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Literatur

Kerres, M. & Jechle, Th. (1999). Hybride Lernarrangements: Personale Dienstleistungen in multi- und telemedialen Lernumgebungen. In Forschungsinstitut für Arbeitsbildung an der Ruhr-Universität Bochum (Hrsg.), *Jahrbuch Arbeit – Bildung – Kultur*. Recklinghausen: Forschungsinstitut für Arbeit Bildung Partizipation e.V.

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Beetsma, Danny (Ed.). (2002). *Trilingual Primary Education in Europe. Inventory of the provisions for trilingual primary education in minority language communities of the European Union*. Leeuwarden: Fryske Akademy (138 pages).

Introduction: Trilingual Primary Education in Europe, edited by Danny Beetsma, is the result of a project ordered by Mercator-Education carried out from March 2000 until November 2001. As the subtitle claims, it is an *Inventory of provisions for trilingual primary education in minority language communities of the European Union*. This study is a follow up of the overview of bilingual primary education that Mercator-Education provided in 1991 and includes reports about 12 projects in seven member states of the European Union: Austria, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Spain.

Most EU member states are bi- or multilingual which is often reflected in the school system at the primary level. English, as the editor describes in his introduction, is not only the most important language of global science and technology, but the number one means of international communication. Therefore the learning of English is of greater importance than ever and so is often introduced at the primary level. This language situation is frequently expressed in trilingual primary education programs, a growing phenomenon in many member states of the European Union. These programs use three languages for instruction: the region's own language, the state language, and a foreign language (mostly English). This book gives an overview of these schools in the form of a synthesis report. The purpose of the publication is to "conduct a comparative inventory of the trilingual provisions for language learning and teaching at primary level in the EU-member states" (p. 12).

Summary of Content: The book is organized into nine chapters which can be divided into four sections; first: an introduction to the subject and the working method of the study (10 pages), second: a detailed description of three trilingual education projects (55 pages), third: a description of the extent to which trilingual primary education is present in the European Union including examples of seven cases (40 pages) and fourth: a general overview and recommendations regarding the provisions towards trilingual primary education in the European Union (10 pages).

The introductory chapter provides the reader with information on the background of the TPEE-Project (TPEE = Trilingual Primary Education in Europe).

It also contains definitions of recurring terms, such as primary education, dominant language, minority language, third language, and trilingual education. It also names and explains the objectives of the project and the content of the synthesis report.

Chapter 2 addresses the design of the study. The data was gathered mainly by experts from that region referred to as correspondents who were asked to write reports considering aspects listed on a standard questionnaire found in the appendix of the book. The working method is described as “pragmatic with an emphasis on the comparability and objective classification of fixed standards and quantitative data” (p. 13).

To increase the comparability of information, a standard item list was developed, organized into four categories: the context, the input, the process, and the output of trilingual primary education. This was also done to increase the readability of the reports and to enable the researchers to store the collected data in the Mercator-Education data bank to give all member states of the European Union access to the data.

The second section contains three in-depth cases: Vaasa in Finland, the Basque Country in Spain and Friesland in the Netherlands. These cases were chosen to be in-depth cases because two of them (Vaasa and the Basque Country) are well established programs with many years of experience and one (Friesland) has recently been started.

The program in Vaasa, Finland is a Swedish immersion program offered to monolingual majority-speakers. It was started in 1986 as an import of the bilingual Canadian immersion program – a program teaching content through the

medium of the minority language. Siv Björklund, the author of Chapter 3, stresses the similar linguistic situation of Finland and of the francophone part of Canada. The program in Vaasa was later broadened into a trilingual program, with English as L3 and an optional course in German (L4). All four languages are taught using the immersion method.

Chapter 4 deals with trilingual education in the Basque Country. Most primary schools in the Basque Autonomous Community are trilingual, using Spanish, Basque and English for instruction or learning activities. Jasone Cenoz describes programs which started as experimental projects in the early 90s, but are now well established. The author summarizes the results of research studies, mentioning, for example, the positive effect bilingualism has on foreign language acquisition.

The trilingual primary education program in Friesland – as described in Chapter 5 by Jehannes Ytsma – is still in the experimental stage. The program was started in 1997 with five primary schools and was extended to seven (out of 500) schools in 1998. The languages taught are Dutch (majority language), Frisian (minority language), and English (foreign language). The research conducted in this program focuses on the linguistic progress of the children but also includes the parents’ attitude towards trilingual primary education.

Chapter 6 provides the reader with a comparison of the three in-depth cases following the 18 topics of the item list: location, languages, schools, history, status, goals, obstacles, parents, government, pupils, age, teachers, teaching materials, time allocation, support, subjects, research, and results.

The third section of the book deals with the extent of Trilingual Primary Education in the European Union.

Chapter 7 contains the description of seven cases in five countries: the Aosta Valley in Italy, Carinthia in Austria, Catalonia in Spain, the Ladin Valleys in Italy, Luxembourg, North Frisia in Germany and the Valencian Community in Spain. At the end of the chapter the reader finds a brief comparison of the cases. However, it would be even more helpful if the editor had provided a more in-depth interpretation and categorization.

Chapter 8 provides a list of regions in which trilingual primary education is hardly found or not at all.

The final section (chapter 9) first gives an overview of the cases described in the previous chapters mainly in the form of two tables, both with a focus on the extent of trilingual primary education. The author continues with general observations and trends concerning different aspects such as the age at which trilingual education programs start, objectives of the program, teacher training, teaching material, etc. He interprets the growing phenomenon of trilingual primary education as a trend towards regional awareness and mentions the seemingly opposite trend towards globalization.

The book ends with recommendations for policy development regarding trilingual primary education on the level of member state and region and of the European Union, educational practice, and further research.

The appendix contains the names and addresses of the correspondents, the item list and guidelines for the correspondents.

Conclusion: The book gives a good overview of the extent of Trilingual Primary Education in the European Union. Several examples are explained and illustrated in language that is clear and concise. The book is well organized and follows a pattern which makes it easy to find single points of interest.

The study focuses on institutional aspects of trilingual education. However, it would be interesting to learn more about the sociological impact. Significant in this matter would be a more critical analysis of the terms “majority” and “minority”. For this it would be helpful to describe not only the social development of the minority languages this publication deals with, but also the development of minority and national languages and its status in Europe since the establishment of the nation state.

This study provides the reader with valuable, well organized information on the current institutional status of minority languages. It could be used as the basis for further research, for example for an in-depth analysis of the relation between the prestige and the legitimation of a minority language. The Euromosaic Project¹ – a study on autochthon language minorities in Europe conducted in the early 90s – comes to the conclusion that the prestige of a language and its legitimation is closely linked. The less valuable the language is (measured by the economic status of the minority), the less it is legitimated through the educational system.² It would be interesting to see to what extent the results of the Mercator Study correspond with the results of the Euromosaic Study.

There are many more aspects yet to be examined and interpreted – among them could be the relationship between

the promotion of minority languages through trilingual primary education and the development of the cultural identity of the speakers of minority languages, as well as the way the concept of trilingual primary education is brought to life in institutional frameworks as different as the school systems of Finland and Spain.

Taken as a whole, the book can be used as an introduction to the field of trilingual education or for examples for projects if needed. It addresses all readers interested in trilingual education, minorities, and educational institutions in Europe. It is also a valuable source for instructors who wish to start a trilingual

program themselves as it provides the reader with a list of names and detailed addresses of experts and institutions in which this has already been done successfully.

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1 Amt für amtliche Veröffentlichungen der Europäischen Gemeinschaften. (Hrsg.). (1995). *Euromosaic. Produktion und Reproduktion der Minderheiten-Sprachgemeinschaften in der Europäischen Union*. Luxemburg.

2 Nelde, P.H. & Weber, P.J. (1998). Die Euromosaic-Studie als Element einer europäischen Sprachpolitik. *ZFSH / SGB*, 37 (2), 88.