenging to develop plurilingual awareness by living in a monolingual country and learning language(s) only through a formal study. Therefore, they find it difficult to change their monolingual stance in teaching and require additional didactic training for working in linguistically and culturally more diverse classes (cf. Szczepaniak-Kozak et al. 2023). Likewise, ECEC teachers who are non-proficient in an FL are less likely to develop plurilingual and pluricultural awareness. Lack of FL competence also impedes them from teaching the FL communicatively. It also disables them from the efficient socialisation of foreign children, who, in recent years, have been joining Polish pre-primary institutions more frequently. This shows that not all educational goals set out in the PEPELINO portfolio (Goullier et al. 2015) can be realistically attained in the Polish ECEC setting. These findings align with our previous study (Rokita-Jaśkow & Król-Gierat 2021), in which we found that the trainees' weakest point was the perception of the diversity of children's languages in the ECEC and their lack of plurilingual awareness. They may find it challenging to teach an FL communicatively by engaging in authentic and meaningful interactions with

the children and scaffolding new meanings for them. All these skills would also be helpful while integrating a migrant child into the ECEC. This finding also shows that the PEPELINO portfolio (Goullier et al. 2015) is a more suitable learning and reflective tool for training teachers in more linguistically and culturally diverse settings. However, the language portrait technique seems to portray the language biographies of the participants accurately, pointing to the participants' "aspirational" rather than genuine multilingual lives. It also enhances deepened reflective practice on their own plurilingualism and the meaning of languages in their lives (Coffey 2015). As suggested by other researchers (Prasad 2020; Soares et al. 2021), it can be argued that teachers' familiarisation with the technique can aid their didactic practice as it can be used as a teaching technique while working with child learners, particularly in contact with multilingual newcomers.

As a limitation of the study, one should mention that the participants were ECEC teachers who voluntarily enrolled on the TEYL methodology course, which may have biased the results regarding the preference for English in the cognitive and communicative dimensions. If the study were conducted in a different environment and on a larger population, perhaps a more comprehensive array of languages and a greater degree of plurilingual awareness would be mentioned.

The study's findings are essential for in-service and pre-service ECEC as well as general teacher education. It seems that, particularly in the changing ECEC and school classrooms, which are becoming more and more multilingual, foreign language education should constitute an essential part of the university curriculum. It should include encompassing intercultural projects, exchange and telecollaboration programmes, among others, as these would give future teachers more confidence in actually using the languages and not only studying them. Such pre-service education, in turn, would contribute to the overall development of plurilingual and pluricultural awareness of all Polish teachers.

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Appendix 1.

Table 1. Languages indicated by the research participants in their linguistic portraits

Language indicated	No. of indica-tions	Colour	Body part	No. of references to the emotional dimen-sion	No. of references to the cognitive dimen-sion	No. of references to the com-municative dimension

Polish	75	red – 60
		green, pink – 5
		orange – 2
		blue, yellow,
		    white&red – 1
			heart – 39
			head/brain, mouth
			    – 13
			half of the body – 10
			whole body – 4
			arms – 4
			hands, torso – 2
			eyes/eyelashes – 2
			legs – 1
			(book) – 1
				62	25	26

English	73	green – 20
		yellow – 7
		blue, red – 3
		black, orange,
		    pink – 2
		gray, purple,
		    white – 1
			head/brain – 33
			mouth – 10
			heart – 6
			hands – 5
			face – 4
			eyes, foot/feet, (fore)
			    arms – 3
			legs, torso – 2
			half of the body – 2
			ears, neck – 1
				44	60	44

German	46	black – 18
		blue – 8
		green – 6
		brown – 5
		orange, purple,
		    yellow – 3
		gray – 2
		white – 1
			head, foot/feet,
			    legs – 7
			mouth – 3
			arms, hands – 2
			back, ears, heart,
			    heels, rear, torso – 1
			ball and chain – 1
			(pockets – 1)
				29	28	9

French	39	blue – 8
		yellow – 7
		pink – 5
		black, green – 4
		brown, orange,
		    purple – 3
		red – 2
			head, legs – 3
			eyes, hips, torso – 2
			arms, hands, cheek,
			    mouth, rear – 1
			body sides – 1
			whole body – 1
			(asterix next to the
			    body – 1)
				20	24	5

Spanish	31	red – 10 yellow – 6 orange – 5 green – 4 blue, pink – 2 gray, purple – 1	arms – 3 face, cheeks, torso – 2 ears, foot, head, hips, legs – 1 (glasses – 1)	19	11	–

Italian	24	yellow – 12 blue, green – 4 orange – 2 pink, silver – 1	legs – 3 face, feet/foot – 2 arms, head, stomach, tooth – 1 (book) – 1	20	14	4
Russian	21	blue – 5 green, purple – 4 white – 3 black, orange – 2 brown – 1	hips, mouth – 2 ears, feet, head – 1 (shadow – 1)	8	9	1
Latin	15	blue, brown – 4 black, yellow – 2 green, orange, purple – 1	head – 7 eyes, feet, mouth – 1	6	13	1

Norwegian	4	blue, orange,
		  pink, yellow
		  – 1
			head – 1
			torso – 1
			("speech bubble"
			  next to the head,
			  present in the head
			  – 1)
				2	2	-

10–11.
Dutch
	3	green, pink,
		  purple -1
			head – 2
			hands, heart, face,
			  feet, mouth, neck,
			  torso – 1
				2	1	2

Swedish		blue, purple, red – 1	arms, legs – 1	2	1	1
12–14. Chinese	2	black, blue – 1			2	–
Greek		blue, red – 1	feet – 1	2		
Ukrainian		yellow – 2	foot – 1		1	
15. Sign language	2	blue, green – 1	hands – 2 arms – 1 fingers – 1	–	1	1
16–25. Croatian	1	yellow – 1		1		–
Finnish		orange – 1	ears – 1		1	
Georgian		red – 1		1		
Hungarian		purple – 1				1
Irish		blue – 1	heart – 1	1		
Japanese		orange – 1	hips – 1	1		
Korean		purple – 1	arms, torso – 1	1	1	

Portuguese		green – 1	head – 1	1	1	
Slovak		green – 1	hips – 1	1		
Vietnamese		purple – 1	whole body – 1	1		
26. Local dialect	1	pink – 1	torso – 1	1	–	1
27. Old Church Slavonic	1	brown – 1	rear – 1	1	–	–
28–31. Slavic lg Romance lg Oriental/ Asian lgs	1	green – 1	–	1	–	–
32. Body language	1	green – 1	–	–	–	1
33. Music	1	pink – 1	heart – 1	1	–	–

Source: own data.

Ewaluacja repertuaru językowego nauczycieli przedszkolnych przedstawiona za pomocą portretów językowych

Abstrakt. Rozwijanie świadomości różnojęzycznej i międzykulturowej jest istotnym aspektem programów szkolenia nauczycieli wczesnej edukacji i opieki nad dzieckiem (ECEC) w krajach takich jak Polska, gdzie populacja staje się coraz bardziej zróżnicowana pod względem językowym. Świadomość różnojęzyczna i wielokulturowa może pomóc nauczycielom w skutecznym nauczaniu języków obcych oraz w pracy z dziećmi z różnych środowisk językowych i kulturowych. Aby osiągnąć ten cel, portrety językowe zostały uznane za przydatne narzędzie w pedagogice transformacyjnej i wielojęzyczności (Coffey 2015; Hopp et al. 2020; Lau 2016), ponieważ pomagają nauczycielom stać się bardziej świadomymi własnego repertuaru językowego i tego, jak mogą go wykorzystać w pracy z małymi uczniami (Prasad 2020; Soares et al. 2021).

Niniejsze badanie analizuje repertuary językowe 75 nauczycieli przedszkolnych z wykorzystaniem techniki portretu językowego przedstawionej w portfolio PEPELINO (Goullier et al. 2015). Analiza danych wskazuje na szeroki repertuar języków obcych w życiu nauczycieli – są one jednak istotne tylko w wymiarze emocjonalnym, a mniej w wymiarze poznawczym i komunikacyjnym. Zjawisko to może by wynikiem utrwalonego wśród nauczycieli podejścia monolingwalnego, braku świadomości różnojęzycznej i wielokulturowej, a tym samym braku umiejętności przewidywania trudności w nauczaniu języka obcego lub w klasach zróżnicowanych językowo. W artykule przedstawiono także wytyczne dotyczące kształcenia nauczycieli przedszkola.

Słowa kluczowe: świadomość plurilingwalna, świadomość plurikulturowa, portrety językowe, portfolio PEPELINO, język obcy, edukacja nauczycieli, wczesna edukacja i opieka nad dzieckiem.

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