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*Multilingual Research Unit*

Multilingual Education

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# *Multilingualism, academically challenged pupils and educational change*

How multilingual education is changing European education

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# Introduction

## Prelude

- ***“Multilingualism has been part of Community policy, legislation and practices from the time of the Treaties of Rome”*** (High Level Group, 2007, p. 5).
- ***“[It is part] of the increasing importance of the multilingual challenge for the European project”*** (High Level Group 2007, p. 6).



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# Introduction

## Prelude

***“Across the Union, early language teaching is becoming normal practice. However, it is not known what the long-term effects of these measures are, especially since practices vary considerably with regard to starting age, number of contact hours, and teaching methods”*** (High Level Group, 2007, p. 19).

**It is my intention to show that, despite these words, multilingual education is one of the major means to attain a number of European goals...**



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# Introduction

**Aim: to examine multilingual education, i.e. *language learning* from**

- **a *societal and macro standpoint*...**
- **an *individual and micro standpoint*...**
- **focusing on change or *how to change education in an attempt to boost it*...**



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# Structure

1. The challenge for multilingual education for ***member states*** ...
2. The benefits of multilingual education for ***individuals***...
3. The challenges for ***change in education***...



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# Multilingual education and the member states

Member states ***react differently*** to the  
ideas of multilingual education ...

This depends on their ***historical and  
language political background*** ...

And on ***the way member states have  
analysed their language situation*** ...



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# Multilingual education and the member states

## Significant parameters

- ***standardization ...***
- ***language threat(s) ...***
- ***language dominance ...***
- ***language legislation ...***



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# Multilingual education and the member states

Research as part of *Dylan*, a 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (2007-2011), for the following countries and/or regions...

- *The Netherlands*
- *France*
- *Germany*
- *Dutch- and French-speaking Belgium*
- *Luxembourg*
- *Estonia*
- *Spain*





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# Multilingual education and the member states

- **Results:** multilingual education flourishes in those countries or regions that enjoyed
  - ***early standardization,***
  - ***no language threats,***
  - ***dominant status,***
  - ***light legislation...***

**The best example is The Netherlands**



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# Multilingual education and the member states

- Multilingual education encounters resistance to implementation when
  - ***standardization occurred late,***
  - ***language threats are perceived,***
  - ***a language feels dominated,***
  - ***heavy legislation is imposed...***

The best example is Flanders, i.e. the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium.



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# Multilingual education and the member states

- It is safe to conclude that ***the introduction of multilingual education and - by expansion - the idea of multilingualism*** will take time to take root ...
- Because member states' ***analysis of the situation*** is heavily influenced by these parameters...
  - The analysis or definition of the situation goes back to the sociologists Thomas & Znaniecki in the 1920s...
  - ***“If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences”*** (Thomas & Znaniecki 1927).
- ***As a result France, Germany, Luxembourg, Estonia, ... implement multilingual education differently***, i.e. related to timing, number of hours, organization, ...



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# Multilingual education and the member states

However, 'it ain't necessarily so'...

- **Wallonia, French-speaking Belgium...**
  - until 1998 comparable to France but then a legal decision was made to foster multilingual education...
- **Spain, i.e. Andalucía and the Madrid area...**
  - could equally be compared to France until 2004-2005, when in Andalucía a major language plan was approved that fostered multilingual education...
- ***These areas can show wonderful results, obtained in a very short period of time, overcoming the influence of the previously mentioned parameters.***



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# Multilingual education and the member states

## What is needed is

- *a language plan fostering multilingualism*
- *regional or national (financial) support*
- *strong political will*
- *a European mind set*



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# Multilingual education and the member states

## What is also needed is

- *an objective analysis/definition of the situation*
  
- *insight in learning processes*



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# Multilingual education and the member states

- ***Objective analysis of the situation...***
  - ***This refers to the different status of languages***
    - ***International languages ...***
    - ***National languages ...***
    - ***Regional languages ...***
    - ***Local languages ...***
    - ***Migrant languages ...***
- ***Ideally (language) education should provide languages for all in order to come to grips with individual language needs ...***



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# Multilingual education and the member states

- ***Insight in learning processes...***
  - ***This refers to different ways of learning***
    - ***Explicit learning***
    - ***Implicit learning***
- ***Ideally (language) education should take various ways of learning into account as well as the learning effects it entails ...***





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# Multilingual education and individual benefits

## *What is meant by multilingual education ?*

**Official European language policy recommends** that at 18, our pupils should speak 1 + 2 languages ...

A number of **tools** have been developed to help teachers and learners ...

- portfolios
- CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference)  
(From A1 to C2)

However, ***the learning process itself*** should be addressed ...



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# Multilingual education and individual benefits

***Early language learning from kindergarten onwards and pursued in primary and secondary school*** is part of the European language policy.

Common terminology :

- ***Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)***
- In French: ***enseignement d'une matière intégré à une langue étrangère (EMILE)***



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# Multilingual education and individual benefits

***Instead of learning a language, pupils learn subject matter in a language ...***

***The number of hours per week may differ from 20% to 70% of the curriculum ...***

***Every member state has some kind of experience with it* (cf. Eurydice 2006)**

***In all cases the results are extremely encouraging and remarkable, pupils, teachers and school change for the better***

***Remark: This approach***

- 1. is not restricted to the learning of English ...**
- 2. easily allows the use of local languages fostering dynamic multilingualism ...**
- 3. the results are positive for anyone ...**



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# Multilingual education and individual benefits

## Six research questions with respect to CLIL results in primary and early secondary schools:

- *How and to what extent do the results of the CLIL language learning processes differ from traditional language education?*
- *How and to what extent does the mother tongue develop?*
- *How and to what extent can we say that subject matter knowledge is mastered compared to traditional schools?*
- *What can be said about attitudes and motivation of these children?*
- *What can be said about cognitive development?*
- *What can be said about brain development?*



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# Multilingual education and individual benefits

## Six research questions

In other words it is about...

- ***1. the target language...***
- ***2. the mother tongue...***
- ***3. subject matter knowledge...***
- ***4. attitudes and motivation...***
- ***5. cognitive development...***
- ***6. brain developmen ...***



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# Multilingual education and individual benefits

## Six research questions

In other words, it is about ...

- **1. *the target language ...*** is better mastered
- **2. *the mother tongue ...*** develops better
- **3. *subject matter knowledge ...*** if anything, it has improved
- **4. *attitudes and motivation ...*** are enhanced
- **5. *cognitive development ...*** results on mathematics are remarkable and striking
- **6. *brain development ...*** differs from monolinguals indicating more learning aptitude ...



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# Multilingual education and individual benefits

- ***In still other words ...***
  - ***Language proficiency increases ...***
  - ***School performance increases ...***
  - ***Learning aptitude increases*** with special reference to mathematics ...
- ***Content and Language Integrated Learning is a powerful learning tool that is good for all children of any background, intelligence or socio-economic background ...***
- ***References:*** Jäppinen 2005, Van de Craen *et al.* 2007a,b,c, 2008, 2011, Lorenzo *et al.* 2009, Murray 2010)



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# How to explain such results?

## CLIL learning or implicit learning involves *a particular kind of learning*

- It is called *implicit learning*, referring to a *non-structured, non-guided, scaffold-like, holistic, unconscious way of learning ...*
- Whereby “[*complex information*] is [*learned*] *without complete verbalisable knowledge of what is learned*” (Seger 1994:164).





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# How to explain such results?

Unlike traditional learning this learning has ***the following characteristics ...***

## **Implicit learning is**

- ***more robust,***
- ***age independent,***
- ***less influenced by learning variation,***
- ***IQ independent,***
- ***prone to communal learning.***

(cf. Reber 1993)

Cf. the learning of a musical instrument ...



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# Multilingual education and individual benefits

- It can be said that in this way, better learners are created **because learners get empowered... learners are academically challenged ...**
- What has to be done is **that school authorities get together and draw up a master plan for education ...**
- Including **teacher education ...**
- We are dealing here with ***innovative education, not a revolution, but in a kind of ‘piecemeal engineering way’*** (Popper 1966) ***while bringing in new ideas.***



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# Challenges for Change in Education

- But the CLIL approach is also valid in other contexts such as ***adult education ...***
- As a result, ***one of the challenges is change ...***
- ***Change in education is one of the more difficult changes to achieve ...***
- However ...



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# Challenges for Change in Education

- But the CLIL approach is also valid in other contexts such as ***adult education ...***
- As a result ***one of the challenges is change ...***
- ***Change in education is one of the more difficult changes to achieve ...***
- However, ***‘When a hot woman meets a hermit, one of them is going to change’*** (Charles Bukowski 2002: 246)



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# Challenges for Change in Education

- Change should be *meaningful and relevant...*
- Stakeholders should be convinced that *investing in change yields added value and is worth the effort...*
- Results should *really make a difference...*
- Change is only change *if we succeed in making people believe in it...*



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# Conclusion

- Europe should ***continuously pay attention to language*** in the broadest context possible
- Member states ***need the support*** Europe should offer
- The CLIL approach is a ***flexible, powerful learning tool*** that makes a difference and that can be used in various educational contexts with different groups
- CLIL is also ***a good ‘driver for change’*** (Fullan 2011) ... in line with Europe’s language political objectives



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# Conclusion

## ***FINAL WORDS***

- ***Approaches such as this have a tremendous political impact since member states can liberate themselves from the historical parameters that in some cases paralyse them ...***
- ***At the same time this approach has tremendous influence on the way (language) learning is perceived. Traditional language learning is a thing of the past. Let the future begin ...***



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***Thank you for your attention***

***Merci de votre attention***

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