

Language policy in the Netherlands

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Introduction

As a consequence of socio-economically and/or politically determined processes of migration, the traditional patterns of language variation across Western Europe have changed considerably over the last decades. Most nation-states find it hard to deal with the significant demographic changes they are faced with. Nation-state institutions not only want to retain their traditional structures but also want to strengthen their connection with old practice, local identity, and attachments. Traditional norms and values are re-introduced so that newcomers adopt them. The latest public discourse on whether the “norms and values” of the mainstream Dutch society should be accepted and obeyed by immigrant minority (IM) groups is a typical case symbolizing social cohesion and identity concerns of the general public. Faced with deep transformations in society, policy makers struggle to find adequate solutions to ever pressing problems. Politicians and media might opt for the easy way out by simply blaming “new-comers” as the cause of all social “problems” but such unfounded simple actions lead to growing anti-immigrant feelings and antagonisms in the mainstream society, which turn out to be a serious threat to social cohesion in actuality.

Migration is taking new forms as diverse cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, and language groups move between borders much more freely. Especially in the EU, people move across national borders. Not only indigenous populations but also immigrant populations seek employment beyond national borders within the EU, which leads to increasing transnationalism. As the immigrant-receiving societies become more and more diverse, nation-states need to find adequate ways of dealing with this diversity. Public and educational institutions are challenged by this increasing diversity. Most nation-states in the EU are reluctant to consider themselves as multicultural societies. In some EU countries the explicit goal is the assimilation of newcomers. In France, for instance, if immigrants want to be full citizens they need to assimilate into the mainstream society. They are required to surrender their languages and cultures in order to become full citizens (Castles 2004, Archibald 2002). In Germany, on the other hand, on the basis of their blood-bond, the *Aussiedler* (ethnic Germans from Eastern European and former Soviet Union countries) are seen as a privileged group compared to other immigrants (Bühler-Otten & Fürstenau 2004).

The issues of democratic citizenship, language rights of regional versus IM groups, and social cohesion versus linguistic diversity are unresolved issues facing immigrant-receiving societies (see Extra & Yagmur 2004 for a detailed discussion). However, the gap between the democratic ideals in European nation-states and the daily educational experiences of IM groups in schools continue to challenge nation-state ideologies. Policy-makers still persistently ignore the *bottom-up* push for pluralism. Present language regimes in European schools mostly ignore IM languages. The act of abolishing home language instruction in primary schools in some EU countries shows that some languages are not yet admissible in the classroom and in the schoolyard. On the basis of the demographic and sociolinguistic evidence, proscribing the use of IM languages will gradually become more difficult because pluralist language regimes will gradually take over the national language regimes.

Derived from Max Weber (1968, cited in Laitin 2000), Laitin makes a distinction between a “rationalized” language regime and a “multilingual” regime. If a language is imposed as the only language for educational and administrative purposes, the state has a “rationalized”

language regime. According to Laitin (2000: 151), states can achieve language rationalization by three different methods: a) rationalization through the recognition of a *lingua franca* (such as Swahili in Tanzania or Bahasa in Indonesia), b) rationalization through the recognition of the language of a majority group (French in France or Han Chinese in China), and c) rationalization through the recognition of the language of a minority group (imposition of Amharic on Ethiopia or Afrikaans in South Africa). If states have not pursued any form of rationalization or were obliged by the social and political circumstances to recognize language rights of minority populations, then these states are said to have multilingual regimes. There are different forms of multilingual regimes with varying numbers of languages. In India, for instance, one can talk of language repertoires of 3 plus/minus 1 language regime. Different languages are used for different purposes in different domains: Hindi for state documents, English for higher civil services and big business, and the state language for state services and education. Besides, an additional language is used for communication in the domestic domain and within a particular group. There is also the 2 plus/minus 1 regime, in which in addition to the mainstream language another legalized language is used, e.g. Spanish (with Bask, Catalan) or Russian (with one or two official languages in federal republics plus a variety of minority languages). In some multilingual contexts, some minority group members have neither the regional language nor the mainstream language as their mother tongue. Such speakers are often trilingual. For instance, Turkish speakers in Friesland in the Netherlands may be trilingual in Dutch, Fries, and Turkish. Yet, Turkish does not have any form of status in the mainstream society. Most IM communities within EU countries share this *de facto* multilingual position.

The ideological stance

In addition to the traditional forms of migration, there are new forms of population movements, such as overseas students and highly qualified professionals, who mostly offer their knowledge and expertise to transnational companies or universities. This new form of population movement is an essential component of the globalisation process, and it results in increasing language diversity in the host societies. It is important to remember that IM groups do not create their communities in isolation; they interact with the mainstream society, mostly, in the social and legal frameworks provided by the receiving society. The connection between source and destination countries is an inherent aspect of the migration phenomenon. The type of connection varies depending on the type of migration, whether *push* or *pull* factor. In addition, receiving societies' integration policies have a decisive role concerning the integration patterns and language use of IM groups.

As documented by Extra & Yağmur (2004), the legal status of IM groups within host societies is not as straightforward as that of regional minorities. In most immigration contexts, legally, socially, and economically, immigrants are not considered to be equal members of the mainstream society; instead they are often considered as temporary, marginal, or even undesired within the host society. In this way, state policies may define the social-psychological reality of being an immigrant and accordingly, may influence the socio-cultural orientation of immigrants. In the literature, four clusters of state ideologies shaping integration and language policies of immigrant receiving societies are identified (Bauböck *et al.* 1996; Bourhis 2001; May 2001; Penninx 1996). These ideologies range from pluralism to ethnist ideologies, in terms of pluralist, civic, assimilation, and ethnist ideology.

Pluralist ideology proposes duties and responsibilities to be observed by all members of the society. In this ideology, learning the official or mainstream language is the responsibility of the citizens themselves, and the state provides opportunities to facilitate language learning. Concerning the home languages of citizens, the state has no mandate in defining or regulating

the private values of its citizens in the domestic domain, nor their political or social affiliation. As different from other ideologies, the state provides financial support for mainstream language classes and for cultural activities to promote first language maintenance. Australian and Canadian multicultural policies are good examples of the pluralist ideology as presented here.

Civic ideology expects that immigrants adopt the public values of the mainstream society. Like pluralist ideology, the state does not interfere with the private values of its citizens but unlike pluralism, the state does not provide any provisions for the maintenance or promotion of linguistic or cultural values of IM groups. A typical example of civic ideology might be the Netherlands. Given the centuries old coexistence of people varying in descent, religious denomination, culture, and class, the Netherlands might be considered to be a plural society. In discussing the relationship between integration of immigrants and pluralism, Vermeulen & Penninx (2000: 3) assume that the tradition of religious pillarization in the Dutch society can be associated with pluralism. Yet, Penninx (1996) argues that due to nation-state ideology, Dutch state policies cannot be identified as pluralistic. Nonetheless, the long-standing pillarized structure of the Dutch society has acted as a barrier against assimilationist or ethnist ideologies.

Assimilation ideology expects IM groups to comply fully with the norms and values of the mainstream society. As different from pluralist and civic ideologies, assimilation ideology expects complete linguistic and cultural assimilation into the mainstream society. In the name of homogenisation of the society, assimilationist language policies aim at accelerating the language shift and language loss of IM groups. With its unitarian approach, French policies fit the assimilationist ideology cluster quite well. Recent political developments, such as restrictions on marriage partners of IM groups, abolition of community language classes, and compulsory integration classes in Denmark show a strong shift towards assimilation ideology. During the last few years, the Netherlands moved in the same direction (Extra & Yağmur, 2004) Such shifts prove that changing political circumstances have a profound effect on integration and language policies of immigrant receiving countries. Basically, all nation-states are assimilationist in nature. According to Waldinger & Fitzgerald (2004: 1179), “as ideology of the nation-state society, the sociology of assimilation necessarily obscures coercive efforts to build a nation-state society by excluding outsiders –via control of external borders- and to distinguish between members and unacceptable residents of the territory - through regulation of the internal boundaries leading to citizenship and legal residence.” For most immigrants the link between *old-ancestral* homeland and *new* country of residence is an inevitable reality, and contributes to the shaping of a transnational identity; but for the nation-state ideology, that link and identity are difficult to accept. Irrespective of the traditional and conservative discourse on immigration and integration, however, IM groups maintain, build and reinforce multiple connections between their old and new homelands. In the contemporary era of migration, such linkages maintain and reinforce the dynamism of globalisation. Yet, especially in nation-states, IM groups are often conceived as aliens, and they are subject to different treatment. Different language policies with respect to regional *versus* IM groups highlight the unfavourable position of the latter in assimilationist societies.

Ethnist ideology shares most aspects of the assimilation ideology; yet, it makes it difficult for IM groups to be accepted legally or socially as full members of the mainstream society. Citizenship and naturalisation laws are quite representative for distinguishing ethnist ideologies. The principle of *ius sanguinis* (“law of the blood”) underlies acquisition of citizenship in such countries. For instance, while third generation of Turkish immigrant children born in Germany are not automatically entitled to German citizenship, German repatriates, most of whom cannot even speak German, coming from ex-Soviet Union countries, are granted German citizenship. On the policy level, ethnist ideology seems to

favour full linguistic and cultural assimilation of IM groups but in reality achieving full membership is not easy. Even though there is variation between the policies of various states in Germany, federal state ideology in Germany can be identified as ethnist in nature.

Even though different IM groups exhibit different reactions to the above policies, generally speaking, host societies' policies have an effect upon their integration and language use patterns. Depending on to what extent IM groups consider their own language as part of their core values, they either maintain their first language or shift to the mainstream language (Smolicz, 1981). On the basis of the state ideologies briefly described here, I will examine the shift from pluralism to assimilation in the Netherlands. In accordance with social conditions and dynamics, policies and attitudes change as well. The recent shift in the Dutch politics is a clear example of changing attitudes.

Dutch Policies: OALT and ONST in primary and secondary schools

In this section, a descriptive analysis of instruction in IM languages in Dutch primary and secondary schools is presented. Since 1998, such instruction in primary schools has been labelled OALT (*Onderwijs in Allochtone Levende Talen* = education in non-indigenous living languages). OALT was made possible in primary schools from 1974-2004 under the previous acronym OETC (*Onderwijs in Eigen Taal en Cultuur* = education in own language and culture), later on renamed as OET (without the Culture). In secondary schools, the teaching of IM languages as optional subjects does not have a long history. Here, the teaching of languages, which do not belong to the traditional foreign language teaching curriculum (English, German, and French), is referred to as ONST (*Onderwijs in Nieuwe Schooltalen* = education in new school languages). In this article, the acronyms OALT and ONST are used to refer to these two types of education, respectively.

It should be noted that, in the spirit of recent anti-immigrant movements in the Netherlands, the first Balkenende cabinet already proposed abolishing OALT in primary schools, in spite of its recent legislation in 1998, because OALT was held to be "in contradiction with the policy of integration of immigrant children" and all efforts should be focused on Dutch only. This conception of monolingualism for multicultural schools has been taken over by the second Balkenende cabinet, installed in May 2003, and has not met with any resistance in the newly elected parliament, nor in Dutch society at large. Only some immigrant groups resisted the decision but it did not mean much for the mainstream politics. The Ministry of Education announced the abolition of OALT at the start of the 2004/2005 primary school year and the dismissal of more than 1,400 OALT teachers. The affirmative budget for promoting ONST in secondary schools is also cut, although ONST will remain a legal option in secondary schools. Against this background, the descriptive analysis in this section should be regarded as a report of the status of OALT in 2003/2004. It should also be seen as a fundamental shift from multilingualism to Dutch-only orientation. As seen in the following section, there are major differences between home language instruction in primary and secondary schools.

1) Target groups

As stated in the OALT law (1998), the target group for OALT consisted of primary school children who speak a language other than Dutch at home. In principle, OALT could be offered to all potential target groups, dependent on parental interest and, more importantly, municipal budget constraints.

For ONST, according to legislation, all secondary school pupils are eligible, regardless of their ethnolinguistic background. In practice, the most commonly offered languages for ONST are Turkish and Arabic, and Turkish and Moroccan pupils opt for these languages most commonly. Native Dutch-speaking pupils rarely participate in these lessons, and no

precise data on this distinction are available. In contrast, Spanish is commonly offered, if at all, to pupils from different (mostly non-Spanish) backgrounds, and native Dutch-speaking pupils often participate in these lessons.

2) Arguments

Table 1 gives an outline of the goals and status of OALT in different stages of primary schooling, according to the OALT law (1998).

Stage	Grades 1-4	Grades 1-8
Goals	Auxiliary: In support of learning Dutch	Intrinsic: Development of home language skills
Status	Part of curriculum	At extra-curricular hours

Table 1 Stages, goals, and status of OALT, according to OALT legislation (1998)

OALT has been ambivalent in its rationale as a distinction was made between auxiliary and intrinsic goals. The first type of goal derived from a compensatory perspective, and for this reason was situated within the curriculum. The second type of goal derived from an acknowledgement of the value of multilingualism in a multicultural society, but in spite of this rhetoric, it was situated at extra-curricular hours. The pressure in favour of auxiliary goals was top-down, and such goals were commonly supported by national and local educational authorities, and by school boards and school directors (Turkenburg 2002). The pressure in favour of intrinsic goals was bottom-up, and such goals were commonly supported by minority organisations and parents. OALT teachers were confronted with the dilemma that they were often in favour of intrinsic goals, but had a better labour contract position at schools in the context of auxiliary goals. Given the obvious differences in status between auxiliary and intrinsic OALT goals, most of the allocated municipal funding went to auxiliary OALT, and for this type of OALT, teacher qualifications were also strict in terms of skills in Dutch (as a second language), not in terms of skills in the children's home languages. Moreover, it should be mentioned that there is an increasing variation in the degree of minority and majority language proficiency between and within different groups of IM children; this makes a distinction between auxiliary and intrinsic OALT goals for different target groups highly problematic.

Arguments for offering ONST in secondary schools are based on promoting skills in languages other than Dutch and in this way *promoting cultural pluralism*. In contrast to OALT at primary schools, there is *no deficit perspective* on ONST, and ONST is commonly part of the regular school curriculum.

3) Objectives

There have never been clearly specified objectives for OALT, neither with respect to auxiliary goals nor with respect to intrinsic goals. In spite of a strong educational tradition in the Netherlands of specifying the skills and knowledge to be achieved at the end of primary schooling for a wide variety of subjects (including Dutch and Frisian), such skills and knowledge have never been established for, e.g., Turkish.

The basic objectives of ONST are similar to those of modern foreign languages like English, French, and German. There are well-specified objectives for Turkish and Arabic in terms of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills to be achieved by the end of

secondary school, in all cases differentiated for lower and higher levels of secondary schooling.

4) Evaluation

Given the lack of objectives for OALT, progress in language skills as a result of OALT has never been measured. On their reports, primary school children are given grades for 'language'. In practice, this concept refers to Dutch. No grades in school reports have been given for home language skills as a result of OALT.

ONST achievements are evaluated through both local school exams and centrally developed and implemented national exams. The outcomes are reported on school reports and diplomas. Nationwide standardised exams are prepared by the Central Institute for Test Development (CITO) for Turkish, Arabic, and Spanish at vocational level (VMBO) and at higher levels (HAVO and VWO) of secondary schooling. For Russian and Italian, there are national exams at the levels of HAVO and VWO only. There are no national exams for such languages as Portuguese, Greek, Chinese, Hindi, or Papiamentu, although one or more of these languages are taught at some secondary schools. Hindi is tested by means of a nationwide examination developed by the *Hindi Parishad* Netherlands Foundation, but this examination is not officially recognised.

5) Enrolment

There have been no minimal enrolment requirements for OALT. It was offered on parental request, but municipalities decided for which languages classes were offered, depending on the available budget. OALT has neither been compulsory nor a right. No nationwide data on OET(C)/OALT enrolment have been gathered and published since 1993.

Secondary schools only receive funding for ONST if at least four pupils enrol and if at least two hours of instruction in a particular language are offered per week. Nationwide enrolment and examination figures are made available yearly by the Ministry of Education. Arabic and Turkish were taught mainly at lower secondary schools, and had only recently emerged at higher secondary schools. Russian was represented in higher secondary education only, and Spanish was taught widely in both types of secondary schooling.

6) Curricular status

OALT was offered at curricular or extra-curricular hours, depending on whether its goals were auxiliary or intrinsic. Most OALT was offered for grade 1-4 children with auxiliary goals and during school hours. This priority was a direct effect of municipal budget allocation (see 7). Turkish and Arabic were taught with auxiliary goals in grades 1-4, and with intrinsic goals in grades 5-8. All other languages were taught with intrinsic goals only as extra-curricular options. In general there was no connection between other school subjects and home language instruction. In a formal sense, OALT was not part of the school curriculum.

In secondary schools, ONST is part of the regular school curriculum as an elective course. Arabic, Spanish, and Turkish may be chosen instead of French or German, in both vocational and higher-level schools. The same applies to Russian and Italian in higher-level schools, but not in vocational schools. Languages like Chinese, Greek, Hindi, Papiamentu, and Portuguese do not have an official curriculum status.

7) Funding

Funding for OALT has been allocated by the Ministry of Education to municipalities on the basis of their numbers of *allochtoon* pupils (*allochtoon* does not have its equivalence in English but close to the term 'foreign speakers'). In turn, municipalities were free to allocate the money to particular languages and particular OALT goals. Moreover, they were free to

supplement the nationally allocated OALT funding with their own municipal budget resources.

Funding for ONST is directly allocated by the Ministry of Education to schools which apply for the funding and which satisfy the enrolment conditions. In 1987, a provision was added to the law on Secondary Education (Article 12) stating that schools with pupils from non-Dutch-speaking backgrounds can receive additional funding for ONST if at least four pupils attend lessons in a given language for at least two hours per week. In practice, almost all funds go to the teaching of Arabic and Turkish. Languages like Chinese, Hindi, or Papiamentu are excluded from the allocated facilities. Additional state funding is only available during the first two years of offering a new school language. Afterwards, schools need to cover the costs from their regular school budget. Secondary schools can make use of a special regulation for IM pupils. This provision enables these pupils to receive additional instruction in Dutch as a second language and in their home languages. Secondary schools that are willing to begin classes in new school languages, can also do so by using this provision.

8) Teaching materials

Many OALT teaching materials have been developed in the Netherlands for EU languages like Spanish and Portuguese. For non-EU languages, the availability of teaching materials was strikingly less. In many classes, materials originated from the source countries, such as India, Pakistan, or China for the teaching of Hindi, Urdu/'Pakistani', and Chinese, respectively. Turkish and Moluccan/Malay can be considered exceptions, as substantial teaching materials for these languages have been made available, mostly developed in the Netherlands. In general, there have been more OALT materials for the lower grades than for the upper grades of primary schooling.

At the level of secondary schooling, the Ministry of Education has given support for the development of ONST materials since the 1990s. As a result, there are various well-established teaching materials for Turkish and Arabic. Ministerial support has recently been given to the development of ONST materials for Chinese, Hindi, Italian, and Spanish. For other languages, materials often originate from abroad.

9) Teacher qualifications

At the level of primary schooling, the earlier-mentioned distinction between auxiliary and intrinsic OALT goals had remarkable consequences for teacher qualifications. For auxiliary OALT, the focus was on skills in Dutch as a second language. Numerous in-service programmes were set up to improve the teachers' skills in L2 Dutch. This is in sharp contrast with the requirements in terms of the children's home language skills. Such skills have never been specified for either intrinsic or auxiliary OALT, nor have any training programmes been set up in this domain. Until recently, policy aimed at recruiting new OALT teachers who received their training in the Netherlands. A special OALT teacher-training programme has been set up at the Higher Education School in Breda. However, the teachers working there do not have adequate qualifications for foreign language didactics.

A Dutch certificate of adequate teaching qualification is needed to teach at secondary schools in the Netherlands. For a number of languages, teaching diplomas are issued from educational institutions. In the Dutch educational system, there are two types of teaching qualifications for secondary schools, referred to as 'first-' and 'second-degree' qualifications. A teacher who possesses a first-degree teaching qualification can teach all classes in all school types. A teacher who has a second-degree teaching qualification can teach all classes except the highest grades in higher-level education (HAVO and VWO). There is a second-grade teacher-training programme for Arabic at the Higher Education School in Amsterdam,

and for Turkish at the Higher Education School in Rotterdam. Faculties of Arts at universities can also issue first-degree teaching qualifications. For new school languages like Hindi, Chinese, or Papiamentu, there are still no educational programmes available for issuing an appropriate teaching qualification.

Conclusions and discussion

The Netherlands had been famous with its pluralistic approach; however, after September 11, the dominant discourse in Dutch politics has become anti-pluralist. Dutch policy makers, politicians, opinion-leaders in the media, and even some 'educational specialists' identify the use of home language as the underlying barrier before a successful acquisition of Dutch. Scheffer, a popular newspaper columnist known for his anti-immigrant discourse, (2000) blamed the multicultural policies for all the problems encountered in the Dutch society. He alleged that the efforts to establish multiculturalism have been futile and Dutch integration policies failed. He further speculated that in spite of all the positive action programs, poverty, school dropout levels, and crime rates are increasing among ethnic minority youngsters. He claims that rather than multicultural policies, strictly monitored integration policies are needed. The development of multiculturalism in the Netherlands is shown to be an unplanned and unwanted phenomenon (Penninx, 1996). In general, right-wing politicians and people like Scheffer, think that migrants speak a different home language, which is why they cannot integrate into the Dutch society. Diversity and multilingualism are seen as threats to social cohesion. With such prohibitive measures, policy makers want to speed the integration of immigrants into the mainstream society. In this respect, current trend in the Netherlands is highly comparable to "English only movement" in the USA (Barker et al. 2001). Just as the English-only movement in the USA, Dutch as a second language-only tendency aims at limiting the use, maintenance, promotion, and salience of immigrant minority languages.

In spite of a serious shift in Dutch policies, the European discourse is geared more towards pluralism. In cooperation with the Council of Europe and with the support of UNESCO, the year 2001 was proclaimed by the European Commission (2001a) as the "European Year of Languages" with the following three aims:

- to increase awareness of Europe's linguistic heritage and openness to different languages and cultures as a source of mutual enrichment to be protected and promoted in European societies;
- to motivate European citizens to develop plurilingualism, that is, to achieve a degree of communicative ability in a number of languages, including those less widely used and taught, for improved mutual understanding, closer co-operation, and active participation in European democratic processes;
- to encourage and support lifelong language learning for personal development and so that all European citizens can acquire the language competences necessary to respond to economic, social, and cultural changes in society.

The Council of Europe developed projects for the European Year of Languages, which covered 47 states and also engaged with UNESCO in order to spread involvement to as wide a range of countries as possible. The EU formally agreed to support the European Year of Languages in July 2000. The European Commission (2001b) also set a number of objectives for the Year, which were similar to, if somewhat more detailed than, those of the Council of Europe. These were:

- to raise awareness of the richness of linguistic and cultural diversity within the EU and the value in terms of civilization and culture embodied therein, acknowledging the

principle that all languages must be recognised to have equal cultural value and dignity;

- to encourage multiculturalism.

In a follow-up to the European Year of Languages, the heads of state and government of all EU member-states gathered in March 2002 in Barcelona and called upon the European Commission to take further action to promote multilingualism across Europe, in particular by the learning and teaching of at least two foreign languages from a very young age. On 14 February 2002, the Education Council invited Member States to take concrete steps to promote linguistic diversity and language learning, and invited the European Commission to draw up proposals in these fields. In preparing an Action Plan, the European Commission undertook a wide public consultation involving other European institutions, relevant national ministries, a wide range of organizations representing civil society, and the general public. The consultation document was made available on-line in all EU languages. Over 300 substantive responses to the consultation were received. The final Action Plan 2004-2006, published by the European Commission (2003) contains a number of remarkable passages, one of which is quoted here:

Promoting linguistic diversity means actively encouraging the teaching and learning of the widest possible range of languages in our schools, universities, adult education centres and enterprises. Taken as a whole, the range on offer should include the smaller European languages as well as all the larger ones, regional, minority and migrant languages as well as those with “national” status, and the languages of our major trading partners throughout the world. The imminent enlargement of the European Union will bring with it a wealth of languages from several language families; it requires a special effort to ensure that the languages of the new Member States become more widely learned in other countries. *Member States* have considerable scope to take a lead in promoting the teaching and learning of a wider range of languages than at present.

These and other pleas made in this European Action Plan may lead to an inclusive approach in which IM languages are no longer denied access to Europe’s celebration of language diversity. In particular, the plea for the learning of three languages by all EU citizens, the plea for an early start to such learning experiences, and the plea for offering a wide range of languages to choose from, open the door to such an inclusive approach. The empirical evidence presented in Extra & Yagmur (2004) shows the extent of *de facto* multilingualism present in European schools.

A Pluralistic Model of Language Teaching

The final Action Plan 2004-2006, published by the European Commission (2003) may ultimately lead to an inclusive approach in which IM languages are no longer denied access to Europe’s celebration of language diversity. In particular, the plea for the learning of three languages by all EU citizens, the plea for an early start to such learning experiences, and the plea for offering a wide range of languages to choose from, open the door to such an inclusive approach. Although this may sound paradoxical, accepting the role of English as lingua franca for intercultural communication across Europe can also advance such an approach.

Against this background, the following principles are suggested for the enhancement of multilingualism at the primary school level:

- 1 In the primary school curriculum, three languages are introduced for all children:
 - the standard language of the particular nation-state as a major school subject and the major language of communication for the teaching of other school subjects;
 - English as lingua franca for international communication;
 - an additional third language chosen from a variable and varied set of priority languages at the national, regional, and/or local levels of the multicultural society.
- 2 The teaching of these languages is part of the regular school curriculum and subject to educational inspection.
- 3 Regular primary school reports provide, formally or informally, information on the children's proficiency in each of these languages.
- 4 National working programmes are established for the priority languages referred to under (1) in order to develop curricula, teaching methods, and teacher training programmes.
- 5 Part of these priority languages may be taught at specialised language schools.

This set of principles is aimed at reconciling *bottom-up* and *top-down* pleas in Europe for multilingualism, and is inspired by large-scale and enduring experiences with the learning and teaching of English (as L1 or L2) and one *Language Other Than English* (LOTE) for all children in Victoria State, Australia (see Extra & Yağmur 2004). When each of the above-mentioned languages should be introduced in the curriculum, and whether or when they should be subject or medium of instruction, should be spelled out depending on particular national, regional, or local contexts. Derived from an overarching conceptual and longitudinal framework, *priority languages* could be specified in terms of both regional minority and immigrant minority languages for the development of curricula, teaching methods, and teacher training programmes. Moreover, the increasing internationalisation of pupil populations in European schools requires that a language policy be introduced for *all* school children in which the traditional dichotomy between foreign language instruction for indigenous majority pupils and home language instruction for IM pupils is put aside. Given the experiences abroad (e.g., the Victorian School of Languages in Melbourne, Australia), *language schools* could become centres of expertise where a variety of languages is taught, in particular if the number of children requesting instruction in these languages is low and/or spread over many schools. In line with the proposed principles for primary schooling, similar ideas could be worked out for secondary schools where learning more than one language is already an established practice. The above-mentioned principles would recognise multilingualism in an increasingly multicultural environment as an asset for all children and for society at large. The EU, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO could function as leading transnational agencies in promoting such concepts. The UNESCO *Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity* is in line with the inclusive views expressed here, in particular in its plea to encourage language diversity, to respect the mother tongue at all levels of education, and to foster the learning of several languages from the youngest age.

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