

Good practices of bilingual education in the CoE countries



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INTRODUCTION

This paper was presented at a workshop "Best practices in designing bilingual curricula: European experience, information and methodological support" organized by the Project "Protecting national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine" and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. This project is part of the "Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2021". The workshop was directed at teachers and pedagogues in teacher education and training, in order to support them in their endeavor to implement the *Law on education* and the *Law on General Secondary Education* in Ukraine.

Ukraine is a member of the Council of Europe and has signed and ratified the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages and thus committed herself to the preservation and fostering of the respective languages on her territory, among other things, in education. In 2017 the Parliament of Ukraine adopted the Law "On Education" – a framework document for the reform of the national system of education. §7 of this law concerns the use of languages of instruction. Since the main aim of the new law was the implementation of Ukrainian as the language of instruction, the Council of Europe was concerned about the rights of the minority languages guaranteed by the Charter. The comments by the Venice commission were considered in the *Law on General Secondary Education*.

The agenda is currently to find viable ways of implementing §5 of this law. The workshop was concerned with these questions for the group of minority languages that are at the same time official languages of the European Union. The aim of the following paper is therefore to show, how selected member states of the CoE ensure the preservation and learning of minority languages on the one hand, and the learning of the state language on the other, in their educational systems.

The importance of learning languages

The Council of Europe as well as other institutions in Europe propagates the learning of languages. The Council of Europe itself maintains the webpage *Council of Europe Language Policy Portal* (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/home>) with materials both about the policies and with recommendations for practice. The latest such material concerns the recommendation on the importance of competence(s) in the language of schooling (Beacco et al. 2016: A Handbook for Curriculum Development and Teacher Training. The Language Dimension in All Subjects) that focusses on language sensitive education throughout, not only in foreign language learning or its offspring CLIL (content language integrated learning), but in the first place in one's first language, taking into account that language is the most important vehicle of thought and instrument for acquiring knowledge. This educational strategy of "language across the curriculum" relates neatly to the task of implementing the state language as a language of instruction, in that all teachers should always be aware of the role language plays both for transmitting content and for the reception and processing of the latter. This language awareness relates to one of the aims the CoE wants to achieve, namely equal opportunities of all citizens.

Language learning has different aims: 1) the preservation of existing languages, especially minority and regional languages, on the one hand, and 2) better communication between people of different tongue on the other, which also ensures the integration of people into modern societies and states as well as their equal opportunities. A third reason for learning languages is put forward by the European Union – enhancing mobility across countries and regions, regarding in particular the labour market.

The special situation of Ukraine

As to Ukraine, the situation and position of the Ukrainian language is unique in Europe, since Ukrainian was itself a lesser used language until the end of the Soviet Union and the following independence of the Ukrainian state. Since the 1990s the policy of Ukraine has therefore been to promote Ukrainian as a state language, for reasons of unity and identity of her citizens and for the functioning of the communication in

the state. At the same time Ukraine has committed herself to the preservation of minority languages according to the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. In these goals Ukraine resembles many other states in Europe.

However, the promotion of the state language with autochthonous minorities is a lesser problem in most European states, since minorities are usually bilingual nowadays. Nevertheless, there are situations, which are similar to the Ukrainian one. Let us have a brief look at such situations in European countries.

Policies and practices – some examples

For the present talk I have chosen the minority languages German in Italy, Basque in Spain, Italian and Hungarian in Slovenia and Slovene in Austria.

All mentioned languages have been suppressed during their history, in particular in the 20th century. Nowadays, the policies of the respective states aim at preserving these languages and at the same time at guaranteeing knowledge of the state language. The concrete aims of these policies are different, though, and so are the practices. I will now present some details of these policies and the related practices, because they can partially serve as examples for the implementation of bilingual teaching in Ukraine.

German in South Tyrol

Let us first look at the situation of German in South Tyrol, Italy. German in South Tyrol has a very strong position; it is a fully functional language that is spoken by a big community which is also the majority in the province. 'In the region, the German language is given parity with the Italian language which is the official language of the State' (Art. 99, Autonomy Statute 1972). (Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning 2017)

Since the 1950s the state policy has been to preserve and further the German language as one official language of the region, also in public service. On the other hand, the German speaking population must learn the state language, Italian. The Italian population in South Tyrol has to learn German. The education system ensures learning of German and Italian with two aims: 1) the preservation of German in the region, 2) territorial and collective bilingualism.

How is this brought about? Quite similar to legislation in Ukraine there are separate schools for both language groups, where the respective other language is taught as a compulsory subject during the whole education process. I.e., German is the language of instruction in German language schools and Italian is taught as a subject (3-4h per week in secondary school), and the other way round in Italian language schools. Teachers must be mother tongue speakers. Immersion is not in the regular program, but recently there have been experiments with Content language integrated learning (CLIL).

The success of this model is moderate regarding knowledge of Italian and German as L2: "The language situation is still quite heterogeneous, there is no widespread bilingualism. It can be observed that German speaking South Tyroleans living in rural areas have difficulties with Italian and on the other hand Italian speaking South Tyroleans living in the cities have insufficient proficiency in German" (Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning 2017, cf. also Ghirardo 2009: 63, 92f.)

Basque in Spain

Basque is an official minority language in the Basque autonomous country (BAC) as well as the province of Navarre in Spain. We are looking at BAC here. The similarity with Ukraine is that the Basque language differs remarkably from the state language, Spanish, and the Basque minority has a strong sense of identity. One of the differences is that all Basque speakers are bilingual, because Spanish has been present in public communication and school during the last 100 years at least.

For some decades the policy has been to make Basque strong again as the vernacular language of the

Basque country, which seems to succeed quite well (Cenoz/Gorter 2011). Similar to German in South Tyrol, Basque has a strong status in the BAC, "because it is required for many government-related jobs and has advantages in many jobs in the private sector as well". (Cenoz/Gorter 2011)

The education system ensures the learning of Basque and Spanish, thus aiming at: reversing language shift, the normalisation of use of Basque along with Spanish (state language), the defense, study and promotion of the Basque cultural heritage and territorial and collective multilingualism. (Cf. Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning 2005)

Cenoz and Gorter (2011) describe the system as follows:

"In the BAC, three models of language schooling were established (models A, B and D).

- The A-model programme is intended for native speakers of Spanish who choose to be instructed in Spanish. Basque is taught as a subject for four to five hours a week. The outcome is minimal proficiency in Basque as a second language.
- The B-model programme is intended for native speakers of Spanish who want to be bilingual in Basque and Spanish. Both Basque and Spanish are used as languages of instruction for approximately 50 per cent of school time, although there is considerable variation from school to school (Arzamendi and Genesee 1997).
- The D-model programme was originally created for native speakers of Basque. Basque is the language of instruction, and Spanish is taught as a subject for four to five hours a week. This model currently also includes a large number of students with Spanish as their first language. The intensive use of Basque and the dominant position of Spanish in society lead to high levels of proficiency in both languages. D-model, with Basque as the language of instruction, is the most popular, followed by B-model."

If we compare the models of language learning with the aforementioned Italian ones, we see, that immersion together with teaching the language as a subject (B-model, D-model) fares better than just language taught as a compulsory subject (A-model).

Slovenia¹

Slovenia guarantees a special status for two minorities: the Italian one in the litoral area (Primorje) and the Hungarian one in the province Prekmurje close to the Hungarian border. The education system ensures learning of the two official languages: Italian and Slovene in Primorje and Hungarian and Slovene in Prekmurje with the aims of preservation of the Hungarian and the Italian languages and cultures in Slovenia, territorial and collective multilingualism in the form of *functional*

¹ See also: Republic of Slovenia 2013.

bilingualism in the respective areas, and last but not least, cultural pluralism (Novak Lukanovič/Limon 2014: 429).

The educational models are different in the two regions. According to Novak Lukanovič /Limon (2014: 428) "in the first region, individual schools use either Slovene or Italian as the language of instruction, while the other language is taught as a subject, whereas in Prekmurje the schools are bilingual, with instruction in both Slovene and Hungarian, and children from both language communities (or those from 'mixed' backgrounds) learning together in the same classes."

Primorje

So, the school system in Primorje is similar to the one in South Tyrol, in that "the model applied in the Slovene part of Istria and on the Slovene coast in primary and secondary schools involves using the pupil's L1, be it Slovene or Italian, as the language of instruction, while the second language (L2) of the environment becomes a compulsory subject" (Novak Lukanovič / Limon 2014: 430), i.e., in Italian schools Italian is the language of instruction and Slovene is taught as a subject from primary school onwards (3 h/week), while in Slovene language schools (Slovene L1) the opposite is the case.

It is, however, important to mention that "during other subject classes, all pupils learn about the culture and history of the other nation or ethnic group living on the same territory", in order to achieve the aim of intercultural understanding and cultural pluralism. As in South Tyrol, "it is the pupils themselves, or rather their parents, who decide whether their 'L1' is Italian or Slovene" (ibid.).

Prekmurje

The educational model in Prekmurje, on the other hand, "is a bi-directional one, aimed at stressing the equality of two languages. Here, compulsory bilingual classes are attended by pupils from both the national communities; both Slovene and Hungarian are languages of instruction, as well as school subjects, and have an equal status in the classroom and outside it, in the functioning of the school, in both spoken and written form." (Novak Lukanovič / Limon 2014: 430)

"The teaching model used is 'one person, one language': teachers use their L1 when communicating with the children. In Prekmurje, first language use is a matter of self-declaration: pupils and their parents decide whether their 'L1' is Hungarian or Slovene." This means, that all children in the province attend bilingual education, they are, however streamed in L1-teaching. Slovene and Hungarian are taught either as first or as second language. After the fourth year, Slovene as a subject is unified, while the teaching of Hungarian as first or second language continues during the whole educational process.

Bilingual teaching practices

Bilingual teaching is carried out in three different ways in Prekmurje (Nećak-Lük 2013):

- team teaching
 - one person – one language
 - two teachers or teacher and assistant simultaneously in the same lesson/class
- differentiated groups
 - separate groups according to language proficiency (taught separately by the two different teachers; only for defined periods)
- „purposeful parallel“ method
 - one teacher in class
 - uses both languages alternately (50:50) for different functions (e.g., Hungarian for the presentation of content, Slovene for the metacommunicative function, i.e., for commenting on pupils' performance, appraisal, critique, or for organizational questions, but **not** for translation of the content presented in Hungarian)
 - needs exact planning of each lesson, also regarding language use, high language

awareness

These different approaches are chosen in dependence on the concrete situation in class, i.e., what the pupils need, in order to reach the goals of the curriculum, and also in accordance with the resources at hand (bilingual teachers, subject teachers, language assistants etc.).

Carinthia (Austria)

Let us now turn to Carinthia, where I live and work. The Austrian education system in Carinthia ensures learning of Slovene in Southern Carinthia.

The aims of bilingual education are the preservation of the Slovene language and ethnic group in the region, partial territorial and collective bilingualism (actually one-sided diglossia).

Note that all Carinthian Slovenes are bilingual with German as their second language. The following possibilities are offered:

- bilingual primary education (Slovene-German, in the relationship 50:50)
 - on the basis of individual enrolment (children have to be enrolled every year anew)
- one secondary school with instruction in Slovene (gymnasium, 5th-12th grade)
- two bilingual vocational upper secondary schools (9th-13th grade)
- lower secondary schools in German with Slovene as a subject 4h/week Practices: time-based models of bilingual teaching (50:50)

In Carinthia time-based models are used in primary education, in order to keep the languages separate. Usually the language is changed day by day (one day German, one day Slovene for all subjects) or every week. The latter time-model is combined with change of teacher (one person – one language). In secondary education, as we shall see, the language may also be changed for a certain subject lesson once a week. Time based models are one way of separating languages, their advantage lies in the longer period of immersion in one language. They ensure a regular and controllable use of both languages.

Time-based models can be used for differentiating the functions of each language, e.g., one can present new syllabus in the stronger language and repeat, control, summarize etc. the same syllabus in the other language. This can be done by one and the same teacher, or by two different teachers or by an assistant teacher etc., if the principle one person-one language is followed.

Teachers keep to the time-based models consistently, i.e., they remain in one language. Children are encouraged to do the same, but they are not punished or criticized if they use the other language, too.

Content-language integrated learning (CLIL): Kugy-classes²

Now I would like to present a specific example of immersion in the form of CLIL that is practiced at the Slovene secondary school in Carinthia, the so-called Kugy classes (named after the polyglott Julius Kugy). This model of multilingual teaching has been practiced for more than 20 years now and evaluated several times as very successful (Vrbinc 2002, 2015, Larcher/Vospersnik 2013).

It starts with the fifth grade of schooling, i.e., when children are 10 years old. The basic language of instruction is, as has been mentioned, Slovene. Beside Slovene (main language of instruction, L1 or L2

² This description is based on an interview with Dr. Miha Vrbinc, former head master of the Slovene secondary school, now inspector for minority secondary schools. See also the weblinks at the end of the paper.

of pupils), German (L2, state language), Italian and later English (foreign languages) are also used in content-language-integrated learning, i.e., in foreign language immersion in different subjects at the amount of 1 hour per week (of 2-4 hours totally) and sometimes with the help of language assistants. The four languages are of course also taught as subjects.

Let us take Italian as an example, because Italian is a new language for all pupils. They start with an intensive language week, with language teaching together with playful activities, usually in a camp, not in school. Back in school, Italian is taught as a subject 3-4 hours per week. At the same time, Italian is used in 2 subjects for one hour a week along with Slovene, the main language of instruction.

Usually, CLIL starts with mathematics and music or art or also biology. Let us have a look at the plan for CLIL of one school year:

Plan for CLIL (2019/20)

grade	Language	Subject
1. class (5th grade)	Ital	mathematics and musical education
	Germ	art
2. class (6th grade)	Ital	biology
	Germ	geography
3. class (7th grade)	Ital	geography
	Germ	mathematics
4. class (8th grade)	Ital	history
	Germ	geography
5. class (9th grade)	Ital	history
	Germ	mathematics
6. class (10th grade)	Ital	art
	Germ	biology
	Engl	geography
7. class (11th grade)	Ital	geography
	Germ	psychology
8. class (12th grade)	Ital	philosophy
	Germ	physics

Mathematics is a good subject for the beginning, because it does not require a lot of vocabulary or complicated language structures – it is easy to learn the numbers, for example. Music and art are also adequate for the beginning, because they involve action and are usually enjoyed by pupils.

Therefore they enhance motivation. Biology, on the other hand, is rather concrete and involves the use of pictures. This is also true for geography. This is why these subjects are chosen in lower secondary grades/classes. History is much more demanding regarding language; this has also been confirmed by

research (cf. Dalton-Puffer 2017). Therefore history in Italian is introduced only in 9th grade.

CLIL in Italian involves two teachers, one for Slovene hours, and one for Italian hours, who cooperate as a team. They have to make a tight common plan for the whole year and they also have to assess pupils' performance together. Sometimes it is not possible to find a subject teacher with knowledge of Italian. In such a case a language assistant or a language teacher may also fulfil the role, but only in lower grades, while the content is not so demanding. However, the Italian hours are not just used for repeating (with the exception of mathematics, where exercises are more common), they usually introduce new content. Therefore the two teachers have to discuss the assessment of the performance of pupils and give a common mark.

In the case of German it is usually a bilingual subject-teacher who teaches alternately in Slovene (2-3 h/week) and German (1h/week).

It is also essential that the teaching staff of the class works together as a team with a common plan. Flexibility is very important, too. Cooperation of all teachers in a class is a prerequisite.

Bilingual teaching is more effective if supporting measures are employed. Since language is learned by using it, some schools organize immersion weeks in regions, where the respective language is spoken, excursions, projects with partner schools or partner classes, tandems (where 2 pupils with different languages help each other).

Such measures raise intrinsic motivation and foster communication; they also show the value of knowing languages. However, the communicative function is essential also in the content classroom – it is not enough to teach the content in the language, you have to provide various scaffolding materials for the language (e.g., for verbs, for phrases). Pupils should learn to present content in different ways (cf. e.g., the articles in Doff 2010, pace the literature on CLIL in English).

Possible outcomes

At the end, let us speak about the possible results. The goal should, to my mind, be functional bilingualism, i.e., command of the languages according to individual and societal needs. It must not be forgotten that the different language skills are usually developed differently both in one single person and across people. The receptive skills use to be stronger. As research has shown, it usually takes 6 years for learning a language by immersion (Baker 2006: 265). It must also be mentioned, that the effects of CLIL concern the enlargement of vocabulary in the first place (Dalton-Puffer 2017).

Last, but not least I want to underline that in bilingual education code switching and bilingual language use, translanguaging, are normal and should not be forbidden in pupils. Of course, the goal remains to become proficient in both languages. That is why the languages are separated by the diverse models.

Recommendations

There should be seminars (advanced vocational training) in bilingual teaching sc. content language integrated learning (CLIL) for teachers in service.

Schools should actively look for and uncover resources they already have, including experience from former times. (During the workshop one participant noticed, e.g., that she had always practiced bilingual teaching, without being conscious of this fact).

At the same time, theory and practice of bilingual teaching should be implemented into the regular curriculum of teacher education³ as a compulsory elective subject for all teachers who want to teach in minority education, i.e., also for the Ukrainian speaking ones. Only teachers with a corresponding certificate should be employed in schools with bilingual education.

Regarding textbooks, in Austria bilingual teaching materials are usually developed by teachers themselves. They also use textbooks either in the one or the other language. There are, however, bilingual textbooks for English-German CLIL (as mentioned in Doff 2010). Given the heterogeneity of educational situations and the time and energy it takes to develop textbooks, I recommend that educational authorities create a website and initiate working groups or workshops where teachers develop such textbook materials which are consequently uploaded and shared on this site. Such working groups could work autonomously or with the support of an educational expert. They should take the curriculum and the desired learning outcomes as a basis. It is important that the site be official and publishing on it is prestigious. Otherwise teachers might be reluctant to share their materials. Furthermore I recommend to integrate intercultural learning into the obligatory school curriculum (as is the case, e.g., in Slovenia).

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³ One example are the syllabuses of German, French and Luxembourgish studies at the university of Luxembourg, which includes the module "Mehrsprachigkeit und Heterogenität" ("Multilingualism and heterogeneity", 14 ECTS credits), https://www.wen.uni.lu/studies/fhse/master_en_enseignement_secondaire_germanistik/programm_germanistik or https://www.wen.uni.lu/var/ULcache/classinfo/MAPROSECONDEDUC_ALLEM_en.pdf in the second semester of study. Another example is the syllabus of the study course for team teachers (18 ECTS credits) at the pedagogical university of Carinthia <https://www.ph-kaernten.ac.at/organisation/institute-zentren/mehrsprachigkeit-und-interkulturelle-entwicklung/themenfelder/teamlehrer/innen-ausbildung/>.

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https://www.academia.edu/38077440/Bilingual_education_in_Austria_the_case_of_Slovene_in_Carinthia

https://www.academia.edu/29197522/Multilingualism_in_Carinthia_the_case_of_Slovene_and_the_Slovene_minority (on Carinthia by U. Doleschal)

Useful links

Mercator: European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning: <https://www.mercator-research.eu/en/knowledge-base/regional-dossiers/>

About the Kugy-classes:

<https://www.slog.at/schule/detail/C13/kugy-weil-mehrsprachigkeit-ein-geschenk-ist-perche-il-multilinguismo-e-un-d> (Slovenska gimnazija)

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Education/training for bilingual teachers:

https://wwen.uni.lu/studies/fhse/master_en_enseignement_secondaire_germanistik/programm_germanistik (Syllabus of German, module "Mehrsprachigkeit und Heterogenität" ("Multilingualism and heterogeneity", 14 ECTS credits) at the University of Luxembourg)

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