Bonjour, and hello everyone!

My name is Meike Wernicke I would like to begin by acknowledging that my work as a researcher and teacher educator takes place on the Musqueam campus of the University of British Columbia, where I am a guest on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ speaking xʷməθkʷəy̓əm people. And at the same time, I would like to acknowledge I am currently speaking to you from the unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and Tsleil-Waututh Nation on which North Vancouver is located now.

Today I will tell you a little bit our Teacher Education program at UBC, some of its features related to multilingualism and how I see us moving forward with this conversation.

At UBC we have a consecutive Teacher Education program at the post-graduate level. This is a one-year Bachelor of Education with language-centered specializations and several required components that focus on the role of language in teaching more generally. A Bachelor of Education degree can also be completed through UBC’s Indigenous Teacher Education Program - NITEP, which is a five-year concurrent program and is offered in four field centres across British Columbia.

One underlying concept or orientation framing our Teacher Education program is that language must be the responsibility of all teachers, not only language or specialist teachers. In the early 2000’s, the program underwent a major redesign to incorporate five curriculum strands, one of which is Languages, Literacies and Cultures. This set out a specific approach which acknowledges that:

- the classroom has moved from a unilingual, monocultural context" to one where mainstream classroom teachers must contend with different languages, socio-cultural values and also varied types of parental involvement
- and where instruction explicitly activates students' prior language-learning and school knowledge as well as the totality of the experiences that have shaped their identity and cognitive functioning.

My focus today is on the required components of our program for all 700+ teacher candidates.

- Of the six required courses (4 at the Elementary Level and 2 at the Secondary Level) - 2 focus specifically on the integration of English as an additional language in content areas with a plurilingual lens.
- These courses draw on multilingual and multiliteracies pedagogies and are theoretically grounded in Halliday and Hassan’s social semiotic perspective, which takes into account the cultural values and ideologies shaping the way meaning is made in particular contexts.
- The main objectives in these courses (as well as the cohort specialization in English Language Teaching) is to ensure that all teachers learn about
  1. how language works to create meaning in their content areas;
  2. how to make is a focus in the classroom
  3. how to provide scaffolding strategies that allows students to explore this relationship between language and content
• The idea behind the inquiry-based approach in these courses is to encourage teacher candidates to become ethnographers of language and language use in order that they can implement a similar approach in their classrooms and have students investigate how language is used in schools, their families, and their communities.

It's important to acknowledge the time, communication, and overall commitment it takes to implementing a program that foregrounds language, especially in making visible the connections to other disciplinary content and creating critical awareness about language and its relevancy in all areas of education.

Two urgent issues I see the need to explore further within my own context include how to more productively extend the approach we have in ELT to our French specialization, to loosen the grip on monocentric approaches to language use and consider the affordances that bi-literacies and translanguaging approaches in conjunction with content-and-language integrated approaches might offer.

With regard to the higher education setting more generally, I see a commitment to multilingualism as a demarginalizing approach that works in conjunction with decolonization on our campus. Critically examining English-centric practices in academia that prioritize Western epistemologies and underpin how we learn, teach, and produce knowledge, will hopefully make spaces for other languages and varieties. It will also highlight what has been referred to as linguistic indifference - seeing cultural practices, representations, and products as separate from language - or vice versa, treating language as a simple, decontextualized communicative tool that allows for the straightforward transmission of information or knowledge.

Having just finished a project in the European context working with teacher education researchers in several countries, one aspect that see as an integral part of this discussion is not to only to have a better sense of what is happening in other teacher education programs across Canada, but to learn more about the particular local context of that program, in relation to the Indigenous lands on which it is situated, the provincial language and education policies that shape the structure and content of the program, and the population it serves.

I will end here and hope this offers a useful beginning contribution to the conversation we will be having on January 26th! Looking forward to seeing you all there.