

Multilingual Early Language Transmission (MELT)

Summary of relevant literature on early multilingual learning, related to European smaller state and regional & minority language communities

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Published in September 2011

Project number: 504186-LLP-1-2009-1-NL-COMENIUS-CMP / 2009-3894 (2009-2011)

ISBN number: 978 94 9071 90 43

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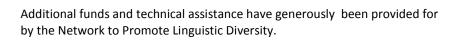
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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.







The MELT project is carried out in a cooperation of four European regions and five partners:













Acknowledgements

The authors wish to express their gratitude to the partners of the MELT project who were very helpful and who supplied all necessary information with great enthusiasm. Special and personal thanks go to Veronica Hertzberg, Gari Lewis and Gregor Mazo, who have contributed to the content, and to Heledd Daniel, Osian Llywelyn, Virginie Pronost, Bauke Okkema, Robert Harris, Jan van der West, Saskia Benedictus-van der Berg, Verena Backer-Steinbrink, Tjallien Kalsbeek and René Jorna who have assisted greatly to this publication and to the success of the project.

Summary

Between 2009 and 2011, pre-school practitioners implemented a practical Guide, developed jointly as part of the MELT (Multilingual Early Language Transmission) project for the promotion of multilingual early language transmission and the identification of best practices. The MELT project is a Comenius Project co-funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme. The project proposal was the result of cooperation between four regions within the NPLD (the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity), other NPLD members benefiting from the project as associate partners. The Guide for practitioners identifies and pre-school provisions. In addition the project has resulted in a brochure for parents, exploring the best way to support their child's linguistic development in a minority language. The differences and similarities in the regions of the project are described, the various types of pre-school provisions in these regions being clarified in chapter 2. Although the various structures and approaches in the project regions differ from each other, the key concepts and common perspectives form the basis for cooperation.

The MELT project defines 'pre-school' as: The period from 0 until compulsory primary school, during which children attend pre-primary school provisions outside the home. A public provision where children must feel secure in order to be able to benefit from their experiences and to develop in their best natural way. This holds for all kinds of development, including (multilingual and minority) language acquisition. The pedagogic approaches applied in preschool education are always offered in a playful and natural way. Language topics are offered in conscious planned activities in a thematic and project-type manner. The pre-school teacher observes the development of the children and reports the offered vocabulary. Based on these data, a well-documented portfolio can be transferred to primary school and a continuous line from pre-school to primary school with regard to multilingual development of the child can be enhanced, and the position of the actual minority language can be strengthened.

The early years (age 0-4) are an advantageous timespan to acquire language skills. One of the skills young children need to acquire is the ability to understand the adults in their environment, whatever language(s) they may use while speaking to the child. At the same time, the child is learning to speak, acquiring the language(s) at its own pace and in a playful, natural way. The child's early language development is described in chapter 3.

Language is not merely a tool of communication but also a value. To the child, mother tongue and father tongue are of equal value. And in the eyes of pre-school teachers, parents, other care takers and policymakers, the minority language should attain a value equal to that of the majority language. Early-years practitioners working within the pre-school institutions should employ a deliberate language policy, offering children a language-rich environment. Pre-school staff must be aware of language immersion methodology in the minority language. Learning a language relies on the development of operations: these operations are influenced and modulated by both verbal and non-verbal interactions (led by adults) with the child's environment.

Language acquisition can take place sequentially or simultaneously in several languages. The MELT project focuses on the smaller state and regional & minority languages, in particular language acquisition and natural development in these languages. The experts, summarised

in chapter 4, have demonstrated that when parents and pre-school practitioners consistently speak the minority language to children, this will ultimately lead to better results in the majority language as well; the level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second or third language development. The promotion and stimulation of smaller state and regional & minority languages from an early age is crucial to the overall development of the child, i.e. its becoming a permanently multilingual individual, particularly in an era of ever-increasing globalisation. The MELT project explicitly stresses that the acquisition of the minority language at an early age is favourable to the development of the multilingual individual.

Nevertheless, to become a multilingual individual, some conditions will have to be met: the child must feel the need to communicate and to interact with others and to speak more languages; different factors such as language input and a positive language attitude in the social environment must be present; the child should have a natural development; the parents should choose a 'fitting' language strategy of immersion. When these conditions are met, the child is in a position to grow up multilingually. To continue as a multilingual individual, it is not only important that there be a balance between all conditions, but also that they are fulfilled during the different developmental stages (infant, toddler, school child, adolescent and young adult etc.). When continued attention is paid to all conditions, we may speak of a "continuous multilingual development" in which the child may hopefully develop into a multilingual individual. The model of continuous multilingual development is presented in chapter 4.4.

Chapter 5 contains recommendations for materials and resources in pre-school. During the implementation process of the Guide in the four regions, the tutors experienced that immersion and language acquisition was most successful when pre-school practitioners offered the children a rich and varied input in the minority language. In general, however, pre-school practitioners need confidence and guidance in developing the correct skills and expertise necessary for the creation of an environment and the implementation of activities that will promote the child's language development.

In chapter 6 recommendations and future challenges are formulated, directed at local and regional authorities as well as national governments and European organisations. The overall goal of these recommendations and challenges is the strengthening of the relationship between theory and practice with respect to the multilingual upbringing of children.

The publication is augmented by three contributions on special themes regarding language learning and training of practitioners, written by international experts.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The MELT project

The Multilingual Early Language Transmission (MELT) project is developed and carried out in a partnership between four language communities — the Frisian language in Fryslân (the Netherlands), the Swedish language in Finland, the Welsh language in Wales (UK), and the Breton language in Brittany (France). The MELT project aims at awareness raising and strengthening of multilingual upbringing of children (in the early years) from birth until primary schooling, either in the minority language or bilingually. This paper aims to describe the theoretical background and best practices and strategies in immersing children in a minority language. The process and results of the MELT project are presented in this paper. Below the project and its aims are described.

The MELT project is a two-year Comenius Multilateral Project co-funded by the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme. The project proposal is a result of a cooperation between regions on this topic within the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD). ¹ This network considers the pre-school period as crucial for the acquisition and transmission of so-called Constitutional, Regional, and Smaller State (CRSS) languages. ² The MELT project also explicitly takes these languages as a starting point for its activities. The CRSS language communities can function as natural laboratories for promoting the development of multicultural and multilingual societies.

It is common knowledge that the early years are an advantageous time to acquire language skills simultaneously³ in more languages. The promotion of minority languages from an early age⁴ is crucial for their long-term future, particularly in an age of ever increasing globalisation.

Individuals who work in pre-school settings⁵ require the correct skills and expertise to introduce language to young children. The level of understanding and awareness of language immersion methodology⁶ varies amongst organisations and practitioners working to introduce these minority languages with children from 6 months to 4 years old.

¹ The Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) is a pan-European network to promote linguistic diversity in the context of multilingual Europe. The Network comprises two levels of membership: full members fund and govern the Network through the Steering Committee, and associate members discuss and participate in the Network by participating in the General Assembly.

² Constitutional, Regional and Smaller State (CRSS) languages are also known as Regional and Minority Languages (RML), or Lesser Used Languages/ Less Widely Used Languages in literature. In this MELT paper we prefer to use the terms 'Regional & Minority languages' and 'Majority languages'; are also known as the official language, dominant language or State language. A majority language is spoken by the majority of the country's population.

² In this paper we use the term 'multilingual.'

³ In chapter 3 the concept 'simultaneous language acquisition' will be further defined.

⁴ In this paper 'early age (language learning)' refers to age 0-4 years.

In Europe a variety of terms is used to refer to pre-school settings: day-care centers, kindergartens, nurseries, crèches, playgroups, family care centre, shelters etc. In this paper 'pre-school' is the period before primary school, where children go outside the home to pre-primary school education. In chapter 2 the differences between institutions and backgrounds in the four regions will be clarified.

⁶ In chapter 4 the concept 'immersion' will be further defined.

The MELT project aims:

- to identify best practices in language immersion methodology;
- to increase the skills of early-years practitioners;
- to provide young children with a strong educational foundation, enabling them to go on and continue to progress with their multilingual skills;
- to provide parents with information on multilingualism;
- to strengthen language communities and promote cultural and linguistic diversity.

The MELT project will do this:

- by researching the early-years provision in the four language communities, looking at different approaches to language immersion and the resources currently available to parents and practitioners;
- by providing information to parents on the benefits of multilingual pre-school education;
- by developing a practical guide for early years practitioners, including teaching tools and resources;
- by employing an individual to work with practitioners and children in a number of early years settings in the four language communities;
- by holding a final conference in Brussels in October 2011, in order to share the messages of the project with a wider audience.

Figure 1.1 presents an overview of the target groups, products, and overall goals of the MELT project:

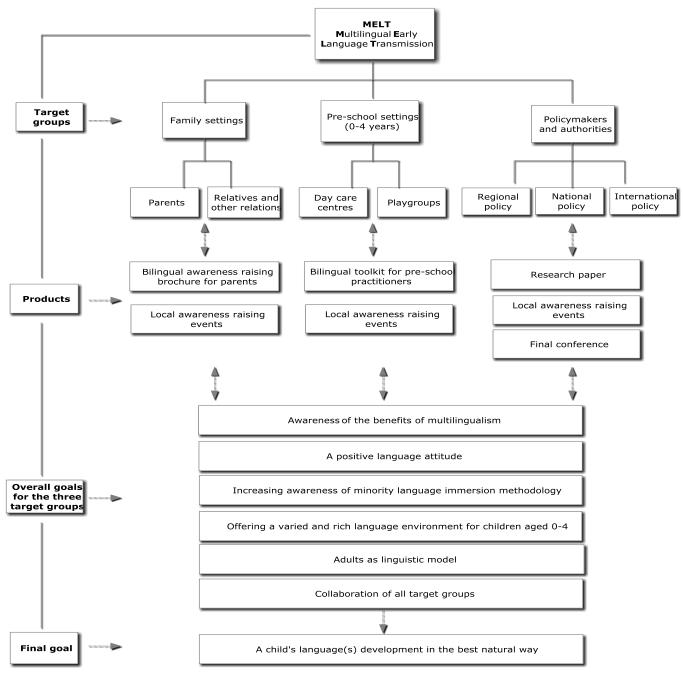


Figure 1.1 Overview of the MELT project.

The tasks, deliverables and responsibilities of the five MELT partners are described in detail in the application to the European Commission; below a brief description of the tasks and responsibilities of each of the partners is given.

The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, hosted by the Fryske Akademy (located in Fryslân, the Netherlands), is project leader. The Mercator European Research Centre will be responsible for (desk-based) research into current good and best practices in pre-school education for 0-4 year olds in a minority language environment, based on the work they have already done on trilingual education in the primary school sector. They will also form part of the quality and monitoring working group and ensure the participation of 'Sintrum Fryske Berne Opfang' (SFBO), the Foundation for Frisian language day care centres and pre-school provisions, (100 day care centres, with more than 10,000 children in all) to take part in the piloting of the Guide. They will ensure that the implementation phase (incubator) and its follow-up is properly carried out. Finally, the Mercator European Research Centre will oversee the tasks (holding local events, expert seminars, Skype meetings with the partners etc.) to be executed by the partners.

Folkhälsan (Finland) is responsible for an awareness-raising and guidance pamphlet ("Multilingualism in everyday life") for parents who deal with minority language in preschool settings for children from 0 to 4 years old. Folkhälsan also has the responsibility for the development of a toolkit for practitioners based on the earlier published book "Language Strategy for Day Care Centres" written by Gammelgård (2008). Folkhälsan will examine the results that have been achieved within the pre-schools by the incubator and formulate conclusions. This results into a Guide ("Multilingualism for children's everyday life. A guide for practitioners working with very young children") which aims to stimulate multilingualism at pre-school level, with a particular focus on minority languages. Finally, Folkhälsan will participate in the quality and monitoring working group and identify pre-school organisations in Finland that can take part in the piloting of the toolkit.

The Welsh Language Board (Wales, UK) will provide specialists in the field of pre-school education to participate in the expert seminar and provide overall expertise and knowledge in the field. It will also coordinate the participation of Mudiad Ysgolian Meithrin (with more than 500 day care centres, about 15,000 children), the Welsh-language pre-school organisation, in the piloting of the toolkit produced as part of this project. It will take the lead in the quality monitoring working group and the development of the dissemination plan. The Welsh Language Board already benefits from major expertise in dissemination through the "Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity" (NPLD). The Welsh Language Board is currently the coordinating partner for the EU-funded NPLD and partly funds the Secretariat service to the Network. The staff of the Secretariat will provide assistance to the project by supporting coordination of events and by providing Network resources. The Welsh Language Board is also responsible for the public relations (MELT newsletters en MELT website), press and media activities.

The Regional Council of Brittany and Divskouarn, a non-profit organisation that works on a local level on the awareness and the structuring of bilingual day-centres (representing 17 day-care centers in Brittany, France), will be responsible for managing the exploitation plan

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⁷ The original Swedish book "Språkstrategier för dagvården" was published in 2006 and written by Lillemor. Gammelgård.

so as to ensure that the project and its results reach policy-makers and raise their awareness. They will also participate in all the (Skype) meetings of the quality monitoring working group and pay great attention to the parents' pamphlet and the implementation of the toolkit. The Regional Council of Brittany, with the help of Divskouarn, will make sure that the pre-school organisations in Brittany; Diwan (38 primary immersive schools – about 700 children under 4 years); Dihun (60 primary catholique bilingual schools – about 1200 children under 4 years); and Divyezh (72 primary public bilingual schools – about 1700 children under 4 years), will participate in the project. The Regional Council of Brittany and Divskouarn will take part in the pilot project to test the toolkit and make sure it is properly implemented. The Regional Council of Brittany and Divskouarn are also responsible for organising the final conference in Brussels, October 6, 2011.

In this paper we use the term 'four regions' to denorte the four language communities (Frisian, Swedish, Welsh, and Breton), and often we refer to the respective organisations (described above) participating in the MELT project. It shouls be noted that when we describe or mention the four regions, we use a random order; no distinction is made concerning importance or status.

1.2 Products of the MELT project

A variety of deliverables, products, and results are to be achieved in a period of two years (November 2009-November 2011). These results do not only aim at the above mentioned project goals, but also fit in the EU policies.

The relevant Communication report of the Commission (2011) says:

"This Communication responds to the requests from Member States to launch a process of cooperation which will help them address the two-fold challenge outlined above: to provide access to child care and education for all, but also to raise the quality of their provision through well integrated services that build on a joint vision of the role of ECEC⁸, of the most effective curricular frameworks and of the staff competences and governance arrangements necessary to deliver it."

With the MELT project we hope to develop products to raise the quality of the provisions and to improve the competences of practitioners working with children in pre-school institutions in the participating regions, mainly by developing a toolkit for starting practitioners and by providing practitioners and parents with information on best practices available on pre-school immersion and mother tongue language education.

The following sections describe the products of the MELT project.

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⁸Early Childhood Education and Care – Project: Enhancing Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): Project Methodology (2010) http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/47/45236206.pdfn [Accessed August 2011].

1.2.1 Guide for pre-school practitioners

One of the deliverables of the MELT project is a toolkit for practitioners: a guide for preschool teachers. This toolkit builds on existing initiatives and best practices in the participating regions, such as the book "Language Strategy for Day Care Centres" written by Gammelgård (2008), which focuses on tools for creating language strategies for day care centers. The toolkit includes guidelines, practical examples, lesson plans, and theory of language development of children aged 0-4 years. The toolkit has been translated into the eight languages of the four regions (Welsh-English, Swedish-Finnish, Breton-French, and Frisian-Dutch).

In the school year 2010-2011, several practitioners (about 40 practitioners per region) in the four minority regions have implemented and tested the toolkit for practitioners. During this year the MELT-mentors visited a number of pre-school institutions. During these visits the use of the toolkit in practice is evaluated. Based on the evaluation forms and Skype meetings of the mentors the decision was made to update and restructure the toolkit. This included changing the toolkit into a guide: a binder folder with bilingual (both languages; the minority and majority language on one page) language topics sections, including theory and examples of language activities. This Guide is intended for the whole pre-school setting: the pre-school practitioners in nurseries, playgroups, day care centers and other pre-school professionals dealing with bilingualism and young children from 0 - 4 years. They can use this Guide to give them ideas to create a supportive and rich language environment (in the day care) for children, aiming to make language work as an integral part of pre-school activities during the day. Pre-school teams can develop linguistic awareness and promote the minority language and multilingualism within their pre-schools. Practitioners of the pre-school institutions can work with this Guide for a longer period, for example during one school year, and go through one section at the time. Practitioners may also use this Guide in their own way, in sequential order as a portfolio for personal growth.

The title of the Guide is: "Multilingualism for children's everyday life. A guide for practitioners working with very young children." The Guide consists of nine sections, the first eight sections follow the same structure. Each section includes a theoretical background, suggestions and tips for daily work, and issues for reflection and development. The ninth section contains a number of examples of the language enriching activities.

The sections in the Guide are intended to give an answer to questions of practitioners such as: How can I be a linguistic model for the children? How can I collaborate with the parents on linguistic matters? How can observe the children's language and its development be observed? How can I make a rich language environment for children? What kind of language activities are there for children and how should I organise these activities?

The content of the Guide for pre-school practitioners is:

- Introduction
- Section 1: Adults as linguistic role models
- Section 2: Collaboration with parents on linguistic matters
- Section 3: Everyday situations and the physical environment
- Section 4: Suggestions for observing and recording children's language
- Section 5: Working with themes, and emphasis on linguistic factors

- Section 6: How to stimulate children's language use
- Section 7: Playtime to stimulate language
- Section 8: Reflection
- Section 9: Examples of exercises and activities
- References
- Suggestions for further reading
- Websites and useful links

The "Multilingualism for children's everyday life. A guide for practitioners working with young children" is a key component of the MELT project. The material of the Guide emphasises what day care staff should pay attention to regarding children's language development in their day-to-day work, as well as how they can design activities so as to make them linguistically enriching for the children; to make language (work) an integral part of pre-school activities and to focus attention on the minority language. Its aim is to make pre-school teachers aware of the benefits of a multilingual upbringing and to see the importance of language input of the minority language by young children. The Guide of the MELT project will offer them guidelines to support that process.

1.2.2 Awareness-raising and guidance brochure for parents

Apart from the Guide an awareness-raising brochure has been developed targeted at young parents dealing with questions about a bilingual or multilingual upbringing. Most of the ideas included within this brochure are directed at families that use two languages side by side, a though it has also been designed to assist monolingual families that wish to introduce an additional language to their child at a later age. The title of this brochure is: "Multilingualism in everyday life" and describes children's language development up to the age of 4, the benefits of parents who speak a minority language at home and gives some tips and good ideas for multilingualism in daily life. This brochure takes into account the different language situations in Europe and has been translated into the eight languages of the participating MELT partners.

1.2.3 Local events

In the application the awareness-raising tasks at local level are described. Each partner organises local events for parents, practitioners, incubators, and local policy authorities to inform them on the results obtained so far in the MELT project and to raise their awareness about the importance of such an initiative.

During the MELT project a number of awareness-raising local events with parents, practitioners, and incubators have been organised in the four regions. The series started in October 2009 and the last event was held in September 2011. Furthermore, some special events for local authorities have been organised in Finland and Brittany in March 2011, in Wales in April 2011, and in Fryslân in October 2011.

1.2.4 Expert seminars and conferences

On 23 July, 2009, in Dublin all partners gathered for the first time at a pre-project meeting to congratulate each other on the successful application and to discuss organisational matters. In a period of two years (2009-2010) four expert seminars were held in the regions: Aberystwyth, Wales -8/9th October 2009; Tarbes (Occitania), Brittany -18 November 2009; Leeuwarden, Fryslân -14-16 April 2010 and Helsinki, Finland-13 December 2010.

These seminars gave the opportunity to meet all partners face to face for in-depth discussions on the content and expected results of the project. During these discussions project goals were made concrete and new targets were set at the different meetings. Besides, different experts on the pre-school age group were invited to speak, to report research results and to give their views based on wide experience. A closing conference will take place in Brussels in October 2011. At this final conference, all products and results of the MELT project are presented, including this paper. See appendix D for the program of the final conference.

1.2.5 PR and communication

During the MELT project several PR and communication products has been developed:

- Eight hundred copies of the bilingual project flyers: see appendix B for the Welsh-English, Swedish-Finnish, Frisian-Dutch, and Breton-Frensch version.
- The website <u>www.meltproject.eu</u>, where the different versions of the parents' pamphlets, the toolkit, and this research paper will be published online: see also appendix C.
- Quarterly press releases, which are distributed to international, national, and regional media (radio/ television/ journals/ websites etc.)
- A Facebook page, with more than 200 friends.
- Four MELT Newsletters, including news and updated information about the project.
- One scholarly article will be published.

The target audiences will include the project's direct beneficiaries but also a broader group of potential beneficiaries in the EU:

- 50 million speakers of CRSS and lesser used languages in the EU
- 5,000 practitioners and parents in NPLD associate member regions
- Policy-makers from NPLD associate member regions and other regions, national and EU bodies.

1.2.6 MELT the scientific component

Within the MELT project, there is a scientific component that comprises two deliverables: a scientific article on the results of the project and this research paper. The scientific article will look at the outcomes of the incubator phase in which the Guide is tested at the participating pre-schools in the four regions. The research paper will have a more theoretical approach. This research paper presents theoretical backgrounds and practical descriptions of good practices of multilingual early language learning and transmission to children aged 0-4

years in the four regions. It contains no empirical data, but descriptions of situations and models applied in practice.

Further information on the MELT project is available on the project website: www.meltproject.eu

1.3 Introduction to the MELT paper

Provisions for children in the age group from 6 months up to 4 years are different per country. As a result, the terminology also differs between regions. However, professionals, parents, and policymakers face similar issues.

This research paper will try to scientifically underpin themes, that are shared by the regions represented in the MELT project.

- Definitions of Multilingual Early Language Transmission.
- Methodologies for multilingual pre-school teaching and teaching young multilingual children.
- Information on best practices available on pre-school immersion and mother tongue language education.
- Recommendations regarding materials and resources.
- Policy recommendations.

This research paper consists of nine chapters. Chapter 1 includes the introduction, in which the background, the aims, products, and respective organisations of the MELT project are described. In chapter 2 the backgrounds, pre-school institutions, training, and pedagogical guidelines of the four regions are described. Furthermore, the similarities, differences and best practices in the four regions are discussed Chapter 3 defines multilingualism and early language learning (in general) and an overview of the history of BFLA (Bilingual First Language Acquisition) is presented. The definition of MELT (Multilingual Early Language Transmission) is also presented, as defined by the participating partners of the MELT project. Chapter 4 describes several methodologies and immersion programme of mother tongue education used for multilingual early language transmission in the family and in pre-school. Section 3.3 'continuous multilingual development' describes the importance of strengthening of the minority language in pre-school provisions. A model, including the conditions to become a multilingual adult, is presented.

Chapter 5 focuses on materials, resources, and approaches for pre-school education. In section 5.2 the process and results of implementing the MELT Guide in the participating pre-school provisions are described. Chapter 6 describes the policy concerning multilingual early language transmission and contains challenges for the future. Furthermore, recommendations at micro, meso and macro level are described. The annexes, chapters 7-9, consist of contributions by international experts. Chapter 7 contains a paper by Dr. Annick De Houwer: "Early Bilingual Development: the Role of Attitudes and Language Input." Chapter 8 contains a paper by Dr. Tina Hickey: "Immersion Preschooling in Ireland: Training Provision and Best Practice" and in chapter 9 Dr. Gunilla Holm contributed the paper: "Early childhood teacher education focused on multilingual and multicultural issues."

2. Information on best practices in the four regions

This chapter concerns background information on pre-school education in four regions: Fryslân in the Netherlands, the Swedish community in Finland, Wales in UK and Brittany in France. This chapter presents the figure 'Start of pre-, primary and compulsory school in the four MELT regions.' Chapter 2.1 presents the general MELT definition of 'pre-school.' The different types of pre-school provisions in the regions are further clarified and the differences and similarities in the regions are described in chapter 2.2 to 2.5. These chapters include numbers, descriptions and information regarding the four regions from different websites. Most information is obtained from the NPLD pre-school project ⁹ and the Regional dossier series. ¹⁰ Chapter 2.6 shows a summary of practices and approaches, which according to the MELT partners are best to promote the minority language in pre-school education.

Figure 2.1 below presents an overview of the infrastructure of provisions for early childhood education in the four regions, structured for ages of participation. Parents decide on voluntary basis whether or not their children receive pre-primary school education. Sometimes parents choose consciously for their children to attend pre-school provisions for social or educational reasons, and sometimes parents just decide for practical reasons: their children attend a nursery provision while they are both working.

The model distinguishes 'day care' and 'playgroups.' In this paper 'day care' is used as the general terminology for centres like nurseries, crèches, babysitters, childminders etc. These provisions focus on the care of children. Usually no didactic curriculum is used. The terminology 'playgroup' on the contrary is used for any playgroup settings, such as kindergarten or pre-school classes based on a focused curriculum. In playgroups practitioners use a didactic curriculum and mostly they are called and considered 'teacher' by children and parents.

The figure below also presents the start of primary school and the age of compulsory school in the four regions. This model is only an indication, there are exceptions to the rule; some municipalities give advice or expect parents to bring their children to a certain pre-school provision and some day care centres use a curriculum.¹¹

¹⁰ Regional dossier series. Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, http://www.mercator-research-eu/research-projects/regional-dossiers [Accessed August 2011].

⁹ The Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) is an European network which encompasses constitutional, regional and smaller-state languages to promote linguistic diversity in the context of a multilingual Europe. *The questionnaires from the project 'Pre-School Education'* (2010) http://www.npld.eu/currentprojectsbestpractise/pre-schooled/pages/default.aspx [Accessed August 2011].

An overview of ages starting compulsory school in European countries. The Eurydice Network; includes the Member States of the European Union http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/index.cfm?9B1C0068-C29E-AD4D-0AEC-8B4F43F54A28 [Accessed August 2011].

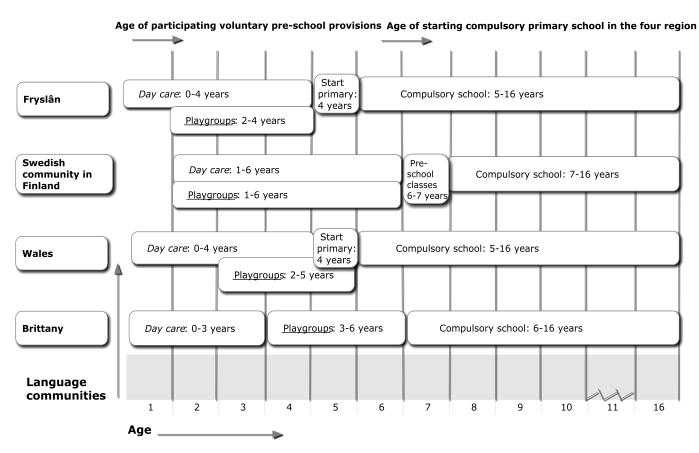


Figure 2.1 Start of pre-, primary and compulsory school in the four MELT regions.

In the above figure the similarities and differences between the four regions become clear, in particular with regard to the start of compulsory primary education. The figure shows that in Wales and Fryslân children can start primary education at the age of 4, and most children do so, it is however compulsory to start school at the age of 5. In Brittany almost all children attend at the age of 3 playgroups based on a focused curriculum, while compulsory primary school starts at the age of 6. Parents and others usually use the term 'school' and not 'playgroups' when they speak about pre-school education for children from 3 to 6 years. In Finland, most children attend some kind of pre-school setting and all children aged 6 attend pre-school classes. The MELT project, however, is mainly focused on the age group of 0-4 years.

A table including statistical data of participation in the various pre-school provisions particular for the age of 0-4 year in Europe is not available. Since Europe has no common childcare system and there are no overall European regulations and legislation, all countries and local authorities have different systems of pre-school education and different public and private childcare facilities with different methods of public funding and payment of fees by parents. Public funding has mostly been directed at children aged from three years up to school-going age (Foundation Findings Childcare services in Europe, 2009: 8-9).¹²

¹² Foundation Findings Childcare services in Europe (2009) *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*. Printed in Denmark

However, the European Commission and the Council of Europe focus on policy on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and improving the quality and effectiveness of education systems across the EU. More recently, childcare investment has begun to be directed towards care services for children under the age of three years. Childcare and preschool provisions have been increasing in quantity. The new childcare targets, established at the 2002 Barcelona European Council Member States, were yet not achieved. These 2010 targets were to provide full-time places in formal childcare arrangements to at least 90% of children aged between three and compulsory school age, and to at least 33% of children under the age of three. ¹³ Only five EU countries exceeded the 90% target and three others are approaching it.

In 2009, Education Ministers decided that at least 95% of the children between the age of 4 and the start of compulsory school-age have to attend pre-school provisions, by the targets of the ECEC policy of 2020^{14} . From numbers of the European Commission $(2011)^{15}$ it seems that France, the Netherlands and the UK already achieved this goal. France has 100% participation in early childhood education, the Netherlands scores 99,5% and the UK 97,3%. In Finland 78%¹⁶ of the six-year-old children participate in pre-school education based on a focused curriculum. In Finland all six-year-old children participate in pre-school education based on a focused curriculum.¹⁷

2.1 Defining pre-school education in the four regions

During the discussions and the process of developing the products of the MELT project, the partners kept one of the project target groups in mind; a minority language pre-school setting for children from 0 to 4 years old. The partners noted that there are different terms and institutions used for pre-primary school settings: day-care centres, kindergartens, nurseries, crèches, playgroups, family care centre, shelters, childminders, pre-school classes etc. Defining and clarifying the term 'pre-school' seems necessary.

According to UNESCO ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) Unit 'early childhood' is defined as: The period from birth to 8 years old. As a time of remarkable brain development, these years lay the foundation for subsequent learning. (...) ECCE is part of a range of

http://www.oph.fi/download/130716 Koulutuksen maaralliset indikaattorit 2010.pdf. [Accessed August 2011].

¹³ Quotes from European reports on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC):

⁻ Commission Communication (2006) COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 'Efficiency and Equity in Education and Training Systems'. Brussels. http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/comm481 en.pdf [Accessed August 2011].

⁻ Council of Europe (2009) Council Conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020). Brussels. [Accessed August 2011].

⁻ Communication from the Commission (2011) Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow. Brussels. [Accessed August 2011].

¹⁴ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER (2011) European Strategic Framework for Education and training (ET 2020) LANGUAGE LEARNING AT PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL: MAKING IT EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE A POLICY HANDBOOK http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/odf/ellpwp_en.pdf (Accessed August 2011).

http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/ellpwp_en.pdf [Accessed August 2011].

15 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSIONS (2011) Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow. Brussels. http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/childhoodcom_en.pdf [Accessed August 2011].

¹⁶ Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland (2001) http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/52/27/2534770.pdf [Accessed August 2011].

¹⁷ Koulutuksen määrälliset indikaattorit 2010, 2011 National Board of Education (p.27)

programmes that attend to health, nutrition, security and learning and which provides for children's holistic development (UNESCO).¹⁸

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of Finland (2000)¹⁹ defines 'pre-school education' as: *Pre-school education involves exploring various phenomena together with children in a thematic and project-type manner, and topics are studied holistically in different subject fields. Many of the preschool subject fields form a flexible continuum with the topics dealt with in the initial education at school. Pre-school education builds a bridge between day care and school instruction (OECD, 2001, p. 21).*

The partners of the MELT project notice that early language learning and minority language and multilingual education is related to 'care,' especially because the children who attend pre-schools are very young. In the above given definitions the term 'holistic' (all parts of the child should be developed) is mentioned. Language acquisition is just a part of the total development of the child. Pre-school staff must have knowledge on all areas of development and they should offer activities appropriate to the overall development of the child. In the MELT project the focus is on language development, increasing the minority vocabulary and the development of multilingual language acquisition and transmission by parents and pre-school teachers.

The MELT project defines 'pre-school' as: The period from 0 until compulsory primary school, during which children attend pre-primary school provisions outside the home. A public provision where children must feel secure in order to be able to benefit from their experiences and to develop in their best natural way. This holds for all kinds of development, including (multilingual and minority) language acquisition. The pedagogic approaches applied in preschool education are always offered in a playful and natural way. Language topics are offered in conscious planned activities in a thematic and project-type manner. The pre-school teacher observes the development of the children and reports the offered vocubalary. Based on these data, a well-documented portfolio can be transferred to primary school and a continuous line from pre-school to primary school with regard to multilingual development of the child can be enhanced, and the position of the actual minority language can be strengthened.

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¹⁸ Website UNESCO: Education http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/early-childhood [Accessed August 2011].

¹⁹Quote from the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) website. The mission of the OECD is to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/52/27/2534770.pdf [Accessed August 2011].

2.2 Fryslân in the Netherlands

2.2.1 Background information

In 1997, the Northern Province of the Netherlands lost its official Dutch name to the Frisian name 'Fryslân.' Nevertheless, 'Friesland' remains in common usage, being the Dutch (and international) name for the province. Fryslân has about 646.486 inhabitants.²⁰ Recent research shows that 84.6% of all inhabitants understand the Frisian language very well (64,6%) or good (20%).²¹ Slightly more than half of the Frisians has Frisian as mother tongue: 56%. And about 50% of the parents speak Frisian to their children.²²

In 2011, there are 43 trilingual (Frisian, Dutch and English) primary schools and 105 bilingual (Frisian and Dutch) and Frisian medium pre-school organisations in the province of Fryslân. It is estimated that more than 10.000 children in the Province Fryslân visit day-care centres, crèches, playgroups or other pre-school organisations.²³

The percentage of children going to day-care centres, based on the statistics of 2007 (assumedly the numbers haven't changed significantly) is about 47%. This depends very much on the area people live in. In rural areas this percentage is lower than in urban areas.²⁴

In 2005, the national Child Care Act ('De Wet kinderopvang') came into force. The main concern of the Act was to set rules for contributions towards the costs of childcare and the quality of child provisions. In 2010, the Child Care Act was changed into the Act OKE ('Ontwikkelingskansen door kwaliteit en educatie', Opportunities through quality education and development). Since then, municipalities are responsible for offering educative programs. Local authorities and the pre-school provisions are responsible to ensure a comprehensive system of recruitment and guidance to pre-school education, in order to develop a continuous line of learning from pre-school to primary school. All early childhood organisations and provisions are involved and work together to stimulate an optimal development of the child.

Language use in the pre-school provisions

All bilingual (Frisian and Dutch) and total immersion (Frisian) pre-school provisions belong to the SFBO network (SFBO, Sintrum Frysktalige Berneopfang²⁵, what can be translated as the Centre for Frisian Language Child Care). In the bilingual provisions practitioners speak either Frisian or Dutch to the children divided in either by periods of time or persons and in monolingual provisions the target and instruction language to the children and parents is only Frisian.

²⁰ Provinsje Fryslân, Fryslân yn sifers- <u>www.fryslân.nl</u> [Accessed June 2011].

²¹ Provinsje Fryslân, De Fryske taalatlas- <u>www.fryslan.nl/taalatlas</u> [Accessed June 2011].

²² Gorter D.& Jonkman R. J. (1995) *Taal yn Fryslân: op 'e nij besjoen.* Leeuwarden: Fryske Akademy.

²³ Provinsje Fryslân, De Fryske taalatlas- www.fryslan.nl/taalatlas [Accessed June 2011].

²⁴ Rijksoverheid, <u>www.rijksoverheid.nl</u> [21/06/2011] Note: the stated percentage is for The Netherlands as a whole, Friesland is more rural so the expectancy is that the percentage in Friesland is lower.

so the expectancy is that the percentage in Friesland is lower. ²⁵ In paragraph 5.2.4 the foundation SFBO will be further described.

Collaboration between pre-school practitioners and parents

Parents often mention they want their children to attend pre-school provisions in order to learn social abilities. For the day care centres it is the least obvious reason. The most often heard reason why parents send their children to day care centres is because of their jobs and the limited availability of other resources, like babysitters or au pairs.

A formal conversation between parents and pre-school teachers takes place at the start, during registration. Usually, when parents, grandparents and other caretakers bring the children to the provisions there are short informal conversations between pre-school teachers and parents. The parent participation depends on the policy of the pre-school institution.

The Child Care Act ('Wet Kinderopvang') states that every institution for pre-school facilities should establish a parents' commission. This commission provides parents the right to advise on subjects such as quality, opening hours, rates and size of the day care centres. This right is translated into a prescriptive document on participation by the supplier of the pre-school facility. The document prescribes the procedures and power of the parents' commission within that facility. Large organisations often have, next to a parents' commission on every location, also a central commission. The national association in favour of the Interests of Parents in Child Care ('BOinK' Belangenvereniging van Ouders in de Kinderopvang), is concerned with the representation of parents and tries to support and enlarge the position of parents in child care. ²⁶

The legislation for preschool education respects the choice of parents. If parents prefer the Frisian language in pre-school settings, they have the freedom to bring their child to a monolingual Frisian pre-school provision.²⁷

2.2.2 Institutions of the pre-school education

In Fryslân the pre-school period is aimed at children aged up to 4 years old. There are different forms, private and public institutions of pre-school education, of which the most commonly used forms are:

Day care centres

These provisions are mainly aimed at working parents. Children may attend from 6 weeks until the age the parents prefer. This is usually until the age of 4 years when children may attend primary school. Parents bring their children 1 or more days or sessions per week. On average in Fryslân, children attend day nursery provisions 2 or 3 working days per week (mostly between 8.00-17.30 hrs.). Some children, especially

²⁶ Brandsen, T, Broersma, F. & Fledderus, J. (2010-2013) *Local welfare in The Netherlands: Housing, employment and child care.* Nijmegen: Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen http://www.wilcoproject.eu/public/assets/img/uploads/WILCO WP2 reports 04 NL.pdf [Accessed June 2011]. This document is a result of the result of the WILCO (Welfare innovations at the local level in favour of cohesion) project and is funded by the European Commission www.wilcoproject.eu

²⁷ The website of the National government 'Rijksoverheid' www.rijksoverheid.nl

those of single parents, attend the provisions 4 or 5 days per week. Depending on the wages of the parents, the government subsidizes 50-80% of the costs.

Play groups

Playgroup provisions are mainly aimed for children aged 2-4 years. Usually children attend them 1 to 3 morning(s) per week or approximately 2,5- 3 hours. Playgroups are financially supported by the municipalities. There are no structural national financial resources for these provisions. Parents pay a contribution, this depends on the municipality inquestion.

Childminders

Childminders are speaking Frisian, or Dutch or bilingual. Childminders (a kind of babysitter, mainly women taking care of the children in their own home while the parents are at work) take care of children of any age. Childminder's are mostly related to the parents, such as a neighbour or a grandparent etc. Care is usually provided for the full working day.

At the child care centre a number of nursing tasks have to be done (sleeping, eating, giving bottle etc.). There are always opportunities for free play, sometimes there is a focused curriculum present and (group) activities are consciously planned. Especially in the play groups, education is an important part of the everyday program, in order to prepare children for primary school. All playgroups in Fryslân do use a didactic curriculum. The playgroup programs contain a mixture of group activities (book reading, talking about it, get instructions for and execute a creative task) and individual activities (having conversations, telling stories, playing a game etc.). Day care and pre-school provisions belong to the Ministry of Education Culture and Science.²⁸

In 2010, The Education Council of the Netherlands advised to the Ministry that all primary schools in the Netherlands should offer education and care for all three year olds during five mornings a week. Also more qualified staff should be trained and educated, in order to prevent language deficits. The Dutch government emphasizes that, by 2011, all children need to attend pre-school before primary school and obliges municipalities to establish preschool provisions, in order to offer children "at risk" additional education. In the four big cities of the Netherlands huge numbers of immigrants are settled. Often their children don't speak Dutch when they start attending primary school at 4 or 5 years. In 2011, the experiment 'the group 0' has started; a class for children aged two and three years with a Dutch language deficiency. ²⁹ In Fryslân, this issue does not apply.

Child-staff ratios and maximum group size

In day care nurseries the size of the group depends on the area where the nursery is located, usually a group consists of 12-14 children. The child - practitioner ratio is approximately 5:1. Usually a student is added to the staff of the group.

In playgroup the group size consist of up to 15 children. They are usually lead by one paid pre-school teacher and one volunteer or student.

²⁸ OC&W, Ministry of Education Culture and Science urged the day care centres and the playgroup provisions to attune and to integrate pre-school provisions in primary education, creating centres for children from birth to age 12. Deunk, M. (2009) *Discourse Practices in Preschool. Young Childrens's Participation in Every Classroom Activities.* Zutphen: Wörhrman Print Services.

²⁹ The website of the National government 'Rijksoverheid' <u>www.rijksoverheid.nl</u> - toddlers and language delayshttp://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/leerachterstand/taalachterstand-bij-peuters [Accessed June 2011].

2.2.3 Training of practitioners

In day care centres and playgroups qualified staff will guide and take care of the children. In addition, without special training volunteers (mostly a parent or grandparent) or students are often present. In the Netherlands, the practitioner is trained for working at day care centres during a study of 3 or 4 years. They pass the exam in the field of 'social pedagogic work', at level 3 or 4 (the highest level) in secondary vocational education and training. This exam is valued much lower than the Bachelor of Education. Pre-school teachers in playgroups are usually higher educated than practitioners in day care centres.

Some students who are studying at the third level (University) can also become day care centre teachers when they can show their grades from the first year of higher education, but this concerns just a small percentage of all practitioners. Most of the practitioners have passed their exam after an in-house training period, where the practitioners train their skills in practice. Practitioners can go to school for about 80% of the time and 20% in house training or practitioners choose to have 60% of the time in house training and 40% guidance and theory at school.

2.2.4 Pedagogical guidelines and SFBO

In the Netherlands there are many pre-school materials published for children aged 2-6 years. These different methodologies, used by practitioners, are aiming to develop all parts of the child. Some popular programmes and materials are:

- 'Puk & Ko' (A program for playgroup practitioners, aims for a comprehensive development of toddlers);
- 'Spel aan huis' (Home Game: program to increase skills of children and parents);
- 'Piramide' (Pyramid: program to promote and stimulate the overall development of children);
- 'Kaleidoscoop'(A prevention program of educational delays);
- 'Voorleesproject' (Reading books: project to promote story telling).

In Fryslân pre-school education means that children learn through the medium of play. That means: reading to the children, playing with toys, constructing things etc. Usually teachers use themes or projects to do things with the children. For example, one of the themes is "summer". Within this theme, practitioners read books, the children can make drawings or other little works, they sing songs, maybe the pre-school teachers have the ability to go out with the children to see what summer looks like and they can make a little play for the parents to show them what they've learnt about "summer". For Frisian, a special program has been developed. It's called "Sânglêsrige", or in English "Hourglass-series". This series contains materials and of course a manual for the teachers, per theme. The "Tomke" project is aimed at toddlers, parents and professionals working with young children. All activities and materials (books, songs, activities and TV programs) are in the Frisian language. The role-model "Tomke" understands and speaks only Frisian.

The Foundation **SFBO** was founded in 1989 as the Foundation "Stifting Pjutteboartersplak". This foundation started with an explicit language policy and which consists of two goals:

- a) to provide Frisian medium and bilingual services for the pre-school sector;
- b) to establish a Frisian-speaking environment for young children.

The Foundation establishes Frisian medium playgroups; they enroll both Frisian and Dutch-speaking children. In 2005, the 'Stifting Pjutteboartersplak' was changed into 'Stifting Frysktalige Berneopfang,' which is responsible for the running of bilingual (Frisian and Dutch) or monolingual (Frisian) playgroups. In 1999, the Provincial Government issued a grant to promote the use of Frisian at playgroups and day care centres and to upgrade the educational work at pre-school level to a professional level. For the improvement of the professional quality of playgroup and day care practitioners a Quality Framework has been developed consisting of the elements: language command, didactics, the language environment, and language policy. Through guidance and visitations the pre-school provisions are encouraged to increase their qualities in these fields. A commission visits the provisions and judges whether these have translated and implemented the criteria sufficiently. Organisations are given the opportunity to develop and implement their policy in three phases. Every phase has a different character:

- Phase 1: Orientation; the organization starts developing a language policy and awarenessraising amongst the parents.
- Phase 2: The language policy is implemented.
- Phase 3: In this phase language policy and implementation are perfectioned.

As a result of this process SFBO issues certificates to playgroups and day care centres that meet the set criteria. A playgroup and day care centre that receives a certificate obtains an extra grant from the provincial government.

The project was evaluated in 2006. The main conclusions were that the professional qualification of the practicioners has increased greatly, that the qualification structure is transparent and on a level comparable with other provisions in Fryslân. On the basis of these results the provincial administration has granted a permanent financial structure for Frisian medium pre-school provisions.

In January 2011, the target of the Province of Fryslân has been achieved. On December 31st, 2010 there were at least one hundred Frisian playgroups and day cares, as agreed with SFBO. In the future, the number of Frisian medium and bilingual nurseries and playgroups will increase by at least 10 provisions per year.

2.3 Swedish community in Finland

2.3.1 Background information

Swedish is one of the two official languages in Finland. The majority of the inhabitants in Finland are Finnish-speaking but a minority speaks Swedish as its first language. In 2008, Finland counted about 5.3 million³⁰ inhabitants, of whom 91.7% had Finnish registered as their mother tongue, 5.5% Swedish, 0.03% the Saami/Sami languages and 2.7% any other language.³¹ The number of bilingual families (one parent Finnish-speaking – the other parent Swedish-speaking) is increasing. Swedish is the mother tongue of about 275,000 people in Finland.

The Swedes in Finland live in limited areas along the coast. On the south coast in the Uusimaa/Nyland province with the capital Helsinki/Helsingfors, and in the archipelago west of Turku/Åbo. The other area is Ostrobothnia, Pohjanmaa/Österbotten, situated on the west coast around the city of Vaasa/Vasa.

There are no (recent) statistics based on language regarding the number of children in Swedish pre-school, however there are statistics for the whole country. In 2003, $96\%^{32}$ of all 6-year-olds took part in pre-primary school education, and more than half of these children also attended day care. In 2006 there were 186.058^{33} children in day care (131.079 in day care institutions). In 2006, there were 3.634^{34} beginners in Swedish schools. Most of them attended pre-school the previous year.

For Swedish speakers and for many bilingual families, the natural choice is to bring their children in Swedish day-care. Swedish-speaking schools and day care centres are considered a corner stone for the Swedish language and culture in Finland. The national social and health and education authorities have a Swedish department on a par with the Finnish ones. Education is an important element and a unifying factor in the Swedish network. There are over 440³⁵ Swedish speaking day care centres in Finland.

For Finnish-speaking pre-school children there exists in some areas a possibility to take part in an early total immersion programme (this possibility exists for a period of twenty years) where the medium of instruction is Swedish. The target group are monolingual Finnish-

³⁰ Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, *Regional Dossiers* http://www.mercator-research.eu/research-projects/regional-dossiers. The number of inhabitants was 5.296. 033 in 2007 according to Väestörekisterikeskus/Befolkningsregistercentralen, the Population Register Center in Helsinki, Finland. http://www.vaestorekisterikeskus.fi [Accessed June 2011].

³¹ Liebkind, K, M. Tandefelt & T. Moring (2007). The Swedish speaking Finns. International Journal of the Sociology of Language 187/188. In Björklund S. et. al... (2011) *Trilingual Primary Education in Europe. Some developments with regard to the provisions of trilingual primary education in minority language communities of the European Union*. Leeuwarden/Ljouwert: Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning.

³² NPLD, the questionnaires from the project 'Pre-School Education' (2010). http://www.npld.eu/currentprojectsbestpractise/pre-schooled/pages/default.aspx [Accessed June 2011].

³³ Varttua on Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitoksen/Institutet för hälsa och välfärd (THL, National Institute for Health and Welfare) in

³³ Varttua on Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitoksen/Institutet för hälsa och välfärd (THL, National Institute for Health and Welfare) in Regional Dosier (1997) Swedish The Swedish language in education. Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning.

³⁴ Finnäs, F. ed. (2007). *Finlandssvenskarna 2005 – en statistisk rapport. Finlandssvensk rapport nr 43.* Helsingfors/Helsinki: Universitetstryckeriet/Yliopistopaino. Available at http://ft.huset.fi/sve [Accessed June 2011].

³⁵ NPLD, the questionnaires from the project 'Pre-School Education' (2010). http://www.npld.eu/currentprojectsbestpractise/pre-schooled/pages/default.aspx and http://svenskskola.fi/sok.php?kommun= ALLA &typ=1&submit.x=52&submit.y=23 [Accessed June 2011]

speaking children; the idea is that these children will become functionally bilingual in Swedish and Finnish through the immersion programme. Most research in the field of immersion is carried out at Vaasan yliopisto/Vasa universitet (Vaasa university). ³⁶ In 1980, the concept of immersion was first implemented in the Finnish-language school system in Vaasa, but the concept has spread especially to the area around the capital city Helsinki.

There are private and municipality immersion pre-school provisions around the bilingual municipalities of Finland and more than 40 Swedish immersion day care centres in Finland, and the demand for immersion provisions as well for the Swedish care centres is growing.

Language use in the pre-school provisions

The pre-school provisions are categorised on the basis of their language of instruction in Swedish-language and Finnish-language institutions. The Swedish immersion pre-school teacher usually speaks fluently both Finnish and Swedish. This is typical for the urban bilingual areas in Finland, where Swedish-speaking families often live in a Finnish-speaking context.

Some of the pre-school settings are bilingual with separate language groups within the institution, according to the language background of the children. You can also find some bilingual settings, with varying pedagogical and linguistically approaches.

There also exist day care institutions with another language than Swedish or Finnish as the medium of instruction (for example, English, Russian).

Collaboration between pre-school practitioners and parents

If parents choose for a monolingual Swedish pre-school provision, they want their child to attend a Swedish day care group in order to give the child a chance to a good Swedish language competence when entering primary school. The parent participation depends on the policy of the pre-school institution.

2.3.2 Institutions of the pre-school education

According to the law every child has her/his subjective right to day care in her/his mother tongue. Day care must be offered to every child, if the parents so wish. Pre-school education starts for children from between the ages of 9 months and continue until they start compulsory primary school starts usually in August of the year when the child turns seven. Infants under age one are rarely enrolled in care centres because Finland offers generous parental leave support programs for parents in their child's first year of life.

In Finland, there are different kinds of day care institutions for children who have not yet started pre-school classes. Pre-school classes start at the age of 6 prior to primary school.

In the Swedish community in Finland the institutions prior to primary school are:

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³⁶ Buss, M. & Laurén, C. (1996) *Immersion Requires a Wide Network. International connections provide new ideas for teaching.* University of Vaasa. Translation by Sari Suistala. http://www.uwasa.fi/midcom-serveattachmentguid-29d06a4b29e85da1ac2963a34c5c693d/lang.pdf

Day care or family day care centres

Children who do not start school yet and schoolchildren up to and including the age of 12 attend this institution. Most of the children are aged between 1 and 5 years. Children attend the centres for at least 3 hours a day or 15 hours per week. Municipalities are obliged to provide these (also after-school) centres for parents who are working or studying. Day care centres are to be offered as close to their home or school as possible. During the day a lot of time is devoted for play and creativity.

Open pre-school

Children in the range from 1 to 6 years of age. According to the National Agency for Education, children who have not yet started school and who do not have a preschool place are entitled to have access to open pre-school. A parent or another adult accompanies the child. Open pre-school can also function as a supplement to pedagogical care. A lot of time is devoted to play and creativity.

• Pre-school classes

A pre-school year for every 6-year-old is offered free of charge. The reform of pre-primary school education for six-year-olds is being implemented in Finland as a 'mixed model', in which the local authorities may decide whether to provide pre-school education within day care or school system. About 90 % of the 6-year-old children in Finland attend this preschool, which is a preparation for primary school (at least 700 hours teaching). In 2004 about 700 6-year old children attended the Swedish-language pre-school connected to primary school.³⁷ A pre-school day consists of both free play and guided activities. Daily routines are for example playing outside twice a day and resting in between. In day-care the children are given breakfast, lunch and snack every day. The pre-school is open between 6.30 and 18 hrs. from Mondays to Fridays.

Child home care

In child home care the child can be looked after by anyone, e.g. either of the parents or some other relative, or a private child care provider. The allowance can be granted to families having a child under the age of 3 who is not in municipal day care. If granted, a small addition is also paid for other children under school age who are looked after in the same way. Three quarters of Finnish children under three-years old and a third of all children under seven-years old are cared at home, mostly by their mothers.³⁸

Children start at different ages and attend for varying numbers of hours a week. The different provisions are to help providing an environment that stimulates children's development and learning, and enable parents to combine parenthood with work or studies. Municipalities are obliged to provide 24 hours day-care during weekends, evenings and nights if its needed due to the parents working hours or pursuing studies or when their parents are unemployed or on parental leave.

³⁷ Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, *Regional Dossiers* http://www.mercator-research.eu/research-projects/regional-dossiers [Accessed June 2011].

³⁸ Repo, K. (2003) *On the Nordic Social Care Model: Finland as an example.* Research Fellow Department of Social Policy and Social Work 33014 University of Tampere, Finland http://www.sare-emakunde.com/media/anual/archivosAsociados/03REPO,K.-pon_Engl_1.pdf [Accessed June 2011].

Child-staff ratios and maximum group size

The ratio is 1 practitioner for every 4 children under age 3 years; 1 trained adult at every day care is needed. For every 7 children over 3 years 1 trained adult is needed. In family day care, the ratio per day care parent is 4, plus one half day pre-school or school child including day care parents' own (under school age) children. ³⁹

In pre-school education, for 6 years-olds, the maximum ratio is 1 teacher (with an assistant) for 13 children, with the recommendation for the maximum group size of 20 children. When arranging part-time service the ratio for 3-6-year-olds is one to thirteen and for children under three the ratio is the same as in full-time service. These ratios apply also to pre-school education when provided in day care centres. In family day care, the maximum group is 4 full-day children, plus 1 half day child. In child care centres, there are no group size requirements. The adult-child ratio in day care centres is one to seven for 3-6-year-olds and one to four for children under the age of three in full-time service.

2.3.3 Training of practitioners

All teacher education is Swedish had until 2006 been part of Åbo Academy University. Due to a change in law in 2006 other bilingual universities can now share the responsibility for educating teachers in Swedish. A new early childhood teacher education program in Swedish at the University of Helsinki started in September 2011. There was a great need for this program to be located in southern Finland. (See Gunilla Holm, chapter9).

The day care institutions are led by a pre-school teacher who is required to have at least a secondary-level degree, a university bachelor degree, mostly in the field of 'social welfare and health care' or 'social sciences with an additional pedagogical course.' When group size exceeds 13, the teacher in pre-school must have an assistant with at least an upper secondary level training.

One in three of the staff must have a post-secondary level degree (Bachelor of Education, Master of Education or Bachelor of Social Sciences). Mostly the different institutions, led by preschool teachers, are supported by other kinds of caring staff.

The pre-school teacher in the Swedish pre-school is commonly a native speaker of Swedish, usually the pre-school teachers speaks fluent Finnish.

2.3.4 Pedagogical guidelines and Folkhälsan

The aim of pre-school education is to improve children's capacity of learning; in fact children are taught new facts and new skills through play. The national curriculum guidelines on Early

³⁹ Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care (2006) http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/16/2/37423404.pdf [Accessed June 2011].

Childhood Educational and care provide guidance for implementing the content of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Finland.

Teaching material in Swedish and in Finnish for the pre-school teachers is available for a variety of thematic areas. Much of the material used for the Swedish-speaking children is imported from Sweden. Swedish publishers in Finland do also produce teaching material in Swedish (*Editum/Schildts* and *Söderströms*), and they do have an agreement with publishers in Sweden about importing teaching material. Also the faculty of education at Åbo Akademi⁴⁰ publishes material for pre-school teachers.

Folkhälsan is a Swedish-speaking NGO (non-governmental organization) in the social welfare and health care sector in Finland. It carries out scientific research and provides social welfare and health care services as well as information and counseling in order to promote health and quality of life. Since 1999 Folkhälsan has also worked on supporting language acquisition for children aged 0 - 15 and promoting immersion education.

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⁴⁰ Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, *Regional Dossiers* http://www.mercator-research-eu/research-projects/regional-dossiers [Accessed June 2011].

2.4 Wales in UK

2.4.1 Background information

Throughout the world there are about 750,000 people who speak Welsh, mainly in the west of the UK, in Wales (611,000) ⁴¹ and Britain (133,000). ⁴² Welsh is a Celtic language, closely related to Cornish and Breton. The UK Government signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in March 2000 in respect of Welsh , Gaelic, Irish and Ulster-Scots. In all, 52 clauses were signed, relating to linguistic rights for Wales and other parts of the UK.The 2001 Census shows that 20.8% ⁴³ of the population of Wales said that they could speak Welsh.

In the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, in response to ever-increasing political pressure, the UK Government instituted a consultation process to ascertain whether widespread support existed at the time for further legislation of the Welsh language. These consultations were partially responsible for prompting the establishment of the non-statutory Welsh Language Board, to advise the Secretary of State for Wales on matters connected with the language. Full recognition for Welsh education came in 1988, when the Education Reform Act gave Welsh the status of a core subject of the National Curriculum in Wales in Welshmedium schools, defined in the Act as 'Welsh speaking schools', and the status of a foundation subject in the rest of the schools in Wales. Welsh became a compulsory subject for all pupils in Wales at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (i.e. up to age 14) in 1990. In 1999 it became a compulsory subject at Key Stage 4; this meant that all pupils in Wales study Welsh (either as a first or a second language) for 11 years, from the ages of 5 to 16.

Welsh-medium and bilingual education is available to every child in Wales, according to the wishes of the parents. So has Wales a strong Childcare Policy, so that they can provide best-quality childcare and early learning for children.⁴⁴ All local authorities have pre-schools which provide a monolingual policy (only Welsh or only English) or bilingual (Welsh-English) pre-school education.

Language use in the pre-school provisions

Below the language use in the provisions in Wales:

Welsh-Medium Setting

Welsh is the language of the setting. Welsh is the language of all activities, and is the language of communication with all children and young people. It is also the language of

⁴¹ The Welsh Language Board indicated in 2004 that 611,000 people (21.7% of the population of Wales in households or communal establishments) were able to speak Welsh. "Welsh Language Use Survey: the report" (PDF). http://www.byigwlb.org.uk/English/publications/Publications/4068.pdf. [Accessed June 2011].

⁴² Wikipedia http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Welsh (taal) [Accessed June 2011].

⁴³ http://www.byig-wlb.org.uk/English/welshlanguage/Pages/TheHistoryofWelsh.aspx [Accessed June 2011].

⁴⁴ The Wales Childcare Policy Map (PDF) for a complete overview: http://www.walesppa.org/USERFILES/FILE/CHILDCARE%20POLICY%20MAP%20-%20WALES.PDF [Accessed June 2011].

the setting's administration. The setting communicates with parents either in Welsh or in both Welsh and English according to parental preference.

English-Medium Setting

English is used as languages within the setting. With some children and young people English is the language of communication and is the language of all activities. For other children and young people English is the language of communication, and is the language of all activities and used for the setting's administration. The setting communicates with parents in English.

Bilingual Setting

Both Welsh and English are used as languages within the setting. Welsh and English are used as languages of communication with the children and young people and both languages are used for activities. Both languages are used for the setting's administration. The setting communicates with parents either in Welsh or in Welsh and English according to parental preference.

Predominantly English-Medium Setting with some use of Welsh

English is the main language of the setting. English is the language of the majority of activities, and is the main language of communication with all children and young people. Some Welsh is introduced to all children and young people through the use of greetings, songs, stories and games. The proportion of Welsh used varies according to the linguistic ability of the staff. English is the language of the setting's administration. Some settings communicate with parents either in Welsh or in both Welsh and English according to parental preference.

There are over 500 Welsh-medium daycare and Welsh-medium playgroups across Wales. 45 In 2000/2001, 12,954⁴⁶ children attending Welsh medium playgroups (including 'Cylch Ti a Fi' mother and toddler groups). There were 935 playgroup leaders in Welsh medium playgroups.

Collaboration between pre-school practitioners and parents

Parents decide which pre-school provisions their children attend. Sometimes parents are also learners of the Welsh language. Some pre-school provisions offer language courses for parents, they can participate into the Welsh speaking groups and acquire the Welsh language. However, the participation of the parents depends on the policy of the pre-school organisations.

2.4.2 Institutions of the pre-school education

Before statutory educational provision (the name of compulsory primary education in UK), which starts at the age 4,5 / 5, there is a range of provision for younger children from a very early age (sometimes from 6 weeks old) up to school age. Some provide only for children from 3 months, or even 6 months and above. It depends on the policy and local authorities

⁴⁵ NPLD, the questionnaires from the project 'Pre-School Education' (2010). http://www.npld.eu/currentprojectsbestpractise/pre-

schooled/pages/default.aspx [Accessed June 2011].

46 Number of the Welsh Assembly Government . Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, Regional Dossiers http://www.mercator-research.eu/research-projects/regional-dossiers [Accessed June 2011].

of the nursery and playgroups. In Wales there has been also a growth in the private sector provision of these facilities, to take care of the children at somebody's home.

In Wales, pre-school education is provided in the main groups; playgroups and nurseries. In local authorities there are differences in policy and language use:

• Welsh-medium playgroups

Children range from 2 to 5 years of age. These provisions are members of the Cylchoedd Meithrin. ⁴⁷ A setting where children are offered play and learning experiences through the medium of Welsh, whilst also providing valuable help and support to families from non-Welsh speaking backgrounds who have the desire to learn Welsh. The playgroups operate for 2 to 3 hours in the morning and/or afternoon mainly during term time.

Parent and toddler groups

In these groups (Cylch Ti a Fi⁴⁸) attend children from birth to school age and their parents. With the aim to offer parents/carers an opportunity to enjoy playing with their children and socialise in an informal Welsh atmosphere. The activities will reinforce the use of Welsh language at home and gives non-Welsh speaking families the opportunity to use Welsh for the first time with their children. Parents are responsible for their own children.

• English-medium playgroups

As with the Welsh-medium playgroups children are from 2 to 5 years old. Pre-school provisions who have English as an instruction are members of the Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association (WPPA⁴⁹) They give 'Blas ar laith' courses as an introduction to the Welsh language for early years settings.

Day Nurseries

Day nurseries may be either Welsh-medium or English-medium. Welsh-medium nurseries are usually members of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. So Some day nurseries offer full day service for children aged between six weeks and 5 years, mostly for working parents.

Childminders

Childminders are Welsh, or English or bilingual.⁵¹ Childminders (a sort of babysitter, mostly females taking care of the children in their house while the parents are working) take care of children aged between 0 and 5 years old that are not related to the childminder and for reward in the childminder's own home. Care is usually provided for the full working day.

A nursery or playgroup class in a local primary school

A nursery or playgroup class in the building of the primary school is either Welshmedium or English-medium, it depends of the policy of the primary school. The ages of starting at this classes are different, all are up till 5 years old.

Local authorities and municipalities will not be expected to provide childcare direct but will

⁴⁷ These belong to an organisation called Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (MYM), now called, in 2011, Mudiad Meithrin (MM), - http://www.mym.co.uk/index.cfm?UUID=DE0484E7-70C8-4A56-A23367B950C328B3&language=en [Accessed June 2011].

⁴⁸ http://www.mym.co.uk/index.cfm?UUID=D078C930-D56F-E4BD-52647C3C3C3C3C40 [Accessed June 2011].

⁴⁹ Their umbrella organisation is called the Wales Pre-school Playgroup Association (WPPA) - http://www.walesppa.org
⁵⁰ English-medium playgroups. Many English-medium nurseries (but not all) are members of the National Day Nurseries Association Cymru (NDNA Cymru) - http://www.ndna.org.uk [Accessed June 2011].

⁵¹ Many childminders (again not all) are members of the National Child Minding Association (NCMA) http://www.ncma.org.uk/MainWebSite/Homepageb51465f4.aspx?Map=163EB4336F1F8E141AF4FDF3DCD0FDA9 [Accessed June 2011].

be expected to work with local private, voluntary and independent sector providers to meet local need. They have the duty to secure a free minimum amount of early learning and care for all 3 and 4 year olds whose parents want it.

Child-staff ratios and maximum group size

The staff -child ratios will vary according to the age of the children:

- years 1 qualified member of staff to every 3 children
- 2-3 years 1 qualified member of staff to every 4 children
- 3-5 years 1 qualified member of staff to every 8 children

In a nursery or playgroup class in a local primary school the staff- child ratio is 1 member of staff to every 13 children. The maximum number of children who may be appropriately cared for by a particular provider may be fewer than the maximum numbers set out in these ratios. ⁵²

2.4.3 Training of practitioners

Most practitioners working in pre-school settings hold a Level 2 or Level 3 qualification in Early Years and Childcare. The person in charge must have at least 2 years' experience of working in a day care setting and have a recognised level 3 childcare qualification from the National Qualifications Framework (NNEB, CACHE⁵³ Diploma in Childcare, NVQ Level 3 or equivalent). On some courses students are college based, but have contact time with children in early years settings. On other courses e.g NVQ (National Vocational Qualifications) students are mainly based in early years settings.

Once practitioners are in post, professional development opportunities are provided by national organisations such as Mudiad Meithrin, or training courses run by the Local Authorities.

2.4.4 Pedagogical guidelines, Mudiad Meithrin and The Welsh Language Board

Parallel to the Frisian figure "Tomke", in Wales there is for young children the figure "Dewin", Welsh for wizard, a character developed through Mudiad Meithrin, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years experiences through the medium of Welsh.

There is a curriculum for 3-7 year old children in Wales developed, the 'Foundation Phase'. 54

⁵²Valuation Office Agency, Section 337: Day Nurseries, Nursery Schools and other Day Care facilities for under Fives. http://www.voa.gov.uk/corporate/Publications/Manuals/RatingManual/RatingManualVolume5/sect337/rat-man-vol5-sec337.html [Accessed June 2011].

⁵³ CACHE stands for Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education.

⁵⁴ Welsh Government website http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/earlyyearshome/foundation_phase/?lang=en [Accessed June 2011].

It combines what currently was called 'Early Years Education' (for 3 to 5-year-olds) and 'Key Stage 1' (5 to 7-year-olds) of the National Curriculum. To support the rollout of the Foundation Phase, a statutory framework, 'Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales', is available. There are 7 areas of learning in this curriculum:

- Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity
- Language, Literacy and Communication Skills
- Mathematical Development
- Welsh Language Development (in English-medium schools and settings)
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

In the Foundation Phase, emphasis is placed on developing knowledge, skills and understanding through experiential learning.

Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin⁵⁵ has developed several courses:

1). CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Early Years Care and Education (Welsh-medium)

This is a joint enterprise between <u>CACHE</u> (Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education) and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. This course is for leaders, and deputy leaders with responsibility for an early years setting.

The course is divided into four units:

Planning and Framework of the Welsh-medium Provision
 Child Development
 The Learning Environment

2). CACHE Level 2 Certificate in Early Years Care and Education (Welsh-medium)

This is a joint enterprise between <u>CACHE</u> (Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education) and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. This Certificate course is suitable for assistants, parents and carers working under supervision in an early years setting.

The course is divided into four units:

The Development of Children and Needs Providing **Experiences** and **Activities** for Young Children Working Within Welsh-medium Settings

3). Cam wrth Gam National Training Scheme:

This offers training at Levels 3 and 4 of the Children's Care, Learning and Development (CCLD) NVQ, for those wishing to work in Welsh-medium early years care and education settings.

Placements are organised for candidates in cylchoedd meithrin, day nurseries and Welshmedium nursery classes in schools across Wales.

Candidates work towards their qualification by:

*learning and direct experiences in the workplace

^{*} The Role of the Welsh Medium Early Years Setting

^{*} The Environment for Young Children

⁵⁵Nowadays called Mudiad Meithrin: http://www.mym.co.uk [Accessed June 2011].

The Cam wrth Gam programme also delivers Level 2 training through the Genesis programme.

It also works with 17 Welsh-medium secondary schools, enabling these schools to deliver CACHE Award, Certificate and Diploma courses in Childcare Education at Level 2 and 3.

Mudiad Meithrin is a voluntary organisation. It aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh. Welsh medium early years' education is provided throughout Wales by Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (MYM the Welsh medium nursery association), which was established in 1971. In 2011, the organisation is just called Mudiad Meithrin. It provides Welsh language immersion teaching and support for children from Welsh and English speaking homes. The aim of Mudiad Meithrin is to promote the education and development of children under 5 years old through the medium of Welsh. Early years care and education of a high standard through the medium of Welsh is provided in Cylchoed d Ti a Fi and Cylchoe dd Meithrin. The aimis to give every child in Wales under statutory school age the opportunity to take advantage of the linguistic experiences offered in these groups. These groups are subsidised by MYM and provide training for staff as Education and lesser used languages 14 well as giving practical support by finding appropriate accommodation and resources. Mudiad Meithrin also provides help for pupils with special needs via its "Extra Hands" scheme. Mudiad Meithrin receives substantial funding an nually from the Welsh Language Board to support and develop this provision.

The Welsh Language Board is a statutory organisation funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. It was established in December 1993 as part of the Welsh Language Act 1993. Its main function is to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language. Its aim is to work for the welfare and future of the Welsh language.

^{*}attending a series of workshops every term

^{*}e-learning

2.5 Brittany in France

2.5.1 Background information

In January 2007, the population of historic Brittany was estimated to be 4,365,500.56 Approximately 450,000 people understand Breton and the most recent census (2007) shows about 200,000 speakers.

The Breton language is spoken mainly by inhabitants in the region of Brittany in the west of France, but also spoken in the main cities in the east called Breizh Uhel 'Upper Brittany'. Almost all speakers are bilingual, they also speak fluent French. Breton language is a regional language in France. It is recognized in the French constitution as the other regional languages of France since 2008: "The regional languages are part of the French heritage". Traditionally Breton is the language of a large part of Brittany, but over the centuries the linguistic border gradually moved westwards. Linguistically, Breton forms part of the Brittonic branch of the Celtic languages, to which Welsh and Cornish also belong.⁵⁷

Several factors⁵⁸ have contributed to the decrease in numbers of speakers. Some social and economic developments have led to the decrease of Breton speakers; most Breton-speakers were farmers, fishermen and people in the rural areas, Breton was affected particularly by economic changes such as migration towards the cities in the last 30 years. Further, some official State behaviour was negative for the Breton language; In 1972, Mr Georges Pompidou, then President of France, stated that there was no place for regional languages.

However, since the Deixonne law (1951⁵⁹) and subsequent implementation measures, Breton language and culture may be taught for up to three hours per week in public education if the teacher is willing and able to do so. To preserve the Breton language and culture a few parents created the first Diwan⁶⁰ school at Lampaul-Ploudalmézeau (Breton: Lambaol-Gwitalmeze) near Brest in 1977. The Diwan is an organisation of parents and teachers who wish to create cultural surroundings favouring the Breton language by means of schools. The first bilingual class in a public school opened in 1983 and the first bilingual class in a catholic school opened in 1990⁶¹.

⁵⁶ Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breton_language [Accessed June 2011].

Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, Regional Dossiers http://www.mercatorresearch.eu/research-projects/regional-dossiers [Accessed June 2011].

For more descriptions about the factors which have led to Breton becoming a threatened language: Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, Regional Dossiers http://www.mercator-research.eu/research-projects/regional-dossiers

A primary school teacher explained in a letter how the love of Breton is not incompatible with the love of France and how pedagogically the use of Breton is a tremendous tool to achieve a higher degree of fluency and accuracy in French. The letter is addressed to Maurice Deixonne, who was in charge to draft the legislative proposal which led to the formal, but limited, recognition of regional languages in 1951. The original letter can be found in OURS (Office Universitaire de Recherche Socialiste, Paris) http://lslvm-pm4.ecs.soton.ac.uk/2239/ [Accessed June 2011].

The Diwan website: http://www.diwanbreizh.org/?lang=french [Accessed June 2011].

⁶¹ NPLD, the questionnaires from the project 'Pre-School Education' (2010). http://www.npld.eu/currentprojectsbestpractise/preschooled/pages/default.aspx [Accessed June 2011].

The Finistère department subsidizes to the maintenance of bilingual classes and the development of learning materials (2.000.000 euros in 2002⁶²). The director of the Académie of Rennes launched the idea of drafting a cultural charter for all public schools, which should promote the cultural identity of Brittany through teaching, not only by integrating a regional interpretation to subjects already taught, but to also enhance the possibilities of teaching Breton.

In the early 2000s non-profit organizations started advertising campaigns about education in Breton and some local authorities supported parent and student initiatives, on how become a bilingual teacher.

There is a convention between the Conseil général du Finistère⁶³ and Divskouarn⁶⁴ stating that this institution is supporting the development of Breton in pre-school education. But also day care centre in Brittany are free to have a Breton project or not.

Language use in the pre-school provisions

Most of the pre-school settings are in Lower Brittany for the 0-3 year-old children. There are many more Breton medium pre-schools in big cities and in Upper Brittany for the 3-4 year-old than there are for the 0-3 year-old. 99.6%⁶⁵ of the children aged three attend pre-school provisions. French is almost exclusively the medium of instruction in pre-schools in Brittany. Breton is the home language for only a small percentage of the pupils. Only some pre-school provisions make use of the legal possibility to spend up to three hours weekly on regional language and culture. In bilingual and immersion pre-school settings Breton and French are used. Nevertheless, in the catholic bilingual system, English is taught as well. There are also pre-primary classes of public bilingual schools where children have fifteen hours of activities in French and twelve hours in Breton.

Pre-primary schools where Breton is used are mainly based in towns all over Brittany from Nantes to Brest and from Rennes to Quimper. In the Diwan's schools, the child is immersed in a totally Breton language environment, so it can quickly understand the language, and subsequently speak the language effectively. Reading activities leading towards literacy training are also conducted in Breton. In the public bilingual system, as well as in the catholic bilingual system, every subject has to be taught in the two languages.

Since 2009, Finistère⁶⁶, with the support of Régional Council of Brittany, subsidizes Divskouarn. The social and health services dealing with mothers and children send a leaflet about early bilingualism (Breton and France) to every pregnant mother. Every practitioner working with young children of Finistère also receives a leaflet.

⁶⁴ Divskouarn is one of the MELT partners. The further explanation of the organisations is presented in paragraph 5.4.4. Pedagogical guidelines, Divskouarn and Regional Council of Brittany.

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⁶² Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, Regional Dossiers http://www.mercator-research-projects/regional-dossiers [Accessed June 2011]

research.eu/research-projects/regional-dossiers [Accessed June 2011].

63 Since 2005 the Conseil général du Finistère gives Divskouarn financial support.

⁶⁵ Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, *Regional Dossiers* http://www.mercator-research.eu/research-projects/regional-dossiers [Accessed June 2011].

⁶⁶ Le Conseil general du Finistère is the department in the westernmost region of France and Bretagne.

Collaboration between pre-school practitioners and parents

During the MELT project Divskouarn developed a questionnaire for parents of the 10 preschool institutions who participated. Of the 77 families observed, parents and grandparents completed a questionnaire. These results only display a tendency, but this tendency is likely to come might probably come up as close to reality. ⁶⁷

There are 17 different languages observed by parents and grandparents within the 10 participating pre-school settings. 97% of the parents speaks French as a main language with 3% speaking Breton. Breton is usually the second language of the grandparents. Breton is spoken by 26% of the grandparents. As far as the parents' mother tongue is concerned, 73% of the mothers speak French to their children and 71% of the fathers. 2% of mothers and fathers speak Breton as a first language to their children. The results shows that fathers talk more in Breton than mothers. Fathers tend to speak more languages to their children: Breton, English, Bambara (dialect from Mali), Arabic, Russian, Ukrainian, Polish etc. Grandparents do share even more languages with their grandchildren.

Figure 2.2 presents one of the results of the questionnaire. From the 77 observed families 35% of the children hear (and sometimes speak) French with their friends and family, 8% are in contact with Breton, 6% hear English, 3% hear Spanish and 2% respectively for Russian and Arabic.

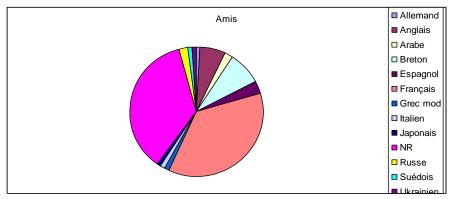


Figure 2.2 Languages and friends

Figure 2.2 shows that one child can be in contact with more than one of the languages above. And that for some children in Brittany it is normal to hear and speak more than just one language. Figure 2.3 shows some languages used by parents to tell stories.

⁶⁷ The researcher (V. Pronost, staff member of Divskouarn and partner of the MELT project) underlines that the results cannot be generalised for all parents in Brittany, since there is needed a much bigger sample of families.

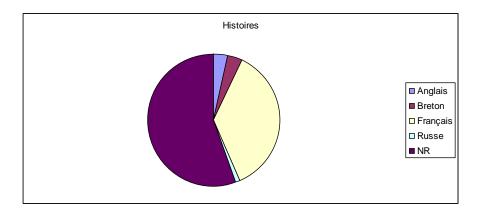


Figure 2.3 Languages and telling stories

When parents tell stories to their children, usually this activity is in French. Only five languages are presented in figure 2.3 Breton represents 4% of the total figures which proves that there is an interest in finding ways activities for parents at home. Breton can also be part of children's home life and therefore also of their everyday life.

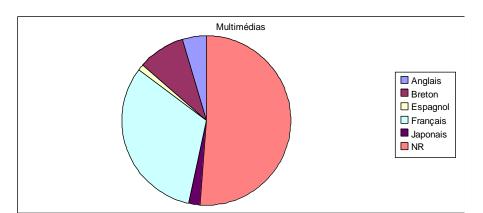


Figure 2.4 shows the relationship between the languages and media.

Figure 2.4 Languages and media

From the results of the questionnaire it seems that parents are open minded with regard to media (radio, television programmes, internet) in the Breton language.

In some cases, parents feel encouraged to use Breton themselves. With the assistance of good bilingual examples, someone who read stories in different languages to their children, among which one person speaks the Breton language fluently on basis, they feel encouraged to practice the language.

Some parents have a positive attitude towards the acquisition of the Breton language, some parents often declare that if it would have been better for their children to learn English rather than Breton, they would have preferred that.⁶⁸

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⁶⁸ NPLD, the questionnaires from the project 'Pre-School Education' (2010). http://www.npld.eu/currentprojectsbestpractise/pre-schooled/pages/default.aspx [Accessed June 2011].

Parents in Brittany are mostly also learners of the Breton language themselves, they cannot read or write in Breton. There are almost no written documents in Breton only, usually documents in Breton are bilingual Breton/French.

Some pre-school provisions organise (grand) parent meetings. There is collaboration with godparents, elderly people who stimulate the Breton language.

However, the participation of the parents depends on the policy of the pre-school organisations.

2.5.2 Institutions of the pre-school education

In France, pre-school education relates to day care settings for children from 0 to 3 years. Most of the pre-school settings in Lower Brittany are for the 0-3 years-old children. In big cities and in Upper Brittany there are pre-schools for children aged 3-4 years. Even though the compulsory primary school starts for children aged 6 almost every child in Brittany goes to (pre-) school from the age of 3 years. In Brittany the term 'school' is used for the school-systems for children aged 3 years and older.

In Brittany there are 2 provisions for children up to 3 years:

Childminders

Most of the children stay at childminders⁶⁹(a kind of babysitter), the rest stays at day care centres or at home provided their parents don't work.

Day care centres

Children attend day care centres when they are about 3 months old up to 3 year. Even if the compulsory school starts when they are 6 years-old almost every child in Brittany goes to 'school' from the age of 3 years. Most of these day care centres are opened from Monday util Friday, from 7.30 or 8.00 in the morning, until 6.00 or 6.30 in the evening. Children do not have to stay all day long.

Divskouarn⁷⁰ defines two types of day care centres using Breton in pre-school settings for children from 0 to 3 years-old:

- **Day care centre Model 1**: At least one activity in Breton each week.
- Day care centre Model 2: At least two practitioners working in Breton, every day they offer activities in Breton.

Divskouarn want to develop a model 3, were every practitioner of the day care centre works in Breton, this type of setting doesn't exist yet.

For children from 3 to 6 years old, there are three types of pre-schools:

Public bilingual schools

Public bilingual schools ("école maternelle") are required to offer at least as much French as Breton. For the moment there is no official curriculum about teaching Breton, a lot depends on the teacher. Public bilingual pre- schools are depending on

⁶⁹ Divskouarn is the organisation for Breton language in pre-school and has 17 day-care centres in their network. In Brittany almost 85% of the children up to 3, attend childminders. In 2010 there are about 10 childminders speaking Breton. NPLD, the questionnaires from the project 'Pre-School Education' (2010). https://www.npld.eu/currentprojectsbestpractise/pre-schooled/pages/default.aspx [Accessed June 2011].

⁷⁰ Website of Divskouarn: http://divskouarn.free.fr [Accessed June 2011].

the National Education services. 71 About 6 hours a day (without meal), it means 3 hours of Breton, 36 weeks a year: 18 weeks of Breton.

Catholic bilingual schools

Depending on the Diocesan Education services (on a local level), most of the teachers are being paid by the state. 72 As with the public bilingual schools children are from 3 to 6 years old and as much French as Breton is spoken, even if it is recommended to speak more Breton than French with the youngest.

Associative immersion schools

Depending on both, local and regional associations, most of the teachers are being paid by the state. 73 The immersion schools, where Breton is the only language of instruction, are called 'Diwan' schools. The children are between 2 years old and 6 years old. At the age of 7, French is introduced during 2 out of 26 school hours. When the students are 10, French (6 hours out of 23) is taught at the same level as Breton.

In Brittany there are different organisation for Breton immersion (pre-, primary- and secondary-) schools. Diwan⁷⁴ provides education counselling to 38 immersive schools (743 child under 4 years). Dihun⁷⁵ is the organisation that promotes the use of Breton in the public-funded Catholic school system and has 1,450 students in the program from pre-school (1260 child under 4 years) to primary schools (60 catholic bilingual primary schools) to high school. The organisation Divyezh⁷⁶ has 72 primary public bilingual schools in their network (1 660 children under 4 years).

Child-staff ratios and maximum group size

Often parents choose to enroll their children in a bilingual school for practical reasons; it is the local neighbourhood school and generally there are less children in those classes than in monolingual ones.

The official ratio in day care centres (children from 0 to 3 years) is one professional for 5 children who do not walk and one professional for 8 children who already walk. The maximum group size depends on the kind of day care, there are micro-day care settings welcoming 10 children and others being able to welcome 100 in total.

Usually children from 2, 2,5 or 3 years old attend pre-school classes. There are 18 to 25 pupils in one group (children from 2 to 6 years). The three pre-school levels for children are in the same class: litterally they are called "little section" for children from 2 to 4 years-old, who are attending on a half-day basis, then "medium section" for children from 4 to 5 yearsold, and lastly "big section" from children from 5 to 6 years-old and then from 6 starts primary school.

⁷¹ In 2010 there are 74 (state and municipality) bilingual public schools. NPLD, the questionnaires from the project 'Pre-School Education' (2010). http://www.npld.eu/currentprojectsbestpractise/pre-schooled/pages/default.aspx [Accessed June 2011].

In 2010 there are 60 catholic bilingual schools. NPLD, the questionnaires from the project 'Pre-School Education' (2010).

http://www.npld.eu/currentprojectsbestpractise/pre-schooled/pages/default.aspx/ [Accessed June 2011].

73 In 2010 there are 41 immersion schools are run within an associative system: parents are running the steering comity, even if most of the teachers are paid by the state. NPLD, the questionnaires from the project 'Pre-School Education' (2010). http://www.npld.eu/currentprojectsbestpractise/pre-schooled/pages/default.aspx [Accessed June 2011].

74 Website of Diwan: http://www.diwanbreizh.org/ [Accessed June 2011].

An information website of the Diwan organization: http://icdbl.org/saozg/Diwan_Intro.php [Accessed June 2011].

Website of Dihun http://dihun.com/ [Accessed June 2011].

⁷⁶ Website of Div Yezh: http://www.div-yezh.com/ [Accessed June 2011].

[&]quot;Div Yezh" differs in approach from "Diwan", putting the emphasis on bilingual French-Breton education at the primary and secondary levels.

2.5.3 Training of practitioners

There is no basic education training for working in Breton language with young children. From birth to 3 years old, there is an in-house training and Divskouarn established a first training session in 2009. It is a 6-day training where trainers specialized in Breton language work along with trainers more specialized in pre-school education.

Since 2011, teachers working with children up to 3 years need to have a Master degree. Each of the 3 systems has its own Master degree. So it means firstly 3 years of general studies, and then 2 years more specialized in teaching with 2 languages.

Once the practitioners have passed their Master Degree exam, they need to go through another exam in order to get an appointment to a permanent position. Each year, 20 students manage to be appointed as bilingual teacher, and to work within the three different systems.⁷⁷

2.5.4 Pedagogical guidelines, Divskouarn and Regional Council of Brittany

In Brittany each pre-school institute (settings with children from 0 to 3 years old) has its own curriculum. There is no official curriculum about teaching in Breton, it depends mainly on practitioners and pre-school teachers. Most of the pedagogical guidelines of the pre-school education rely on ideas developed through the concept of "active pedagogies" like Montessoris¹⁷⁸ or Lóczy.⁷⁹ Most of the provisions are under the influence of the spirit of Françoise Dolto.⁸⁰

For the 3 bilingual systems of schools (up to 3 years old), they have to follow the National curriculum. The only difference to a monolingual school is that the public and catholic ones have to have studied all the subjects at least in French. The Divskouarn Charter, with its 3 models, gives guidelines to the settings, where Breton is introduced.

There is a public organization, TES⁸¹, linked with the national services of education and the regional council of Brittany which works on creating teaching materials by writing new books in Breton and translating others. TES is funded by the State, the region Brittany and the département Côtes-d'Armor as well as by a range of private institutions, such as publishers

NPLD, the questionnaires from the project 'Pre-School Education' (2010). http://www.npld.eu/currentprojectsbestpractise/pre-schooled/pages/default.aspx [Accessed June 2011].
 Montessori education is an educational approach developed by Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori. Montessori education

[&]quot;Montessori education is an educational approach developed by Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori. Montessori education is practiced in an estimated 20,000 schools worldwide, serving children from birth to eighteen years old. Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montessori_education [Accessed June 2011].

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montessori_education [Accessed June 2011].

79 Pediatrician Emmi Pikler (1902-1984) was director of the orphanage-Lóczy in Budapest Hungary. With its innovative ideas on the care and upbringing of children, she showed that children in an orphanage are mentally healthy and physically able to develop. Adults must respect the individuality and autonomy of the child and his or her room in a friendly manner by giving the child attention.

Penn, H. (1999) Values And Beliefs In Caring For Babies And Toddlers. Institute of Education, London University.

http://childcarecanada.org/sites/childcarecanada.org/files/fs7.pdf [Accessed June 2011].

http://childcarecanada.org/sites/childcarecanada.org/files/fs7.pdf [Accessed June 2011].

80 Françoise Dolto (1908 -1988) was a French paediatrician and psychoanalyst who was a pioneer as far as the psychoanalytical study of young children is concerned. She worked e.p.g. together with the French psychiatrist Jacques Lacan. Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7oise Dolto [Accessed June 2011].

⁸¹ TES, Ti-embann ar Skolioù Brezhonek, a publishing house for the bilingual and Breton-language schools which functions as a section of the Centre Départemental de Documentation Pédagogique since 1993. Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, *Regional Dossiers* http://www.linguae-celticae.org/dateien/Breton_in_Education.pdf [Accessed June 2011].

and cultural organisations. TES functions for all three streams: public, catholic and Diwan. It publishes some 5-6 text books every year as well as some audio-visual materials in collaboration with the Universities.

For children up to 3 years old a variety of material is available: two vocabulary books in Breton, five music CDs and a few books, most of them are translated from French into Breton. TES produces an anthology of nursery rhymes for the pre-school level, called 'Enora,' which has known a great deal of success and it continues producing new material.

2.6 Summary of best practices in the four regions

In the MELT project four partners (Fryslân, Finland, Wales, and Brittany) learned from each other's experience in the different pre-school settings. Similarities and differences became evident during the project. The information in the previous sections shows that most children under four attend the preschool provisions in the four regions on a voluntary basis. Figure 2.1 (p. 18) presented an overview structuring the age for starting pre-school as well as the age for starting compulsory primary school in the different countries. (of ages of starting pre-school and the ages of starting compulsory primary school). Those ages depends on the local authorities, municipality and parents. The MELT partners know that the kind of compulsory primary schooling differs in the four countries.

In Wales and Fryslân children start primary school at the age of 4. However, education is only compulsory from the age of 5. In Brittany children start primary school starts at the age of 6, and in Finland at the age of 7. Therefore, the MELT project focuses on the common preschool years: 0-4 years.

During the two-year project there was every opportunity to use each other's expertise and best practices in the field of pre-school immersion and mother tongue education before primary school. However, the four MELT partners had to determine the definition of pre-school education and had to agree on the best pedagogical approaches and materials. The products had to be developed to everyone's satisfaction, so that they are appropriate for each region in Europe. In chapter 2.1 the definition of pre-school, as used in the MELT project has been presented. Chapter 3.3 will present a definition of Multilingual Early Language Transmission (MELT).

The previous sections show that most states developed a national curriculum for pre-school education for children aged 2-7. In the four regions most pre-school institutions adjust the national curriculum to their regional situation and in some settings the minority language is included in the daily programme.

One of the similarities is that most participating pre-schools in the four regions work in a thematic and project type manner. Some even have developed their own materials in the minority language.

Unfortunately, some pre-schools have no explicit conscious language policy. Noted that a conscious language policy within the pre-school setting is an important aspect when it concerns multilingualism in the daily life of young children. However, putting an conscious language policy into practice requires practitioners to have the providing skills to offer young children a rich language environment, including enough input in the minority language.

In the four regions some pre-school provisions changed the national curriculum and applied it to their own regional situation and sometimes provisions use extra or new materials and approaches in the minority language only. In Wales and Fryslân there are pre-schools that use a character ("Dewin" in Wales and "Tomke" in Fryslân) to stimulate and promote the minority language; the characters speaks and understands Welsh (Dewin) and Frisian (Tomke). Such a 'character approach' is an easily accessible and recognisable way for parents, practitioners and children to speak the minority language. Dewin and Tomke

stimulate children's and adults enthusiasm, and the minority language is offered in a positive way. However, sometimes parents are not aware of the message of the 'character approach,' which aims to offer the minority language in a playful way in line with the child's perceptions.

Another similarity in the four regions is that some parents and practitioners have no knowledge of the benefits of multilingualism and minority language pre-school education. In the future, the foundations and organisations in the four regions will continue 'the pioneering work' and promote the minority language in pre-schools and develop materials (stories, books, songs etc.) for children. Most parents in Fryslân, Finland, Wales, and Brittany decide to enrol their child in the nearest pre-school provision and do not ask for the institute's language policy.

In Fryslân and Wales, many pre-school practitioners work with themes and projects. That approach can also be applied in different minority language regions in Europe.

In Brittany, there is a good collaboration with grandparents and other elderly people, who function as a godparent for the Breton language.

In Wales there are parent and toddler groups. Children from birth to school age and their parents attend these groups. The aim is to offer parents an opportunity to enjoy playing with their children and socialise in an informal, Welsh atmosphere. The activities reinforce the use of Welsh at home and give non-Welsh speaking families the opportunity to use Welsh with their children for the first time.

A strong point of Finland is that pre-school teachers must have a bachelor's degree, in order to be allowed to work with children.

3. Multilingual Early Language Transmission

As indicated in chapter 1 we prefer the terms regional & minority languages and majority language. In this paper we use the term multilingualism and in this chapter will define the concepts bi-, pluri-, and multi-lingualism. Chapter 3.2 describes the concept early language learning. Chapter 3.3 presents the definition of MELT. The important stages of bilingual development from young children are presented in chapter 3.4. Chapter 3.5 presents an historical overview of Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA) and the need and the factors to stimulate language acquisition are described.

3.1 Multilingualism in society and individuals

Multilingualism as a social phenomenon is common throughout Europe, and indeed the whole world. In the twenty-first century, all European citizens live in a multilingual environment. In their daily lives they come across many different languages. As a communication tool, languages are useful in communicating with others for trade, tourism, and international contacts. In its symbolic function, language carries the deepest emotions and the historical awareness of its speakers. The mother tongue is the language children acquire first in life. It is also the language that most people know best, use most, and strongly identify with. All people have the right to learn and use their mother tongue and to learn a second or third language. In many cases, these rights are still absent, or there are no adequate provisions. Regional & minority languages are spoken by more than ten percent of the European population. Particularly for some languages, their situation and future prospects are critical.

This section describes some definitions of bi-, pluri-, and multilingualism formulated through experts. They form the basis for overthinking about multilingualism within the MELT project. Chapter 3.2 presents the concept early language learning. Those definitions and theories are the basis of the definition of MELT, that will be presented in chapter 3.3.

Most socio- and psycholinguistic researchers define 'multilingualism' as the use of three or more languages. However, this entails defining what a language is, which can be problematic, according to Kemp (2009: 11). A number of terms are used by different researchers within the different fields. Kemp (2009) describes the term 'multilingualism,' using other definitions from other researchers, that are summarised in the book "The exploration of multilingualism: development of research on L3, multilingualism and multiple language acquisition" as follows: (...) "Most researchers now use the term 'bilingual' to refer to the individuals who use two languages, and 'multilingual' to refer to individuals who use three or more languages" (Kemp, 2009: 24).

Edwards (1994) describes a multilingual person as: "A person who has the ability to use three or more languages, either separately or in various degrees of code-mixing. Different languages are used for different purposes, competence in each of then varying according to such factors as register, occupation and education" (Edwards, 1994, in Kemp, 2009: 15).

According to Hall (2001) the term bilingualism and multilingualism "...is currently used to refer to pupils who live in two languages, who have access to, or need to use, two or more

languages at home and at school. It does not mean that they have fluency in both languages or that they are competent and literate in both languages" (Hall 2001, in Conteh, 2006: 3).

Hall stresses that multilinguals do not need to be fluent in both languages. Baker (1996) claims there are different dimensions of language skills: receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing).

Baker then goes on to describe interacting dimensions (and overlap) of bilingualism and multilingualism:

- **Ability** (a person's productive and receptive ability in the four domains: speaking, writing, reading, and understanding);
- Use of languages (the domains where each language is acquired and used);
- **Balance** of the languages (the dominance of a certain language);
- **Age** (simultaneous acquisition, when children learn two languages from birth, or sequential acquisition, when children learn a second or third language at a later age);
- **Development** (one language is more developed than the other; development of ascendant or recessive bilingualism);
- **Culture** (bilinguals or multilinguals become more or less bi- or multicultural, which increases or decreases their positive or negative feelings and attitudes towards acquiring more languages);
- **Contexts** (some bilinguals live in endogenous communities; they use more than one language on an everyday basis. Others live in exogenous communities; they use more than one language in a network during holidays, on the telephone or in social media);
- **Elective** or **circumstantial** bilingualism (elective bilinguals learn a second language without losing their first language; circumstantial bilinguals are groups of individuals who must become bilingual to operate in the majority language society that surrounds them, and their first language is in danger of being replaced by the second) (Baker, 2006: 3-5).

Further, Baker (2006) regards bilingualism and multilingualism as: "an individual possession and as a group possession. (...) Bilinguals and multilinguals are usually found in groups. Such groups may be located in a particular region or community. Bilinguals may form a distinct language group as a majority or minority" (Baker, 2006: 2).

Finally, Grosjean (1982) states that a bilingual is "any speaker who habitually uses one language in setting A and another in setting B." In 2010, he formulates a slightly different definition: "Bilinguals are those who use two or more languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives." Grosjean assumed that some people "only" know and use two languages, so it seems odd to use the term multilingualism when describing bilingual people and children. He prefers the words 'bilingual' to the word 'multilingual' (Grosjean, 2010: 4).

With reference to the definitions above, the Council of Europe⁸² defines multilingualism and the new term 'plurilingualism'⁸³ was introduced as follows:

- 'Multilingualism' refers to the presence in a geographical area, large or small, of more than one 'variety of language' i.e. the mode of speaking of a social group whether it is formally

⁸² Website of the Council of Europe, education and language http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/division EN.asp [Accessed March 2011].

⁸³ In 1997, a study focused on the individual as the locus and actor of contact encouraged a shift of terminology, from multilingualism (the

study of societal contact) to plurilingualism. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/SourcePublications/CompetencePlurilingue09web_en.pdf [Accessed March 2011].

recognised as a language or not; in such an area individuals may be monolingual, speaking only their own variety.

- 'Plurilingualism' refers to the repertoire of varieties of language which many individuals use, and is therefore the opposite of monolingualism; it includes the language variety referred to as 'mother tongue' or 'first language' and any number of other languages or varieties. Thus in some multilingual areas some individuals are monolingual and some are plurilingual.

The Council of Europe policy attaches particular importance to the development of a plurilingual person with a repertoire of languages and language varieties, because the development of multilingualism is a lifelong enrichment for a person living in Europe.

In Europe, there is a growing awareness of the value of linguistic diversity and the need to learn languages. The objective of the Council of Europe and the European Union is that all Europeans learn to speak at least two other languages in addition to their mother tongue.⁸⁴

On basis of the different presented above, we can conclude that the terms multilingualism and plurilingualism are generally seen as a valuable asset for individuals and that the term bilingualism is often used for communities/groups. However, in this MELT paper we use multilingualism for individuals (young children, parents, or pre-school teachers) and for language communities. As the MELT project focuses on minority languages because in daily life, due to ever-increasing mobility, immigration and international contacts, language skills are now more important than ever (for multilingual societies and minority communities). Nevertheless, there are diverging views of multilingualism, and languages learning, and (preschool) education. Moreover, parents and practitioners are confronted with practical problems with regard to language contacts during the child's development.

This not only refers to some of the major languages of Europe, such as English, French, German, or Spanish, but also to (smaller state languages, immigrant languages, and regional or) minority languages.

The equality of languages of all kinds is not self-evident. Baker (2006) shows that where bilingualism involves high-status languages it is viewed positively, as an educational advantage, and where the languages have low status, bilingualism is (in some school systems) viewed as an educational handicap, which must be overcome (Baker, 2006: 385). Cummins (2000) too describes how (bilingualism and) multilingualism are valued differently by educationalists depending on the social and political status of the languages concerned. 85

As a result of this imbalanced evaluation of multilingualism, the mastery of a minority language is not always considered (and not by everybody) to be a valuable asset. Often, practical and political arguments in favour of learning English are revealed. And, unfortunately, the well-documented arguments of the mother tongue being the best basis for a good linguistic and cognitive development, and language providing of cultural social wealth are less widely known.

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⁸⁴ Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020")

⁸⁵ Description from the website of *Language Rich Europe Multilingualism for stable and prosperous societies*. The British Council leads the Language Rich Europe project, what is co-funded by the European Commission. They work with a wide network of partners and specialists across 20 European countries, including the European Union's Network of National Institutes of Culture. http://languagerichblog.eu/2010/11/23/multilingualism-changing-the-mind-set [July, 2011]

Since pre-school provisions, training of practitioners and participation of more and more provisions in a network organisation became common in the 1980s, attention for the position of minority languages in the pre-school period has increased. Ó Murchú conducted research in the 1980s. After the conference 'Early Childhood an Bilingualism' held in Fryslân in 1985, she published her study combining her own data and the results of the conference (Ó Murchú, 1987). This marks the start of the attention for bilingual early childhood learning at European level. Mercator-Education conducted a follow-up study on provisions and activities in eighteen regional or minority languages throughout Europe (Goot, 1994). Since 1996, the Regional dossiers series of Mercator-Education contains a chapter on pre-school education.

In terms of study and action research in 2008, the NPLD has taken the initiative for European projects aimed at strengthening the position and function of (regional or) minority languages. The ideas and proposals of the MELT project are welcomed and will be further disseminated by European networks such as the Mercator Network, NPLD, FUEN⁸⁷ and RML2future⁸⁸.

All languages together create Europa's linguistic diversity of Europe. Linguistic diversity which includes (regional or) minority languages, however, needs to be protected and promoted at all levels.

3.2 Early language learning

In this section we will define the term early language learning. The concept early language learning can take many forms. The age of children (up till age 4, 6, 7 or 12)⁸⁹, the period of learning (only the period before compulsory primary school or also during primary school), and the form of care and educational institutions (public or private) vary in the formulation of the definition of early language learning. Researchers mostly use terms as bilingual first language acquisition or second language acquisition or second language learning, or trilingual acquisition for learning more than two languages at an early age.

Edelenbos (2006) defines early language learning as: "The choice for a particular early language learning model is determined by a combination of key factors: the 'time' available for language learning, 'perceived and realised intensity', 'material and financial input',

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⁸⁶"Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning" was (form 1987-2007) called "Mercator-Education." www.mercator-research.eu [Accessed March 2011].

WWW.mercator-researched [Accessed Match 2011].

87 FUEN (Federal Union of European Nationalities) is the umbrella organisation of the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe, with 90 member organisations in 32 European countries. FUEN was founded in 1949 – in the same year as the Council of Europe – in Versailles. FUEN adopted the Charter for the autochthonous national minorities in Europe in 2006. This Charter serves as the basis for the activity of FUEN. www.fuen.org [July,2011]

The network RML2future is dedicated to the promotion of multilingualism and linguistic diversity in the Europe of the 21st century, actively involving the regional and minority languages (RML). For the multilingual regions in Germany, Denmark, Austria, Belgium and Italy that have been selected for the first years (2009-2011) of the action of the network, scenarios for language transmission in the context of European multilingualism using the minority languages will be developed. www.rml2future.eu [Accessed June 2011].

⁸⁹ Ages mentioned in the European projects "Language Rich Europe" and "Poliglotti4.eu." Language Rich Europe *Multilingualism for stable and prosperous societies* is a project led by the British Council and co-funded by the European CommissionEuropean project. http://languagerichblog.eu The project *Poliglotti4.eu* is also funded by the European CommissionEuropean and part by EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture). http://poliglotti4.eu [Accessed July 2011].

⁸⁹ Mercator newsletter "Conference: Early foreign language learning" (May 2011 num. 71) "Conferentie: 'Vvto in opmars' over vroeg vreemde talen onderwijs" 12-05- 2011 (the experts speakers: Hell van J., Bot de K. & Krikhaar E). Leeuwarden: Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning

'starting age', 'social and geographical settings', as well as the 'language competence of the teacher." (Edelenbos ...et al. 2006: 14)

In 2009, the EU Education Ministers set the target that by 2020 at least 95 % of the children aged between four and the age in which compulsory primary education starts should participate in early childhood education. In the Communication report the European Commission describes the importance of early childhood education and care (2011):

"Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is the essential foundation for successful lifelong learning, social integration, personal development and later employability." ⁹¹

The European Commission defines 'Early language learning' as follows:

'Early Language Learning (ELL) at pre-primary level' means systematic awareness raising or exposure to more than one language taking place in an early childhood education and care setting in a pre-primary school context.⁹²

In 2011, a group of national experts, convened by the European Commission, debated on current needs and issues in the field of pre-primary language awareness and acquisition in Europe. These data and results are presented in a Handbook, including summaries of the participating countries and the good practices.

However, the central message of research on 'multilingualism' and 'early language learning' is: "Start early!" There are many advantages when children have the opportunity to acquire more languages at an early age. Research suggests that bilingualism has positive effects on children's linguistic and educational development: they develop more flexibility in their thinking as a result of processing information through two different languages. There are long-term cognitive, linguistic, social, economic, and cultural benefits to become multilingual.

Some benefits⁹³ to learn more languages from the early start are:

- Bi- or multilingual children communicate easier, faster, and better with other people (in this increasingly globalised world).
- Children are less shame (than adults) to use new languages other than their mother tongue.
- Their pronunciation is better in both languages, they do hardly have an accent, or not at all.
- Bilingual children can manage their grammar better; there is also more chance to develop better writing skills. Compared to adults children who acquire a second language at early age make fewer spelling errors.

⁹⁰ Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') (2009/C 119/02), http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:119:0002:0010:EN:PDF [Accessed June 2011].

⁹¹ EUROPEAN COMMISSION, COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION . (2011) Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow. Brussels http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/childhoodcom_en.pdf [Accessed June 2011].

⁹² EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2011), COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER European Strategic Framework for Education and training (ET 2020) LANGUAGE LEARNING AT PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL: MAKING IT EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE A POLICY HANDBOOK. Brussels. http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/ellpwp_en.pdf [Accessed June 2011].

⁹³ In *Mercator newsletter "Conference: Early foreign language learning"* (May 2011 num. 71) "Conferentie: 'Vvto in opmars' over vroeg vreemde talen onderwijs 12-05- 2011" (the experts speakers: Hell van J., Bot de K. & Krikhaar E). Leeuwarden: Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning

• There are vocabulary advantages; children grasp the meaning of a word better.

During early (second) language acquisition the relation between and development of 'maturation' and the 'critical period of age' are important. De Groot (2011) describes the age effects of early bilingualism and claims that early in life humans have a superior capacity for language learning which declines with maturation, even if the language-learning capacity is exercised early in life (De Groot).

De Groot (2011: 63) quotes: "Early in life, humans have a superior capacity for acquiring languages. This capacity disappears or declines with maturation" (Johnson & Newport, 1989).

After describing the two versions of the critical period hypothesis of Johnson & Newport (1989), De Groot (2011) claims that children are better at second language learning than adults. Brain resources of young language learners are still largely uncommitted and can therefore be easily recruited for the learning task. She also states the older the learner is, the more neural tissue already is committed to other knowledge and processes, and recruiting neurons to subserve new knowledge and tasks becomes increasingly difficult (De Groot, 2011).

Following above descriptions and statements the partners of the MELT project see the importance of multilingual early language learning. In the next chapter, a definition will be formulated and will be discussed.

3.3 Definition of Multilingual Early Language Transmission

Using the knowledge and descriptions of the definitions in the above sections we will formulate a definition of multilingual early language transmission (MELT) in this section. Below we will first present the definition of MELT as it is used in the project and in this paper. In the sections after that and in the next chapters we will clarify some terms and theoretical concepts further.

The early years (age 0-4) are an advantageous time to acquire language skills. One of the skills young children need to acquire is to understand the adults in their environment, whatever language(s) they speak to the child. At the same time the child learns to speak and acquires the language(s) in its own time and in a playful, natural way.

Language acquisition can take place simultaneously in several languages (in the MELT project the minority and the majority languages) or just only in the minority language. The promotion and stimulation of (regional or) minority (and less widely used languages) from an early age is crucial for (the overall development of) the child, to wit its becoming a continuous multilingual person, particularly in an age of ever-increasing globalisation. The MELT project explicitly stresses that it is important to learn the minority language at an early age. Due to its high social status the majority language, will develop automatically through primary school, television, other media etc.

Language is not merely a tool of communication but also a value. Mother tongue and father tongue are of equal value to the child. And the minority language should gain equal value to the majority language in the eyes of pre-school teachers, parents, other care takers and policymakers. Early-years practitioners work within the pre-school institutions with a conscious language policy and offer children a language rich environment. Pre-school staff are aware of language immersion methodology in the minority language. Learning a language relies on the development of operations: these operations are influenced and modulated by both verbal and non-verbal interactions (led by adults) with the child's environment.

For their children to grow up as a balanced and long-term multilingual, bilingual, or plurilingual person, parents need advice and guidance on how to raise their children as balanced multilinguals, especially if only one parent speaks the minority language and the other speaks the majority language. When parents raising their children multilingual they must be aware of the benefits of multilingualism, they have a positive attitude, and they are not afraid to speak the minority language to their children.

3.4 Children's early language development

Babies are not born talking. They acquire language, starting immediately from birth. The social setting in which children are exposed to their first language is critical; this is where they hear their language being used. This is the material they must learn to recognize, analyse, understand, and produce themselves (Clark, 2009). Children's cognitive development at least partially depends on their socialising environment (e.g. Bornstein, 2002).

Young children often acquire their language in a natural, playful manner. In Piaget's view, children learn to talk naturally when they are ready without any deliberate teaching by adults. Piaget's theory of cognitive development, which includes development stages, is a comprehensive theory about the nature and development of human intelligence (Wardsworth, 1979).

Whether children hear one language or more, start speaking early or late, the language acquisition of all children occurs gradually through interaction with people and the environment. Children vary considerably in the speed of their language development. Early bloomers in language are not necessarily those who will be the great linguists of the future. Those children whose language development seems slow early on, may be those who catch up very quickly later (Baker, 1995). A normally developing child speaks its first words around its first birthday. Several researchers claim the normal range is 8-15 months. There is no difference between monolingual and bilingual children. Volterra and Taeschner's (1978) hypothesis claims that the initial phase of the developing bilingual child is essentially monolingual (Volterra and Taeschner, 1978). Psycholinguist Oller (1997) compared the development of babbling and discovered that bilingual and monolingual children start babbling at the same time.

Baker (1995) presents the average pattern of development for bilingual children from birth until 4 years onwards in figure 3.1.

Age	Language
First year	Babbling, cooing, laughing (dada, mama, gaga)
Around 1 year old	First understandable words
During second year	Two-words combinations, moving slowly to three-
	and four- word combinations. Three-element
	sentences (e.g. 'Daddy come now'; 'That my book';
	'Teddy gone bye-byes')
	Dramatic changes. Simple but increasingly longer
3 to 4 years	sentences. Grammar and sentences structuring
	starts to develop. Conversations show turn taking
	Increasingly complex sentences, structure and
4 years onwards	ordered conversation. Use pronouns and auxiliary
	verbs.

Figure 3.1 The general average pattern of development for bilingual children (Baker, 1995: 46).

This general division in years is further specified in a development in months by De Houwer (2009). Below the important stages of bilingual development of children aged 0;6-5;0 years (6 to 60 months) are presented.

When? (roughly)	What?
6 to 12 months	babbling in syllables
By 12 months	comprehension of many words and phrases in each of two languages
Soon after 12 months	production of what sounds like single words in one or two languages
18 to 24 months	noticeable increase in the number of different words produced
Around 24 months	production of combinations of two words in one breath
30 to 36 months	production of short sentences with at least some bound morphemes and/or closed class grammatical words
Around 42 months	child is mostly understandable to unfamiliar adults who speak the same language(s)
Around 48 months	production of complex sentences
54 to 60 months	ability to tell a short story that hangs together
For easy reference, here is	a key to some age indications:
12 months = first birthda	y, age 1, start of the second year of life
	hday, age 2, start of the third year of life
	ay, age 3, start of the fourth year of life
	day, age 4, start of the fifth year of life
	ay, age 5, start of the sixth year of life

Figure 3.2 Milestones in BFLA (Bilingual First Language Acquisition). Children's early language development (De Houwer, 2009: 37).

Baker (figure 3.1) divides bilingual development in phases of one year, while De Houwer (figure 3.2) goes into more detail and specifies the bilingual development phases specific in months. The two figures present common knowledge each other in the important changes and developments bilingual children make. Around 1 year old the bilingual child produces his or her first words, in each of the two languages that are spoken to him or her. A young father or mother wonders in which language bilingual children say their first words. Is that the language that the baby heard in the belly? Or are the first words either from the mother language or from the father language, assuming the parents speak different languages to the child. Are the first words from the minority language or the majority language?

Research has shown that language development is not affected by the language in which the bilingual child says its first words; the child will possibly mix the words and languages. However, De Houwer (2009) refers to the results of Genesee's (1996) study that was focused specifically on children's language adjustments to unfamiliar adults. The results of this study show that young children easily switch from one language to another and easily switch back. According Sinka & Schelletter (1998) children over the age of two can adjust their language choice to their limited language abilities. However, one language may appear to be far better developed than the other (De Houwer, 2009: 46-47).

Educators and parents have to realize that bilingual children go through the same stages of language development as monolingual children. Research shows that bilinguals between 1;7 and 2;2 are at similar stages of grammatical development as monolinguals at that age. (Chávez-Chávez, 1984, Padilla & Lindholm, 1978). But important for any language development is the condition to use the language or languages in daily life, therefor the child must have enough language input so that he/she grows up in a language rich environment.

Children need to have language input in a variety of situations from people that matters to them, there has to be a "linguistic soundscape" (De Houwer, 2009: 97).

Grosjean (2010) calls it "amount of input." Apart from amount of input he distinguishes other "factors" leading to language acquisition and maintenance and "the need of language."

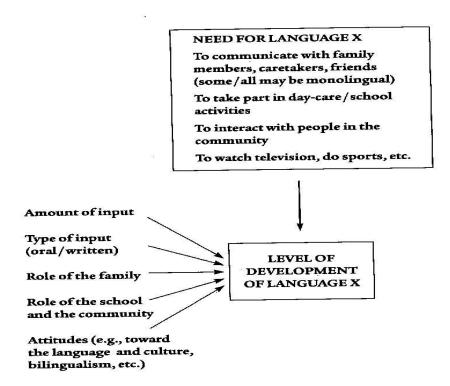


Figure 3.3 Factors leading to the acquisition and maintance of another language in children. (Grosjean, 2010: 172).

The first factor that plays a role in the level of bilingual development is "amount of input": children need to receive a varied and differentiated language input.

The second factor is "type of input": young bilingual children use code-switching, but they have to get "monolingual" input too, as naturally as possible. Sometimes a monolingual role can be taken on by members of the extended family who do not know the other language. Written language is also very important: it is an excellent source of vocabulary and cultural information that children may not have in their normal environment (De Houwer, 2009). When the need for language disappears or is not really there and factors are missing, then the child will no longer use the language and the language will steadily be forgotten. "The role of the family" and "the role of the school and the community" are the third and fourth factor respectively. If the minority language is not support by family, school, and the community, there is a good chance that this language will lose importance and disappear from the child's language repertoire.

So far, this analysis applies to any bilingual situation with young children. However, not all bilingual situations are equal. Family settings (mother-tongue, father-tongue, the language of other family members or caretakers) and language environment settings (outside the home, for example day-care centre) are different. In settings with a minority language as mother-tongue, the majority language is also present in every aspect of the child's life (through media/television etc.). Parents, caretakers, and teachers should be aware of processes their children are going through as they are acquiring (or losing) a language. They

should adopt strategies to reinforce the minority language, so as to provide varied language input. The final factor of Grosjean's (2010) figure are the "attitudes" that people have toward bilingualism and bilingual culture. Positive language attitudes of parents, teachers, and peers are very important for the development of a bi- or multilingual child.

A child has to feel that he/she really needs a particular language. The need can be of various kinds: to communicate with family members, caretakers, friends, to participate in the activities of day care or school, to watch television, to do sports and so on. The combination and relation of the need for a language and the factors mentioned above stimulate language acquisition.

3.5 Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA)

In this section special attention will be paid to the multilingual language acquisition process. In a bilingual situation afamily usually adopts an approach at which the child receives input in two languages (perhaps one language is spoken by the father and the other one by the mother, or one language by the parents and the other by a caretaker such as a nanny or at a day care centre) (Grosjean, 2010).

BFLA (Bilingual First Language Acquisition) focuses on the simultaneous acquisition of two languages spoken at home from birth (De Houwer 2009). BFLA children learn to understand two first languages concurrently. In a quarter of the cases, BFLA children will also speak two languages from early on, and quite a few BFLA children speak just one language (De Houwer, 2009). The central focus of BFLA studies is the compensation of discusses the development of a bilingual child and a monolingual child. Below an overview of the history BFLA is presented.

De Houwer (2009) claims that the first extensive, book-long study of a child growing up with two languages from birth was published almost 100 years ago. The French linguist Ronjat (1913) gives a good, global description of an individual child's bilingual development, based on the model one person, one language. He studied his son as an example, who heard Dutch and French from birth on. Ronjat followed the German psychologists Wilhelm and Clara Stern (1907, republished as Stern and Stern, 1965), who are describing language development against the backdrop of children's overall development.

The next large BFLA study is by the German-American phonetician and linguist Werner Leopold (1939, reprinted 1970). Much of his work was based on the linguistic development of Leopold's daughter Hildegard, and he described his findings in four volume studies. He is obviously convinced that learning two languages in early childhood had no negative consequences for the child's development. Leopold also claimed that the best model for developing bilingualism in a child is the one person, one language strategy. He published one of the first exhaustive case studies on the simultaneous acquisition of two languages. Leopold also used the term 'child languages' for the first time (Hakuta, 1983).

When Leopold's daughter Hildegard said her first sentences, she combined words from two languages in one sentence together and was functioning as a monolingual. This (issue) has set the tone for the study of BFLA until today.

Further issues for research were parent's and educator's concerns about bilingual education: children are at risk of academic failure or delay (e.g. Macnamara, 1966), or BFL learners will be socio-cultural misfits and identify with neither language group (Diebolt, 1968).

Leopolds finding that bilingual children may mix their languages, sometimes more so in the early years than later on, gave rise to two opposing positions. Volterra and Taeschner (1978), on the one hand, concluded that bilingual children do not have any difficulties in comprehension and may have only one lexical system in the initial development of their vocabulary. On the other hand, the idea that bilinguals have a lower IQ still exists among some people. It is one of the persistent myths among monolinguals. Some believe that bilingual children develop a single, unitary language system at the start, which then slowly separates into two systems. This myth is hard to overcome, even though research comparing monolinguals and bilinguals has shown that they score the same on IQ tests (with the same gender, social class and age).

As Baker stated in the 1990s: "Far from making people mentally confused, bilingualism is now associated with a mild degree of intellectual superiority" (Baker, 1995: 49).

In 20011, De Groot (2011) describes: "Multilinguals have not mentally compartmentalized their languages in neatly separated sections, with solid firewalls between them, but all of the languages known interact with one another, both during acquisition and use" (De Groot, 2011: 339).

Until the 1960s, scientific discussions and positions were based on a limited knowledge of the working processes of the human brain. Since the introduction of the 'Common underlying proficiency' by Cummins (1979, 2000) these assumptions and positions can be considered as "old theory."

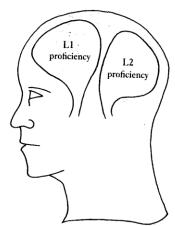


Illustration 3.1: Separate underlying proficiency.

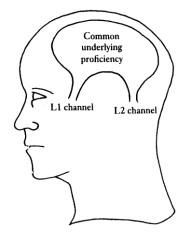


Illustration 3.2: Common underlying proficiency.

The old theory, which remained in use until the late 1950s, was based on the idea that both languages as such have a place in the cognitive system of the child (figure 3.1) and that these two languages compete with each other in the development of the vocabulary, articulation, and quality of speech. Therefore it was said that bilingualism and bilingual upbringing of

children was not good for their intellectual development. In the 1970s, on the basis of new research results, linguists concluded, that there is no single language or several languages as such in the cognitive system of the child. Instead of there is common underlying proficiency for the language acquisition and development. Depending on the language or the languages which are spoken to the child, the child will acquire and learn one, two, three or more languages, either parallel and at the same time or the one after the other, sequentially. (illustration 3.2) (Cummins, 2001).

Cummins (1979) developed the "Iceberg" model, the theory of language interdependence. Instead of having two separate areas for two languages in the cognitive system, this model posits that the common features of languages are stored together and common knowledge is linked and can interact. This model shows that the two languages are kept separate only at the surface level, where they are used for listening, speaking, reading and writing.

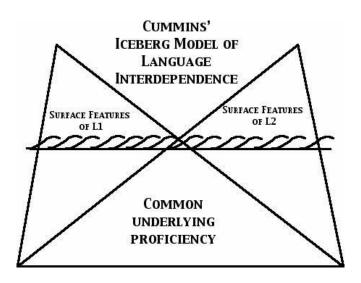


Figure 3.4 Iceberg Model of Language Interdependence of languages (Cummins, 1979, 1981)

From 1970s onwards a number of research studies were published on BFLA quality and it was not always clear whether children were growing up in a BFLA environment or not (De Houwer, 2009). Volterra & Taeschner(1978) are opposed to the theory of Leopold. They argue that young bilingual children prefer the mixed language to speaking one of the languages separately; a position which is no longer upheld according to De Houwer (2009). However, Grosjean (2010) questions what is meant by "mixing." Does it refer to interferences in language-dominant children or to code-switching and borrowings? These questions are currently (2011) a subject of research.

Some case studies were published in the 1980s. George Saunders (1983) wrote a book on his bilingual family: he raised his children in German, English, and Australian English. He spoke German with his children, and his wife spoke Australian English; they were living in Australian. Saunders described how a bilingual family is not an island, but part of a larger community, even if that community is monolingual. More recently, Stephen Caldas (2006)

described nineteen years of his bilingual family, his children's bilingual language (English-French) and literacy development in a monolingual setting (Louisiana in the US). In de 1980s the focus was on language choice and morphosyntactic development: the development (in young children) of the ability to construct words and sentences in the two languages. The starting point of research was the relationship between the two languages. More and more research is done into early bilingual language learning. For example, phonological development and early speech perception in bilingual infants (Bosch & Sebastián-Gallés, 1997).

More research is done concerning another line of research concerns the different domains of language learning. Cummins (2000: 57-111) distinguishes two levels of language learning skills: BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). BICS are language skills needed in social situations, and CALP refers to formal academic learning. This includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing about subject area content material. This level of language learning is essential for students to succeed in school.

Since the 1990s about early bilingual development has been studied extensively. De Houwer (2009) remarks that: "There is simply too much of it, it is impossible to give a comprehensive review of most publicly available research on early bilingual acquisition" (De Houwer, 2009: 13).

Based on extensive research results, a large body of research suggests that bilingualism is good for an individual child's linguistic development as well as for a child's flexibility in intellectual and social

processes.

However, language is not an abstract vehicle but an instrument of human communication that needs to be used and further developed in two areas of language use. First, in the area of spontaneous communication between adults and children in the personal context of the family, the social environment of the work place, associations, sport activities, and cultural affairs. Second, by means of the training of the structures and expression of more abstract thinking processes. The older a person gets, the more abstract thinking is developed.

Today the number of and also the geographic diversity of the researchers studying BFLA has grown. Western Europe was the first continent that investigated BFLA; nowadays researchers are active across the world: Northern America, Australia, China, and Russia. That brings specific cultural issues into research design, in the sense that children across the world have not got the same socio-psychological development. When children grow older, different events in their lives can lead them to acquire an additional second or third language. Grosjean (2010) suggests that there are probably more bilinguals on earth today than monolinguals. Due to immigration and globalisation the number of bi- and multilingual and bi- and multicultural individuals will only increase.

In a couple of decades, the perspective of BFLA has reversed: first monolingualism was the norm and multilingualism the exception, nowadays multilingualism is the norm and monolingualism the exception.

4. Multilingual Early Language Transmission: methodologies and approaches

This chapter will summarise in greater detail at the pre-school situation as part of the individuals' lifelong learning. Different methodologies and approaches of immersion (for example, 'one person-one language' and 'one day- one language' strategies etc.) will be explained in chapter 4.1 and 4.2. Chapter 4.3 presents the strategies that parents can follow to promote the minority language in their home. Finally, in the conclusion a summary is given.

4.1 Simultaneous acquisition or sequential acquisition?

When a child is raised bilingually from birth, or when the second language is introduced during the earliest stages of emerging language, one speaks about simultaneous acquisition. The simultaneous acquisition process is similar to monolingual development, both languages are acquired as first languages, with the child facing the additional task of distinguishing between the two language systems (Harding & Riley, 1986). There are three phases described by Volterra & Taeschner (1978):

"In the first stage the child has one lexical system which includes words from both languages. ..., in this stage the language development of the bilingual child seems to be like the language development of the monolingual child. (...) In the second stage, the child distinguishes two different lexicons, but applies the same syntactic rules to both languages. In the third stage the child speaks two languages differentiated both in lexicon and syntax..." (Volterra & Taeschner (1978: 312).

Grosjean (2010) says that Hildegard's story (Leopold's daughter) is similar to that of many children who acquire their languages simultaneously: one language weakens if the environment favors the other, there are very rapid shifts in dominance if the main language changes, and there are even signs that a language is forgotten for a while, although it can be revived quickly if conditions are right.

Sequential or successive language acquisition, or simply called second language acquisition, is learning a second language after the first language is already established. The contact with the second language happens most at the time when a child goes to (pre-)school, between 3 and 5 years, for the first time or when the child is for the first time outside home, where the parents use one language at home. Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978) have shown in their research that twelve- to fifteen years olds did better than younger learners, because they have more fully acquired certain cognitive skills. They concluded that age does not matter but instead the usage of the language is more important, all the factors and the need will be necessary and the factors must be positive, otherwise a language will be lost (Grosjean, 2010).

Even learning three languages is not necessarily more 'costly than learning two.' Montanari's study (2011) focuses on phonological differentiation before age two by a trilingual (Tagalog-

Spanish-English) child. She followed a toddler (age 1;10) and showed that early trilingual phonological differentiation is possible. Simultaneous multilingual exposure does not appear to delay children in their initial language discrimination or production capacities. Bosch & Sebastián-Gallés (2001) reported some research results of assumptions who were made to believe that simultaneous acquisition, of two or three languages, would slow down normal language development and simultaneous exposure to more than one language might even lead to an 'enhanced language discrimination capacity.'

Montanari (2011) stresses the fact that much more research is needed; studies need to be conducted with children learning pairs and triplets of typologically related and unrelated languages; more work needs to assess whether all children, irrespective of learning style and type of environment in which they are raised, show signs of differentiation in the course of development and more research to investigate whether the development of each language in multilingual children is autonomous or interdependent.

4.2 Early immersion approach in pre-school education

It is difficult to clearly define early immersion, because of the different situations, the complex pre-school settings and its contexts. Below some definitions of the concept 'immersion' are presented.

Obadia (in Arnau & Artigal, 1998) gives a definition of immersion program: "An immersion program (also known as a multilingual, intensive or extended program) is defined as a program in which one or more subjects are taught in a language different from the language of the home at either the elementary, secondary or post-secondary level."

Wode also (in Arnau & Artigal, 1998) defines immersion: "According to Genesee (1987) the Canadian usage of the term immersion is such that it is applied only to those programs that are designed for majority-language children and that devote medium of instruction; programs with less than 50% are labelled extended core. The reason for this distinction is that government funds will only give to programs that do, in fact, carry at least 50 % of the curriculum in the foreign language."

Immersion is a method of teaching a second language. The target language is used for instruction. Cummins (2000) describes two-way immersion with two major models of two-way programs: 90/10 and 50/50 programs. These models represent the proportion of time devoted to the minority and majority languages in the early grades of the program. The 90/10 model aims to promote the minority language as much as possible in the early grades on the assumption that the minority language has a lower status in the wider community. The 50/50 model is based on the belief that both languages need to be acquired from the beginning of schooling and the best way to do this is to split the instruction time between the two. Cummins (2000) agrees that both programs can work well.

Double immersion has also proved to work effectively (Laurén in Arnau & Artigal, 1998). Genesee & Lambert (1983) studied how early double immersion, in French and Hebrew, works with English-speaking children. Both languages here have respectable sociocultural

status even if the grounds are somewhat different. Both languages are used in teaching, as tools for meaningful communication.

According to Swain (1981) and Hicky (2001) early immersion programs works the best when children at home speak the majority, dominant language while they learn the minority language at pre-school, care centre or kindergarten. The second language is offered in a playful way, while the high status and social position of dominant home language ensures that the development of the home language is not interrupted.

In literature definitions of immersion are focused on school settings and not on the preschool facilities. Some parts of the definitions and descriptions in this section are also applicable to pre-primary school education. Even though there are no different subjects (like mathematics, history etc.) offered in pre-school provisions, the are many pre-schools with a focused didactic curriculum. Pre-school practitioners offer different activities (songs, stories, games, nursery rhymes, creative activities etc.) in a different form of language as the home language. Some practitioners have to decide how to deal with the instruction language in those different activities and which immersion method they want to use. Especially when it concerns a bi- or multilingual pre-school setting a conscious language choice is important. It is also important in monolingual settings with multilingual children. The MELT project partners developed a Guide containing examples of linguistic activities and theories, to increase the skills of practitioners, who are working in a minority pre-school setting with children from 0 to 4 years. And of course to provide young children with a strong educational foundation, enabling them to go on and continue to progress with their multilingual skills.

4.3 Continuous multilingual development

Children who are born in the 21st Century, will grow up as global citizens. The world has become smaller, children have more knowledge of the world around them. Communication with people from other cultures with other languages is much easier than ever before. The awareness about a multilingual upbringing and education is greater than in the 20th Century. Multilingual speaking children are 'normal,' due to the increased immigration and more 'mixed-cultural' marriages. Monolingual people are becoming rare exceptions. In the next sections strategies on how to raise a child multilingual, the importance of the minority language and the conditions for a continuous multilingual development are described.

4.3.1 Multilingual language acquisition strategies

Different researchers show the benefits/ advantages and disadvantages of multilingualism and there have been studies about the best method to raise a multilingual and multicultural child. One of the recommendations nowadays is: start as early as possible to educate a child multilingual. But there are different approaches that allows the child to develop the consciousness of two or more language systems more quickly than others. Which strategy is

the best one to raise a child multilingual? And what are the best strategies to continue to be a multilingual person? What are the conditions to become a permanent multilingual adult?

Grosjean (2010) presents five strategies that parents can follow to promote bilingual children:

- one parent one language strategy;
- home outside the home strategy;
- one language-first strategy;
- language time strategy;
- free alternation strategy.

The best known (and also commonly used in pre-schools) is the first strategy "one parent-one language." Each of the parents speaks a different language to the child (for example, the father Dutch and the mother Frisian). Based on this strategy, common practice in day-care centres includes that the practitioners accommodate which language they will speak to the children (for example, one caretaker speaks Breton and the other one speaks French). The child is able to discern the two languages and to make the necessary separations faster and more efficiently. Grosjean (2010) thinks it's a fine strategy in the very first months of language development, when children are primarily with their parents. But as soon as the children go out into the outside world this strategy can become a problem. The minority language will eventually have less and less input, children hear and use the majority language much more. Children don't want to be an outsider, when they speak the minority language in a majority language environment.

The second strategy is also well known, the "home-outside the home" strategy. The child speaks one language (the minority language) at home and a majority language outside. The child learns and practices the community language at school while the parent's native language is learnt at home. The majority language will take care of itself outside the home through day care, school, friends, other family members, peers and watching television. In mixed families however, one of the inconveniences of this strategy, according Grosjean (2011), is the fact that one of the parents will probably have to speak his or her second (or third) language to the child so that everyone speaks just one language in the home.

The third strategy Grosjean (2010) describes is the "one-language- first" strategy. Usually the first language is the minority language. Parents make sure that every contact the child has, with other caretakers, family members, playmates, television, and so on, has to take place in the minority language. Once that language is well accomplished parents allow the other (usually the majority) language to be acquired. The acquisition of the majority language, the community language, happens usually very fast. This strategy is successful when the family is surrounded by a well-organized and quite large minority language community so that the child is given all the language input he or she needs.

Some immersion methods shows some overlap with the "one-language- first" strategy. Immersion programs may be categorized according to age and extent of immersion. Cummins (2000) describes different immersion programs used for instruction by classroom-teachers.

The "language-time" strategy is the fourth. Languages are spoken by a particular timetable. For example, in the morning the minority language and in the afternoon the majority language. Another example is to speak the one language during the first part of the week and the other language in the second part. According Grosjean (2010) this strategy is not very successful in the family setting, the consistency is an issue. However, this strategy is used in immersion and dual-language educational programs and it is successful in that kind of environment. For example, the trilingual primary education system in the Province of Fryslân. 94 The Network of Trilingual Schools includes 42 (out of 500) primary schools in Fryslân. The three languages (Frisian, English and Dutch) are taught as subjects and are used as a medium of instruction. Frisian and Dutch are offered as a double immersion method, and English is offered a half hour per week to 4 year old pupils. In the city of Vaasa (Finland), there are pre- and primary schools with more than two languages, some Swedish immersion programme comprises four different languages in primary education (grades 1-6, from 7 years old). Finnish is the students' first language (mother tongue), whereas Swedish is used as the main immersion language. English and optional German are introduced as additional languages at primary level. 95 In Wales there are some pilots with pupils educated in Key Stage 2 (pupils aged 10-11 years) where half an hour a week devoted is to a third language (French, German, Spanish). 96 According to the publications about the teaching of in Breton, there are no official trilingual primary schools in Brittany. However, some of the catholic Breton bilingual schools use the Programme Multilingue Breton; Breton and French are used as a medium of instruction, and they offer English as subject since the age of 3. In a few day care centers, some practitioners (from 3 month to 3 years old) introduce English as a short activity around rhymes and little games one time each week.

However, in Fryslân, Finland and Brittany some primary school teachers offer more and more frequently a foreign language, usually English, to their pupils. When children attend secondary school, mostly at age 12, they have been in contact with three languages; the minority language (Frisian, Swedish, Breton), the majority language (Dutch, Finnish, French) and the international language (English).

The last strategy is the "free-alternation" strategy. Parents use two languages interchangeably, letting such factors as person, situation and the time. It is far the most natural strategy but its success rate suffers from the fact that the majority language becomes dominant as the child spends more time outside the home. (Grosjean, 2010).

4.3.2 Importance of strengthening of the minority language

Monolingual children are fluent in their home language at the age of four or five. Cummins (2000: 34) stresses the fact that immigrant students (children aged 12 years or older) require at least five years (and frequently much longer) to catch up to their majority language peers in academic-related language skills. The problem is that many students become discouraged and fall behind or drop out. (Grosjean, 2010: 234).

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⁹⁴ Primary school in Fryslân starts at age 4.

⁹⁵ Björklund S. et. al... (2011) *Trilingual Primary Education in Europe. Some developments with regard to the provisions of trilingual primary education in minority language communities of the European Union.* Leeuwarden/Ljouwert: Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning

⁹⁶ The welsh Language board. http://www.byig-wlb.org.uk [Accessed March 2011].

Children, with the minority language as home language, attending pre-school provisions where early immersion programs are offered in the majority (mostly State language) will not develop into balanced multilingual students. The status of the minority language is low and the development of the home language can be interrupted (Campos & Rosenberg 1995, Duquette 1992). Cummins describes that those pre-school programs, that minority language speakers teach in the minority language, ultimately lead to better results in the majority language, than programs when a part is taught in the minority language. The level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development Good minority pre-school programs may eventually lead to a better command of the majority language (Campos & Rosenberg, 1995; Cummins 2000).

Research shows that the language attitude of adults effects the language attitude of children. López (2005) claims that children follow their parents' attitude and that a positive parental attitude positively affects the language learning progress. The sudy of McGrath & Repetti (2000) shows that there is a relationship between parental expectations and the actual academic achievements of their children. These two statements also apply for regional & minority languages.

4.4 Conclusion and model continuous multilingual development

The described theories and the conclusions of the literature study in chapter 2 and 3 lead to the recommendations stresses that the target language whitin the pre-school provisions for children aged 0-4 years should be in the conscious minority language. Parents and pre-school practitioners should choose conscious about the language they speak to the children and the way of immersion should be determined and should be discussed. Parent should think of their own 'linguistic attitude' and behaviour accords to the minority language. Because, it is important that children feel invited and encouraged to use language(s) in their social environment (family, relatives, pre-school teachers and other children) and at school. Language acquiring only at academic (CALP)⁹⁷ level is not enough, rather preferred is to learn language(s) in different contexts and situations and to use two (or three) languages in everyday situations, during the whole day.

Conclusion of the previous paragraph is that the best strategy to raise a bilingual child is the one who suits the child the best. Every family setting is different and parents have to decide which strategy is the best one in their particular setting. In a minority bilingual family setting some strategies are better fitting than others.

Where parents speak a minority language to their children, and where the language of the community and education is the dominant, majority language whatever the type of acquisition is, simultaneously or sequentially/successively, the degree of bilingualism attained can be the same. If the factors and the need for a language are present and the child has a natural development (see the figure below and the previous paragraphs) then all conditions are fulfilled to grow up multilingually and to go multilingually through life in adulthood. For the language maintenance of the different languages and to continue as a

⁹⁷ CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) and BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) are explained in chapter 2.5.

multilingual person it is important that all the factors, the need to use a language, the natural development and the 'fitting' strategy are all in balance. If all these conditions are fulfilled during different developmental stages (infant, toddler, school child, adolescent and young adult) and for all conditions is continued attention than we can speak of a "continuous multilingual development" and the child will develop to a continuous and long lasting multilingual adult.

Figure 4.2 presents the conditions for a continuous multilingual development. Those conditions are based on the theories and studies presented in the before chapters and the experiences during the MELT project.

Conditions for a continuous multilingual development:

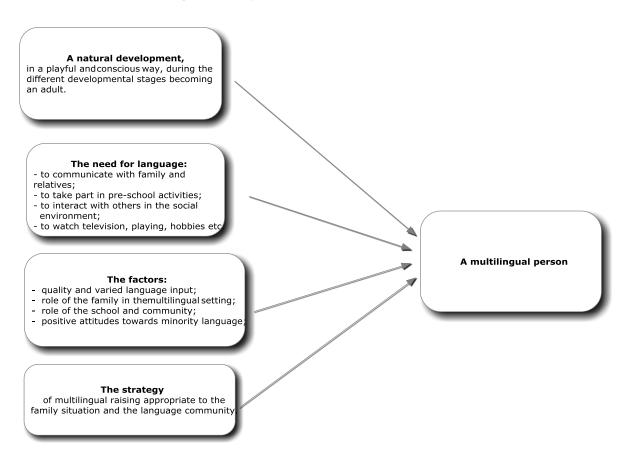


Figure 4.1 The 'continuous multilingual development' model.

5. Recommendations for materials and resources in pre-school

During the last decade, a number of research projects has been carried out. At the same time, and particularly in Europe, a variety of projects has been initiated on bilingual or immersion pre-school services. Both the research and the action projects are established to meet one of the four strategic objectives of the EU program Education and Training 2020⁹⁸: improving the quality and efficiency of education and training.

General conclusion from these studies is that only qualified caretakers and teachers should be working with (young) children, and that languages are an essential part of the pre-school curriculum. It is important that students acquire language awareness and the ability to deal with different languages at their future workplace. Across Europe, nurseries, day-care centres, playgroups, pre-schools and kindergartens are setting the stage for children to learn two or more languages. In this chapter some studies, projects and development of methodologies and materials for pre-school are described. Further, the results of implementing the MELT Guide are presented in paragraph 5.2 and some recommendations for minority pre-school teachers are presented in the sections about exchanging good practices in paragraph 5.4.

5.1 Methodologies for pre-school teaching

Sometimes pre-school practitioners have received little specific training and support for language teaching. Nevertheless, and especially where as soon as the target and instruction language is a minority language in pre-school, these practitioners are expected to act as language specialists. Because most materials and methods for pre-school teachers are intended for majority languages and mostly the materials are intended for children from the age of 3 or older. The four partners of the MELT project developed a Guide for all pre-school practitioners working together in a pre-school as well as for practitioners who just start working in minority or bilingual pre-school settings and who want to improve their knowledge and skills. This Guide contains language development activities which are intended for all pre-school settings; pre-school practitioners in nurseries, playgroups, day care centers and other pre-school professionals dealing with bilingualism and young children from 0 - 4 years. This Guide provides ideas to create a supportive and rich language environment in pre-school provisions for children. This Guide aims to make language work as an integral part of pre-school activities, and that language activities will be of value in the day to day activities of the pre-school.

The implementing process of the MELT Guide will be described in section 5.2. In the next section other developed pedagogical approaches and methodologies are presented.

⁹⁸ "Education and Training 2020" (ET 2020), Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training. It provides common strategic objectives for Member States, including a set of principles for achieving these objectives, as well as common working methods with priority areas for each periodic work cycle.

5.1.1. Quality of language input

The ELIAS (Early Language and Intercultural Acquisition Studies⁹⁹) project published two volumes¹⁰⁰ including results of a longitudinal study on bilingualism in European (pre- and primary¹⁰¹) schools and best practices in bilingual pre-schools, where a foreign language is taught from kindergarten to secondary school.

One of the ELIAS project's aims was to investigate the nature of language input provided in bilingual pre-schools by pre-school teachers. The assumption that quality of language input matters to second language acquisition of children was made. As a result of an "Input Quality Observation Scheme and Grammar Test Development over time" the analyses show that input quality significantly correlates with the amount of progress in receptive second language grammar knowledge. For the quantitative side of language input there were no significant differences found between the low and high input intensity groups as to grammar development (Kersten, 2010).

The MELT partners had the same experience as regards providing a good language input by pre-school teachers. Even though in the ELIAS project the focus was on learning a second foreign language and the MELT project mainly focuses on pre-school in the minority languages. In the MELT project practitioners concluded, that while working with young children, it is necessary to repeat words and phrases over and over again and in different contexts, before a child understands and later on uses the words and concepts by themselves.

5.1.2 Guidelines for pre-school practitioners

The ELIAS project developed guidelines for language use in bilingual preschools for children aged 3 to 6 years. These seven guidelines are a kind of theoretical strategies for language input for bilingual pre-school teachers. The ELIAS guidelines are:

- 1) The teacher uses the L2 in a way that the children receive rich and varied L2 input;
- 2) The teacher needs to contextualise the L2;
- 3) The teacher adapts speech patterns for the benefit of the child's understanding;
- 4) The teacher creates an environment which promotes multi-sensory learning;
- 5) The teacher provides the children with ample opportunity to interact verbally and to express themselves (verbally and non-verbally);
- 6) The teacher provides scaffolds to support the children's learning;

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⁹⁹ The ELIAS project (2008-2010) has been funded with support from the European Commission, Multilateral EU-Comenius Project. Project partners include ten bilingual preschools in Germany, Belgium, England and Sweden, a monolingual English preschool in the UK, as well as eight Universities and the Zoological Garden in Magdeburg, Germany, which carried out the scientific research. For further information on the ELIAS project: www.elias.bilikita.org [Accessed May 2011].

¹⁰⁰ Kersten, K. et.al. (eds.) (2010). *Bilingual Preschools Volume 1 Learning and Development*. And *Bilingual Preschools Volume 2 Best Practices*. Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.

¹⁰¹ They cover the age range of 3;0-18;00. In this project children aged 3 to 6 years are attending pre-school, primary school starts in this project at age 6.

project at age 6.

102 Weitz et al. (2010). In: Kersten, K. et.al (eds.) (2010). Bilingual Preschools Volume 1 Learning and Development. Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.

7) "Golden Rules" for parents, which allow children a successful early immersion experience.

These above guidelines include second language input quantity and quality, contextualisation, multisensory learning, speech intonation, interaction strategies, scaffolding, and parental involvement. The ELIAS project describes in a conclusion that these guidelines are far from complete but focus on the idea that children learn languages only if they are exposed to "good" input.

To integrate the language activities pre-school practitioners should practice the language activities at the workplace. In the MELT Guide one of the suggestions for beginning or uncertain practitioners is to practice storytelling, playing games etc. in a small group. In this way the practitioner will experience the reactions of the children. 'Adults as linguistic role models', 'Interaction' and 'Working with themes' are some key words. To make language activities easier the MELT Guide suggest the use of picture cards and concrete materials to make new words visible and concepts are to clarify concepts.

The data and analyses of the ELIAS studies also came to the conclusions that children show the best results when teachers provide a high quantity and quality of language input, when they ensure comprehension by visualising and contextualising everything they say and when they explicitly encourage the children's language production.¹⁰⁴

In 2010, a second edition of "Das Handbuch Schnupperangebot: Deutsch als Fremdsprache im Kindergarten¹⁰⁵" was published. This handbook provides many suggestions, ideas for content, learning objectives and methodological approaches to promote German as a foreign language in kindergarten. It is aimed at teachers and educators who are looking abroad and want to teach their pupils German as a second or third language. The activities and recommendations are intended for children aged four to six years, children who come in contact with the German language for the first time. One of the didactic methods they use is the Total Physical Response (TPR)-method.

The TPR-method , developed by James Asher in the 1970s, ¹⁰⁶ is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action; it attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity. This approach introduces the language through the use of commands (imperative sentences) and let children demonstrate their understanding through action responses. TPR is based on the premise that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any natural language on earth - including the sign language of the deaf. The process is visible when we observe how infants internalize their first language.

The secret is a unique "conversation" between the parent and infant. For example, the first conversation is a parent saying: "Look at daddy. Look at daddy." The infant's face turns into the direction of the voice and daddy exclaims: "She's looking at me! She's looking at me!" Asher calls this "a language-body conversation" because the parent speaks and the infant

¹⁰³ For further descriptions of the "golden rules", visit

http://www.elias.bilikita.org/docs/guidelines for language use in bilingual preschools e.pdf [Accessed May 2011]. Kersten, K. et al. (2010). *Guidelines for Language Use in Bilingual Preschools*. ELIAS- EU supported multilateral Comenius-Project.

Kersten, K. et.al (eds.) (2010). Bilingual Preschools Volume 2 Best Practices (p. 79) Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.
 Widlok, B. (2008, 2nd edition 2010) Das Handbuch Schnupperangebot: Deutsch als Fremdsprache im Kindergarten München: Goethe-Institut e,V.

¹⁰⁶ James Asher is a professor of psychology at San Jose State University and developed the TPR-metod. http://www.tpr-world.com [Accessed June 2011].

answers with a physical response such as looking, smiling, laughing, turning, walking, reaching, grasping, holding, sitting, running, and so forth.¹⁰⁷

Notice that these "conversations" continue for many months before the child utters anything more than his or her first proper words. Although the infant is not yet speaking, the child is imprinting a linguistic map of how the language works. Silently, the child is internalizing the patterns and sounds of the target language. This principle of the silent period holds true for bilingualism likewise.

The TPR Storytelling- method was introduced by Blaine Ray of Bakersfield (Krashen, 1998). This method concerns a foreign language teaching methodology were teachers tell personalized stories in their foreign language or English as a Second language classrooms where their students act those stories out. Students comprehend the stories by virtue of the live action visual aids and acquire the target vocabulary because it is repeated dozens of times within the daily story. Sentence structure, vocabulary and grammar are acquired because non-stop comprehensible input is provided by the teacher.

The TPR- method and the TPR Storytelling- method fits well in pre-school curricula dealing with multilingualism. The MELT project has introduced the TPR- Storytelling method in a multilingual setting. This approach is helpful to visualise the language, for example with picture cards and materials supportive to tell stories.

5.1.3 Children with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds

The ELIAS studies showed that bilingual preschools with an immersion setting foster early foreign language learning. It is indispensable that more preschools offer such a bilingual programme and that primary and secondary schools follow lead in order to enable more European children to master their foreign languages at a functionally adequate level at the end of their school career (Kersten, 2010).

One of the results of the ELIAS project showed that immigrants, children with a different cultural and linguistic background than other children in the pre-school, adapt very well to the bilingual pre-school settings. (...) The results of their receptive L2 vocabulary and grammar learning does not differ significantly from that of their monolingual peers (Kersten, 2010).

This above conclusion proves that young children can easily acquire more than one language. And if the child attends a pre-school setting with a different language than the mother tongue there is no damaging for children's bilingual language development. During the MELT project the participating pre-school settings continued to implement the 'one-person-one-language' strategy or the immersion strategy. Pre-school teachers agreed which of them should speak the minority language to the children. When pre-school practitioners

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¹⁰⁷ This example is quoted from a lecture of Asher *What Is TPR?- "Babies don't learn by memorizing lists; why should children or adults?"* at Cambridge University, England http://www.slideshare.net/ignorantdavinci/total-physical-response [Accessed July 2011].

agreed with each other, they are telling stories, singing songs and playing games with the children in the minority language.

5.2 Results of implementing the MELT Guide into pre-schools

5.2.1 Process of implementing the MELT Guide

During the school year 2010-2011, several practitioners (about 40 practitioners per region, 120 in total) of 40 different provisions in the four regions implemented the first draft version of the MELT toolkit within their settings to improve their skills and help them to be more aware of creating a language strategy within their day care. This toolkit offers guidelines, practical examples, lesson plans and theory that is aimed at language development of children aged 0-4 years.

The MELT project tutors visited the participating pre-school settings 5 times, in order to guide and assist the practitioners. During the MELT project the use and content of the toolkit was evaluated on a block by block basis. Several evaluation periods were organised; discussion groups during expert seminars, monthly Skype Meetings, contact through electronic mail and evaluation forms.

Following feedback received from the final evaluation period between all four tutors during a Skype meeting in May 2011, the MELT partners agreed on updating and editing the toolkit into a Guide. The original draft consisted of five sections, with the final version including nine sections. The Guide is written as a common tool for all practitioners within a pre-school setting, with the aim of assisting them to work towards a focused language strategy within their day care. However, the Guide can also serve as a practical tool for beginners. These changes included presenting the Guide as a binding folder with all sections presented bilingually on each page. It became evident during the tutor visits that many practitioners are learning the minority language themselves. Due to this, it was decided that the two languages (the minority and majority language) would appear on the same side. This will enable practitioners to see both languages at the same time, hopefully assisting them in the learning process. By restructuring the MELT Guide, pre-school teachers will feel encouraged to use these sections in their own way, and in any order which they deem appropriate to their actual setting of learning and teaching. The final Guide will be translated into eight languages which will be available online and in hard copy from October 2011.

5.2.2 Results of implementing the MELT Guide

According to the four tutors¹⁰⁸ within the MELT project, the most important and challenging tasks was promoting the benefits of bilingualism and raising awareness of minority language

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¹⁰⁸ The four tutors of the MELT project are: Johanna Sallinen (Swedish community in Finland); Margaret Francis (Wales); Virginie Pronost (Brittany) and Sytske de Boer (Fryslân). Further descriptions of the tutors and organisations are at the MELT website: www.meltproject.eu [Accessed August 2011].

acquisition. Some pre-school staff and parents have hardly any knowledge of multilingualism and have difficulties recognizing the advantages it presents. By providing information, the tutors hoped to change some negative attitudes of both practitioners and parents. Below some challenges faced by bilingual families are described.

Some challenges faced by bilingual families:

- Raising *awareness* of the benefits of multilingual child raising. (For example, by gathering information through flyers etc.).
- Equal *language input* of both languages (50% minority/50% majority)
- Consistency in 'the one person one language strategy.' (For example, mother speaks the minority language; father the majority language to the child).
- Enough information/materials to provide a language rich environment for the child. (For example, by telling stories en playing games).
- Positive language *approach* regarding both languages and encouraging reactions towards children, when they speak the minority language (For example, giving compliments and confirmation to the child).
- Positive language *attitude* regarding both languages, especially the minority language (For example, equal language status).

Figure 5.1 Challenges faces by bilingual families.

One of the leaders of a day care centre said after a successful information session by the tutor:

"Parents and educators have learned much about the opportunities of a multilingual upbringing and what education may bring to children; they will surely share this information with others!"

During the implementation process the tutors and the practitioners of the 40 participating pre-school institutions in the four regions experienced that immersion and language acquisition is most successful if pre-school teachers offered the children a rich and varied input in the minority language. In general, however, pre-school practitioners need confidence and guidance to develop the correct skills and expertise to create activities and an environment that promotes the child's language development. This is certainly true in terms of inexperienced pre-school teachers, in addition to pre-school teachers who are speaking a language other than his/her own mother tongue to the child.

Practitioners mentioned the need for concrete examples of language activities. They also wanted to know what kind of words, phrases and concepts they are expected to transmit to

the children. In general, tutors concluded that a vocabulary list corresponding to a theme or project would be useful.

The sessions with the tutors proved fruitful, both with the children's activities and with the practitioners themselves.

Various results and comments of the different participating pre-school provisions are provided below. These comments are taken from the evaluation forms and issues that were discussed between practitioners and tutors during the implementing process of the toolkit in each region.

Fryslân

Some practitioners found some examples of minority language activities, described in the toolkit, useful for daily practice. However, some practitioners encountered another problem with the toolkit itself, namely that in their opinion it was directed to an overly broad audience, resulting in the fact that the toolkit was either too simple for experienced teachers or too complex for starting teachers.

Besides, some practitioners had some problems with the structure of the toolkit. They considered the chapters too long, with too many sub-topics. The tutor suggested for the restructured toolkit to break up the chapters into smaller sections, each of them containing a theoretical background, general suggestions and advices and one concrete activity.

In one pre-school setting forwarded the advice to label playing area's and objects. However, in Fryslân there is some discussion about labeling. Some practitioners and others working in the pre-school settings stressed the fact that the focus should lie on playing and not at learning. Labeling and using letters and words are according some people too pedantic for 4 year-olds.

In Fryslân, working with themes is common use; enough materials are developed to offer activities in the Frisian language. But some activities and suggestions were new. One setting has adopted a suggestion of the toolkit to lend out a book to read at home (loggerboek), and when the book is finished the parent comes to the setting to read it in the group. The collaboration between parents and pre-school teachers is increasing through this activity.

In another setting the pre-school teacher already uses most suggestions on conversations that are described in the toolkit, such as taking time, eye-contact during conversations, going along in the interests of the children etc. At this moment the teacher doesn't plan the conversations in the way that she writes down with what children she has had a conversation, or using a stone to mark the "turns of speaking", yet but in this setting they do not find this suggestions necessary either, as the conversation times are structured enough as they are.

Finland

Some pre-school provisions are familiar with the theories, for example from Folkhälsans book Språkplantan. The methods are familiar but the material in the guide is 'new.' However, at least one setting has already bought the literature that has been recommended.

Most participating settings are now using picture cards to stories and books. And one setting tried to change some routines, to have structure time for conversations, playing games and telling stories.

The tutor stressed the importance of theme work linked with language development. Not many provisions are using theme work. In the pre-school settings where themes are used, the focus on language is not specific enough and does not reflect the language development. Many words are introduced linked with a theme, but there is not enough emphasis on the active use of the language.

Most practitioners and the tutor notice the importance of parental involvement with language development. It is crucial for the overall success, and especially for language acquisition, that practitioners work closely with parents.

Wales

In Wales practitioners and teachers are used to teacher friendly material. Practitioners are less interested in theory, but in particular in the activities. Most settings found the picture cards containing nursery rhymes very useful as the children enjoy the activities where the songs are linked to the picture.

Theme work is familiar in Wales. Basically most of the provisions are working with themes, the content of that chapter was not new. However, as a result of lack of training and knowledge, language strategies are not developed effectively to offer those activities in the Welsh language.

The tutor was surprised how many language learners there are working as practitioners within the settings. Of course, this is very encouraging, but it is difficult to implement immersion techniques. The instructions linked with the resources had to be introduced bilingually (Welsh-English), encouraging the learners that these resources could be of benefit to them as well as to the children. In line with this approach and because so many of the practitioners are learning the language, the tutor suggested to restructure the toolkit. It would be better to present two languages on the same side, so that they will be able to see the sentences in two languages in one sight.

The tutor also commented on the lack of self-confidence of some of the practitioners to use one language only. When two languages are spoken, children focus on the language they understand, total immersion strategies are sometimes not working.

Brittany

Most participating pre-school provisions were at the beginning of the MELT project looking forward to the new ideas, activities and practices from other regions. They needed guidance and examples how to immerse the Breton language.

Some participating pre-school provisions found that it was fairly difficult to apply the theory, suggestions and tips for their children appropriately where one of the practitioners is to transmit the language and work in Breton all the time fluently. Lots of adaptations are made

in the overall toolkit. Some of the activities were offered bilingually (Breton-French). The strategy 'one person one language' seems difficult to integrate in some provisions.

One setting mentioned that it was often difficult to adapt the activities to the smallest children (1-2 years, if not under 1 year-old). The activities are too much intended for 'schools' (3 years and older).

According to one of the practitioners it would also be good to include new words and new terms in the theme, either in the minority language or in both languages. During the MELT project the amount of Breton vocabulary to be offered to all children has increased.

One setting will consider discussing what they do on an everyday basis for the language in general and how the pre-school teacher who is able to speak Breton, can go ahead with this.

One setting mentioned that they learnt a lot regarding the consciousness of the professionals and the importance of parents participating in the pre-school activities.

One provision recorded their own CD with songs in French and Breton.

The tutor stresses the fact that team work and a positive language attitude towards Breton is essential. Some settings need to work on that. Team work has to be more focused and practitioners have to agree with the strategies they use within their pre-school.

5.3 Skills of training staff: mentors and practitioners

There has to be good training programmes for both pre-school and immersion practitioners/teachers. A training program focusing on three competencies: linguistic, scientific and pedagogic (Obadia in Arnau & Artigal, 1998). The pre-school teachers of nurseries/kindergarten are naturally present in all activities together with the children. They help children to dress, undress, to eat etc. If the pre-school teacher uses a pedagogical approach there is a more communicative role on the part of the teacher: more collaborative, and more conducive to a varied input (Arnau & Artigal, 1998). The University of Barcelona studied the Pedagogical Approach, Context and Language in Early Catalan Immersion and came to the conclusion that a pedagogical approach, more pupil centred, provides a richer mental 'context.' This approach promotes a more active use of the language, and also develops the communicative competence of pupils. A pedagogical approach of the language will promote a faster and more effective acquisition of the second language (Arnau & Artigal, 1998).

The profile of a good teacher in early language learning includes not only language competence but also the specialist skills and knowledge of an effective nursery, infant or primary teacher. The teacher has a central role as he/she is likely to be the main source of input in the target language. He/she is also bringing an intercultural dimension to the learners, helping them to learn about languages (i.e. developing language awareness, as well as developing strategies for language learning which will help in later life. The teacher also

has to be able to understand the needs and capabilities of the young learners including the stage of mother tongue language development they have reached.

Daycare centres are important for language learning. Quay (2011) presented a study about the role of caregivers and peers in language development by multilingual toddlers. The daycare settings provide such an environment where young children can interact with peers and caregivers to acquire the skills they need to develop socially and linguistically (Beller, 2008; Weitzman & Greenberg, 2002).

5.4 Exchanging good practices

Europe wide there is no organization which coordinates minority language pre-primary education for children aged up until 4 years. In the study of Mitchell (2010) the connections between minority language pre-school organisations in Europe are investigated. There are some examples described of communities in Europe who contacted and shared their experiences.

(...)when the Isle of Skye educators visited the Skolt Sámi, the focus on cultural activities and

'free play' in Nordic pre-primary care struck a chord with them and they left thinkin g about how to incorporate a more culture-specific element into their pedagogic method (Jansson 2001).

(...) Contact between different communities affects educators' choices about the most basic educational principles and has disseminated the immersion technique throughout Europe (Mitchell, 2011).

Dissemination on early language learning and best practices of immersion in the region & minority language between the different regions in Europe seems necessary.

5.5 Conclusion with regards to materials and resources in pre-school

This chapter describes some conclusions with regards to materials and resources in preschools. In the above sections the skills and quality of the pre-school practitioner sare described. Further research on this topic; skills and competences of the pre-school practitioners, working with children from 0;6 - 4;0 years, seems necessary. Some of the differences between the training qualities from early language learning teachers across Europe could be further investigated and clarified more in depth. Based on the research and experiences of the MELT project, exchanging good practices and learning from each other will increase the quality from the different pre-school provision.

Research has shown that when parents and pre-school practitioners speak the minority language to their children, this will ultimately lead to better results in the majority language. Through implementing the Guide in the provisions, tutors pointed out to use the minority language with young children consistently. Pre-school practitioners should be aware of their language use to children, parents and colleagues.

Further, an active language interaction amongst children, in addition to the interaction between children and adults is a prerequisite for optimal language development. If there is a rich and stimulating environment for the minority language, there is a basis to learn the majority language as well. Offering quality language input through training and qualified preschool staff is necessary for the development of multingualism.

Language is the most critical tool for children throughout their lives. Children learn the languages they feel they require, because naturally they want to communicate with adults and children they engage with on a daily basis. To learn a language, children must be allowed to listen to others using the language and to produce it themselves. While working at a pre-school setting, practitioners are an important linguistic model for the children, and therefore have a critical role to play. Repeating words, phrases and concepts is an excellent habit, as children need to acquire them in order to make them part of their own language. Adults are the ones who are responsible for encouraging children to speak.

6. Recommendations and challenges

Language transmission of two or more languages within the family is not self-evident for all parents involved in multilingual settings, nor for their peer groups (families, friends, colleagues, neighbours and nurses). In the broader context of social life (education, sports, cultural associations), and public life (authorities, media) often a double message is emitted: multilingualism is an asset both for the individual child / citizen and for society, but the learning and teaching of the national standard language and dominant international languages are more important than the learning of regional minority or immigrant minority languages. Mother tongue education often ignores vernaculars, dialects and immigrant languages, thus fostering assimilation instead of the proclaimed diversity. This phenomenon influences the beliefs and opinions of young parents, and their behaviour regarding language transmission and language choice. This research paper as well as the MELT Guide for practitioners and the parents' pamphlet has been developed to provide relevant information to all individuals and relevant organisations involved in multilingual early childhood matters.

6.1 Multilingualism and language maintenance

The idea of plurilingualism of the individual pupil and the overall goal of language maintenance and development of both the first language/mother tongue and the dominant language is generally accepted in official declarations and documents.

In 1953, the UNESCO declared the right to the use of the mother tongue for becoming literate and the importance of mother tongue education being extended to as late a stage in education as possible. "In particular, pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue, because they understand it best and because to begin their school life in the mother tongue will make the break between home and school as small as possible" (Garcia 2009: 14).

In the European Treaty linguistic diversity is proclaimed. In the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) multilingualism is described as both 'a factor of European identity and citizenship' and 'a cornerstone of the knowledge-based society'. In the Lisbon Strategy (2000) and the Barcelona Council (2004) the idea was promoted that all European citizens should acquire three languages, the mother tongue plus two community languages.

The Council of Europe in particular has already been working for decades already towards the promotion and balanced development of plurilingualism – the lifelong enrichment of the individual's plurilingual repertoire. This repertoire includes mother tongue and second and foreign languages which are fostered through education as well as in the informal settings. The theoretical and practical work of the Council of Europe proves of great value for educational practice not only, but also for the policy development and program planning of the European Union. However, all responsible people, parents and practitioners, local and regional policy makers, are aware of the difficulties and sometimes suffer disappointing experiences in daily life. They all know: "Policy is about decisions we make, policy is not written rules, but implementing the decisions!"

A conscious decision on language choice(s), language behaviour of the parents and related aspects such as reading aloud, singing, books and CDs must be made, implemented, often defined and sometimes reviewed. In other words: "Acquisition planning to encourage family

intergenerational transmission occurs by, for example, interventions with parents, health visitors, midwives, as well as by language learning in school, adult language classes, and literacy" (Baker 2003: 101). The MELT project and its products individually aim to make a contribution in encouraging parents to make a well-informed choice and practitioners to advise those parents as well as to guide the children on their way of a multilingual development.

Traditionally a number of reasons are mentioned for the transmission of minority languages: pedagogical motivations, cultural values, diversity of society and language maintenance. First and most important of all, however, is the right of every child to become literate in their true mother tongue, as declared in the Universal Declaration of Children's Rights. It is well known and often proven that the child's chances of further cognitive development are most completely guaranteed by a good knowledge of the mother tongue. This universal right to mother tongue development, however, is much less accepted and less self-evident for children in bilingual contexts and / or in families where non-national languages are spoken. That situation, and in particular the aim of language development and maintenance requires special measures in terms of infrastructure or provisions, and training programmes. These aspects of language policy can help to fulfil the goals which are formulated for Welsh children, but are of equal importance for all children living in a multilingual society: "For all children, the essential aims of bilingual education in Wales should be: to develop community fluency in the Welsh and English languages; to develop biliteracy in the Welsh and English languages; to become multicultural and increasingly multilingual; and to have entitlement to equal access to the potential economic and employment benefits of bilingualism" (Baker 2003: 104).

6.2 Development of smaller state and regional & minority languages in education

The position of minority languages in education and the formulation of aims and goals shows a development which can be characterised with the metaphors of stumbling stone, stepping stone and corner stone. For a long time, regional minority languages were, and nowadays immigrant languages still are, often considered stumbling stones which prohibit the children from acquiring a sufficient knowledge of the standard language and their full academic skills of reading and writing. Educational programmes used to neglect those languages, they didn't even use those languages as an assistant or support tool towards the learning of the standard language. Later on, and also nowadays in some cases, both regional and immigrant minority languages are being used in the starting phases of oral language development and early literacy, but forgotten as soon as the serious aspects of education begin, in particular teaching of reading and writing skills. This phase of transitional education can be characterised as the stepping stone towards the mastery of the dominant language(s).

The position of the corner stone means that both the minority language and the dominant language are taught and learned on equal footing, aiming at "full bilingualism, biliteracy" (Fishman) at the end of obligatory school attendance. This position of equal corner stones can be achieved only on the base of a number of conditions and measures, in particular continuity of schooling and learning, starting from pre-school through primary school to secondary education. The continuous development of bi- and multilingual children towards the achievement of all language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) on the level which is appropriate to the reference age of the children is often a challenge.

6.3 Multilingual Early Language Transmission in smaller state and regional & minority languages

Depending on the strength and vitality of the language concerned, the political circumstances and practical possibilities, as well as the ambitions of parents and authorities, various models of upbringing and teaching are applied. Within the MELT project a range of models is displayed and discussed. The total immersion method is applied at the day care centres and pre-school provisions of the Swedish-speaking community in Finland as well as in Wales. They have the policy and the strong belief that the total immersion approach in the minority language will foster bilingual or multilingual individuals, and that within these structures the minority languages will have better chances of maintenance. Note that in these regions "immersion" also refers to mother-tongue education in minority languages. The experiences within Finland and Wales show that in those linguistic situations children from majority language speaking families benefit more from bilingual provisions and structures than the children from minority speaking families. In other words: through immersion most of the Swedish-speaking children in Finland become bi- or multilingual, while the Finnish children tend to stay more unilingual. The same holds for Welsh speaking children within Wales. Those children are living in the prosperous situation of having a chance to continue their schooling at primary and secondary education through the medium of Swedish respectively Welsh.

In Friesland and in Brittany on the contrary, the minority languages are less vital in terms of language prestige, their position and function in education, and with respect to language use in public life and in the media. Therefore, in Brittany and in Friesland, it is much harder to implement structures and provisions which apply total immersion, although experts agree that also in those regions the immersion approach would be beneficial for the children involved. In these regions, more often part-time immersion or two-way immersion is applied: "in one-way immersion, some of the teaching time is in the target language. In two-way immersion, two language groups learn each other's language by working for some of the pre-primary day in one language and for the rest of the day in the other" (Language Learning at Pre-primary school level 2011, p. 15).

The intention is that children in Friesland become bilingually fluent in Frisian and Dutch, and preferably trilingual with respect to English. The concept of trilingual schooling has been developed over the last decade, and has proven to be successful at a growing number of primary schools. Bilingual education with Frisian as a subject and medium of instruction for one day or half a day per week and English as a subject only, is widespread throughout Friesland.

In Brittany the main aim of the introduction of Breton in pre-school provisions is to raise and increase among parents and grand-parents, peers and practitioners the awareness of the cultural value of Breton. The MELT project itself contributes greatly to the further development of tools for the purpose of the promotions of awareness among parents, practitioners and authorities.

In all four participating regions, and indeed in all European regions with a minority language, the real challenge is the continuity of learning and teaching *in* and *of* the minority language, starting from pre-primary provisions through primary schooling to secondary education, as well as in vocational training. It is hard to define different chapters within the curriculum for majority respectively minority language speakers, including different attainment targets, time tables and assessment procedures. The ideal situation would be that each individual

child could be offered a tailor-made curriculum, differentiated for mother tongue and second language acquisition. The true role of language policy is the development and realisation of that ideal in practice as much as possible within a given linguistic situation.

6.4 Recommendations with respect to Early Language Learning and Multilingualism

The European Commission has identified pre-primary education as a priority theme for cooperation between Member States in 2009-10, in particular to promote generalised equitable access and reinforce the quality of provisions and teacher support. Recently, in July 2011, the European Commission released a Staff Working Paper within the Strategic Framework for Education and Training (ET 2020): Language Learning at Pre-primary school level: Making it efficient and sustainable. A policy handbook (SEC (2011)928. In this working paper on Early Language Learning (ELL) all general aims, goals and benefits of early multilingualism are summarised and proclaimed: "The aims of any ELL policy for children in pre-primary education should be to foster intercultural and multilingual education focused on the development of the child's personal potential. Where appropriate, it could also be to provide an introduction to a particular language that will be taught later on in primary school" (p. 9). Within this working paper a special chapter is dedicated to 'Children with a minority or migrant background'. In that chapter a double message is emitted. On the one hand the benefits of multilingualism are underscored: "Children with a minority or migrant background will usually benefit when offered equal opportunities to access language learning and support to maintain and improve both their first language/mother tongue and the second language. Their established repertoire should therefore be further valued and promoted" (p. 23). On the other hand, the transitional approach is promoted: "The participation of these children in programmes that provide systematic language support in the language of instruction at pre-primary level should therefore be encouraged, since it would be beneficial for their social integration and educational journey" (p. 22). The phrasing suggests an opposition between the maintenance and fostering of mother tongue which differ from the state language, and the language of instruction at school. From the perspective of equal footing of mother tongue and standard language, both languages of education serve to foster the child's social integration and educational journey. Explicit language policy and measures are essential in order to put formal declaration into practice. The EU policy handbook at hand which is aimed at national authorities and administrations in charge of childhood education and care and of language education, further stresses the importance of lifelong learning, and the increase of awareness of linguistic diversity, the importance of informal settings for language acquisition by language use in the right cultural context. Also the training of staff is recommended as well as permanent and consistent advice to parents and families who often find it difficult to choose which language(s) they should use to raise their children.

This research paper and indeed the Guide for practitioners as well as the parents' pamphlet of the MELT project are without doubt of great value for the deepening of insight – both theoretical and in practice – of multilingual children's language development in the preschool age.

6.5 Challenges for the future

At micro level, most important of all in the processes of raising our children through languages is the constant (and continuously to be encouraged) awareness of parents and their peers that they have a choice. They should be aware that multilingual upbringing can foster a child's cognitive development and further language learning, provided that appropriate conditions are met. Parents are responsible for raising their children in both languages or either language, to guide the children through immersion education, bilingual or monolingual courses, to apply the one person – one language approach or any other wellthought-out approach, and to read aloud with their children as much as reasonably possible. The practitioners involved in these provisions and approaches are expected to guide the parents and peers towards that choice. They are considered to be experts and, indeed, parents will expect clear answers on a great variety of questions, although in most cases their training is insufficient. Therefore, within the European and national policies regarding the improvement of quality of practitioners, a bachelor degree, specially developed modules and tailor-made internship must be developed. Within vocational training courses those modules and internship courses must be certified, both for the school and for the individual student.

At meso level, regional and local educational authorities should take it as their responsibility to insist on the integrative or holistic approach of the health and wealth organisations in cooperation with vocational training. This vision of the development of the child as a totality must include not only aspects of physical growth and health, but also a balanced approach towards language acquisition appropriate for the child in its linguistic environment. The relationship between formal education and language learning activities in non-formal contexts should be strengthened.

At macro level, national governments should include in their educational policy not only an increase of participation of pre-school education, which is proclaimed by the EU in the Agenda 2020, but must also give priority to the improvement of the continuity of language learning through primary school and secondary education. National legislation must be based on equality of the target languages and aimed at full language development.

With respect to the training of practitioners and day care servants, sufficient provisions for teacher training must be guaranteed, including in-service training programmes. Training programmes must include promotion awareness programmes focussing on balanced plurilingualism, as well as methodologies of immersion and language acquisition approaches in various linguistic settings. Such programmes can be developed and targeted at speakers of regional minority languages as well as immigrant languages.

At macro level, European organisations should encourage all policy makers and stake holders to express the same positive attitudes towards multilingualism and language maintenance. The importance of communication in different languages and language learning from a lifelong learning perspective should include continuous attention for first language/mother tongue acquisition. Furthermore, the concepts of "Equity, Quality, Consistency and Continuity" (Language Learning at Pre-primary school level 2011 p. 9) should be applied to smaller state languages and regional & minority languages as well as immigrant languages.

The European organisations also should encourage national governments to develop common standards of quality of practitioners in terms of language skills and didactic skills for

the individual practitioner; but also common standards in terms of availability and accessibility of pre-service training and the setting of its quality standards.

With respect to the EU Agenda 2020 the policy of mother-tongue plus two (Lisbon and Barcelona) should be re-scoped. The EU should develop "(...) a framework in which specific national, regional and local policies may flourish, and Languages for international and national/regional communication, for community cohesion and personal linguistic development may be supported" (King et.al: 40).

All in all, when looking back at this MELT project, and when considering all studies and recommendations in official documents, the most important recommendation of all is concerning the relationship between theory and practice. At local and regional level, as well as at national and European level, stakeholders and policy makers, scholars and practitioners should take into account that all their ideas, proposals and work must be carried out for the benefit of the growing children.

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7. "Early Bilingual Development: the Role of Attitudes and Language Input"

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Introduction

Many young children grow up hearing more than one language (1). Whether they themselves will actually speak more than one language is not something that can be taken for granted. In fact, one in four children who are raised with more than one language will speak just a single language on a day-to-day basis. This single language usually is the school language.

For the parents and families of those children this is often a problem: most parents want their children to learn to speak the language they speak to them. When children do not speak the family language or do not speak it well, parents may feel guilty, rejected, angry, all of the above or more. Usually they do not understand why it is that their children will not or cannot speak the language used at home. Children themselves, as they get older, may feel regret and/or shame at not being able to speak their family's language.

The fact that children do not speak their family's language becomes a strong threat to the survival of a minority language if many children who are hearing that language at home do not speak it. Of course, languages can be learned throughout the lifespan. Children can, as they get older, try to re-learn their family language, but this takes an extensive amount of conscious effort, time and expense.

There are many factors that help explain whether young children who are raised bilingually will actually speak two languages rather than just one. This research-based article gives a brief overview of factors that can to some extent be influenced. These include attitudes and the nature of the input situation, that is, how often and in what circumstances children under age 6 hear their two languages.

Some examples

In order to make my later discussion more accessible I present four examples of children growing up in a regional minority language context. These examples, though not real, have been inspired by the countless children raised bilingually that I have met, read about, or heard about (2).

Yann

Yann is a five-year-old boy whose parents have spoken French and Breton to him from birth. They both address him in either language and they both use both languages every day, as does almost everyone else who talks to Yann. When Yann's parents talk to him in French, they expect him to respond in French, and when they speak to him in Breton, they expect him to reply in Breton. Yann speaks both languages fluently and has playmates he speaks French with, and others he speaks Breton with. At his monolingual French medium preschool he mainly uses French, and occasionally some Breton with a friend he knows from his village. The teachers don't mind in the least and wish they could speak Breton themselves.

Alana

Four-year-old Alana is growing up in a Finnish-Swedish household. Until she was three years old, her parents spoke only Swedish to her, although they are fluent in Finnish, too. Alana herself spoke Swedish fluently by age two and a half. She then enrolled in a Finnish-only preschool. She wasn't speaking any Finnish until she was about three, though (she was silent at preschool). Her preschool teacher told her parents that this was because of the bilingual situation and urged the parents to start speaking Finnish instead of Swedish to Alana. With a heavy heart the parents gradually stopped speaking Swedish at home. This was very upsetting to Alana, who continued to speak Swedish to her parents for a while, but as she started to learn to speak better Finnish at school she gradually changed to speaking Finnish with her parents, too. Now that she is four she no longer speaks any Swedish.

Pelle

Six-year-old Pelle is growing up in a Frisian-Dutch bilingual household. His mother speaks Dutch and Frisian at home, and his father only Dutch. On his mother's side there are a few relatives who speak a bit of Frisian to Pelle now and then. Everyone in Pelle's environment, including school teachers and pediatricians, think it is great that Pelle is learning two languages. Pelle understands Frisian and Dutch, but he speaks only Dutch. This is puzzling to everyone and his mother is very sorry about it.

Bronwyn

Bronwyn is a perky five-year-old who heard only Welsh when she was very little. She started going to a bilingual preschool at age four and started learning English there. This added on to her fluent Welsh. While her English is not yet as well developed as her Welsh, Bronwyn can tell stories in either language. She will be continuing on to a bilingual primary school.

The role of attitudes

The way people feel about specific languages and child bilingualism has a strong effect on individual children's bilingual development. This is because these feelings or attitudes feed into people's behavior towards bilingual families and children, which in turn affects these families and children.

Needless to say, if parents themselves have a negative attitude towards child bilingualism they will most likely not raise children with more than one language. If one of the spouses has negative feelings about the other spouses' language or does not understand it, there will be little chance of a successful bilingual upbringing. For instance, a Dutch-speaking friend of mine married a Frenchman who neither spoke nor understood Dutch. They built up their lives in central France. My friend's husband had fairly negative views towards Dutch and believed that bilingualism was bad for children. In these circumstances, and given that she spoke fluent French herself, my friend did not even attempt to speak Dutch to her two children. She does not mind so much that her children cannot speak Dutch, but her parents, whose knowledge of French is limited, are quite sad that their communication with their grandchildren is necessarily quite limited because of the lack of a shared language.

Positive attitudes within the family towards specific languages and child bilingualism are a crucial foundation for children's bilingual development. Without positive attitudes, parents would simply not speak more than one language to their children. In the remainder of this article I will focus only on attitudes held by people outside the immediate family, and will go on the assumption that families themselves have positive or neutral attitudes towards both languages involved and that they have no particularly strong beliefs about child bilingualism being a bad thing.

Unfortunately, many people outside the bilingual family hold negative attitudes towards child bilingualism. Many people think that learning two languages at an early age is bad for young children and makes them confused. Others think that learning two languages from early on slows down the language development process. It is attitudes like these that made Alana's preschool teacher tell Alana's parents to stop talking Swedish to her. I want to point out that advising parents to stop speaking a particular language to their children goes against the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states in Article 29, division (c), that the States parties to the Convention agree that the education of the child shall be directed to "The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own identity, language and values [..]" (source per September http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm). Besides, there is absolutely no evidence that simply stopping to speak a particular language to a child will automatically increase the child's proficiency in another language. That would be like expecting that if you stop playing football you will get better at tennis! You will get better at tennis only if you spend more time practicing tennis, not because you gave up football.

Typically, negative attitudes towards child bilingualism go together with negative attitudes towards whatever language is not the majority language. Thus, Alana's preschool teacher didn't advocate stopping the learning of Finnish, the majority language, but advised stopping the learning of Swedish, the minority language.

Such negative attitudes are also at the basis of school rules that require children to always just speak the school language (except in foreign language classes): at many monolingual schools all over the world it is common for teachers to forbid students to speak any other language at school than the school language. Schools have the right to do this, but it is

unfortunate that such rules exist. Such rules communicate a negative attitude towards children's home languages. Children may interiorize such negative attitudes and consequently stop speaking the home language altogether. Teachers should also realize that children under age 6 might not have the necessary cognitive maturity to be able to reflect on what language they are speaking to their friends at school and to be able to change their habits from home. Even for adult bilinguals it is exceedingly difficult and unnatural to speak another language X to someone they have always spoken language Y to. It is a good thing, then, that in Yann's school the teachers allowed him to speak Breton to children he speaks Breton to outside of school.

As I said earlier, many people believe that early child bilingualism leads to all sorts of psychological problems and confusion. There is more and more scientific evidence, though, that children who hear two languages from early on are generally performing better on all sorts of tasks than children who hear just a single language. Also, the millions of bilingual children who perform well in each language and who are doing fine at school are evidence against the ill-founded idea that somehow, learning two languages early on is bad for you.

Positive attitudes normally support bilingual development. In Yann's case, even though his preschool is monolingual, the teachers there have positive attitudes towards his bilingualism and towards the minority language, Breton. In Pelle's case there are similarly positive attitudes all around. Yet Pelle does not speak the minority language, Frisian. Obviously, for bilingual development to flourish additional factors play a role. These have to do with the language input, that is, with how often children hear each of their languages and in what circumstances.

The role of language input

The importance of frequent and regular language input

In order to learn to speak a language children need to hear it a lot. Children cannot learn language from the air. Unfortunately, prominent linguists used to claim otherwise, but these claims were not founded on any real evidence. It is now very clear that if children do not hear a lot of a language they cannot learn it well enough.

Parents may not be sufficiently aware of this. Many parents do not consider the importance of how much they talk to their children. They simply assume that children will talk in the language they speak to them. In a monolingual situation it doesn't matter all that much how often a particular person speaks to children - there will be plenty of other people speaking to them. In a bilingual setting where often only one or two people speak a particular language to children it becomes very important that these people speak that language a whole lot.

In Pelle's case there are positive attitudes towards child bilingualism and towards both Frisian and Dutch. Yet Pelle does not speak Frisian. This is because Pelle simply does not hear enough Frisian and so doesn't have enough learning opportunities. Only his mother regularly speaks Frisian to him, but not every day. Only occasionally does Pelle hear other people speak Frisian to him.

Let's compare Pelle's case with the case of Yann. Both children heard two languages from birth. Both are growing up in an environment that has positive attitudes towards child bilingualism and both the majority and the minority language. In Pelle's case only one person regularly addresses him in the minority language; in Yann's case, it's many people, including other children. Pelle does not hear the minority language every day; Yann does.

Another major difference between Yann and Pelle is that unlike Pelle's parents, Yann's parents both use both the majority and the minority language at home. In Pelle's case, his father speaks only the majority language at home, and his mother both the minority and the majority language. Such differences between different sets of parents in how the use of two languages is distributed are very important factors for the transmission of languages from parents to children. This was shown in a large survey of about 2,500 families that used one of 73 minority languages at home. All the ca. 5,000 children in this survey speak the majority language, which in this case is their school language, Dutch. But do they also speak the minority language they hear at home?

Table 1. Parents' home language use and children's active use of the minority language (source: De Houwer, 2007)

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Parent 1 speaks	Parent 2 speaks	the children speak the minority language
X	X	97%
Λ	^	3776
NL + X	X	93%
NII - V	NII . W	700/
NL + X	NL + X	79%
NL	Х	73%
NL + X	NL	34%

NL = the majority language, Dutch; X = one of 73 minority languages

As shown in Table 1, families like Pelle's where both parents speak the majority language at home and only one parent speaks the minority language have only a one in three chance of having children who speak the minority language. This is very different for the opposite pattern, that is, families where both parents speak the minority language at home and only one parent speaks the majority language at home. This pattern (the second most successful one) has a more than 9 out of 10 success rate.

Often bilingual families are advised to use a so-called one person-one language system, where one parent speaks the majority language and the other one the minority language. Table 1 shows that families using this system are not the most successful ones in terms of having children who actually speak two languages: only in about 3/4 of the relevant families do children actually speak the minority language. What's more, families like Yann's who use the opposite system, where both parents speak both the minority and the majority language at home, have a slightly higher chance (about 4 out of 5) of having children who speak the minority language.

The star performance, however, is represented by families where both parents exclusively speak the minority language at home. Children in such families have the highest chance of also speaking the minority language.

Most likely the underlying factor that can explain these differences between different sets of parents boils down to different patterns in the overall frequency with which children hear the minority language.

The importance of children's language learning histories

As shown above, frequency of language input is a very important factor that can help determine whether young children speak a language or not. This implies that it will also matter for how long a child has had input in a language. This is where children's language learning histories come in. Some children growing up bilingually have had input in two languages from birth. Yann and Pelle are examples of this. Other children like Alana and Bronwyn started out like monolingual children and heard only one language for some time after birth, and then through changed circumstances (often through daycare or preschool) started hearing an additional language.

The situation where children have had language input in two languages from birth is termed Bilingual First Language Acquisition or BFLA. When children start off monolingually but a second language is added to the input some time later we speak of Early Second Language or ESLA.

These different input situations create different expectations for bilingual development. When five-year-old Yann, a BFLA child, speaks either of his languages, he speaks them pretty much like a monolingual child would for each separately. When five-year-old Bronwyn, an ESLA child, speaks either of her languages, she makes some strange mistakes in her second language (English) that are influenced by Welsh, her first language, and that monolingual children learning just English would never make. Yann knows about as many words in both his languages, whereas Bronwyn knows far more words in her first language (Welsh) than in her second. These differences between Yann and Bronwyn can be explained by the fact that Yann had much more opportunity to learn his two languages (5 years for each) than Bronwyn (5 years for Welsh, but only 1 year for English). Also, language structures learned before will affect those learned later.

Another major difference between BFLA and ESLA is that once children are of a talking age (for most children, definitely by the time they are 1.5 years old), BFLA children will not just remain silent. They may speak just a single language regardless of whether they are addressed in the minority or majority language, but they will speak. ESLA children, on the other hand, will typically be silent for several months when they start to be addressed in the majority language (at home they will speak the minority language fluently). This initial "silent period" is a well-known phenomenon in ESLA. It does not point to any language learning problem. Rather, it is part of the normal second language learning process in children under age 6. It was just part of this normal second language learning process when Alana was silent in the first half year that she spent at her Finnish-language school. Unfortunately, the teacher was not aware of the fact that this is normal.

It should be noted that both within BFLA and within ESLA there is considerable variation between children. Some children just develop faster than others, regardless of how many

languages they are learning. Also, both within BFLA and within ESLA there is usually uneven development, which means that bilingual children's languages are not used and known at the very same level. Even Yann, who speaks both Breton and French fluently and without noticeable influence from one language on the other, speaks about school subjects more easily in French, but when he's talking about his little herb garden he can discuss it much better in Breton. Again, such differences have to do with input conditions: Yann goes to school in French, and his father dug out and planted the herb garden with Yann while speaking Breton.

The importance of communicative need

Yann's father does not only speak Breton to Yann, but also French. When father and son discuss the position of the stars or how a car works, it's in French. Talking about the herb garden and relatives and friends takes place in Breton. From the beginning, there has been a sort of topic specialization in the family. Certain topics are discussed in Breton, others in French. It was just seen as natural that as he started to speak, Yann would respond in the same language that he was spoken to. If as a toddler Yann spoke Breton when his parents were talking French, they would sometimes genuinely not understand and would ask Yann what he meant. Or when Yann clearly didn't know the required word in the right language, they would tell him what it was and then expect him to use it. In other words, from the beginning Yann's parents were alert to the language Yann was speaking, and were insisting that he speaks the language they were speaking. They were thus creating a communicative need for Yann to speak both languages. Since Yann was two years old, he has been responding in the language spoken to.

This has been different for Pelle. His mother tends to speak Frisian to Pelle mainly when his father is not present. This is a fairly clear communicative situation, and within it, Pelle's mother could have insisted that Pelle respond in Frisian. He did respond in Frisian a little at the beginning, but this soon stopped and his mother was never particularly focused on which language Pelle was responding in. If he responded in Dutch she just continued the conversation in Frisian. As such, there was no real communicative need for Pelle to speak Frisian. This, combined with the fact that Pelle heard Frisian far less frequently than Dutch, lead him to restrict himself to Dutch so that he is not speaking the minority language.

In Bronwyn's bilingual preschool there are teachers who use only Welsh as a medium of instruction and others who use only English. When the English-speaking teacher interacts with the children, either she does not respond to Welsh or she asks children to say what they mean in English. Some second-language children like Bronwyn often lack the necessary vocabulary in English, so teachers provide the missing English word, and then ask children to repeat what they wanted to say in English. Children at this school soon learn to try to speak only English to the English-speaking teacher, and Welsh only to the Welsh-speaking teacher. At the bilingual school, then, just like in Yann's bilingual family, there are little "unilingual" islands, that is, interactional settings that require the use of just a single language for everybody involved.

Such unilingual interactional settings in each language require children to actually speak two languages. This offers them the advantage of practicing. If you want to learn to play the

piano, you need to practice a lot. It's the same with language. In order to learn to speak a language children need a lot of opportunities to actually speak it. Without this practice it is near impossible for children to learn to speak a language well.

In conclusion

For the intergenerational transmission of language to take place, children must learn to speak their parents' language(s). This sounds obvious enough, but in many regions in the world this intergenerational language transmission is just not taking place. In bilingual settings where a minority and a majority language are present the minority language is quite vulnerable: Instead of becoming fluent bilingual speakers of both a minority and a majority language about a quarter of bilingually raised children end up being monolingual speakers of just a majority language (3).

There are several reasons for this. Quite fundamental are negative attitudes towards specific languages and child bilingualism. Where those exist, it will be extremely difficult to raise bilingual children. Secondly, children may not hear each of their languages sufficiently frequently and regularly. Thirdly, they may not need both of their languages for communication and may thus restrict themselves to only one.

What can parents do to support their children's bilingual development? Their own positive attitudes towards both the minority and the majority language and towards early bilingualism are the cornerstone for children's successful bilingual development. Influencing attitudes from people outside the immediate family is difficult. In many cases, though, parents have a choice in who they engage to help take care of their children. Parents should carefully choose their day-care workers, pediatricians and schools. They should find professionals who are respectful of the family's language(s) and wish to raise a bilingual child. This sounds much easier than it is, but is crucial. Parents should not have to find themselves in confrontational situations where they need to defend their minority language or the fact that they wish their child to grow up speaking two languages. Many speech therapists, doctors and teachers today unfortunately still hold very negative opinions about bilingual development and will make claims that are not substantiated by the research data. Parents should rest assured that hearing two languages does NOT slow down the child's cognitive or linguistic development. Parents should ask professionals who might have to deal with their children on a longer term basis what their attitudes towards early bilingualism are, and should stay away from those who voice negative views.

Parents should in addition make sure that they give their children as many opportunities to hear and speak the minority language. The majority language will most likely "fall into place" once children start to attend school, and is usually not at risk. It is the minority language that parents should focus on. If at all possible, both parents should speak the minority language at home, even if one of them does not speak it all that well. Additional contacts with the minority language through media and cultural activities, visits with older relatives and, where possible, bilingual schools, should be actively sought out.

Within the family it should additionally be made into a matter of course that children respond in the minority language. This should start when children begin to speak. This

requires a heightened attention on the part of both mothers and fathers towards the specific language they think their child is attempting to speak in. Parents can help the bilingual development process by teaching children words in two languages. This can most easily be embedded in book reading sessions, where a book is read in the minority language, and occasionally parents say things like: "and at school they call this a *Zug*, but here at home we say *trein*" (Zug = German for train; trein = Dutch for train). Book reading is actually an excellent way of supporting minority language development, and should be started when children are about 6 months old.

It is not easy to support early bilingual development. It requires a lot more work and attention from young parents, who may be overwhelmed by child rearing as it is. All the more reason to garner support from grandparents and other relatives and friends who can speak the minority language and ask them to play and interact with the young bilinguals-to-be. Such trans generational and community support is paramount for minority language survival.

Notes

- (1) Although much of what I write here most probably relates to trilingual settings as well, I focus on the development of just two languages. There has been insufficient research on early trilingual development. Yet, the statements in the first paragraph apply to trilingual settings as well.
- (2) I have chosen to situate the examples in Brittany, Finland, Friesland and Wales (in this alphabetical order). The fact that some examples are more positive for a region and others more negative is entirely coincidental.
- (3) They can, of course, go on to learning other languages, including the minority language, later on in life. The latter appears to be quite uncommon, though.

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8. "Immersion Preschooling in Ireland: Training Provision and Best Practice"

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Introduction

Preschooling through the medium of lesser-used languages has played an important role in the revitalisation movements of many minority and heritage languages. It has been found that it is easier for parents and language activists to establish a preschool offering an appropriate curriculum through a non-dominant language, than to attempt to establish a primary school. Surveys of pre-primary provision in lesser-used languages in Europe (e.g. van der Goot et al., 1994) have highlighted the importance of providing monolingual preschool immersion in endangered languages both to native speakers, who may be in need of mother tongue development and enrichment (Corson, 1993; Baker and Jones, 1998), and to dominant language children learning the target language as L2. Such preschools help to raise the status of the minority language in children's eyes, as well as in the local community, and promote awareness of the need to maintain the language. Preschool education through the minority language benefits mother-tongue speakers, helping them to develop firm foundations in their first language before acquiring the dominant language later. One example of such preschools is seen in the Irish-medium preschools known as naíonraí, which offer early immersion in Irish as L2 for the majority of children coming from English-speaking homes, but also provide mother-tongue pre-primary education for the minority who are native speakers of Irish (Hickey, 2001). These naionrai function for between two and three and a half hours per day for groups of children aged 3-4 years. There are 185 such groups, serving approximately 3,800 children in English-speaking communities in Ireland (according to the umbrella body Forbairt Naionrai Teo.). In Irish-speaking communities, a further 74 groups operate (under the aegis of Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta Teo.) serving another 1000 children.

The Irish Context

While Irish is described in the Constitution as the 'first official language' of the Republic of Ireland, it is English (also a constitutionally recognised official language) that is spoken by the majority most of the time. Efforts at revitalising Irish have had mixed success (Ó Laoire, 2006): there has been growth in the numbers of second language speakers of fairly low proficiency, but a decline in the number of native speakers, and a decrease in the use of the language overall. Census 2006 (CSO, 2007) found that 1.66 million people aged three years and over were 'able to speak Irish,' representing 42% of the population. However, 60% of these reported that they either never actually speak Irish, or do so less often than once a week. Learners' main use of Irish is in school and only about 4% (68,685) of those who can speak the language speak it daily outside of education. Thus, for Irish, the educational context has become a highly significant arena for maintaining and speaking the language, as well as a place where it is learned.

Irish remains as a community language in only in a small number of areas, known as the Gaeltacht, mainly on the western coast. In Census 2006, 70.8% (64,265) of the population of these communities reported that they could speak Irish, but only 57% (36,846) of them reported that they spoke Irish daily, pointing to a perilously low number of daily speakers even in supposedly Irish speaking communities. A recent analysis of Irish use in Gaeltacht areas (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007) projects that Irish is likely to remain a home/community language there for at most another twenty years, unless major policy changes are implemented. Ó Riagáin (2001) attributed the increase in the rate of language shift in the Gaeltacht to a decline in the number of marriages between fluent speakers, and a reduction in the number of parents with high ability in Irish who have children with similarly high level of Irish in recent decades. The best indicator of home-generated Irish ability is found in the figures for 3-4 year olds in Gaeltacht areas, and in Census 2006, 51% of this age group were returned as 'able to speak Irish' (although only 42% were reported to speak Irish on a daily basis). Clearly there is a great deal of variability in language use in the home, which means that children who begin to attend naíonraí or pre-schools in these areas may come as fluent Irish speakers, as bilinguals with some proficency in both languages, or as English speakers beginning to acquire Irish. As a result, there is a high level of language contact from a very young age between these two languages of very unequal status: A survey of Gaeltacht naíonraí (Hickey, 1999) found that children from Irish-only homes (L1 Irish speakers) were in the majority in only 20% of naionrai in these areas, while children from English-only homes (L2 learners of Irish) were in the majority in 40% of these groups, the remainder having a majority of children from homes where both Irish and English are spoken.

Thus, while the majority of children attending immersion preschooling in Ireland are being exposed to Irish as their L2 as part of a revitalisation effort, as in the classic model of immersion education, immersion preschools in Ireland also play a part in minority language maintenance in catering for the minority of children who acquire Irish in their home, either as their only language, or bilingually. In this case, parents are opting for a preschool service that uses these minority language children's home language as the medium of instruction, in order to support and extend it before they are exposed to the majority/community language, as a basis for later bilingualism. In Ireland, as in other countries such as Wales, the Basque Country and New Zealand, such monolingual minority language preschools are part of language revitalisation movements aiming to develop bilingualism through consolidating the non-dominant language in young native-speakers before it is overwhelmed by the majority language, as well as helping L2 learners to acquire it. The need to support threatened home languages arises because of erosion of domains of use, limited numbers of speakers outside the home, and variations in parental proficiency and input. These pressures can affect children's cognitive and academic development, and preschool education through the minority language offers important support to help such children, not only to develop their mother-tongue, but also their cognitive skills through that language, and to form peer group networks through the minority language, which help to prevent marginalisation and low self-esteem. However, given the numbers and the geographical distribution, it is generally not possible to provide separate groups for children who are acquiring Irish as their L2 from those whose L1 is Irish, as discussed in Hickey (2005, 2007). Such grouping of L1 and L2 minority language speakers together poses particular challenges for teachers and teacher training, and some of the issues concerned with best practice in this regard will be considered here.

Curriculum and Training for Irish Medium Preschooling

Curriculum

Preschool provision for children under age 6 has undergone major review and regulation in Ireland in the last twenty years (Child Care Act 1991), and the naíonraí, like other part-time services must meet the regulations governing part-time early years' education which are formulated, monitored and implemented by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The most recent innovation is the development of a national curriculum for all children from birth to six years. This curriculum entitled Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2009) is designed to be used in the range of early childhood settings including children's own homes, with private childminders, in full and part-time day-care settings, and sessional services, including Irish-medium preschools, as well as the infant classes catering for 4-6 year olds in primary schools. The Aistear curriculum highlights the critical role of play, relationships and language for young children's learning, and aims to promote strong foundations and seamless progression from home, crèche or preschool to school, through implicit and explicit links to the Revised Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999). The values of the Aistear curriculum framework are much in accordance with the values and priorities of the naíonraí, (whose organisation and representatives contributed to consultations on its development) in emphasising the importance of play and language in particular, and it is clearly intended to be implemented in Irish-medium groups as well as English-medium ones, since its documentation includes examples, activities and suggestions for Irish-medium groups (see also Ní Rianaigh, 2011). However, it will be some time before equivalent resources suitable for Irish-medium groups are available and before its implementation in this sector can be evaluated to ensure compatibility with the specific challenges of early immersion. Nevertheless, Aistear represents the beginning of an exciting phase in early years' education in Ireland in general, as well as for Irish-medium groups in particular.

Training for Early Years Provision in Ireland

Offering immersion preschooling in a minority language requires the development of appropriate teacher training, as well as curricula and work organisations. Edelenbos, Johnstone and Kubanek (2006) carried out a review of effective pedagogical practice in teaching foreign languages to young learners (also relevant to different models of early bilingual education). They identified as a central factor which contributes to successful language learning the provision of well-trained, resourced and supported teachers with expertise in the target language and in language pedagogy. There have, in the past, been efforts to encourage the achievement of childcare and early education qualifications among those working in preschools in Ireland, but the recent innovation (2010) of a national initiative offering a free preschool year to all children aged 3-4 in a recognised provider of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), including *naionrai*, has led to the enforcement of certain training requirements. To qualify as preschool providers in this programme, all preschool Leaders are required to hold a qualification from the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC, the statutory awarding body for further education and training in

Ireland). This required qualification at FETAC (at Level 5 or equivalent) in childcare/ early childhood care and education usually includes four mandatory component awards related to the required skills and knowledge needed for practice in early childhood care and education settings, e.g. Child Development, Early Childhood Education, Working in Childcare; two general component awards (mandatory), one being work experience/practice-related and another drawn from a list of core skills areas such as. Communication, Information Technology (IT); and two component awards drawn from a pool of elective subjects which may relate to specific areas of practice in early childhood care and education. In the case of the Leaders who are training to work in *naionrai*, these include modules relevant to supporting L2 through immersion, and these are discussed below.

Training for Immersion Preschools

The umbrella body for the naionrai, Forbairt Naionrai Teo (FNT) states that there are three requirements for employment as a naíonra Leader: a FETAC 5 qualification or higher required for all working in the Early Years' sector, as described above; a high standard of Irish; and completion of its own Intensive Course (full-time for one week). A significant step has been the provision by FNT of the general FETAC training courses at levels 5 and 6 through Irish. Offering these general courses through the medium of Irish offers important professional development for fluent Irish speakers, as well as further language development in the register required to work in this section. In addition, it allows that the optional modules included can be tailored to Irish-medium preschools. As a result, modules such as 'Using Irish with young children' and 'Sociolinguistics and the child' are included, which address the methodology of immersion for L2 learners and language support for L1 speakers. This follows on the research by Hickey (1997) which explored the needs and challenges facing Stiúrthóirí (Leaders) and recommended training that specifically targeted language use with L2 learners, as well as offering those working in Irish-medium areas training in the impact of sociolinguistic factors on language use in those areas, as well as extending the preparation for dealing with children who were native speakers but had limited or insufficiently developed mother-tongue skills.

The higher qualification, FETAC Level 6, is also offered in Irish by FNT and qualifies holders for a higher subvention under the national scheme, and this course also includes a module specifically directed at Language Planning in the Preschool. This addresses some of the concerns from previous research (e.g. Hickey, 2007) showing the difficulty of meeting the different needs of learners at different levels of fluency without language planning efforts. A textbook to accompany these courses has been developed in order to support the Leaders' study through Irish (*Cúnamh*, edited by Uí Ghrádaigh 2004) and this contains materials in Irish relevant to these courses

Language Proficiency

The *naionrai* are committed to an Early Total Immersion approach, where all activities are managed only through Irish, and where the only language spoken with children and other staff is Irish. In order to ensure that the approach used in the *naionrai* is Total Immersion, Leaders must be fluent in the language, defined by FNT as being 'confident and comfortable

using the language every day...with richness and accuracy ensured by participating in refresher courses, visits to the Gaeltacht, and conversation circles with other fluent speakers'. (FNT, Ag Bunú Naíonra). Before applying, applicants are asked to complete a 25minute internet test of their Irish (using the Common European Framework of Levels of Language Proficiency). The lowest acceptable level is set at B1, an intermediate or 'Independent User' level, though applicants are required to make efforts to improve on this level after they start work in a naíonra. In order to ensure that Leaders meet the Irish language requirements, applicants must pass an Irish-language interview held by the umbrella body for naíonraí, Forbairt Naíonraí Teo. Applicants who are not considered to be sufficiently fluent are referred for further Irish training, or offered options such as part-time placement in a naíonra to improve their fluency before re-applying. If they pass the Irish language interview, they must also complete an intensive week-long course through the medium of Irish, which covers the management and running of a Naíonra, with 15 days' work experience in a naíonra with an experienced Leader (more than 5 years). This course allows consideration of issues specific to immersion and includes workshops on topics such as Early Total Immersion, the Acquisition of Irish among young children, Using Irish with young children. Child development and Planning in the naíonra, as well as practical workshops on topics such as using music and dance to promote language learning. Material in the Cúnamh agus Lámhleabhar do Stiúrthóirí Naíonraí (Support Handbook for Leaders) book is used in training on these topics.

Pedagogical Approach and Practice in Irish-medium Preschools

Delivery of pedagogically and linguistically appropriate provision in a minority language or through a child's L2 poses significant challenges, and requires bottom-up planning in order to integrate language teaching/enrichment effectively with the rest of the curriculum (Hickey, 2001). Every learning activity of the early years' curriculum offers an opportunity for language learning, but so too does every routine of the normal day, which can offer valuable language learning opportunities if suitably adapted to a child's language level. That adaptation includes marrying linguistically appropriate input with hands-on experience for children, and requires teachers to become adept at using gesture, mime and props, as well as offering appropriate simplification of the target language and repetition to help comprehension and take-up by L2 learners.

Good practice in mixed groups of L1 speakers and L2 learners requires ongoing evaluation of children's different needs. While the language needs of L2 learners may seem more obvious and urgent, in starting *ab initio*, L1 children also need enriched input offering opportunities for vocabulary development and the development of grammatical accuracy through more linguistically challenging interactive activities such as stories and role-play. Hickey (1999, 2007) showed that trainee Leaders needed explicit consideration of these differing needs in their training, so that their awareness was raised with regard to the factors which restrict minority language children's acquisition of a rich competence in their first language, as well as those aspects of the sociolinguistic context that cause them to shift towards speaking the dominant language as they get older. Such explicit consideration of these issues helps Leaders to provide children with appropriate input for their different levels of language competence, while simultaneously supporting the other aspects of their development. Specific language plans, syllabi and methodology need to be put in place for the differing

needs of different types of learners, and the absence of such differentiation for L2 and L1 learners compromises the value of native speaker competence in the minority language and essentially accords it the status of supporting L2 learning. Such prioritising of the needs of L2 learners of the language without due regard for the *use* of the language among those already fluent will be shown to be counterproductive.

Considering minority language use as well as acquisition

Settings that involve mixing L2 learners of a language (who are native speakers of a majority language) with L1 speakers of an endangered or minority language have been studied in Wales (G.E. Jones (1991), Ireland (Hickey, 2001, 2007), Canada (Mougeon and Beniak, 1994) and in the Basque Autonomous Community (Zalbide and Cenoz, 2008). Where L2 learners and native speakers are mixed, research has identified some deficiencies in the provision for native speakers, such as lack of language enrichment in input that is simplified for L2 learners, as well as insufficient promotion of the use of the language between mothertongue speakers of non-dominant languages. Thompson (2000) found that children from minority language backgrounds in her study established their initial friendships through their minority language, but over the course of a year in preschool, they shifted towards English in general and away from speaking only the minority language even with these friends. This points to the difficulty of maintaining minority language networks between children even when they have already been established, given the overwhelming influence of the majority language. Immersion preschools offering immersion in endangered languages, therefore, need to consider, not only the issue of how best to support children's acquisition of the language, but also how to promote and maintain children's minority language use when they are in situations of high language contact such as the preschool, which Hickey (2001, 2007) and Thompson (2000) show can be akin to unofficial English submersion. It is relevant to note that establishing and promoting 'natural use of Irish' among young children is a stated aim of Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta Teo., the group which supports and oversees the naíonraí in the Gaeltacht.

It has long been acknowledged (see, for example, Sylva, Roy and Painter, 1980) that preschoolers thrive in pairs and smaller groups rather than the type of larger class groups found in primary schools. Hickey (2005, 2007) discussed the language learning opportunities afforded by different types of grouping (individuals, pairs, small groups, larger groups, whole group, each with/without the Leader) depending on the type of play engaged in and the children's level of target language competence. It is a highly demanding task to allow children to explore and learn by discovery, while offering developmentally appropriate language input, in conjunction with appropriate activities to promote learning through play. This demanding task requires planning that recognises the centrality of interaction in children's language development. When the majority of children in a group are L2 learners, the Leader and Assistants are the primary sources of target language input, particularly at the outset, and these children will profit from an adult's language scaffolding in order to acquire the language relevant to their activity when they are working alone, in pairs or in small groups (Mhic Mhathúna, 2008). On the other hand, children who are able to speak the target language can benefit from a different balance of activities with similarly fluent peers, provided that their use of the target language with such other children is actively monitored and promoted.

This is supported by research showing that the types of groups that children experience can impact significantly on their chances of using the target language. Carrigo (2000) found that when Spanish-speaking and English-speaking children were together in an immersion setting, the children from different language backgrounds reacted differently to different kinds of groups: the Spanish-speaking children were significantly more likely to speak Spanish together when they were engaged in activities with other Spanish-speaking children, but much less likely to speak Spanish when they were mixing with English speakers. On the other hand, the English speakers maintained only a low use of Spanish with other children regardless of whether they were mainly Spanish or mainly English speakers. Similarly, Hickey (2001) also found that Irish L1 children in Irish-medium preschools were influenced by the composition of their group: in groups where L2 learners dominated, minority L1 children became significantly less talkative and produced significantly less of the target language (their own L1) than when they were in groups where there was a majority of children from bilingual homes or from Irish-only homes. The children from English-speaking homes (acquiring Irish as L2), on the other hand, were not influenced by the mix in the group, but maintained a fairly low level of output in the target language regardless of whether they were in groups dominated by L2 learners or L1 speakers of Irish. Thus, when planning children's range of activities there needs to be some consideration of the types of groups they are likely to experience over the course of their session, given the finding that native speakers are more likely to speak the target language if they are playing with another native speaker than an L2 learner, while L2 learners may benefit less from being mixed with native speakers than is generally believed, unless adults also participate in such groupings. This consideration of group size and mix adds to the complexity in immersion preschools, and may require some shift in focus from de facto prioritization of L2 learning in such mixed groups, to equal provision for effective L1 maintenance and enrichment.

Developments and Challenges for Irish-Medium Preschools

The legislative, administrative and curricular changes in the area of Early Years provision in Ireland in recent times has contributed to a greater interest and growth in this sector. A continuing challenge for Irish-medium preschooling is the need to keep training for Leaders abreast of the changes in the wider sector in Ireland, but also to allow provision of the particular training needs for the immersion setting. Immersion preschools are not simply preschools which are identical to non-immersion preschools, apart from the fact that they happen to be through the medium of a particular language. A current challenge is the need not to lose sight of the particular aims and objectives of immersion in the drive to implement a new early years' curriculum. Finding sufficient staff with the specialist training and skills, in addition to a high level of fluency in Irish, who are prepared to work for what are still relatively low levels of remuneration, is likely to be an ongoing challenge in meeting the demand from parents. It will take some time for recent innovations to 'bed in' and there will need to be review of how well they are being adapted to the particular needs of early immersion preschools. Finally, given the apparently accelerated pace of language shift (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007) away from Irish, it is important that training for Leaders prepares them to offer differentiated input that adequately serves language learning by all children, whether mother-tongue speakers of varying degrees of proficiency or second language learners. There is a pressing need to continue to develop teacher training initiatives that consider not only ways of teaching the language, but also ways of promoting target language enrichment and *use* among children. Such support for children's use of Irish will be based on the formation of strong Irish-medium peer networks in the naíonra. It is this which will most effectively provide a strong foundation for these children to continue such Irish-medium social interaction into their early school years.

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9. "Early childhood teacher education focused on multilingual and multicultural issues"

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Introduction

A new early childhood teacher education program in Swedish at the University of Helsinki started in September 2011. There was a great need for this program to be located in southern Finland where a third of the Swedish speakers live. One other early childhood teacher education program exists in Swedish as part of Abo Academy University but it is located in a small town at the northern end of the coastal region where most the Swedish speaking population lives in Finland. The town is 467 km north of Helsinki. This meant that most of the applicants to this program came from the surrounding Ostrobothnian region. Despite various recruitment efforts few students from the Helsinki metropolitan region (with about 70 000 Swedish speakers) have been willing to go north to this little town of less than 20 000 inhabitants. The students graduating from this program tended to stay in their home region where each job opening had many applicants. At the same time the need for certified Swedish-speaking teachers in the larger metropolitan Helsinki region was enormous. In 2009 the percentage uncertified early childhood education teachers was as high as about 50% in a couple of municipalities and 20-30% in three other municipalities out of seven (Sydkustens landskapsförbund, 2009). There is a parallel daycare/preschool system for Finnish and Swedish speakers in Finland. Even though this had been a problem for years, politicians and decision makers had only nominally reacted to the situation.

All teacher education in Swedish had until 2006 been part of Åbo Academy University. Due to a change in law in 2006 other bilingual universities can now share the responsibility for educating teachers in Swedish. This change in law made it possible for the University of Helsinki to express its willingness to establish a new program for early childhood education in Swedish when approached by local representatives for an organization of municipalities in southern Finland (Sydkustens landskapsförbund). The work for a new early childhood education program located in Helsinki, where the need was, became a common cause for local activists and educators, some politicians, university administrators and university teachers. This program would not have been made possible without the different actors working together for the common cause.

The political struggle

The establishment of this program produced a fierce struggle internally among the Swedish-speakers. It was the northern part of the Swedish-speaking community supporting the existing early childhood teacher education program at Åbo Academy University in the north versus the Swedish-speaking community in the metropolitan Helsinki region supporting the University of Helsinki. The fear was that the Åbo Academy program would suffer, which it in fact has not and the risk for competition is very small since the student recruitment areas are very different.

Those of us working for this program had to lobby very hard. We appeared three times in the Parliament for various groups. Interestingly the hardest struggle was the internal regional educational politics of the Swedish group itself. One member of the parliament from the Helsinki region was working for the cause in the parliament and managed to secure money first for creating a plan and later for some supplementary funding. We also contacted and enlisted the support of a Swedish-speaking Minister of Culture. The struggle was also fought in the Swedish-speaking newspapers by both journalist and others. Five municipal directors of education in the Helsinki region also wrote to the Ministry of Education asking for the support of the new program. The universities were called to the Ministry of Education twice for consultations. The Ministry decided to not provide any extra money for this program. Hence, finally the two universities – University of Helsinki and Åbo Academy University -struck a deal to share the responsibilities and the costs for this program.

Hence, the establishment of a minority language education program required intense political work over an extended period of time. In addition, to the political and economic struggle is the all-important pedagogical planning. Interestingly, since our program is small and aimed at a language minority there is not much interest from the majority teacher educator group for this program. This gives a certain amount of freedom in designing a program fit for the needs of a small minority group. Altogether, it took about a year to work out the practicalities of organizing this program. The development of courses and internships will continue for the next three years.

Guiding principles of the program

The early childhood education in Finland consists of early childhood care and education (including teaching). The education part is mostly the pre-school for 6-year olds. Early childhood care and education is based on a holistic view of the child and children's care, development and education. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) should be a goal oriented interaction and collaboration centered around children's spontaneous play. It is also strongly emphasized that the holistic view should be based interdisciplinary knowledge and research about early childhood education and care. This approach also requires that the early childhood education teachers can read and understand the latest research results about children and learning. The teachers should also be able to meet the challenges of societal changes such as increased immigration and children's changing language backgrounds (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2002).

There are several guiding documents for our program. The Convention on the Rights of the Child serve as a foundation for early childhood education and care in Finland . We have chosen to emphasize especially point c and d from article 29 from the Convention on the Rights of the Child as guiding principles (http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm-art29):

"(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin; "

These two points lay the foundation for two of the thematic foci of the program namely multilingualism as well as identity and diversity. In addition, the program was developed in accordance with various ECEC guidelines. There are legal, national and local documents and policies regulating ECEC. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (2002) points out in its policy on ECEC that there are specific rights mentioned in the Constitution's regulations about the basic freedoms and rights which are especially relevant for ECEC. These include equality, sanctity of human dignity, securing personal freedom and personal rights, freedom of religion as well as language and cultural rights. Furthermore, children should be treated as equals and be heard in things concerning them.

The national curriculum for pre-school (education for 6-year old children) emphasizes that all children should be given the same opportunities to learn and develop. A socially just approach is emphasized also by trying to provide, for example, special education services at an early stage. The national curriculum states that children's cultural and linguistic identity should be strengthened and given an opportunity to develop. Children should also become familiar with different art forms which support the third theme -esthetic education- in our program. It also suggests that children get to know other cultures than the local and national as much as possible.(Grunderna för förskoleundervisningens läroplan 2000, http://www02.oph.fi/svenska/ops/forskola/esiopsve.pdf).

According to the national curriculum guidelines on early childhood education and care in Finland (Stakes, 2004, p.15) a child should be "treated fairly regardless of gender or social, cultural and ethnic background". Many other things that are highly related to our program are emphasized, for example, the importance of language, play, artistic experiences and self-expression. The Advisory Board for Early Childhood Education and Care (2008) points out about future developments that a high quality program should diminish differences among children from different living conditions and social class backgrounds. Early childhood programs should give children equal opportunities to develop and grow in accordance with their abilities.

The structure of the program

The early childhood and preschool teacher education program is a three-year Bachelor's degree program. Early childhood education and pre-school teachers have had a university based Bachelor's degree since 1995. All teacher education is university based in Finland and early childhood and preschool teacher education is the only one that is only a Bachelor's degree. All the other kinds of teacher certificates require a Master's degree. The university based early childhood education teacher education also gives a preschool (6-year olds) teacher certification. There are also early childhood teacher education programs at the polytechnic level which qualify for early childhood education for 1-5 year olds but do not include a pre-school certification. The pre-school certification means an additional 60 points in teaching methods for more subject related courses. Our university based program consists

of 180 study points whereof 20 are studies (6 courses) in languages (Swedish, Finnish and a foreign language), scientific writing and IT. Another 25 points are foundations of education: foundations of early childhood education, history and philosophy of early childhood education, sociological foundations of early childhood, child development and socialization, a course in how children learn and a practice period I.

Thereafter follow 40 points in general early childhood and research related courses: multilingualism, the role of play, special education, educational planning, theory and teaching in preschool education, childhood psychology, socio-emotional development and family dynamics, qualitative and quantitative research methods, thesis seminar and thesis.

The courses required for preschool teaching certification include media culture and media education, social interaction and belonging in a multicultural society, language development and stimulation, drama, mathematics, environment and natural sciences, religion and ethics, children's literature, art, crafts, music, movement and health as well as practice periods II and III.

In addition, students need to choose a minor consisting of 25 points. This could be, for example, in-depth didactic studies in literature, music or sports. Finally they can take 10 points of whatever they like and these university courses do not need to be related to their teaching certificate.

Since this program is a collaboration between two universities each university is responsible for the teaching and the costs of the teaching of half of the courses. The practical work is led by a steering group of three people from each of the universities.

Themes of the program

The program has three foci - multilingual education, identity and diversity, and esthetic education. The three themes are evident through separate courses but most importantly the intention is that they are incorporated in all the courses where it is appropriate. Hence, a course in play or drama also deals with how play or drama can be language stimulating as well as culturally sensitive at the same time. These foci are directly related to the position of the Swedish speaking population in southern Finland and in particular in the Helsinki metropolitan area. Unlike older generations the children and youth of today are frequently growing up in Finnish-Swedish bilingual families as well as in mostly Finnish speaking communities. Unfortunately no current statistics exist about the number of children in Swedish daycare centers coming from bilingual families, but of all children registered as Swedish speaking in municipalities with less than 19% Swedish speakers (such as those in the Helsinki metropolitan region) in 2005 were over 65% from bilingual families (Finnäs, 2010). In additional many Finnish speaking families place their children in Swedish daycare in order for the children to become bilingual. For the Finnish speaking children there are also socalled 'language baths' or language immersion programs where the children quickly become functionally bilingual and can later continue their schooling in Swedish immersion schools (Harju-Luukkainen, 2007).

Finland has the last 20 years experienced increased immigration. The immigration to Finland is still very small in comparison to most other European countries, but for Finland the increased immigration has had a significant impact on, for example, educational policy. Approximately half the immigrants to Finland settle in the Helsinki metropolitan region. Most of the immigrants become Finnish speakers but there is substantial interest among Swedish politicians to increase the number of immigrants who become Swedish speakers and whose children will thereby attend Swedish schools. This would also decrease the risk that the Swedish speaking community would become isolated from the general societal trend of increasing diversity. Altogether about 8% of children younger than 7 are of immigrant background in the Helsinki metropolitan region (Advisory board of early childhood education and care, 2008).

Finland as a country is quite nature oriented and the daycares and their activities are often connected to nature in many ways. However, this is a bit more difficult in the bigger cities. On the other hand the cities have a larger palette of cultural activities and resources. This is an aspect that we want to take advantage of in our program.

The first theme, multilingualism, consists of three subthemes namely bi- and multilingualism, language immersion programs, and language stimulation activities. The language immersion program part of the program is left to be developed later. The multilingualism and the language stimulation go hand in hand. The most current research on bilingualism strongly supports early language learning (see, for example, the work of Judith Kroll; Janet Werker; Linda Bialystok). In the Swedish daycare centers bilingualism is a part of daily life and the teachers need to know how to stimulate the bilingual children's Swedish skills which can be very weak. The daycare center is many times the only completely Swedish speaking environment in a child's life. Interestingly it is not enough for the teachers who in many cases themselves have weak Finnish skills to know how to support the children's language because they also have to have fairly good Finnish skills in order to communicate with parents who maybe speaking only Finnish. Therefore most of the teacher education students will take their minor subject in Finnish. This way they not only improve their own Finnish skills but they also become exposed to the Finnish way of thinking about early childhood education. This connects also to the second theme identity and diversity.

This theme consists of multicultural education, gender and the Swedish culture in Finland. The identity as a Swedish speaking Finn is an interesting subtheme in the sense that the program has an expanded notion of what it might mean to be a Swedish speaker. Traditionally it has meant that a person is a Swedish speaker and comes from a Swedish speaking family. However, due to the changing language picture it is important for the bilingual children as well as those with Finnish as their mother tongue to feel that they are part of the Swedish speaking community if they so choose. The goal is for the children to develop a solid Swedish identity without being excluding of others. Here it could be argued that the goal is a cosmopolitan attitude where one's own identity is clear but open for impulses from others in a globalizing and diverse world (Mansikka & Holm, 2011). The goal is that through multicultural education foster an inquiring and accepting way of looking at diversity.

The concept multicultural is for this program an inclusive concept in the sense that it does not only refer to race and ethnicity but also includes gender, social class, religion, disability and sexual orientation. We have particularly lifted gender to the forefront since gender stereotyping is quite strong still in Finland and girls and boys perform quite differently in school as canbe seen in, for example, the recent PISA results (Sulkunen, Välijärvi, Arffman, Harju-Luukkainen. Kupari, Nissinen, Puhakka & Reinikainen, 2010). However, this does not

exclude the increasing social class differences, religious issues or bullying due to disability as an important part of the program. Particularly the themes of multilingualism and multicultural education is tied to a social justice perspective. In Finland, as a Nordic welfare state, it is important that early childhood education is a socially just education. Many recent studies also have found that there is a fair amount of bullying in daycare and in schools in Finland (Stoor-Grenner & Kirves, 2011). Therefore fostering an accepting or a cosmopolitan attitude towards others is important. Our long term goal is that this teacher education program will contribute to decreasing prejudice and discrimination as well as marginalization of young people.

The early childhood teachers need to have an understanding of the whole spectrum of diversity in Finland even if certain aspects or groups might not be represented in their daycare centers or preschools. Today most of the population has a limited and often stereotypical view of the Samis and Romas. Most teachers do not have the historical understanding of the societal structures that are part of the reason that the Romas traditionally have not done well in schools. Even though the curriculum is supportive of these groups the multicultural curriculum is directed only to the Romas and Samis themselves and not to the rest of the population (Finnish National Board of Education 2004). Likewise a deep understanding of the educational issues related to students of immigrant background is also lacking. Teachers are often supportive on a rhetorical level but unwilling to adjust their own teaching to be culturally responsive (Mansikka & Holm, 2010; Talib, 2005).

The third theme arts education consists of children's culture, creative work as well as self-expression and cooperation. These three areas are intended to foster children's imagination and creativity as well as learning to enjoy the arts. We want to emphasize the arts as a contrast to the increasing focus on academic aspects of early childhood education. Our aim is to see the whole child in accordance with the official guidelines (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2002).

The importance of minority language university education

To be a teacher requires solid knowledge of one's own language, how language develops and research about bilingualism in order to be able to further mono- and bilingual children's language development and skills. This is one of the main reasons why we have developed this new program. It was very difficult for the Swedish speaking high school students to be accepted to the highly competitive Finnish early childhood education program at the University of Helsinki and since the only Swedish speaking program was located far away there was a severe shortage of qualified early childhood education teachers in the metropolitan Helsinki region. The lack of qualified teachers was not only bad for the Swedish speaking children who have the right to daycare and schooling in Swedish but also meant that there was a high risk that bilingual parents would withdraw their children from the Swedish speaking daycare centers and pre-schools. In addition it is important for the preservice teachers to attend a Swedish speaking program in order to get a solid grasp of the Swedish speakers' cultural knowledge. In a Finnish program they would of course get the Finnish cultural knowledge. Hence for the survival of Swedish children's culture such as songs, riddles and stories a program in Swedish is needed. More subtle aspects such as values, customs and ways of interaction are also slightly different and important for the Swedish speaking culture. It is also important for the pre-service teachers to learn how they can strengthen bilingual children's language skills and especially for those children who live in a completely Finnish dominated environment and where the early childhood center is the only Swedish environment. This kind of education would not automatically be part of the Finnish program.

However, since it is important that the pre-service teachers also become bilingual they will in most cases take their minor subject matter courses in Finnish. Hence, the program will in practice be in two languages. Interestingly it is not housed in the department of teacher education which is an environment where all programs are in Finnish. Instead we have housed it in the Institute of Behavioral Sciences where there are two programs in Swedish from before. This department has a long tradition of Swedish speaking programs since the Swedish speaking professor of education position is the oldest in the Nordic countries. With three Swedish programs in the department the Swedish students will have a larger Swedish speaking peer community, more Swedish speaking educators and more administrators who know at least some Swedish. By connecting the three programs we are also able to have one Swedish speaking student coordinator. In other words, we have created a small Swedish speaking university community within the Institute of Behavioural Sciences, which also makes it easier for everybody to use Swedish as a daily language.

A concrete challenge to creating a teacher education program in a minority language is that it also requires qualified teacher educators. Since there is no prior history of early childhood tertiary education in this region there are very few with doctoral degrees in early childhood who are eligible to work as teacher educators. Hence, the program is like a puzzle created in collaboration between two universities and a polytechnic in order to have qualified teacher educators. Adding to this the fact at the University of Helsinki the two early childhood teacher educators are located in two different departments. The program is at times an administrative headache. However, without this kind of collaboration the program would not either have been politically possible to accomplish.

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Appendix A: Partnership of the MELT project

Partnerships

Ever since the application phase of the MELT project there has been close co-operation between the partners through the regular meetings of the NPLD. This has provided a fruitful platform as well as a good means to stay in contact with the associate members of the MELT project.



These associate members are all NPLD members with an interest in multilingual pre-school education. These members represent: Ireland, Estonia, Galicia, the Basque Country and Catalonia (Spain), Scotland (UK), Sweden, Hungary, Norway, Lithuania and Occitania (France). Through regular presentations at the general assembly meetings of the NPLD these partners are kept up to date with the progress and outcomes of the MELT project.

More information on: http://www.npld.eu/

The MELT partners themselves have their own network, both in their respective regions and internationally, where they can find, discuss, and spread new ideas.

The lead partner of the MELT project, the **Fryske Akademy**, represented by the **Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning**, has a long tradition in the field of multilingual education in Fryslân, the Netherlands. The Mercator Research Centre, established in 1987 by the European Commission, has strong international contacts through its activities and international projects. Within the MELT project, the Mercator Research Centre closely co-operates with the Sintrum Frysktalige Berne-opfang (SFBO), the organisation for bilingual and Frisian medium pre-school provisions in Fryslân.

More information on: http://www.mercator-research.eu (both available in Frisian, Dutch and English)





Folkhälsan is a Swedish-speaking NGO (non-governmental organization) in the social welfare and health care sector in Finland. It carries out scientific research and provides social welfare and health care services as well as information and counselling in order to promote health and quality of life, where language is seen as an aspect on health. Folkhälsan is a large provider of social welfare and health care services - child welfare and day-care, outpatient clinics for adolescents, rehabilitation clinics for people with disabilities and service housing for the elderly. Folkhälsan consists of regional and local associations and non-profit limited companies and foundations. Folkhälsan has about 1.500 employees, hundreds of volunteer workers and 16.500 members in the local associations.

More information on: http://www.folkhalsan.fi (available in Swedish, Finnish and English)



The **Welsh Language Board** promotes and facilitates the use of the Welsh language. It cooperates with several public sector bodies, private businesses and voluntary organisations. In the MELT project there is special co-operation with the Welsh-medium pre-school organisation Mudiad Meithrin. The Welsh Language Board is the lead body in the establishment of the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity.

More information on: http://www.byig-wlb.org.uk (available in nearly fifty languages)



The **Regional Council of Brittany** is responsible for the implementation of the region's linguistic policy regarding the Breton language. Therefore it develops pedagogical tools in association with the educational authority. It works closely together with Breton organisations like Divskouarn (association of day-care centres, also a partner), Diwan (immersion schools), Dihun (Catholic bilingual schools) and Divyezh (public bilingual schools).

More information on: http://www.bretagne.fr (available in eight languages)



Divskouarn is a non-profit organisation that works on a local level on the awareness and the structuring of bilingual day-centres. Divskouarn was officially recognised as full partner of the partnership at a later stage (approval by the Commission in August 2010), though they have been involved from the application phase onwards.

More information on: http://divskouarn.free.fr (in French and Breton)



Appendix B: MELT Project flyer

English version:



Welsh version:



Finnish version:



Mikä on mellt-projekti?

Monikielisyyden omaksumiseen varhaisiässä liittyvä MELT-projekti (Multilingual Early Language Transmission) toteutetaan neljän kieliyhteisön yhteistyönä. Projektiin osallistuvat Bretagnen bretoninkieliset, Friisinmaan friisinkieliset ja Walesin kymrinkieliset sekä suomenruotsalaiset

On yleisesti todettu, että varhaislapsuus on otollista aikaa kielen oppimiselle. Alueellisten kielten, vähemmistökielten ja harvinaisten kielten käytön edistäminen jo varhaisella iällä on ratkaisevan tärkeää näiden kielten tulevaisuudelle erityisesti yhä kiihtyvän globalisaation aikakaudella.

Päivähoidossa työskentelevillä henkilöillä tulee olla riittävät taidot ja kokemus kielten opettamisesta pikkulapsille. Monilla varhaiskasvatuksen toimijoilla ja organisaatioilla on varsin vaihtelevan tasoista osaamista ja tietoisuutta kielen oppimisesta ja kielikylpymenetelmästä.



m lit-projektin tavoitteet:

- tunnistaa kielen oppimisen ja kielikylpymenetelmien parhaita käytäntöjä
 lisätä varhaiskasvatuksen parissa työskentelevien toimijoiden osaamista
 tarjota pienille lapsille vankka kasvatuksellinen perusta
- kasvatuksellinen perusta

 antaa vanhemmille tietoa kaksikielisyydestä
- vahvistaa kieliyhteisöjä sekä edistää kulttuurillista ja kielellistä monimuotoisuutta

me let -projekti pyrkii saavuttamaan tavoitteensa

- näissä neljässä kieliyhteisössä.

 tarjoamalla vanhemmille tietoa
 vähemmistökielisen päivähoidon eduista.
- palkkaamalla tukihenkilön lapsille ja varhaiskasvatuksen parissa työskenteleville näissä neljässä kieliyhteisössä.
- järjestämällä päätöskonferenssin Brysselissä lokakuussa 2011.

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Swedish version:



Vad är m litt -projektet?

MELT-projektet (Multilingual Early Language Transmission) är ett samarbete mellan fyra språkgemenskaper – bretonska i Bretagne, frisiska i Friesland, svenska i Finland och kymriska (walesiska) i Wales. Projektet finansieras av EU-kommissionen och pågår från november 2009 till oktober 2011.

Det har konstaterats att man lätt tillägnar sig språkfärdigheter i mycket tidig ålder. Det är därför viktigt att främja barns användning av regionala språk, minoritetsspråk och mindre utbredda språk redan i tidig ålder för att språken ska leva vidare, speciellt med tanke på den ökade globaliseringen.

Personalen inom dagvården behöver färdigheter och kunskap om hur man arbetar med små barns språkinlärning. Förståelsen för och medvetenheten om språkbadsmetoder och språkinlärning varierar bland de organisationer och den personal som arbetar med barn mellan 6 månader och 4 år.

Detta fokuserar MELT-projektet på.

dd

Syftet med m lit -projektet

- identifiera bästa praxis när det gäller språkinlärning och språkbadsmetoder

- stärka språkgemenskaperna och främja den kulturella och språkliga mångfalden

Hur kommer m le le t-projektet

- genom att kartlägga dagvården för små barn inom de fyra språkregionerna
- som arbetar med barnen

 genom att anställa en kontaktperson per
- region för dagvårdspersonalen och barnen genom att hålla en slutkonferens i Bryssel i oktober 2011.

folkhälsan 🖶





Dutch version:



Wat zijn de doelstellingen van het me li project?

- Goede praktijkvoorbeelden van taalonderdompelingsmethoden presenteren.
 De vaardigheden van leidsters vergroten.
 Kinderen voorzien van een sterke basis, zodat zij hun meertalige vaardigheden blijven gebruiken er ontwikkelen.
- Ouders voorzien van informatie over meertaligheid.
 Het versterken van taalregio's door het bevorderen van hun culturele en taalverscheidenheid.

Hoe gaat het **m** all **t** project dit realiseren?

- voorzieningen, naar de verschillen in aanpak in taalonderdompelingsmethodes en naar de momenteel beschikbare middelen voor ouders en de praktijk.

- beschikbare middelen voor ouders en de praktijk.

 Door ouders te voorzien van informatie over de voordelen van meertalig voorschools onderwijs.

 Door het ontwikkelen van een praktische gids voor leidsters, inclusief leermiddelen.

 Door het aanstellen van een deskundige die werkzaam wordt in de voorschoolse voorzieningen in de vier taafregio's.
- Door het houden van een eindconferentie over de resultaten in Brussel in oktober 2011.







Frisian version:



French version:

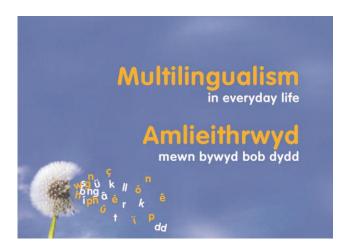


Breton version:



Appendix C: MELT Awareness-raising guidance brochure for parents and Guide for practitioners

Picture of the front of the English-Welsh version of the awareness-raising guidance brochure for parents:



The four brochures for parents (English-Welsh, Dutch-Frisian, Finnish-Swedish and French-Breton) are available as PFD-Files on:

http://www.npld.eu/melt/projectinformation/pamphletforparents/pages/default.aspx



The four Guides for practitioners (English-Welsh, Dutch-Frisian, Finnish-Swedish and French-Breton) are available as PFD-Files on:

http://www.npld.eu/melt/projectinformation/guideforpractitioners/pages/meltguideforpractitioners-wales.aspx

Appendix D: MELT Final conference program 6-10-2011





MELT closing conference on early language transmission - program

8 30 hrs Registration and coffee

9.00 hrs Opening session

- Welcoming by Ronan Le Louarn (Brittany, France) Chair of the day.
- Lena Louarn (Brittany, France) Vice-president for languages of Brittany Breton Regional Council. Kinga Gal (European Parliament) - Co-chair of Intergroup EP for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages.
- Jannewietske de Vries (Fryslân, the Netherlands) The Frisian Minister of Finance, Recreation and Tourism, Language and Culture.
- Hywel Jones (Wales, UK) Chief Executive of Mudiad Meithrin, who provides various training opportunities to provisions staff, volunteers and parents in Welsh-medium playgroups.
- Veronica Hertzberg (Finland) Management member of the MELT Project. Results and products of the MELT project.

10.30 hrs Coffee break

11.00 hrs Morning session

- Annick De Houwer (Germany) Professor of Language learning and language teaching, European Research Network for Bilingual Studies, University of Erfurt and Eunice Shriver Kennedy National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, USA: "Early bilingual development and the role of language input and parents' attitudes.
- Gunilla Holm (Finland) Professor of Education, Institute of Behavioural Scicences, University of Helsinki: "Early childhood teacher education focused on multilingual and multicultural issues"
- Idske Bangma (Fryslân, the Netherlands) In charge of the MELT (Multilingual Early Language Transmission) research paper.
- Video presentation on working with the toolkit in pre-school.

12:30 hrs Group photo

12:30 hrs Lunch

13:45 hrs Workshops

Furthermore, there are workshops that can be followed. You can register for the following workshops, with the following topics:

ROUND 1

- A) Continuity pre-schooling primary schools. or
- B) Competencies and training: competencies and skills of practitioners of pre-education.

- C) Parents: how to involve parents, family and the peer environment?
- D) Language Policy: what can local and regional authorities contribute to the implementation of linguistic human rights at their levels?

15:30 hrs Coffee break

16.00 hrs Closing Session

- Reporting back from workshops and evaluation questionnaire.
- Alexey Kozhemyakov (Council of Europe) Head of the secretariat of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Council of Europe.
- Alex Riemersma (Fryslan, the Netherlands) Senior researcher for the Fryske Akademy: MELT project results and MELT future.

17.00 hrs Reception

Interpretation: English to French and French to English

Participation of the conference is free, unfortunately the resources of the MELT project are not sufficient to cover travel and accommodation costs.

Registration is possible via the website www.meltoroiect.eu until 31 August, 2011.















Lifelong Learning Programme

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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