

ETHNIC MINORITY LANGUAGES VERSUS FRISIAN IN DUTCH PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract In this paper, a comparative perspective is given on the position of ethnic minority languages vs. Frisian in Dutch primary schools. The rationale for such a comparison stems from the rather long history and high status of Frisian as a school subject and a medium of instruction in the Netherlands, and from remarkable similarities and differences in experiences and trends on both sides. First, there is a presentation of basic sociodemographic data on ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands, and arguments in favour of bilingual education in various contexts in which children's home language is dominated by a different school language. Apart from some similarities between Frisian and ethnic minority languages in Dutch primary schools, there is a number of noteworthy differences with respect to preferred arguments, legislation and educational models for minority language instruction (MLI), the actual use of minority languages, the attitudes of parents, teachers and children towards MLI, the pressure groups in favour of MLI, and, finally, the quality of teachers and learning materials. These differences are successively taken into account. Moreover, the need for better research data on bilingualism and better policy guidelines for bilingual education is discussed.

Introduction

Bilingualism is the result of contacts between speakers of different languages. In many countries of the world children come in contact with more than one language before they enter school. Taken from this perspective, bilingualism is the rule and monolingualism the exception. However, in many (especially American) studies more attention is paid to the effects of

bilingualism on children's cognitive, social or emotional development than to the effects of monolingualism on such development. The main explanatory factor for this biased interest is the socio-economic status of bilingual children. In many learning contexts, this status is lower than the status of monolingual children and, quite commonly, bilingualism is blamed for this. Moreover, given the fact that monolingual children often speak the language with the highest social prestige, whereas bilingual children learn this high-prestige variety as their second language, bilingualism is frequently qualified as a 'handicap'.

Language prestige can be derived from the degree of codification and standardisation of a language and, even more importantly, from the number and type of its public functions. Without doubt, the language variety with the most public functions in the Netherlands is standard Dutch. However, for many inhabitants of this country, standard Dutch is not the language variety of their primary socialisation: they learn and use Dutch, to whatever degree, as a second language. This holds for both speakers of indigenous and non-indigenous minority languages. Persistent in this context is the myth that the Netherlands has only recently become a multicultural and multilingual society. First of all, language variation manifests itself in a whole range of regional or social 'dialects'. These language varieties lead a far more active life in the Netherlands than is often supposed or admitted. Only one of these indigenous varieties, Frisian, has traditionally an 'official' language status and is supported by various legislative measures.

A great variety of non-indigenous minority languages have been introduced into Dutch society from abroad. Most speakers of these languages are nowadays referred to as 'ethnic minorities', although ethnicity does not necessarily imply a minority position — nor does the reverse. Like most other Western and Northern European countries, the Netherlands has been faced over the last few decades with a growing number of immigrants who, for various reasons, have taken up temporary or permanent residence. Derived from CBS statistics, the following five main clusters of non-indigenous minority groups in the Netherlands can be distinguished (see also Vallen & Stijnen, 1987):

1. About 530,000 people whose origins lie in former Dutch colonies: Surinam (202,000), the Dutch Antilles (50,000), and the former Dutch Indies (275,000). Within the last group, the Moluccans (42,000) take up a special position, not only from an ethnic, cultural and religious perspective, but also because of their involuntary 'repatriation' to the Netherlands in 1951 and the fact that many of them are stateless.
2. About 350,000 people from Mediterranean countries. In the 1960s and 1970s most of them came from Turkey (162,000) and Morocco (124,000) as foreign workers. There are also much smaller groups from Spain, Italy, Yugoslavia, Portugal (incl. Cape Verdian Islands), Greece and Tunisia, totalling 64,000 inhabitants.
3. About 30,000 political refugees from various countries such as Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Chile, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Turkey

(Turkish and Armenian Christians) and other (mostly Latin and Middle American) countries.

4. About 30,000 Chinese from countries such as China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong.
5. A rather heterogeneous group of 200,000 immigrants from various other countries, as well as caravan dwellers and gypsies.

In sum, about 7% of the more than 14.6 million inhabitants of the Netherlands belong to non-indigenous groups who speak a wide variety of home languages. Their children add to a substantial degree to the language diversity in Dutch classrooms.

As said before, many children around the world learn to cope with more than one language before school entrance. Most commonly in such a context, the dominant school language differs from the dominant home language, and the former has more social, cultural, economic or political prestige than the latter. These basic facts about language 'mismatch' have given rise to a great number of studies on bilingualism and bilingual education. Two classic sources of information on this topic are Fishman (1976) and Gaarder (1977). Recent comparative perspectives in the Netherlands were given by Fase (1987) and Zondag (1982). Fase took into account experiences with bilingual schooling in the USA, Great Britain, the BRD, France, Belgium and Sweden, in contrast to ethnic minority schooling in the Netherlands, whereas Zondag (1982) focused on bilingual education in Friesland. A special issue on the sociology of Frisian was published by the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* in 1987 (nr. 64).

The following main arguments in favour of minority language instruction (MLI) can be derived from various contexts in which children's home language is dominated by a different school language:

(a) *Sociopsychological arguments:*

- if the dominant school language differs from the dominant home language, children will make an easier transition from home to school in the case of MLI, and they will have better opportunities to develop a positive image of themselves and their cultural background;
- children will not be alienated from the cultural heritage of their parents and their wider community of origin;
- parents will show a greater involvement in the education of their children, if the school shows a greater involvement with the parents' concerns; MLI is one of the parents' main educational concerns;

(b) *Educational arguments:*

- when children are given an educational opportunity to develop and use the language of which they have the best initial command, they will be in a better position to attain good results in other subjects;

- MLI will lead to better results in the dominant majority language as well; according to Cummins' interdependency hypothesis (1982), a certain threshold level in one's first language is an important condition for the favourable development of a second language; moreover, children's motivation to learn a second language will increase, if the dominant environment (in this case the school) pays more attention to their first language;

(c) Cultural arguments:

- MLI will help to prevent linguistic and cultural assimilation of minority groups; linguistic and cultural pluriformity can be seen as sources of enrichment for society as a whole;

(d) Juridical arguments:

- MLI is a human right, expressed in various international resolutions and guidelines; its importance is expressed in the United Nations Resolution on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and in the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960); within Europe, this right has been confirmed by several resolutions of the European Council.

In the context of this volume, a comparative perspective will be given on the position of ethnic minority languages (EML) vs. Frisian in Dutch primary schools. The rationale for such a comparison stems from the rather long history and high status of Frisian as a school subject and a medium of instruction in the Netherlands, and from remarkable similarities and differences in experiences and trends on both sides. Although the differences outnumber the similarities, our comparative perspective will start with the latter.

Similarities

The first similarity is based on the absence of goal and content prescriptions. There is a fundamental restraint in Dutch educational history with respect to prescribing goals and content of instruction. This restraint can also be observed in basic issues regarding MLI. Legislation is mainly concerned with financial and organisational conditions, and schools are relatively independent regarding the quantity and quality of attention paid to learning to understand, speak and write the minority language under consideration. Moreover, and both in the case of Frisian and EML, there are disputes about which language variety should be taught. For written Frisian, an officially recognised spelling came into force in 1980. However, given the regional variety of oral Frisian, no oral standard is available and its desirability is disputed. In the case of EML in the Netherlands, a large degree of heterogeneity can be observed between and within ethnic groups. Moroc-

cans, for example, can be speakers of Moroccan Arabic, Berber or Bedouin varieties. Surinamers can be speakers of Sranan Tongo, Sarnami Hindustani, Javanese Malay, Haka, Indian language varieties or Surinamese Dutch. Chinese can be speakers of Mandarin, Cantonese, Wenzhou or Shanghai dialects. Moluccans can opt for High Malay, Moluccan Malay, Malay Sini or Dutch. In governmental policy with respect to EMLI, the importance of instruction in the standard language of source-countries is stressed. One exception has been made to that preference in the case of Moluccan children: here, in accordance with parental wishes, attention can be paid to learning Moluccan Malay rather than Bahasa, the standard language of Indonesia.

A second similarity between Frisian and EML is that their position has been weaker in initial stages than in later stages of the school curriculum. This is a rather paradoxical phenomenon in the light of the home-school bridging argument for MLI, given in our Introduction. If home-school transition is facilitated by MLI, such instruction should at least play an important role in the early stages of schooling. Part of the reason for this paradox is again historical. Until 1985, children first attended Kindergarten, followed by elementary school. These two types of schooling took place under different guidance and even in different buildings. If Frisian and EML were taught at all, such instruction would most commonly start after Kindergarten. Duipmans (1984) revealed some figures about Frisian in Kindergarten which provide evidence for its modest role. Moreover, and in contrast to elementary schools, there has never been any legislation for the use of Frisian in Kindergarten. In the new Primary Education Act (1980), one integrated type of *basisschool* for children aged 4–12 years came into existence in the Netherlands. Both Frisian and EMLs were taken into account in this Act, although in very different ways. MLI is now expanded to children's first years of schooling.

Differences

Apart from these similarities between Frisian and EMLs in Dutch primary schools, there is a number of noteworthy differences with respect to preferred arguments, legislation and educational models for MLI, the actual use of minority languages, the attitudes of parents, teachers and children towards MLI, the pressure groups in favour of MLI, and, finally, the quality of teachers and learning materials. These differences will successively be taken into account.

(a) Arguments for MLI

All the arguments mentioned in our Introduction have been put forward in the case of EMLI in the Netherlands. The rationale of various sociopsychological and educational arguments has been expressed in empirical studies by Appel (1984), Teunissen (1986) and Verhoeven (1987). In

none of these studies did MLI show detrimental effects on the acquisition of Dutch as a second language, in spite of the smaller amount of time spent on second language instruction in experimental groups vs. control groups.

Similar results were reported in a study by Wijnstra (1976, 1980) on the acquisition of Dutch by Frisian speaking children. However, with respect to Frisian a shift of arguments can be observed over time. Whereas traditionally sociopsychological and educational arguments were used to promote bilingualism for children whose home language was Frisian, nowadays cultural arguments are favoured to promote bilingualism for both Frisian and Dutch speaking children. These differences in orientation are reflected in recent legislation and will be discussed in some detail.

(b) Legislation

The role of Frisian in primary education goes back to 1907, when the provincial government offered a small grant for Frisian lessons after school, i.e. outside the regular school curriculum. In 1955 the teaching of Frisian as a subject was allowed throughout the curriculum of elementary schools, and the use of Frisian as a medium of instruction was permitted in the lower grades. In 1974 Frisian became an obligatory subject and a permitted medium of instruction in all grades. This legal arrangement was reconfirmed in the earlier mentioned Primary Education Act (1980), which became operative only in 1985. Article 10 of the PEA says:

4. In schools in the province of Friesland, Frisian is to be taught, unless the Provincial Authorities, at the request of the school authorities, have granted exemption from this obligation.
5. In those places where, in addition to Dutch, Frisian or a dialect is in active use, Frisian or the dialect can also be employed as a medium of instruction in education. For the instruction of pupils from a non-Dutch cultural background, their native language can also be used as an additional medium of instruction.

In other words, since 1980 Frisian has been a compulsory school subject and an optional medium of instruction in all grades of primary schools in Friesland, with the inclusion of exemption rules for ethnic minority children and Dutch children who are native speakers of a non-Frisian dialect.

The Dutch government's reaction to the influx and increasing number of ethnic minority children in school was slow and hesitant (cf. Fase, 1987: 13-40 for an overview). It was not until many other ethnic minority groups had entered primary school that the issue of bilingual/bicultural education for Moluccan children — whose parents immigrated in the early 1950s — was given some preliminary thought. In so far as ethnic minority languages gained a position in education in the 1960s and early 1970s at all, this position can be characterised as follows:

- the Ministry of Education assumed no responsibility for EMLI; there were some private initiatives of parents, embassies or migrant workers' foundations, especially for Spanish, Portuguese, Greek, Italian and Yugoslavian children;
- EMLI usually took place outside the school and at extra-curricular hours;
- EMLI was aimed at remigration to the country of origin.

In the mid-1970s EMLI underwent the following changes with respect to the characteristics mentioned above:

- the national government began to take more responsibility for EMLI;
- EMLI acquired a modest place inside the school (in interval classrooms) and during schoolhours (free periods), and it increasingly took place under the jurisdiction of the school authorities;
- EMLI began to aim at different goals.

Towards the end of the 1970s, the government came to acknowledge the fact that the majority of ethnic minority children would stay in the Netherlands. This acknowledgement led to policy modifications with regard to EMLI (cf. Pais, 1981; Rietkerk, 1983).

The position of EMLI was settled as follows in Article 11 of the earlier mentioned PEA (1980):

1. For the benefit of pupils from a non-Dutch cultural background the school authorities can introduce EMLI into the school curriculum. By general rule, the National Education Council having been consulted, it is determined to which pupils (cf. Fase, 1987: 28) the aforementioned instruction will be given.
2. Pupils can also be admitted to EMLI who are not registered at the school, in those cases in which their own school does not provide this instruction.
3. The pupils mentioned in section 1 are only obliged to receive this instruction at the request of their parents.
4. Of the hours spent on instruction as mentioned in section 1, two and a half hours at the most are to be counted among the total amount of hours of instruction which pupils are supposed to receive every week.
5. Pupils who receive EMLI may, contrary to Article 12 section 4, receive six hours of instruction a day at the most.

A comparison of Articles 10 and 11 of the PEA reveals remarkable differences in legal treatment of indigenous as opposed to ethnic minority languages. While Frisian is a compulsory subject and exemptions must be requested, EMLI 'can' be given if local school authorities deem it to be useful, if pupils concerned fall within the scope of specific groups to be determined by the Minister of Education, and if the pupils' parents express their wish for such instruction. Moreover, Article 11 indicates that EMLI is not necessarily provided under the same roof as the rest of the curriculum.

According to present regulations, the following groups can claim a right to EMLI: inhabitants from those Mediterranean countries with which the Netherlands have a foreign workers' enlistment-contract (Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Tunisia), Moluccan children, children of political refugees, and children coming from other EEC countries in accordance with EEC guidelines. The right to EMLI is not bestowed on three other large ethnic groups in the Netherlands: Chinese, Surinamese and Antillian children. There is even no mention of Chinese, though the number of Chinese children at Dutch primary schools is much larger than that of Greek, Yugoslav or Portuguese children.

(c) *Educational models*

The focus on cultural arguments in favour of Frisian has led to an extension of Frisian instruction in two directions: the target group for bilingual education has been broadened by teaching Frisian to both Frisian and Dutch speaking children, and the attention devoted to Frisian should not be weakened throughout the school curriculum. Such an approach comes closest to language maintenance. Especially in so-called *Opstapscholen* in Friesland, the goal is to realise full bilaterate bilingualism; here, Frisian and Dutch have an equal position in the school curriculum, both as a subject and as a medium of instruction.

Until now and in spite of a multitude of reports on intercultural education stressing the equality of different languages and cultures, there are hardly any advocates of EMLI for majority group children. Even if EMLI is conceived as a valuable goal at all by local school authorities, it is always restricted to part of the school population. Moreover, its function is often stressed in terms of home-school bridging for lower grade children. Such an approach comes closest to language transition.

(d) *Actual use of minority languages*

Although there are only few data on the use of Frisian and EML by children entering primary school, it is a common impression that the number of Frisian-speaking children is declining. On the other hand, it is a demographic fact that the number of ethnic minority children in Dutch classrooms increased over time, at least until 1984. Most commonly, these children speak a home language that differs widely from Dutch. Some recent figures concerning non-indigenous primary school children are presented in Table 1 for the school years 1984/1985 and 1985/1986 (source: Central Bureau for Statistics, 1987).

According to CBS statistics, there were more than 8,400 primary schools in the Netherlands in 1986. At 39% of these schools the percentage of non-indigenous children was up to 10%, whereas at 1% of the schools this proportion was higher than 60%.

Table 1

	Ordinary schools		Special schools	
	84/85	85/86	84/85	85/86
All children	1,494,433	1,466,500	98,358	99,200
Non-indigenous children	84,329	82,775	4,085	5,042
%	5.6	5.6	4.2	5.1

With respect to the actual use of Frisian at primary schools, De Jong (1985) referred to a shift between 1980 and 1985. Whereas the number of schools that teach Frisian as a subject in certain grades increased from 5% to 16%, the number of schools that teach Frisian in all grades decreased from 80% to 73%. About three-quarters of the schools taught Frisian up to one hour a week in 1985. This figure was similar for all grades. On the other hand, there is a legal weekly maximum of two and a half hours of EMLI within school time and two and a half hours outside (if EMLI is given at all). Finally, schools which pay relatively great attention to Frisian are most commonly small country schools, whereas schools which pay relatively great attention to EMLI are most commonly big urban schools. These differences in school environment correspond with the spread in actual use of the languages under consideration.

(e) *Attitudes of parents, teachers and children*

There are no representative data available on primary school children's attitudes towards Frisian. While teachers and headmasters were the pioneers of bilingual education in Friesland in the 1950s, their attitudes towards Frisian have become less positive over time (cf. Gorter, 1982; Duipmans, 1984). Ytsma (1986: 27) concluded that parental attitudes are generally not unfavourable toward Frisian; however, parents should certainly not be conceived as trend setters for bilingual education. Gorter *et al.* (1983) found no correlation between level of education or socio-economic status on the one hand and attitudes towards Frisian in schools on the other hand. In their study, the least objection to the introduction of Frisian in primary schools came from parents with children up to the age of 6 (11% against, $n = 103$), youngsters aged 12–20 years (11% against, $n = 187$), and native speakers of Frisian (8% against, $n = 661$).

With respect to EMLI, only findings of small-scale studies on attitudes of parents, teachers and children are available. However, all available findings point to strong support for EMLI. Van Esch & Bruins (1987) reported

on the attitudes of Turkish and Moroccan parents ($n = 20$). Although the parents had different opinions about the amount of EMLI desirable during school time, they generally considered EMLI as an important instrument for maintaining ethnic group contacts in the Netherlands and abroad. Van de Wetering (1986) did a comparative study on the attitudes of Moroccan parents ($n = 13$), teachers ($n = 9$) and children ($n = 86$) towards EMLI. All groups had a very favourable attitude towards EMLI (84 out of 86 children, aged 6–12, considered the learning of Moroccan-Arabic to be important), although their motivation showed interesting differences. Both parents and teachers stressed the importance of maintaining Islamic religion and culture, and maintaining ethnic group contacts. The teachers added to these concerns the importance of development of personal or group identity. On the other hand, the motivation of the children was primarily an instrumental communicative one in terms of ethnic group contacts in the Netherlands and Morocco, rather than cultural or religious concerns. Finally, a recent 'Inspectierapport' (1987: 43–47) referred to positive attitudes of most ethnic minority students in secondary schools towards EMLI as well; at the same time, many students were demotivated by bad EML learning conditions and learning materials.

EMLs are most commonly taught by teachers who belong to the same ethnic group and have a native command of the ethnic group language. A rather different picture emerges when the attitudes of majority language teachers are taken into account. Molony & Pechler (1982) showed that 59% of those who teach Moluccan children would agree with the statement that 'The Moluccan community in the Netherlands would be wise not to encourage their children to learn Malay and thus to maintain their language'; 60% of the headmasters of schools which had special activities for Moluccan children were of the opinion that Moluccans should not speak Malay with their children; no less than 75% of the teachers were of the opinion that the use of two languages has adverse effects on cognitive development. Finally, Van de Wetering (1986) found that majority language teachers showed little knowledge, involvement and reflection with respect to EMLI. Moreover, their attitude towards EML maintenance over time was rather unfavourable.

(f) Pressure groups

The pressure for Frisian instruction can generally be qualified as top-down pressure. It stems more from institutionalised authorities such as the Provincial Government, the Provincial Educational Council and the Fryske Akademy than from concerned parents, children or teachers (see also Van Dijk, 1987). On the other hand, the pressure for EMLI is most certainly bottom-up pressure. It stems more from concerned parents, children and EML teachers than from governmental agencies. At the national level, at least a low-profile support for Frisian instruction can be observed. However, EMLI is in the government's perception commonly defined as a 'temporary'

problem'. The need for EMLI might change over time, it is said, because it is unclear 'for how many generations such instruction is useful and desirable' (e.g. Van Leijenhurst, 1983).

In addition, legislation on minority languages is often enforced by electoral pressure groups (cf. the pressure of Hispanics on bilingual education in the USA). As yet, in the Netherlands such pressure can more easily be put to work for Frisian than for EMLI, given the lack of electoral status of most ethnic minority groups.

(g) *Quality of teachers*

Frisian is commonly taught by ordinary class teachers who are also responsible for the rest of the school curriculum. With respect to ethnic minority children there is a remarkably undisputed division of labour between teachers. EMLs are taught by special and mostly part-time contracted teachers who rarely share responsibility with other teachers for the rest of the school curriculum.

In the case of both Frisian and EMLI, teachers should contribute to children's bilingualism. However, in both cases doubts have been expressed about the teachers' own degree of bilingualism. The earlier mentioned Inspection Report, published by De Jong (1985), indicated that 90% of the teachers who were formally qualified for Frisian instruction could understand Frisian, whereas about 80% of them could speak it. Over 80% could read Frisian, and only 50–60% could write it. In the Inspection Report various recommendations were made for improving the teachers' literacy in Frisian. No comparable data are available as yet on EML teachers. However, whereas teachers of Frisian have an undisputed proficiency in Dutch and a disputed proficiency in the minority language under consideration, the impression of EML teachers' proficiency is the opposite. Serious doubts have been expressed about their proficiency in Dutch. These different concerns are also reflected in the respective teacher training programmes. In Frisian teacher training much attention is paid to proficiency in the minority language, whereas in EML teacher training much attention is paid to proficiency in the majority language.

(h) *Quality of learning materials*

Finally, there is a sufficient quantity of materials for learning Frisian and these materials look quite good (cf. Ytsma, 1986: 18–24 for an overview). With respect to EMLI, however, there are serious shortcomings and gaps. In many cases materials imported from the source countries have to be used that are not suitably adapted to the educational context of ethnic minority children in Dutch schools or in Dutch society at large. For Turkish and Moroccan–Arabic, some initiatives were recently taken to improve the conditions for EMLI. The ARTUBO project (*Arabisch en Turks in het Basisonder-*

wijs) aims at developing new learning materials with governmental financial support.

Need for Better Research Data and Policy Guidelines

What chances of survival Frisian and EMLS have over time, when one takes into account the different conditions outlined in the former section, is hard to predict. Additional factors will have an influence on processes of language maintenance, shift or loss as well (cf. Grosjean, 1982). Moreover, inter- and intra-group variation will show up in language proficiency and language attitudes. There is a serious lack of basic research data on the acquisition, use, shift and loss of minority languages (cf. Weltens *et al.*, 1986). Educational policy with respect to MLI should be based on valid and longitudinal studies of minority language use in the first place.

In classic English-dominant immigration countries like the USA, Canada and Australia census data are collected periodically on home language use. Depending on the quality of the data and the quality of their interpretation, such data can be a rich source of intergenerational studies on language maintenance, shift and loss. The common intergenerational pattern of immigrants' home language proficiency in many countries is as shown in Table 2.

Such processes of language shift and loss have been observed in many 'demolinguistic' studies. In the USA the least home language erosion shows up in the large and cohesive group of Hispanics in the southern states. In Australia this pattern holds especially for the Polish who are strongly attached to their cultural heritage.

There is no such tradition in collecting census data on home language use in the Netherlands. Consequently, no representative statistics are available on home language variation or home language shift over time. The Central Bureau for Statistics (1984, 1985) started to collect interview data on ethnic minority groups (to begin with 1,000 Turkish, 1,000 Moroccan and 1,000 Surinamese/Antillian informants respectively), in the context of the *Leefsituatie-onderzoek Etnische Minderheden*. One interview question (nr. 112) relates directly to home language use. Unfortunately, the question is phrased rather ambiguously: 'what language do you speak here with your housemates?'

Table 2

<i>Generation</i>	<i>Language proficiency</i>
G1	Source-country language dominates target-country language.
G2	Source and target country language are in balance.
G3	Target-country language dominates source-country language.
G4	Monolingualism in target-country language.

No differentiation is made between age groups (e.g. adults towards children or *vice versa*), or between preferred language in different contact situations (what does 'here' refer to, in the perception of interviewer and interviewee?). Moreover, the interviews were conducted by native speakers of Dutch, leading to heavy bias in the resulting data on language use.

There is an urgent need for more sophisticated data on home language use in the Netherlands (cf. Extra & Vallen, 1988 for recent studies on ethnic group languages). Basic research questions are:

- what language varieties are actually spoken as home languages?
- how are these varieties acquired in a Dutch-speaking environment?
- what interactions in terms of code-switching and language transfer occur between home languages and Dutch?
- what processes of language shift and language loss can be observed over time?

Governmental policy in the Netherlands with respect to EMLI should first of all be based on far better empirical data on EML use. Moreover, policy guidelines should be far more straightforward, if bilingual education for ethnic minority children is to be taken as a serious goal. Some inspiration for policy makers could be derived from Swedish legislation on EMLI and from Dutch legislation on Frisian. Local school boards and inspection teams might consider the following affirmative guidelines for bilingual education (cf. also Extra, 1986):

- (1) The school board should provide EMLI and special instruction in Dutch as a second language (DSL).
- (2) The school board should make yearly announcements of the existence and importance of both types of instruction. This information should be disseminated in oral and written form (both in Dutch and in ethnic group languages) among all relevant target groups within the school board's recruitment area.
- (3) Children who speak an EML as home language should be entitled to a sophisticated diagnosis of their level of proficiency in both EML and DSL. The inspection team should be responsible for the opportunity and quality of such a bilingual diagnosis.
- (4) On the basis of quantitative and qualitative needs, the school board should define the contours of a coherent educational programme for ethnic minority children.
- (5) The inspection team should make sure that the various parts of the programme are carried out by qualified and interactive teachers.
- (6) Schools with EML and DSL programmes should be eligible for extra facilities on the basis of quantitative and qualitative needs.
- (7) Exemption from the obligation to offer special EML and DSL programmes should only be given by the inspection team
 - (a) after evident lack of interest in EMLI;
 - (b) after evident lack of need for DSLI.

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