

Evaluation of the improved version of a plurilingual whole school policy. Implications for the further development

Final report on Intellectual Output 6 in the Erasmus+-project Plur>E 'Towards a plurilingual whole school policy in European schools'

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1. Introduction:

The evaluation of the improved version of a plurilingual whole school policy forms the focal point of the Erasmus+-project Plur>E 'Towards a plurilingual whole school policy in European schools'. In this project, seven schools in Europe and Turkey piloted several initiatives within their local framework. This report on evaluation of the improved version of the prototypical model of a plurilingual whole school policy subsumes the experiences of the Plur>E partner schools' projects. The introduction shortly presents the most important points of the Plurilingual Whole School Policy as devised by Britta Hufeisen. Chapter two contains short summaries of the partner schools' projects reports with respect to their contribution to the improved version of plurilingual whole school policy. Chapter 3 then describes overall aspects of the developments within the Plur>E-project. The report closes with an outlook onto three aspects for future examination of a plurilingual whole school policy.

Multilingualism is one of the strategic objectives of the European Union. The ambitious goal is to enable citizens to communicate in two languages other than their mother tongue. In order to achieve this goal and with the aim to counteract the ongoing linguistic decline in education in favour of English as the only foreign language, traditional educational policies need a specific emphasis on language education. One of the promising proposals is the plurilingual whole school policy, a model devised by Britta Hufeisen and piloted in the project PlurCur®. The model is based on widely recognized theoretical approaches for multiple language-learning and can be seen in close context to her factor model (Hufeisen 2010).

“Ein Gesamtsprachencurriculum zielt darauf, die Sprachenangebote in der Schule miteinander und mit den Sachfächern zu vernetzen und sie zeitlich und im Bildungsgang der Lernenden aufeinander abzustimmen” (Hufeisen 2016, 167). The plurilingual whole school policy is a systematic model and includes all languages (as languages of schooling, heritage languages, and foreign languages). It fosters curricular plurilingualism and it considers interconnected language-teaching. A cross-curricular approach with content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is at its core. The pupils' study is project-oriented and is implemented across all grades (cross-learner approach). There is a systematic approach to culture and literature. More detailed information can be found in Hufeisen 2005, 2008, 2011 & 2016 and in the publications of PlurCur® (project at the European Centre for Modern Languages ECML in Graz, www.ecml.at/plurcur) Allgäuer-Hackl et al. 2015 & in prep.; Allgäuer-Hackl et al. 1994-2017.

2. Plur>E partner school projects: Contribution (added input to a plurilingual whole school policy) per partner

The chapter presents the work towards a plurilingual whole school policy of the Plur>E partner school projects. These short summaries complement the particular project reports and related success stories. More information of the Plur>E school partners' projects can be found in the reports and the success stories of the projects in question.

- P4 HLW Rankweil, Austria:
Cross-linguistic preparation in three foreign languages, fostering metalinguistic awareness, based on a survey of students' experiences; CLIL in PE and in marketing; close cooperation with colleagues; specific focus on attitudes, experiences;
"1. Starting with former students' experience and feedback on multilingual situations while working abroad, we designed the preparation for future students for both the target language in the country or region of their work placement and for multilingual situations and challenges. The students were/are involved in this process.
2. Within the school, cooperation among language teachers to carry out the activities was a new element, as was allowing students to speak all the languages taught in the school, which provided all participants with a positive multilingual experience."
- P6 Ardscoil Rís, Ireland:
Integrating multiple languages in the school surroundings and in multiple projects; increasing the profile of German/French and Irish in the school environment through plurilingual school signage and proverbs throughout; promoting cross-curricular teaching through music, art, science, climate change, history; encourage students to engage with languages outside of classroom content – e.g. Promoting plurilingualism and online interaction app Pablo as an example for using IT.
- P7 Heinrich-Heine-Gymnasium, Germany:
Multilingual Drama Group; integrating pupils of different German language competence fostering integration through school theatre project; raising awareness of own individual plurilingualism as well as the multilingual competencies and the cultural diversity of the school community; comparing and contrasting languages, thus playfully experiencing language learning strategies; promoting intercultural awareness and develop empathy; in the framework of living plurilingualism (Initiative *lebendige Mehrsprachigkeit*) for a better integration of immigrants. "Innovative is probably the fact that pupils of different German language competences are trying to act together and to rehearse a whole German drama play."
- P8 Esenler Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School, Turkey:
The partner choose a so called plan B with the focus on Spanish (instead of Turkish, due to the request of the Syrian immigrants, they seek to move further to Europe;
"Starting with former students' experience and feedback on multilingual situations while working abroad, we designed the preparation for future students for both the target language in the country or region of their work placement and for multilingual situations and challenges. That also means that the students were/are involved in this process." (cf. P4)

- P9, P10, P11: Framework is the *Südtiroler Mehrsprachencurriculum* (Schwienbacher et al. 2016), i.e. the projects are embedded in a supporting school policy, and they are on the way to being sustainable long-term; additionally the *Maßnahmenpaket zur Förderung der Mehrsprachigkeit in der deutschen Schule* [A package of measures to promote multilingualism in the German school] supports multilingual approaches.
- P9 Fachoberschule für Tourismus und Biotechnologie 'Marie Curie', Italy:
 "Die Pflege der Muttersprache sowie die Förderung der Zweit- und Fremdsprachen zielen auf funktionale Mehrsprachigkeit ab. Muttersprachliche Kenntnisse können nur gestärkt, Kompetenzen und Fertigkeiten in den anderen Sprachen nur erreicht werden, wenn sich alle Lehrpersonen um Sprache bemühen." [Maintaining the mother tongue as well as the promotion of secondary and foreign languages are aimed at functional multilingualism. Native language skills can only be strengthened, competencies and skills can be achieved in the other languages only if all teachers are concerned about language.] (Dreijahresplan FOS, 2017).

Several multilingual projects in the normal classroom and outside using multiple languages: Taking part in the English language project: Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention ([YPAC](#)); CarnetCurie SchülerInnenblog der FOS; Festival of Languages in school: multilingual presentations, performances and Language Café; tourism project: preparing a creative multilingual tour in the *Touriseum* (local museum of tourism); multilingual cooking book.

In focus is "the combination of theory and practice, so that students experience language as a means of interaction, especially outside the classroom."

- P10 Gymnasium 'Walther von der Vogelweide', Italy:
 CLIL-sections in law-Italian, science-mathematics-English, history-Spanish, art-history-French as standard courses; successful collaboration between the German and Italian school in Bolzano including a teacher exchange between German and Italian, with a high and stable amount of enrolment; as a very successful and sustainable approach implementing the core of a plurilingual whole school policy. Project page fostering CLIL-approaches in the German Schools in South Tyrol:
<http://www.bildung.suedtirol.it/unterricht/clil/>
- P11 Sozialwissenschaftliches Klassisches und Sprachengymnasium Meran, Italy:
 "Plurilingual education - preparing for a plurilingual future"; Elaboration of a five year concept including various modules using the methodology of general comparative language didactics and elaboration of a language concept focusing on the promotion of plurilingualism on the basis of the *Mehrsprachencurriculum Südtirol*, the *Gesamtsprachencurriculum* (Hufeisen) and the *Curriculum Mehrsprachigkeit* (Reich / Krumm); projects and initiatives in the whole school facilitating linguistic networked thinking / sustainable promotion of plurilingualism.
 Various initiatives implementing plurilingual education: Comparing multilingual and multicultural realities: transfer of skills in different languages learnt and spoken by students; focus on literary texts and intercultural education; presentations of experiences during language weeks in Spain and France: analysis of stereotypes; Languages and sport-competition; European Day of Languages; promotion of Language Certificates.

3. Overall aspects

The implementation of several parts of a plurilingual whole school policy is a challenging task. Educational traditions and strict frameworks in school systems are often a hindrance, but highly committed project partners can experience success in their projects. As evaluation of the improved version of the plurilingual whole school policy, several aspects can be highlighted:

- There is a need for **positive attitudes towards plurilingualism**. In focus are pupils/students, they often show willingness to study more languages or to learn with new educational approaches. But also teachers, parents, administration and government should be convinced and support the implementation of several languages into schooling.
- **Cross-linguistic and plurilingual courses** fostering metalinguistic awareness and preparing for future multilingual challenges are an innovative way for multiple language learning. This approach supports metalinguistic awareness, which itself fosters further plurilingual learning.
- Including **students' voices** (feedback, requests) and various research methods (questionnaires) takes them seriously. This approach supports the implementing of new structures, as the learners see themselves as a part of the process, which then increases their commitment.
- Taking into account the importance of various levels of **framework**: for example, national (like Ireland → Irish; Austria; Turkey), regional (South Tyrol → German, Italian, Ladin, English [+ other modern languages] and heritage languages), local (Cologne → heritage languages), school (like Ardscoil Rís) policies and attitudes of staff and management, and teachers' needs/resources (their own capability, initiative and preferences). As the implementation always takes place in a given framework, its conditions have to be taken into account.
- Existing plurilingual whole school policies like *Südtiroler Mehrsprachencurriculum* (Schwienbacher et al. 2016) promote projects and activities.

In context of the above mentioned aspects, three fields of interest can be subsumed from the Plur>E partner schools' projects:

1. **Focus on the learners:** What are their needs? What do they want? What are their emotions and motivation towards plurilingualism, based on a personal connection? Implementing new structures like parts of a plurilingual whole school policy is more successful when objectives, content and methods consider the learners' needs. That strengthens their autonomy, motivation and commitment, and with it a successful outcome.
2. **Another focus on awareness:** Multilinguals show greater awareness (a higher grade of metalinguistic awareness) when using multiple languages and when learning

language(s) in a multilingual setting. A plurilingual whole school policy can be supported by tools that foster language (learning) awareness in cross-linguistic courses.

3. **Political framework:** Any kind of plurilingual whole school policy is realised in a given framework of language policies, e.g. nationally, regionally, locally, and school specific. Every framework level can support or interfere with / endanger its implementation.

4. Further developments: New aspects

As the implementation of a plurilingual whole school policy has as of yet not materialised, further projects and especially projects with accompanying research are needed. With regard to the evaluation of the improved version of a plurilingual whole school policy, new development and research gaps became evident, for example:

- **Focus on the learners:**
What is the impact of surveys and interviews on a plurilingual whole school policy? Are they only a tool to assist its implementation or are they an integral part of it? What is the role of emotions towards languages and multilingualism?
- **Another focus on awareness:**
Does another focus on metalinguistic awareness entail a need for new objectives and new processes in cross-linguistic courses / plurilingual learning settings?
- **Political framework:**
How much multilingualism needs to be available in a society/environment so that a plurilingual whole school policy can be implemented?

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