

Palma de Mallorca, 24 November 2021

*Comparing the aims and outcomes
of European minority language
education*

Durk Gorter

NPLD-Coppieters
Campus 2021

**Immersion education:
exploring what works in linguistically diverse contexts across Europe**

24th NOVEMBER PALMA



Thank you organizers



ikerbasque
Basque Foundation for Science



dream

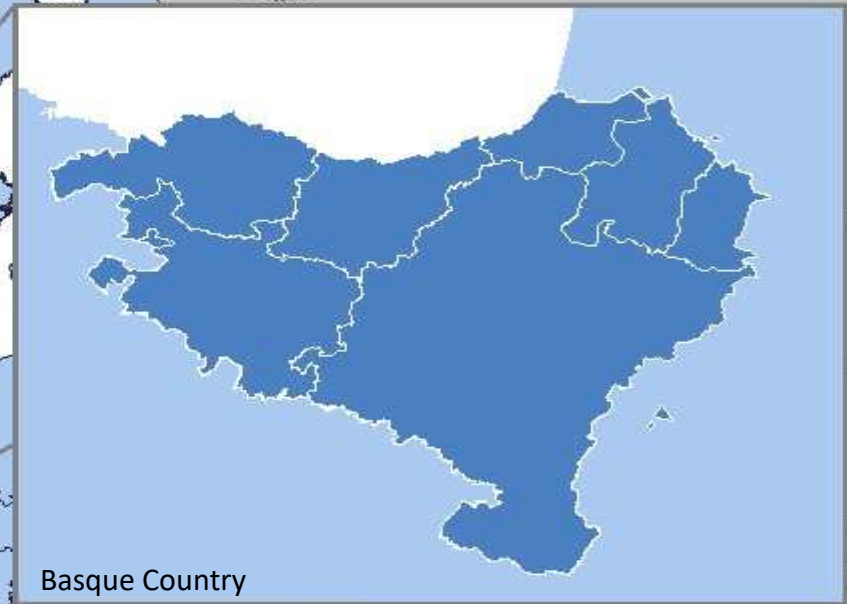
**DONOSTIA RESEARCH GROUP ON
EDUCATION AND MULTILINGUALISM**

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE



Friesland

Frisian: > 40 years



Basque Country

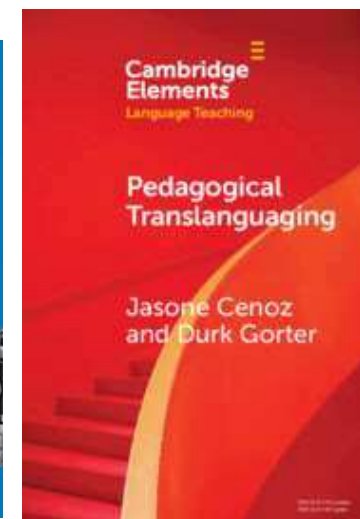
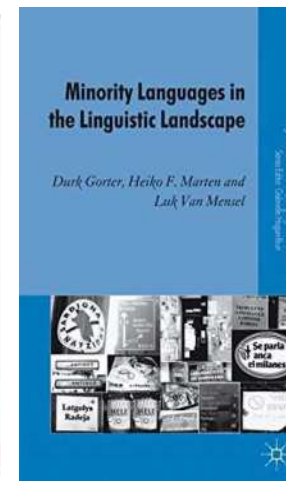
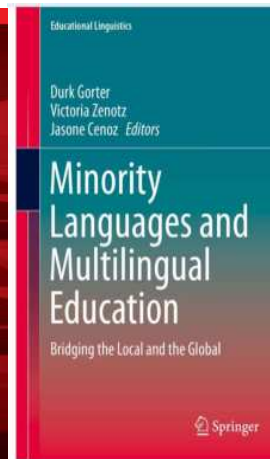
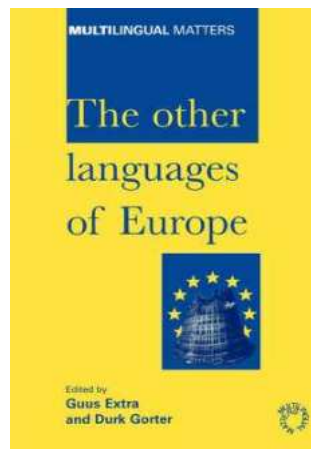
Basque: focus last 14 years

**Comparative education studies,
including other European minority languages**

MY RESEARCH FOCUS

- European minority languages
- Linguistic landscapes
- Multilingual education

Coming soon



1

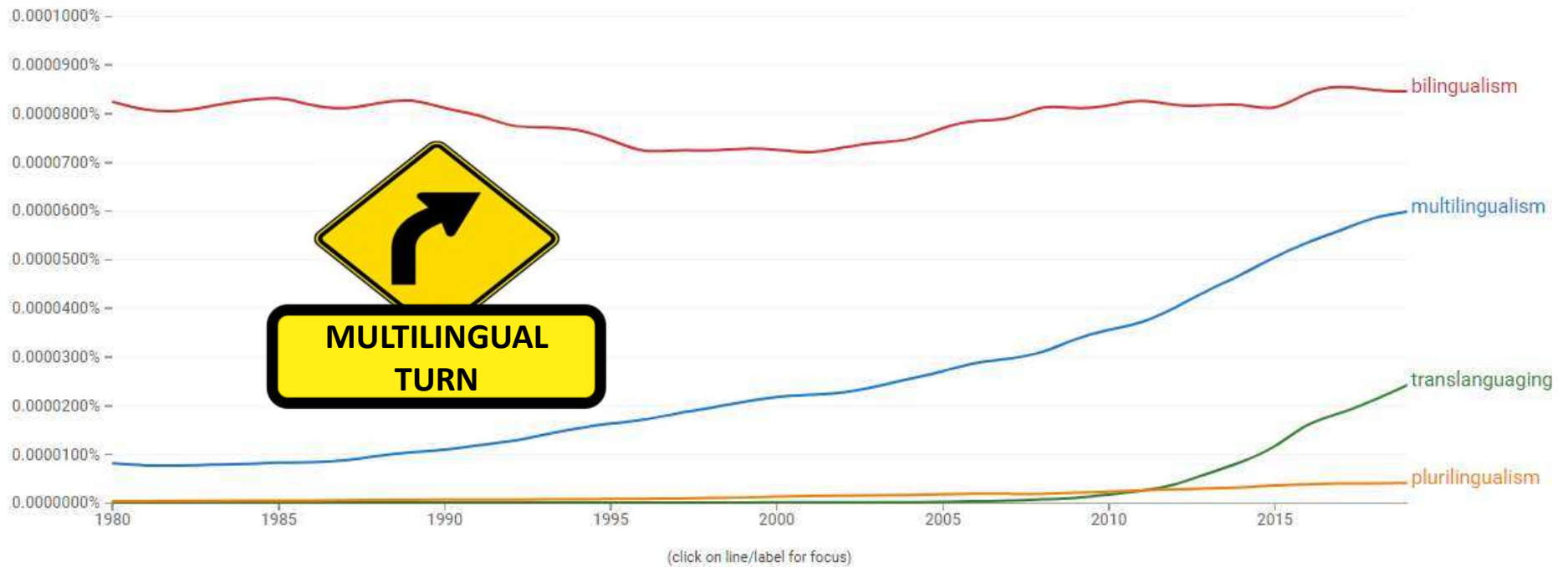
Theoretical perspective

Changes in research



BILINGUALISM
MULTILINGUALISM
TRANSLANGUAGING
PLURILINGUALISM

1980 - 2019 English (2019) Case-Insensitive Smoothing



Search in Google Books

Navigating between languages

“The multilingual turn implies that languages are no longer isolated entities as their boundaries are becoming softer, ... more open and permeable.”

Reality at school

“ONE LANGUAGE AT A TIME”

Hard boundaries at school

- No code-mixing, no code-switching
- One teacher, one language
- No translation
- Independent syllabuses

Monolingual views

Languages contaminate each other

The aim is balanced multilingualism for all situations

Non-existing monolingual societies as a reference

Multilingual views

Languages reinforce each other

Multilinguals use their languages for different purposes and have different skills

Real multilingual societies as a reference

'Focus on Multilingualism'

Looks at the **relationships** between the languages when conducting research, teaching or assessing different language

speakers as multilingual speakers
the whole linguistic repertoire
the wider social context

competence of multilingual speakers is fluid, not fixed,
difficult to measure but real

All the languages being learned and used are taken into account
The languages need to be activated in order to benefit from multilingualism

Multilinguals use their linguistic resources in a social context and shape this context in communicative interaction

(Cenoz & Gorter, 2011, 2014, 2017)

Trawsieithu

Translanguaging

INPUT

OUTPUT

as a learning strategy

as pedagogical tool

WELSH: The process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages

US-LATINX: Multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds

The acceptance of translanguaging as a legitimate practice

Translanguaging: direction

Dimensions of Translanguaging

(Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012, Galante, 2020)

Pedagogical translanguaging: Instructional strategies that integrate two or more languages. A pedagogic theory and practice

Spontaneous translanguaging: The reality of bilingual usage in naturally occurring contexts where boundaries between languages are fluid (García & Li, 2014:20)

Pedagogical translanguaging is **planned** by the teacher and can refer to the use of different languages for input and output or to other planned strategies

is supported by extensive research evidence

Translanguaging has to be sustainable

Translanguaging has to be sustainable

It is necessary to **soften** the **boundaries** between languages in bilingual and multilingual schools involving regional minority languages, but this has to be done in a **sustainable** way

Cenoz & Gorter 2017: 910

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European context

Constellation of Languages

23 official languages

Nr	Member-states	Pop. (million)	Official state language(s)
1	Germany	82,5	German
2	France	60,9	French
3	United Kingdom	60,4	English
4	Italy	58,8	Italian
5	Spain	43,8	Spanish
6	Poland	38,1	Polish
7	Romania	21,6	Romanian
8	Netherlands	16,3	Dutch
9	Greece	11,1	Greek
10	Portugal	10,6	Portuguese
11	Belgium	10,5	Dutch, French, German
12	Czech Rep.	10,3	Czech
13	Hungary	10,1	Hungarian

14	Sweden	9,0	Swedish
15	Austria	8,3	German
16	Bulgaria	7,7	Bulgarian
17	Denmark	5,4	Danish
18	Slovakia	5,4	Slovak
19	Finland	5,3	Finnish
20	Ireland	4,2	Irish, English
21	Lithuania	3,4	Lithuanian
22	Latvia	2,3	Latvian
23	Slovenia	2,0	Slovenian
24	Estonia	1,3	Estonian
25	Cyprus	0,8	Greek, Turkish
26	Luxembourg	0,5	(Luxemburgish), French, German
27	Malta	0,4	Maltese, English

195 European minority language groups

EU-based typology

Unique

- Welsh, Frisian, Galician
- Catalan (E, I, F), Basque (E, F)

'Kin-state'

- German(B,Cz,Dk,F,I,Pl), Slovene(Au,I)
- Ukrainian(Sl, Pl), Russian(Est, Lit, La)

Special

- Luxembourgish, Irish, Maltese
- Romani, Yiddish

Overview of 21 unique minority languages with estimated numbers of speakers (based on 24 cases from the Mercator regional dossiers)

<i>Unique minority language</i>	Estimated size				
		> 1 million	> 100.000	< 100.000	
Catalan (2 states)	6 million + 126,000	Catalan (2)	Basque (2)	Gaelic	Sorbian
Occitan	3,75 million				
Galician	1,90 million	Occitan	Welsh	Kashubian	Sami
Irish (2 states)	1,43 million + 131,000				
Scots	1,50 million	Galician	Asturian	Võro	North Frisian
Basque (2 states)	600,000 + 67,000				
Welsh	500,000	Irish (2)	Frisian	Meänkieli	Ruthenian
Asturian	360,000				
Frisian	340,000	Scots	Breton	Ladin	Cornish
Breton	295,000				
Corsican	166,000		Corsican		
Gaelic	70,000				
Kashubian	52,000				
Võro	50,000				
Meänkieli	40,000				
Ladin	30,000				
Sorbian	20,000				
Sami	17,000				
North-Frisian	9,000				
Ruthenian	5,600				
Cornish	300 speakers, 3,000 learners	5	6		12

Language constellation: hierarchy of prestige

English

Few 'larger':

Spanish, French, German, Italian

Other state languages:

Dutch, Danish, Greek, Slovenian, etc

Regional minority languages:

Basque, Frisian, Catalan, Welsh,
etc

Migrant languages:

Arabic, Turkish, Berber,
Somali, Kurdish, etc



English in society

'One nation, one state, one language'

TV-programs

Movies, games

Social media

Advertisements

Linguistic landscape

Pressure to learn English

"Language has always been the companion of empire" (De Nebrija 1492)

Monolingual mindset

"The greatest impediment is a persistent **monolingual mindset**.

Such a mindset sees everything in terms of **monolingualism being the norm.**"

Language shift

Welsh - Not

General perception of minority languages

We have come a long way,
but....

Tools for linguistic sustainability?

19th-20th century

- Bible
- Grammar
- Dictionary
- Language transmission
- Teaching as a subject

21st century

- Language rights
- TV-channel
- Social media
- New speakers
- Medium of instruction

International legal instruments recognize the right to teach minority languages at **school**

Theories of language revitalization include **education** as a crucial variable

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Comparing minority languages in education

Education: beginning to compare

- Comparative education: no one definition
- comparative approach: rationale
- Do not compare apples and oranges
- Many words for school: skoalle, escola, ikastetxe, scoill, ar skol, iskola

European Charter: menu system

High	Medium	Low	Part III	Not under Charter
Basque (E) Catalan (E) Galician(E) Gaelic(UK) Welsh(UK)	Frisian (NL)	Irish (UK) Meänkieli(S) NorthFrisian (G) Sámi (S) Sorbian (G)	Asturian (E) Cornish(UK) Scots (UK)	Basque (F) Breton (F) Catalan (F) Corsican (F) Irish (Irl) Kashubian(Pl) Ladin (I) Occitan (F) Ruthenian(Pl) Võro (Est)
5	1	5	3	10

DATA: Regional dossiers: Mercator research centre



39 cases
“Unique”: 24 cases

www.mercator-research.eu

Language as a subject

(Near) 100%	Cover >50%	Cover <50%	Optional
Basque (E) Catalan (E) Frisian (NL) Galician (E) Irish (Irl) Welsh (UK)	Corsican (F) Gaelic (UK)	Asturian (E) Basque (F) Breton (F) Catalan (F) Irish (UK) Kashubian (PL) Ladin (I) Meänkieli (S) North Frisian (G) Occitan (F) Sorbian (G) Sámi (S) Võro (Ee)	Cornish (UK) Ruthenian(Pl) Scots (UK)
6	2	13	3

Medium of instruction

≥ half subjects	Some subjects	No medium of instruction
Basque (E)	Asturian (E)	Corsican (F)
Basque (F)	Frisian (NL)	Kashubian (Pl)
Breton (F)	Ladin (I)	Meänkieli (S)
Catalan (E)	North Frisian (G)	Occitan (F)
Catalan (F)	Sámi (S)	Sorbian (G)
Galician (E)	Võro (Ee)	(Cornish, UK)
Gaelic (UK)		(Ruthenian, Pl)
Irish (Irl)		(Scots, UK)
Irish (UK)		
Welsh (UK)		
10	6	8

In short

- Diversity provisions and degree legal protection
- Difference between provisions and practice
- Most languages as subject only
- Most bilingual streams
- Just a few stronger cases

‘the school alone cannot do it’

Education may even contribute more to endangerment than to revival

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Sustainable minority language education

Are we able to secure a sustainable future for minority languages? Sustainable translanguageing

Guiding principles:

1. Design functional “breathing spaces”
2. Develop the need to use the minority language
3. Use emergent multilinguals’ resources
4. Enhance languages awareness
5. Link spontaneous translanguageing to pedagogical activities

Ad 1. “the minority language can be used freely and without the threat of the majority language

Ad 2 “minority languages will not be used if they are not necessary”

Ad 3 “to reinforce all languages by developing metalinguistic awareness”

Ad 4 “explore the knowledge students have about the social status, functioning, language practices and the use of different languages in society”

Ad 5 “do not ignore spontaneous translanguageing, but raise students’ awareness about the different contexts and uses of minority languages”

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Concluding thoughts

Strange belief that a Basque teacher should use Basque only, a Spanish teacher use Spanish only, and an English teacher use English only

And that is the way in which students have to become multilingual speakers of Basque, Spanish and English?

Monolingual mindset

Minority & Dominant

Minority, Dominant **& English**

Minority, Dominant, English, **& Migrant**

All languages

Implications

Focus on multilingualism rather than only on target language

Develop pedagogies that consider the speaker as multilingual, the multilingual repertoire and the social context

Provide enough space for the minority language

It is necessary to soften the boundaries between languages but this has to be done in a sustainable way

Sustainable translanguaging is rooted in the reality of minority languages and allows for breathing spaces that create the need to use these languages

Pedagogical translanguaging can be **compatible** with minority languages

Challenge for minority groups: changing ways in which minority languages are used

Video: Let's make the most of multilingualism