Inequality, inequity and language in education: There are no simple recipes![1]

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Introduction

The consecutive waves of large-scale immigration, EU free movement and, lately, rapid globalisation have increased linguistic diversity across Western Europe. Since international migration initially concentrated in urban settings, multilingualism is still most prevalent in cities (Extra, 2013). Various sociolinguistic surveys (e.g. the Multilingual Cities Project; see Extra & Yagmur, 2005) have documented this trend of increasing diversity of community languages in city populations across Europe.

This linguistic diversity can also be observed in schools and classrooms. It occupies the minds of schools, teachers and society as a whole. A lot of schools are struggling with their emerging multilingual character. Specialists emphasise the importance of multilingualism: it is an added value for all who aim to work and function in Europe. Children are encouraged to learn French, English, German, Spanish and Italian and, if possible, to use these new languages at home, with friends and on holidays. On the other hand, we see that the multilingualism of immigrant minority children, adolescents and their parents is often considered to be an obstacle to school success. Parents are sometimes encouraged to abandon their own language in their conversations with their children and give priority to the majority language. In some cases, children are discouraged or forbidden to speak any language other than the majority language while at school. These measures are not inspired *per se* by a negative attitude towards the native language of immigrant minority children. Schools are truly concerned about the learning opportunities available to these children. And, therefore, children have to be submersed in a 'language bath': they will suck the school language so to speak by being absorbed in it, by hearing and speaking it all day long. However, by opting for this approach the question needs to be asked what the impact is on children when they hear/experience that learning foreign languages is an important asset and, at the same time, their mother tongue is a but a 'handicap' for their future. We also have to raise the question what the impact of a monolingual school policy is? And is a bilingual education model the only valid alternative? Can one ignore or even suppress the multilingual reality in schools and classrooms? If the answer to this last question is

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[1] This paper is based on two previously written papers by the same authors:
Sierens, S., & Van Avermaet, P. (2014). Language diversity in education: Evolving from multilingual education to functional multilingual learning. In D. Little, C. Leung & P. Van Avermaet (Eds.), *Managing diversity in education: Languages, policies, pedagogies* (pp. 204-222). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
Sierens, S., & Van Avermaet, P. (forthcoming). Bilingual education in migrant languages in Western Europe. In O. García & A. Lin (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education* (3rd ed., Vol. 5: Bilingual education). New York: Springer.

no, school are left with questions. How do they have to deal with this multilingual reality? In this paper, we will explore these and related questions.

1.   The impact of monolingual beliefs

Social inequality and inequity is one of the most tenacious problems in education. Among other studies, the results of the successive PISA studies have revealed the lack of success of most education systems to address this challenge (e.g. OECD, 2009, 2010a). Besides the socio-economic background of children, the language they speak at home is prominently put forward as one of the main explaining factors. Children who speak another language at home than the majority language seem to be less successful at school. However, we have to be cautious in the causal reading of a correlation between the language children speak at home and their school success. A statistical correlation between two variables does not by definition express a causal relation. In fact, the reverse argumentation is also quite possible: children who are successful at school may be more inclined to use the language of the school at home. In that case successful experiences at school – both cognitive and non-cognitive (e.g. feeling respect, sense of belonging, wellbeing, etc.) – are the cause of language choice behaviour at home, rather than the consequence.[2] A second concern of the causal reading of the relationship between language spoken at home and school success is that the proficiency of the majority language is almost exclusively being perceived as a *condition* for being successful at school. This conditionality is not only in contradiction with the current knowledge of processes of second language acquisition (i.e. language repertoires – e.g. the language of schooling - are best acquired in the context where they are being used). It also confirms and strengthens prevailing monolingual beliefs.

Monolingualism is seen – certainly in education – as the aspired norm. A recent questionnaire among 700 teachers in 16 secondary schools across Flanders in Belgium clearly showed prevailing monolingual beliefs (Pulinx, Agirdag & Van Avermaet, 2014). Teachers were given a series of assertions and they had to score on a five-point-scale whether they agreed with the assertion or not (see Figure 1).

Assertion	% (compl) agree.
1. Non-Dutch speaking pupils should not be allowed to speak their home language at school.	77.3%
2. The most important cause of academic failure of non-Dutch speaking pupils is their insufficient proficiency in Dutch.	78.2%
3. The school library (classroom library, media library) should also include books in the different home languages of the pupils.	12.8%
4. Non-Dutch speaking pupils should be offered the opportunity to learn their home language at school.	6.8%
5. By speaking their home language at school, non-Dutch speaking pupils do not learn Dutch sufficiently.	72.1%
6. Non-Dutch speaking pupils should be offered regular subjects in their home language.	3.2%
7. It is more important that non-Dutch speaking pupils obtain a high level of proficiency in Dutch than in their home language.	44.7%
8. It is in the interest of the pupils when they are punished for speaking their home language at school.	29.1%

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[2] Most research on language choice behaviour shows a more dynamic and complex picture of language repertoires spoken in the home context (e.g. Van Avermaet, 2008).

Figure 1: Language beliefs of secondary education teachers in Flanders, Belgium (Source: Pulinx, Agirdag & Van Avermaet, 2014, pp. 111-112)

The data in figure 1 reveal that eight in ten teachers agree with the assertion that students should not be allowed to speak a foreign language at school. Another salient finding is that also eight in ten teachers are convinced that the main factor explaining low school success is children's low proficiency in the Dutch language (Dutch being the official school language in Flanders). This is in contradiction with international research which shows that the socio-economic background is the main explaining variable (e.g. Agirdag, Van Avermaet, & Van Houtte, 2013; Maerten-Rivera, Myers, Lee, & Penfield, 2010; OECD, 2009, 2010a; White, 1982). Furthermore, three in ten teachers are convinced that in the interest of the children they should be punished when speaking their home language at school. Less than 13% of the teachers agrees that the school library should contain books in the language of the children. This is intriguing, given the fact that most school libraries of Flemish secondary schools have books in English, French, German, etc. on the shelves. This finding confirms what we said in the introduction about the double standard with regard to multilingualism. We seem to make a difference between 'good' and 'bad' multilingualism (Blommaert & Van Avermaet, 2008).

There is a deeply rooted belief in schools that the multilingual reality of children from poor immigrant families hampers their learning opportunities. In their case, multilingualism is seen as a problem, a deficit. Children speaking another language at home than the language of schooling are almost automatically perceived as children with language problems. Sometimes they are perceived as 'having no language'.

These monolingual beliefs are not unproblematic. The above mentioned study by Pulinx et al. (2014) also demonstrates a negative significant correlation between teachers' monolingual beliefs and trust in their pupils (see Figure 2). The vertical axis indicates the amount of trust of teachers in their pupils (1=low trust, 5= high trust) and the horizontal axis teachers degree of monolingual beliefs (1= multilingual beliefs, 5=monolingual beliefs). The red line shows the negative relationship.
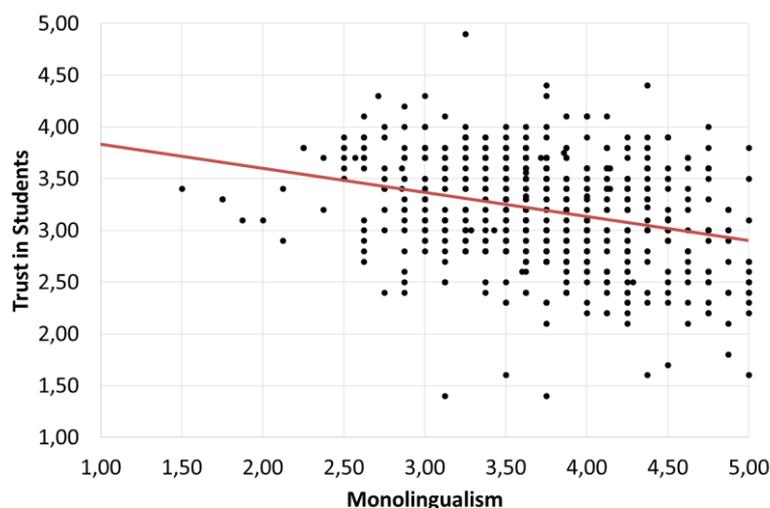

Figure 2: Relationship teachers' monolingual beliefs and their trust in students (Source: Pulinx et al., 2014, p. 116)

From most educational sociology research we know that low trust in children often correlates with low expectations in children. Low expectations, in turn, impact teachers' classroom practices (e.g. giving less

turns in the interaction) and children's classroom behaviour, which adapts to teachers' expectations. This well-known Pygmalion effect leads to lower cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes of children. So in this concrete case, we have to question whether the well-intended monolingual policies in schools might have the opposite effect of what is aimed for.

2.   Monolingual versus multilingual education

Linguistic diversity – or multilingualism – is a specific aspect of diversity within the educational programme. The debate about multilingualism has long focused on language teaching: what type of language education fits pupils from underprivileged immigrant backgrounds the best, monolingual or multilingual? Schools choosing a multilingual approach can use more than one language of instruction and teach their regular curriculum subjects in different languages.

Generally speaking, the debates on this issue are divided into two camps: monolingual (language submersion) versus bilingual (or multilingual) education. Bilingual education has always been a controversial subject, with often only a minority of people prepared to defend it. Flemish research indicates that even immigrant parents and students have different opinions on the subject (e.g. Agirdag, 2010; Ramaut et al., 2013). A clear example is the case of Proposition 227 in California in 1998. In a referendum on bilingual education many of the Hispanic parents voted in favour of the English-only initiative instead of the maintenance of bilingual education. Monolingual education is the mainstream model in most education systems and is generally supported by society at large. Most people find it self-evident and normal that children should speak only the majority language when at school (except of course for foreign language courses). The opinion of many teachers is in line with the prevailing monolingual norm in many nation states in which the administrative elite strives for linguistic homogeneity in all domains of public life (education, administration, the law) (Blackledge, 2000; Blommaert & Van Avermaet, 2008). Most people also rely on their common sense and assume that the best way to learn a new language is to submerse oneself in it.

Supporters of monolingual education are convinced that it is best to submerse non-native children in the majority language as soon and as often as possible. Within this perspective the home language of these children has no place in the classroom or elsewhere in school, and is not included in the curriculum. 'Supporters' of language submersion programmes do not oppose the principle of multilingual education as such (see below). They are however convinced that the use in school of the home languages of children from underprivileged immigrant backgrounds will obstruct the development of proficiency in the majority language, a thorough knowledge of which is a precondition for educational success and integration in the labour market and in society generally.

A lot of schools consciously combine a language submersion model with a monolingual majority language only policy and ban non-native minority languages almost entirely. Sometimes (e.g. in Flanders, Belgium) these principles find their way into the school regulations (for example: 'No language other than (standard) Dutch is allowed in the school yard') and children can be punished for breaking the rules. Besides the argument of 'integration' there is also the aspect of 'time': whenever children use their home language, they steal away time they could use to practice the majority language and as such delay the development of that language (Van den Branden & Verhelst, 2008). From this point of view, some argue that multilingual education, or even the spontaneous use of the home language, leads to 'being zero-lingual' and in the end to complete educational failure (Blommaert & Van Avermaet, 2008).

On the other side of the argument, the 'supporters' of bilingual (or multilingual) education are convinced that children benefit from an education in their own language – in addition to or in combination with education in the majority language of schooling, which for them is usually a second language. They argue that education in the mother tongue provides a more effective basis for learning the language of schooling than total submersion. Secondly, learning their native language at school

would improve the wellbeing of children from migrant backgrounds by supporting positive identity construction, which is known to have a positive influence on school results. Thirdly, teaching non-native languages helps these languages to survive over time. In this perspective providing educational support for minority immigrant languages is an objective of a government policy that acknowledges multilingual education as a positive feature of a multicultural society. The native languages of non-native children are valued for what they are, independent languages, and not simply used as a useful crutch to support the learning the majority language or improve children's wellbeing and involvement.

3. Bi/multilingual education in migrant languages in Western Europe: A brief history

Before discussing the research on bi/multilingual education in the next paragraph, we will give a brief diachronic overview of bi/multilingual education in migrant languages, with a focus here on Western Europe (including the Nordic countries).

Education programmes that include migrant languages consist of various approaches. Bilingual education is sometimes used as an umbrella term for all models in which migrant languages are taught or used (e.g. Kroon & Vallen, 2010). However, we will maintain a stricter definition of bilingual education here, which more or less distinguishes it from mother tongue instruction (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). In mother tongue instruction the migrant language is a teaching subject in its own right; in bilingual education the migrant languages are used alongside the majority language as media of instruction in a variety of school subjects (Kroon & Vallen, 2010).

From the 1970s onwards, a variety of small-scale experiments in mother tongue instruction/bilingual education involving small proportions of immigrant children have been conducted across Europe. Political aims were generally vague and diverse, and have changed over time (see Driessen in Söhn, 2005a). Next to locally developed initiatives, 36 pilot projects were carried out between 1976 and 1991 within the framework of the action programme on the education of the children of migrant workers supported by the European Commission (EC), which was in line with the EC 1977 Directive.[3] These projects showed a wide range of objectives and approaches to the integration of immigrant children in regular education (Read & Reich, 1992). Over the years, bilingual education in migrant languages reached a peak in Western Europe in the late 1970s/early 1980s. It explicitly defines bilingualism as the central element of the immigrant children's linguistic experience and competence, and then proceeds to build up the two languages from there (Reid & Reich, 1992). More specifically, the idea was taking root that teaching literacy and subject matter through the first language is desirable for immigrant children for pedagogical reasons rather than political and cultural reasons. In other words, it is the valorisation in bilingual education of the first language as a cognitive tool for learning by the school which contributes to improving the school performance and educational opportunities of immigrant children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). The theoretical framework for this approach lies in research which highlights the role of well-developed cognitive-academic skills in the first language in providing a foundation for academic development in the second language (see e.g. the linguistic interdependence hypothesis as proposed by Cummins, 1979, 2000).

Sierens and Van Avermaet (forthcoming) offer an overview of selected examples of bilingual education in Western Europe focusing on relatively strong models, which were subject to evaluative investigation. Although these programmes put emphasis on the goals of both first language and second language acquisition, the applied programme models of bilingual education were relatively 'weak'. They were transitional programmes in preschool and primary school which primarily did not intend functional

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[3] The European Commission (EC) issued a directive in 1977 (Directive 77/486/EEC) in which EU member states are required to offer free tuition to children of workers who are nationals of another EU member state, including in particular the teaching of the official language of the host state; and to promote, along with regular education, the mother tongue and culture of the country of origin. See http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31977L0486. Accessed 7 Jan 2015

bilingualism (Reid & Reich, 1992). Even if programmes aimed at developing a certain degree of bilingual competence and first language maintenance, it was more likely that in the long run the children would become dominant in the second language and acculturate (Fase, 1994; Hamers & Blanc, 2000). After all, the (intended) result of transitional bilingual education is monolingualism.

Both the local level – grassroots and official – and the supranational European level have played a pioneering role in the development of migrant language programmes and policies as part of the mainstream school curriculum. Local spaces (authorities, schools, associations) were the natural habitat for the emergence of bottom-up initiatives that positively address the growing linguistic and cultural diversities. The supranational level, for its part, constitutes institutions that have created frameworks and policies in response to challenges arising from multilingual spaces and international migration. European institutions have been important agents of multilingualism (European Commission, Council of Europe, European Centre for Modern Languages).

However, since national states in Western Europe are the major players in charge of language and education policies (Busch, 2011), the question is to what extent different (sub)national governments have adopted official policies which favoured the inclusion of migrant languages in education, as promoted by agents at the local and supranational levels. This is not self-evident when viewed against the backdrop of monolingualism which dominates nation state ideologies in Western Europe. National policy responses to multilingualism and migrant language education in Western Europe have been quite diverse in the past decades, having shown cross-national variation as well as shifts through time within countries, both in terms of rhetoric and practice (Eurydice, 2009; Fase, 1994; Glenn, 1996; Tolley, 2011). One can distinguish roughly three main responses. The first response can be called an active multilingual policy, including legal measures and facilities for special provision of education in migrant languages in mainstream schools. Examples of such relatively progressive – sometimes temporary – responses are: Sweden (1977), the Netherlands (1974-2004), the German federal states of Hesse (1978-1999)[4] and North Rhine-Westphalia (1970s/2000), Finland, Denmark (1976-2001), Norway (1998), Austria (1992/2000) and, partly, Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium (1991-2011). However, in countries where active multicultural/multilingual policies have been shaped by the national authorities, these merely softened the daily school regimes and prevailing ideologies of cultural and linguistic assimilation. The second response is more one of symbolic multilingual policies: education in migrant languages is legally outlined and permitted but the central government takes no further commitments to provide top-down structural support. Provision and funding, therefore, depend largely on initiatives taken by local agents (municipalities, schools) and/or the states of origin, which results in overall limited or patchy implementation. Norway (1978-1997), Switzerland (1991/2004), France (1975), Iceland (1996), Ireland (very limited), Luxembourg (1983), the French-speaking part of Belgium (1996) and a number of German federal states (Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein) are to varying degrees examples of this type of response. A third response is monolingual and is reflected in policies which explicitly prioritise a hard-line second-language-only approach in education; the state authorities ignore or are indifferent to special language arrangements such as mother tongue instruction and bilingual education for immigrant children within the school curriculum, and leave the responsibility of these arrangements to the immigrant groups themselves. The UK is a clear example of this response; drawing on the rhetoric of egalitarian principles, educational authorities in this country are very hesitant to tolerate special treatment of ethnic minority groups through targeting their languages (Fase, 1994).

All in all, despite positive developments in the past on the local and the supranational levels, national states in Western Europe have been in most instances reluctant to adopt migrant languages in their language-in-education policies, regardless of differences in history and the scale of immigration. Hence bilingual education in migrant languages has nowhere in Western Europe been able to establish itself as a fully valued teaching model within educational practice. Up to the present, clear policies outlining the main principles for bilingual education in migrant languages have been mostly lacking; and

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[4] Hesse occupies a special place in that mother tongue instruction had been made compulsory in 1983.

bilingual education is not consistently offered in all school types and levels of education across European countries (Kroon & Vallen, 2010; OECD, 2010b).

An important development of relatively recent date is the implementation of two-way immersion (TWI) models offering migrant languages in partnership with the dominant national language. In TWI learners have two different backgrounds (native speakers of the

majority language and speakers of a minority language) and children are taught in relatively balanced groups. TWI programmes show a clear emphasis on first language enhancement and development of biliteracy in minority children (Busch, 2011). According to Meier (2010) the work in progress on TWI in Europe has so far not been well documented and is hardly ever been mentioned in the English language research literature.

We are only aware presently of TWI projects including streams with migrant languages in Germany. Meier (2010) mentions a surge in interest in TWI in the UK but the bilingual streams in schools and projects have not targeted migrant languages up to now.[5]

TWI programmes have gained foothold in a number of German cities and continue to grow.

An early example of TWI is the German-Italian school in Wolfsburg, which has served as model for many other TWI projects in Germany (Söhn, 2005b; Meier, 2010). The *Staatliche Europa-Schule Berlin* (SESB) – that is, the State Europe School Berlin – is the most extended programme of TWI in Germany. It was founded in 1992 and currently includes a network of 18 primary and 14 secondary schools offering immersion programmes in nine different language combinations, including German and another partner (migrant) language (English, French, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish) (Meier,

2010). In 2010, nearly 6,000 students were enrolled. Linguistic and socio-cultural benefits have been documented yet so far only for language streams not including migrant languages.[6] Another well-established TWI project, which was modelled on its predecessors in Wolfsburg and Berlin, is the *Bilinguale Grundschulklassen* (bilingual primary school classes) being run in Hamburg (Duarte 2011; Meier, 2010; Reich & Roth, 2002). It is funded by the City of Hamburg and the consulates. This project was started in 1999 initially offering language streams of Portuguese and Italian next to German in primary school. Later on, schools following the same model started offering Spanish (2001) and Turkish (2003) as partner languages. The entire project has been scientifically accompanied and evaluated from the beginning (Dirim et al., 2009). Other German TWI trials mentioned in the research literature (Meier, 2010; Reich & Roth, 2002; Söhn, 2005b) are a German-Italian programme in Hagen (North Rhine-Westphalia, set up in 1998), the Nuremberg model of TWI German-Spanish, the *Europaschulen* in the state of Hesse, and a German-Italian primary school in the city of Frankfurt am Main. The main focus of the latter has been on simultaneous bilingual literacy teaching and learning, collaborative bilingual team-teaching, and cross-linguistic and cross- subject curriculum planning.

4. Research on bilingual/multilingual education: A critical reflection

The United States and Canada have extensive and long-term experience with bilingual and multilingual education for children from immigrant and minority groups, especially Spanish/English programmes for the Spanish-speaking population of the USA. This has generated extensive research on the possibilities and effects of the different language education models. When it comes to the development of theories on the subject, the USA has a lead over its European counterparts as well. In the 1970s, Cummins (1979, 2000) formulated a theory to explain the effectiveness of bilingual education. Based on an

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[5] See directory on the Bilingual Immersion Education Network (BIEN) website: http://elac.ex.ac.uk/bien/. Last accessed 7 Jan 2015.

[6] See http://www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/besondere_angebote/staatl_europaschule/. Last accessed 7 Jan 2015.

interdependency theory of language acquisition, he states that the acquisition of educational skills such as counting, reading and writing, in one language, is facilitated by a high level of achievement in the other language. Lambert (1974) introduced two new concepts, 'additive' and 'subtractive' bilingualism. Additive bilingualism refers to the acquisition of a second language without losing the skills acquired in the first language, mostly because society appreciates and acknowledges both languages as being equal. Subtractive bilingualism refers to a situation in which the acquisition of a second language, often enjoying a higher status, threatens the first language and gradually replaces it. Subtractive bilingualism often occurs when society does not value the first language and feels that it should disappear or be put aside for the benefit of the second language (Lambert, 1974). This is the case for a lot of immigrants to Western Europe.

In the USA the contradiction between monolingual and bilingual education grew into a political conflict between the 'English-only' movement and the supporters of 'bilingual education' (Padilla, 1991), which meant that the discussion found itself in an impasse (Köbben, 2003). The available research offered no clear direction, despite the fact that since the early 1970s hundreds of American studies had been published on the subject. However, in recent years new best-evidence syntheses (August & Shanahan, 2006; Genesee et al., 2006) and meta-analyses (Francis et al., 2006; Greene, 1998; Rolstad et al., 2005; Willig, 1985) seem to have tipped the balance slightly in favour of strong types of bilingual education programmes (Goldenberg, 2008). These have modest but consistent positive effects on English language and literacy learning. On the other hand, a recent study by Slavin and colleagues (2011) reports the results of a five-year evaluation study that compared the reading and speaking performance of Spanish-dominant children randomly assigned to transitional bilingual education (TBE) or structured English submersion (SIE) at the beginning of kindergarten. The findings suggest that children learn to read in English equally well in TBE and SIE.

Hence it is clear that the discussion about which models work best is far from settled. The American scientific research continues to suffer from methodological problems. First, a lot of studies have methodological shortcomings (they are insufficiently comparative, measure only short-term effects, fail to include pre-testing, etc.). After the necessary sifting little research remains from which we can draw well-founded conclusions. High-quality and long-term studies about, for example, transitional bilingual education are scarce, very difficult to set up, and often based on secondary data (e.g. Thomas & Collier, 2002). Ideally, research needs to take account of the following five considerations.

First, studies should commence the day children enter kindergarten and last until they switch to education given exclusively in the second language. This implies that studies should start with sufficient participants to ensure that despite the inevitable drop-out they are able to draw valid and reliable conclusions (Slavin & Cheung, 2005).

Secondly, there is the problem of comparing chalk and cheese: there are a great many different models of both monolingual and bilingual education (Archibald et al., 2004; García, 2009). Comparing them demands a careful and fair analysis, which is sometimes hard to find in the different studies. For example, some studies claim that a certain model of language education works very well, but when you take a closer look, you notice that the alternative models used for comparison are not sufficiently underpinned, i.e. they are not always built on firm foundations. Different studies show evidence of a positive effect of bilingual education, but when it turns out that these studies used as a control group children learning English according to the 'sink-or-swim' method (having to make it on their own without any didactic support), it is no wonder that bilingual education ends up with better scores.

Thirdly, there seems to be a persistent theoretical problem. Some experimental studies show a positive effect of bilingual education on different variables (second language acquisition, psycho-social variables, educational success). These provide evidence indeed for Cummins' linguistic interdependence hypothesis (see above) but the fundamental question which psycholinguistic mechanisms are responsible for the transfer of linguistic and cognitive skills across languages remains largely unanswered (Goldenberg, 2011). Nevertheless, one aspect is however worth remembering: when it comes to achieving a successful transfer from the first to the second language, minimal models, in which only a

few hours of the weekly teaching package are devoted to the native language, fall short (August & Shanahan, 2006; Genesee et al., 2006).

Fourthly, scientific research focused for too long on the question of the best model for all circumstances and children: either the monolingual model or the bilingual model, not a combination of the two. This 'either-or' approach has its roots in the desire of policymakers and those active in the educational sector to find an easy way out, a 'catch-all' model. The research however suggests that a 'quick-fix' or a 'catch-all' model simply does not exist because most researchers start from the wrong basic assumption (Köbben, 2003).

And fifthly, research that is premised on mere comparison of programme types rarely gets close to what actually happens in the classroom (Leung, 2005).

It is starting to become clear that all models – monolingual, bilingual and multilingual – have their advantages, and that the choice of a model should depend on the context in which it will be used and the category of children it will address. At least as important to effectively guarantee the quality of an educational model is the quality of the learning environment and the way the pre-conditions are met – both the educational and organisational ones (for example: clearly described objectives, a structured curriculum, guaranteed funding, competent and committed bilingual teachers, sound teaching materials, intensive cooperation within the school team) (August & Shanahan, 2006).

The discussion of monolingual versus bilingual education is further complicated by the fact that the educational quality of schools and the educational success of pupils depend on other factors besides language education. There are several variables in play but unfortunately supporters of both educational models sometimes seem to forget this important detail in the heat of their discussions. Language is an important key to success but by no means the only one. However, a lot more research is needed before we can formulate clear and specific answers to new basic assumptions and questions about context and quality. In particular, we need research in which researchers and practitioners join forces to develop scientifically supported practical models.

The North American context is quite different from the European one. Hence caution is advisable when considering these North American results and conclusions from a European perspective. Is there a lesson to be learned from the research on language teaching done in European countries? Unfortunately, the answer is no. For a start, there are too few initiatives in educational practice that focus on multilingual education. Secondly, Western European studies suffer from the same methodological shortcomings as their American counterparts. The conclusion of recent reviews is quite clear: too few studies provide exclusive evidence for the positive impact of bilingual education on Western European migrants with a low socio-economic status (Söhn, 2005a). An as yet unpublished meta-analysis carried out by Gabrijela Reljić at the University of Luxembourg indicates that bilingual programmes that include the child's first language are superior to monolingual programmes in securing educational success, but this is based on only seven studies selected from over a hundred carried out in Europe to date.

On the other hand, studies providing conclusive evidence of the negative impact of bilingual education are actually scarce. This implies that, in general, bilingual education does not impair the development of the second language. This conclusion gives policy makers and those in charge of the educational sector an additional reason to play the card of the monolingual submersion model. So, although scientific research does not support the theory that language submersion for non-native children is the best solution in all circumstances, sometimes political choices are made based on ideology and emotion rather than on scientific research. The problem in most European contexts boils down to the implementation of multilingual models. To be able to prove the effectiveness of multilingual models through research, and show that they sometimes are more effective than the language submersion model, governments should facilitate the implementation of these multilingual models. However, most governments refuse to invest further in multilingual education for immigrants, arguing that research studies have failed to show positive effects when using this approach. It is important to note that there is barely any research available on the topic, and multilingual education has never received proper support. In short, multilingual education has never even had a chance to prove itself.

5.   Responding to language diversity at school: Going beyond binary thinking

From the foregoing, it should be clear that the principal obstacle to the inclusion of migrant languages in education is essentially ideological. Mainstream educational and social integration practices in Europe essentially remain rooted in the one-nation one-language dogma (Blackledge, 2000). Holding a deep conviction that monolingualism is the normal state of a national education system, most key stakeholders in Western European education systems argue for total submersion of immigrant pupils in the national school language(s). This is considered the most 'common-sensical' and legitimate way of minimising the often presumed negative effects on school achievement of the lack of second language exposure in the home ('the bilingual handicap'), as well as furthering social coherence in society and national identity formation through the use of a single public language.

Since the turn of the century, a return to cultural assimilation in Western Europe has marked a renewed emphasis on learning the majority languages through hard-core submersion programmes. This heralds a backlash against multiculturalism as the ideological framework in the leading discourses, policies and practices, as is established for certain countries by Vertovec and Wessendorf (2010). Under the pressures of a politically unfavourable climate and budgetary restrictions, education in migrant languages has come increasingly under attack (see Gogolin in Söhn, 2005a). This negative shift in public and scholarly appreciation of inclusion of migrant languages in education has often gone hand in hand with more restrictive and defensive national immigration and integration policies (Kroon & Vallen, 2010; Van Avermaet, 2009). This shift has led to explicitly reinforcing subtractive goals, thus downplaying the value of first language proficiency and bilingualism in immigrant children. This tendency, in turn, has resulted in dwindling official support of bilingual education and mother tongue instruction for immigrant minorities all over Europe (OECD, 2010b). Unsurprisingly, bilingual education programmes targeting migrant languages have been disappearing from the Western European educational landscape over the past decade or so. What remains today – apart from the German TWI projects – are mostly grassroots initiatives outside formal education (e.g. complementary schools, 'Saturday schools'). On closer examination, a double-standards discourse regarding multilingualism and education prevails in Western Europe: while knowledge of several EU national languages and/or international prestige languages is highly valued as cultural capital of the so-called European citizen, European institutions in the first place have not (yet) extended this principle to migrant languages (Rindler Schjerve & Vetter, 2012). In this respect, regional or indigenous languages (e.g. Frisian, Basque, Gaelic, Welsh, Sami) seem to be much better off. Even in Western European countries where bilingual education is currently favoured in national policies, this does not signify greater openness to migrant languages.

Although the language submersion model is the dominant paradigm and the most applied model of the last two decades in Western European education systems, one cannot call it a great success. The empirical evidence is far from overwhelming (see above). And, as we stated in the introduction, the inequality in educations remains a tenacious problem. We seem to forget that there is more than 'the language problem'. Also, alternatives for the language submersion model are hardly voiced. On the contrary, educators and politicians stick to the trusted model and advocate for policies that aim to intervene earlier and earlier in the language use behaviour of preschool children and their parents. (We are awaiting the first prenatal second language programmes.) It is odd to note that everybody agrees on the importance of respecting, valuing and exploiting diversity in education. However, when it comes to language diversity, this seems less important.

Does all this imply that we radically have to opt for a bilingual education model? Not at all – or not necessarily. Although there is some positive empirical evidence, our above literature overview reveals that a traditional bilingual education model is not the miracle solution either (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). What is more, a new stage is emerging in the contemporary history of migration in Western Europe, which is often denoted by the terms globalisation and superdiversity. Superdiversity is characterised by a tremendous increase in the categories of migrants, not only in terms of nationality, ethnicity, language and religion, but also in terms of motives, patterns and itineraries of migration, processes of insertion into the labour and housing markets of the host societies, and so on (Vertovec, as

cited in Blommaert et al., 2011, p 1). This tendency has a number of sociolinguistic and pedagogical consequences for language-in-education policies and practices (for a review see the papers in the special issue edited by Blommaert et al., 2011). These consequences also create new challenges for advocates of education programmes offering migrant languages. First, the greater diversification of immigrant groups in Western Europe is reflected in a greater diversification of migrant languages in urban school populations. Moreover, since globalisation also affects the margins of Western European societies, linguistic diversity is now extending from metropolitan zones to smaller cities and non-urban areas. Given the financial and organisational constraints which bilingual education experiences, it is unclear how to provide it in highly heterogeneous schools where children – as individuals and as a group – speak many different languages. Second, there is a shift in migration flows from permanent settlement of groups in bounded territories (large groups of the same people going to the same places) to (temporary) mobility (different people, both smaller groups and individuals, going to different places; migrants moving back and forth more readily and rapidly) and virtual mobility (use of mobile phones and related devices and several communication applications). Migrant flows are now more diverse, fluid and complex, which creates new categories of (virtually) mobile children. Bilingual education programmes in the traditional sense may not be adequate to target these new migrant children, including their diverse languages, whose presence makes school and class populations more complex and constantly shifting. Third, the study of language in superdiverse societies is currently going through a paradigm shift. By investigating the languaging practices of children growing up in the rapidly-changing urban multilingual landscapes of the late 20th and early 21st century, sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists have called into question the traditional notions of 'languages' as unique and separate sets of features. For a long time, languages were considered as compartmentalised units (the 'two solitudes' assumption, cf. Cummins, 2008) and multilingualism as a form of 'parallel monolingualism' (Heller, 1999). As a result, bilingual education, both in space (separate language homogeneous classes) and time (separate lessons), was (is) organised apart. This approach collides with our current understanding of multilingual learning and the present-day multilingual realities in which people flexibly use their full linguistic repertoire (García, 2009) for communication purposes.

Traditional language education programmes are not only based on notions of language compartmentalisation. They also uphold a normative approach, taking the learning of correct standard languages for granted while frowning upon real-life language use as 'incorrect', 'impure' or 'improper' (see Jørgesen et al. in Blommaert et al., 2011). Scholarly terms referring to these real-life languaging practices include 'translanguaging', 'crossing', 'heteroglossia', 'polylanguaging', 'metrolingualism' and 'new ethnicities and language' (see Blommaert & Rampton in Blommaert et al., 2011). Hence the provision of both bilingual and monolingual education in mainstream schools is ever more challenged by children who make fluid and creative use of increasingly complex linguistic repertoires as they navigate through the multiple environments in their everyday lives. In this new context, the traditional concepts of bilingual education and mother tongue instruction may even become obsolete.

Despite these new sociolinguistic insights, schools maintain a majority language-only policy and use pedagogical arguments to defend it. By encouraging the use of the majority language for all communicative purposes, schools hope to discourage the negative use of home languages (name-calling, bullying, social exclusion, forming of cliques, secret language, copying notes). One of the underlying justifications for this approach refers to the fear of losing control over the classroom and the playground. Teachers fear that children who are using their native language will get up to mischief or talk about this and that instead of working on their assignments. When a teacher does not understand what his children are saying, he/she will find it a lot more difficult to intervene appropriately.

There is however a difference between encouraging the use of the majority language at school and in class, and entirely banning home languages. Both practical experience and research show that schools with a student body characterised by a broad variety of home languages do not need to encourage the use of the majority language; children spontaneously use the majority language as their conversational lingua franca (see e.g. Ramaut et al., 2013). Prohibitive rules about the use of home languages do not seem to improve the use of the majority language either. They do however stigmatise the home languages and linguistic varieties of the children and are difficult to put into practice.

Controlling the languages used in the playground or the hallway is a near-impossible task; it is simply impossible to ban the use of home languages entirely, even when schools adopt a policy of imposing penalties (which is impossible for teachers to uphold). Schools may opt for a compromise: allowing the use of home languages during recreational time and demanding the use of the majority language in the classroom. When working with preschoolers, strict rules about language use are difficult to maintain. Teachers in pre-primary education often need to use the home language of children who to begin with do not understand or speak the majority language. To forbid young children to speak their home language is no more realistic than enforcing strict linguistic rules (how would you ever explain it to them?), and it is likely to have a negative impact on their wellbeing (Sierens & Ramaut, 2013).

Backpacked with – among other valuable competencies - their multilingual repertoire children enter the school. So, it is better to unpack and exploit it than to leave it in their rucksack and ignore or ban it. Given the fact that both the language submersion models as the compartmentalised bilingual education models cannot present a cum laude school report; given the increased language diversity in schools and classrooms; given the fact that translanguaging (García, 2009) can be considered as the discursive norm in multilingual spaces and given the current highly polarised and rather unproductive debate about dealing with linguistic diversity in education, we would like to hold a brief to go beyond the binary discussion for a new approach to multilingual learning at school. An approach which integrates exploiting children's linguistic repertoires and learning the 'language of schooling', in which 'translanguaging' – as in other spaces – is used as the discursive norm at school and in the classroom. Or rephrased, 'a multilingual social interaction model for learning' as an alternative for a 'language learning model'. This approach is increasingly known in the international literature as 'pedagogical translanguaging'. This term comprises heteroglossic multilingual approaches which allow multilingual students to build on their dynamic and complex language practices, and to draw on all their linguistic resources to maximise understanding and achievement in learning (García & Flores, 2012; Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012). We have called this approach 'functional multilingual learning' in application to linguistically diverse classroom settings where the second language is the dominant medium of instruction (Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014). This approach, which we will discuss later, is not just applying some kind of technique in the classroom. First of all, it has to be embedded in a constructive and open language policy at school that includes all the languages children and their parents speak. Among many other things, this implies a policy and interactive classroom practice that make children receptive to linguistic diversity and to create a positive attitude towards all languages and language varieties. This is called *language awareness* (Frijns et al., 2011; Hélot, 2008). Interaction between children themselves and between students and teachers are not only pivotal for (language) learning. It also remains an important factor in the creation and moulding of attitudes and opinions about language, non-native speakers and multilingualism (Rampton, 1996). Language awareness stands for making children (and teachers) sensitive to the existence of a multiplicity of languages, and the underlying cultures and frames of reference, in our world, and, closer, in the school environment. Through language awareness children develop an attitude of openness to linguistic diversity. Furthermore, they acquire knowledge and perceptions about language(s), and gradually develop metalinguistic skills that can help them further develop the learning of foreign languages and the mother tongue (Frijns et al., 2011). Language awareness can be used for all languages but it seems logical to focus on the home languages and linguistic varieties already present in the classroom (for example, when singing songs, counting, reciting the days of the week in different languages, language portfolio). A positive attitude towards linguistic diversity may contribute to a better understanding between children in the classroom and elsewhere at school (Genesee & Gándara, 1999; Wright & Tropp, 2005). It also contributes to the wellbeing and the development of the identity of non-native pupils. Especially immigrant children may benefit from this approach as acknowledgement of their often marginalised languages can have positive effects, especially in the affective and social domains (see Sierens et al., forthcoming). After all, this approach encourages these children to express their ideas, opinions and feelings in their own language. The attention paid to their native language increases its status, and because these children become experts in their mother tongue, their self-esteem increases, and with it, indirectly, their motivation to learn and their school results.

The same principles can be applied to parents. Raising their language awareness may be an important way of increasing their involvement (Young & Hélot, 2007): by considering them experts in their native language, just as their children are, schools acknowledge them and are likely to increase their self-confidence in their communication with members of the school team. In the same way parents can be encouraged to use their native language to help their children with their homework, which contradicts the common argument that they absolutely must master the majority language in order to help their children with their schoolwork.

'Functional multilingual learning' is a step further in the positive dealing with children's linguistic repertoires at school and in the classroom. It implies that a mainstream school adopts a policy and a teacher the practice of exploiting children's full linguistic repertoire to enhance the opportunities for learning, as well as to reinforce their wellbeing, self-confidence, motivation and school and classroom involvement (all key for learning and school success). The linguistic repertoire of children can be seen as didactic capital that explicitly can be drawn on to strengthen their (educational) development. Their linguistic repertoire can be a scaffold for learning the language of schooling and more general, for acquiring and unravelling new knowledge. The teacher encourages students to help each other in the execution of a task (for example, explaining to a new student with limited knowledge of the language of schooling what to do) or in the preparation of group work. This approach demands a certain working method: the teaching environment should allow children to interact on a regular basis and should not be entirely teacher-directed. During such intensive interactive moments the linguistic skills of the students help to solve a mathematical problem or to execute a task in physics. We use an example from a physics class to clarify what we mean: levers. The class is divided into groups of three and all groups are given some specific items, some texts in the majority language with pictures and illustrations about levers, and a technology web page with online experiments with levers. Students need to work out how the principle of levers actually works. One of the groups consists of for example three Turkish students. They are allowed to speak different languages while working on the experiments but need to read the texts in the majority language. If one of them doesn't understand that text or some parts of it, the other two are allowed to explain in Turkish; and if one of the children doesn't understand an instruction given by the website, the others are allowed to clarify the instruction in the majority language. When the teacher joins this particular group he can give the children tips to get back on track if they should need them or give feedback/'feed forward' on how they have performed the task so far. In this way the teacher can assess whether the teaching process, which has taken place in a multilingual context, went well. Nine out of ten teachers will use the majority language as the language of instruction. This approach has several advantages: first the teacher reinforces the insights the students gained about how a lever works and offer adjustments where necessary. When student A explains something to student B in Turkish and the teacher paraphrases this in the majority language, the topics which are acquired in Turkish will reinforce the acquisition of certain concepts and insights about levers in the majority language. This is the core of functional multilingual learning; the insights about levers are gained using different linguistic pathways and academic language skills in Turkish and the language of schooling are both reinforced.

Scientific research into the functional applicability of home languages in the classroom is quite recent but shows promising results. Various studies in different countries conclude that when schools acknowledge and use the multilingual repertoires of the children, they may present them with better chances of educational success (e.g. García & Li Wei, 2014; Jaffe, 2003; Moodley, 2007; Olivares & Lemberger, 2002; Olmedo, 2003; Peterson & Heywood, 2007; Ramaut et al., 2013).

An important advantage of this approach lies in the fact that the didactic use of home languages can be introduced into existing courses as a leitmotif. There is no need to alter the curriculum and adapt it to a multilingual approach. What is more, it is not necessary for mainstream teachers to know every single home language themselves. The most important aspect of the discussion is the recognition of linguistic diversity at school as an 'added value', a 'resource' rather than a

'problem' or 'deficit'. Linguistic diversity should be used to a maximum to create the best learning opportunities for all children.

6.   To conclude

As we pointed out in the title, there are no simple recipes in addressing inequality, inequity and language in education. We have to move beyond the binary discussion of an exclusive language submersion model versus a traditional bilingual education model. It is important to recognise that besides the school repertoire that children need to acquire, they also bring several additional repertoires to school. Repertoires that no longer are seen as a 'problem' or 'a handicap' for school success, but as 'a richness,' as an asset or an opportunity for learning and promoting equal opportunities.

Our mental structures about the role of children's linguistic repertoires in education need to be changed. Positive beliefs about linguistic diversity and multilingual didactic practices may contribute to a better understanding between children in the classroom, and between teachers and children. They may also contribute to the wellbeing and the development of the identity of children. After all, the approach of 'functional multilingual learning' encourages disadvantaged immigrant children to express their ideas, opinions and feelings in their entire linguistic repertoire, including their home language. The positive attention paid to their linguistic repertoire increases its status, fosters the children's self-esteem, and with it, indirectly, their motivation to learn, and, ultimately, their school performance.

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