



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe
Europe

Multilingual Research Unit

Multilingualism in

Cyprus, September 26-28, 2012

Why Multilingual Education Is Transforming Europe's Educational Landscape.

Societal and Personal Benefits of Multilingual Education within a Framework of Change

Piet Van de Craen, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium and the European Language Council



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)



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

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)



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Introduction

Point of view: to examine multilingual education, i.e. *language learning* from

- a *societal and macro standpoint* ...
- an *individual and micro standpoint* ...
- a standpoint of change in general or *how to change education without hurting anyone* ...



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

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***
...



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

*Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council*

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 ...**



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Multilingual education and the member states

Parameters of importance

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



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Multilingual education and the member states

Research for the following countries and or regions ...

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



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

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



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Multilingual education and the member states

- Multilingual education encounters resistance to implementation when
 - ***standardization occurred late***
 - ***a threat is perceived***
 - ***it feels dominated***
 - ***heavy legislation is imposed.***

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



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Multilingual education and the member states

- As a result it is safe to conclude that ***the introduction of multilingual education and*** - by expansion - ***the idea of multilingualism*** will take time to take root ...
- Is there ***a way to speed up this process*** ... ?
- Yes, there is, ***two examples*** are of particular importance ...



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Multilingual education and the member states

- **Wallonia, French-speaking Belgium ...**
 - could be compared to France until 1998 when a decree was administered 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 ...
- ***Both areas can boast wonderful results in a very short period of time overcoming the aspects previously introduced.***



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Multilingual education and the member states

What is needed seems to be

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



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

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 ...



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

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)***



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

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 ...

As a result, pupils, teachers and school change for the better ...

Remark:

This approach is not restricted to the learning of English ...



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Multilingual education and individual benefits

- **Six research questions:**
 - *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 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?*



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

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 development ...***



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

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 ...



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Multilingual education and individual benefits

- ***In still other words ...***
 - ***Language proficiency increases ...***
 - ***School performance increases ...***
 - ***Learning aptitude increases ...***
- ***Content and Language Integrated Learning is a powerful learning tool that is good for all children of any background, intelligence or SES***

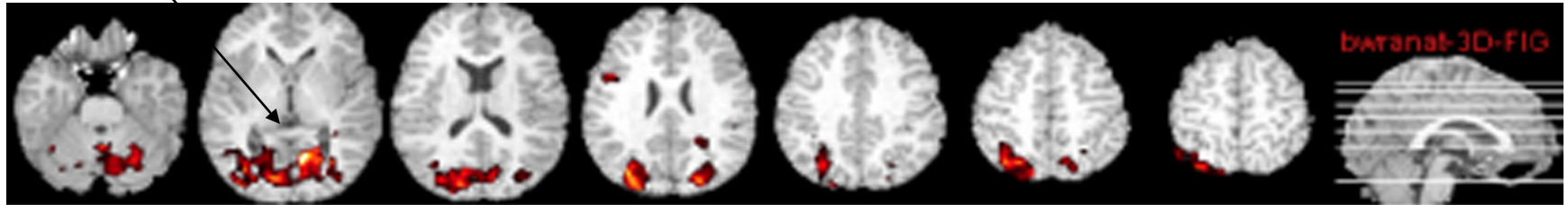


Vrije Universiteit Brussel

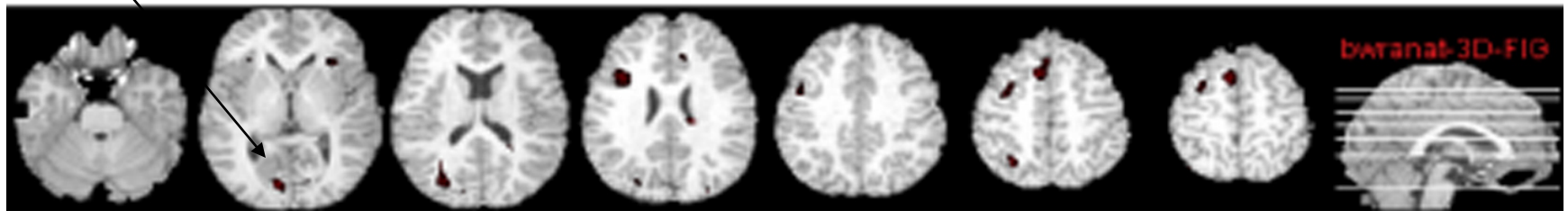
MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

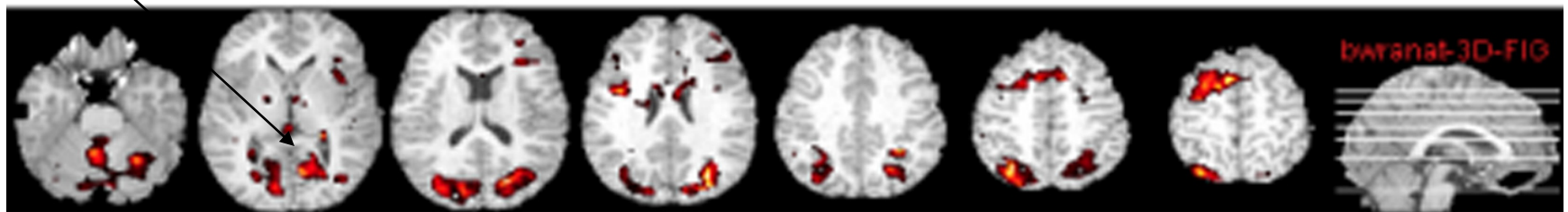
Multilingual education and individual benefits



Monolinguals in school language



Early, highly proficient bilinguals in their school language



Early-late, proficient bilinguals in their school language (SL = L2)

(Mondt *et al*, 2008)



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Multilingual education and individual benefits

- It can be said that in this way better learners are created **because they get empowered...**
- 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 a kind of ‘piecemeal engineering way’ of bringing in new and European oriented ideas.**



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

*Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council*

Challenges for Change in Education

- **Europe moves with different speeds ...**
- **As a result one of the challenges is change ...**
- **Change in education is one of the more difficult changes to achieve ...**
- **However, ...**



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Challenges for Change in Education

- Europe moves with different speeds ...
- 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)



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

*Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council*

Challenges for Change in Education

- Change should be **meaningful and relevant ...**
- It should be **worthwhile investing in change ...**
- Results should **really make a difference ...**
- **Change is only change is we can believe in it ...**



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Challenges for Change in Education

- Why is CLIL a good candidate to play a leading role in educational change processes?
- Because it focuses on **implicit learning ...**
- **Implicit learning versus explicit learning ...**
- Its status is different ... It refers to ***a non-structured, non-guided, scaffolding like, holistic, unconscious way of learning ...***



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Challenges for Change in Education

- **Definition:** “[*complex information*] is [*learned*] *without complete verbalisable knowledge of what is learned*” (Seger 1994:164).
- **Characteristics**
 - *More robust*
 - *Age independent,*
 - *Shows less variation among learners,*
 - *IQ independent,*
 - *More apt for communal learning*(cf. Reber 1993)



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Challenges for Change in Education

- **CIIL is a good candidate for change because it changes**
 - *learning processes ...*
 - *Schools ...*
 - *pupils' results and motivation* (cf. MOLAN)
 - *teachers' motivation ...*
 - *the learning society ...*



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council

Conclusion

- Europe should ***continuously pay attention to language*** in the broadest context possible ...
- Member states ***need the support*** Europe can offer ...
- The CLIL approach is a ***flexible, powerful learning tool*** that makes a difference ...
- CLIL is also ***a driver for change*** ... in line with Europe's language political objectives



Vrije Universiteit Brussel

MuRe

*Multilingual Research Unit & European
Language Council*

σας ευχαριστώ για την προσοχή σας

Thank you for your attention

Merci de votre attention