

Intercultural competence: a major challenge for Europe

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Scales of inequality

Conflicts and contradictions in language education policy

Piet Van Avermaet



Education in Flanders

- ❑ Tracked education system: general, technical, vocational
- ❑ Increasing linguistic diversity
- ❑ Persistent socio-ethnic segregation and inequality in urban school system
International surveys (e.g. PISA): high ranking, BUT achievement gap between high and low SES; immigrant and non-immigrant; Dutch speaking and non-Dutch speaking

Education in Flanders

- ❑ Multilingualism as official policy, BUT only for high status languages
- ❑ Disadvantaged position of low-status linguistic minorities
- ❑ Use of L1 seen as main explanatory factor for academic failure
- ❑ Restrictive school policies: L1's are not welcomed in schools

Language varieties scaled down in school spaces

- ❑ ML seen as a problem, a deficit, “no language”
- ❑ At school often only the SV of the dominant language is allowed to be used (school regulations, punishments, ...)
- ❑ ML promoted as an asset in Europe versus ML of immigrants as a ‘handicap’, a disadvantage
- ❑ FLL contributes to cognitive development versus ‘home language’ as an obstacle for cognitive development

Language ideology and hierarchical power relations

- ❑ Language ideologies are socially situated and tied to questions of identity and power in societies. Ideologies of language are rarely about language alone (Woolard, 1998).
 - Socio-political situation in Flanders (process of sub state nation building, transition to super diverse society)
- ❑ Language education policy in Flanders based on monolingual ideologies, implemented by schools (principals & teachers) through mission statements, curricula, language tests, ... (Shohamy, 2006).
- ❑ Dynamic interaction between policies and teachers' beliefs and perceptions

Research question

- ❏ To what extent do teachers in SE adhere to the monolingual policies currently implemented in the Flemish education system?
 - What are their language beliefs?
 - What is the relationship between school characteristics and teachers' monolingual beliefs?
 - What is the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their self-efficacy and trust in pupils?

Methodology

☐ Survey

- 674 teachers, in 48 Flemish schools
- Monolingual beliefs (8 item scale, $\alpha = 0.82$)
- Standardized scales for trust (10 items, Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999) and Efficacy (12 items, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001)

☐ In-depth interviews

- 6 teachers in 2 urban secondary schools (+ 2 group discussions with pupils)

Survey findings: monolingual beliefs

Assertion	% (compl) agree.
1. Non-Dutch speaking pupils should not be allowed to speak their home language at school.	77.3%
2. The most important cause of academic failure of non-Dutch speaking pupils is their insufficient proficiency in Dutch.	78.2%
3. The school library (classroom library, media library) should also include books in the different home languages of the pupils.	12.8%
4. Non-Dutch speaking pupils should be offered the opportunity to learn their home language at school.	6.8%
5. By speaking their home language at school, non-Dutch speaking pupils do not learn Dutch sufficiently.	72.1%
6. Non-Dutch speaking pupils should be offered regular subjects in their home language.	3.2%
7. It is more important that non-Dutch speaking pupils obtain a high level of proficiency in Dutch than in their home language.	44.7%
8. It is in the interest of the pupils that they are punished for speaking their home language at school.	29.1%

Survey findings

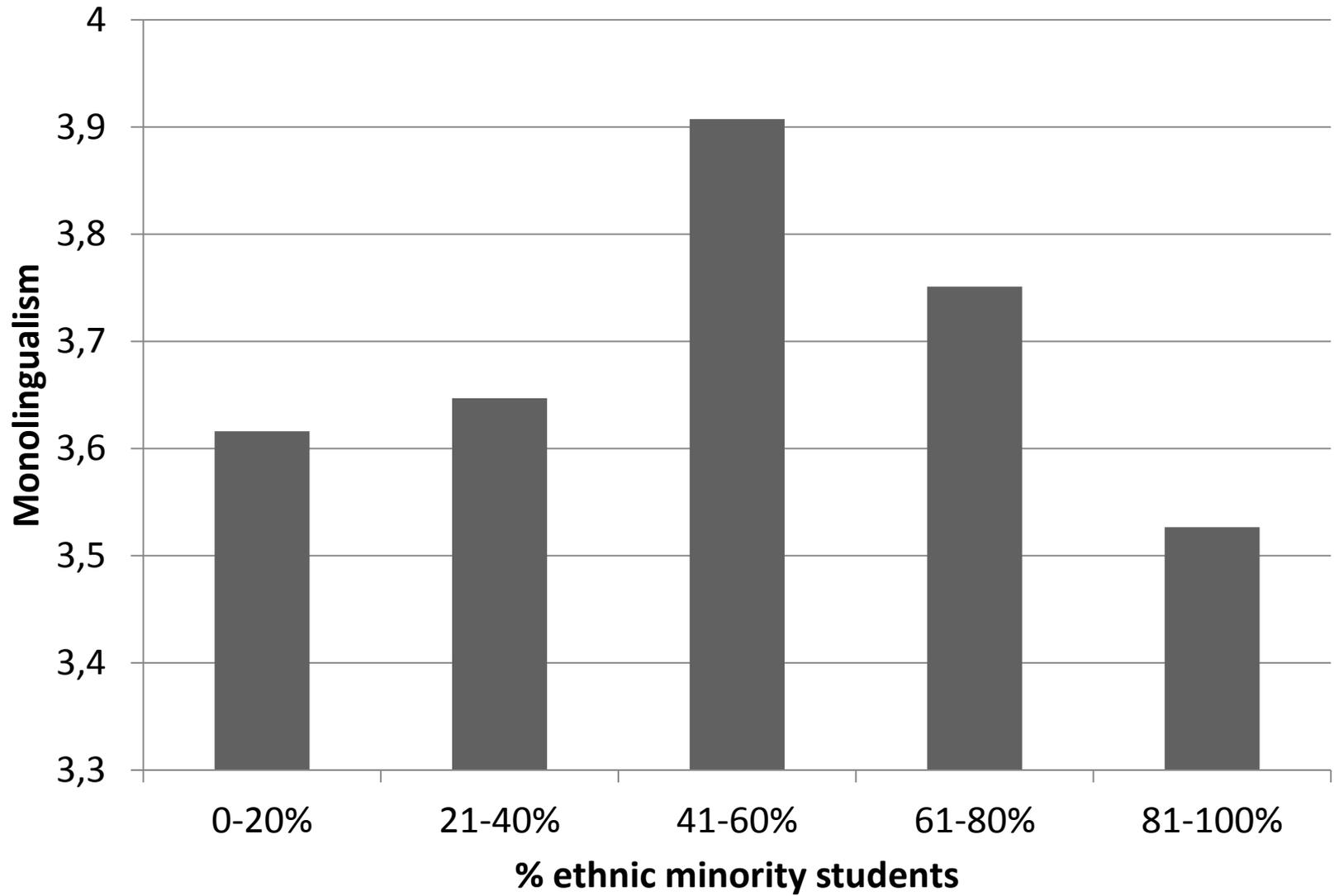
Determinants at school and teacher level

☐ Teacher level:

- Almost no significant effects (track, age, subject)
- Little effect of gender
 - Female teachers less supportive of monolingualism

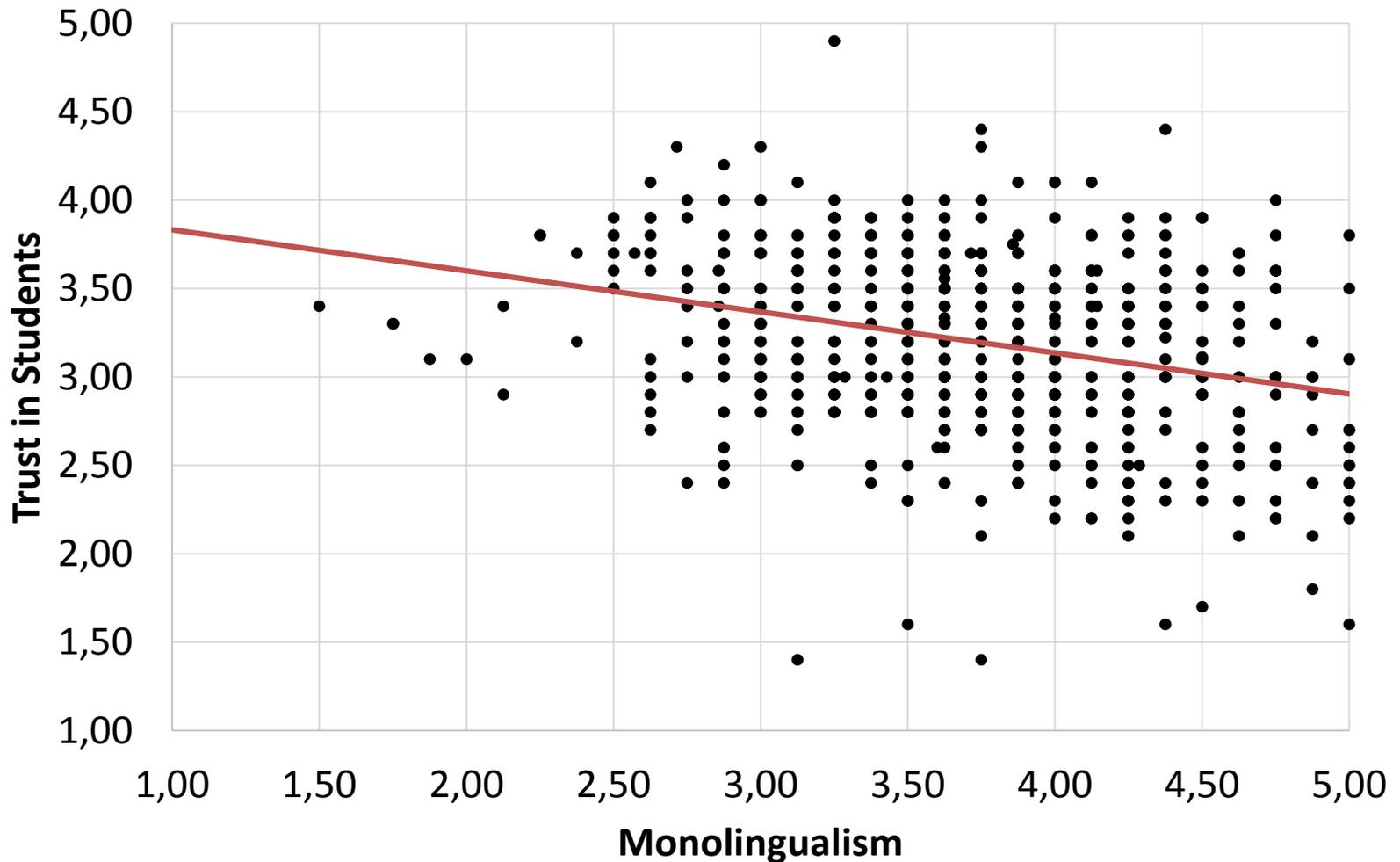
☐ School level:

- No difference between state and private schools
- Effect of ethnic composition of school



Survey findings

Consequences of monolingualism



Findings: in-depth interviews

school 1: urban school in Flanders (50-70%)

- Teacher beliefs are mainly monolingual
 - *“The language of communication at school is Dutch, in the hallway and in the classroom. On the one hand you have the rules and on the other the implication of these rules. Well, I don’t allow it in the classroom when it happens”*
- However, doubts about the effectiveness of the current monolingual policy at school can be observed
 - We are failing short. It’s hard to describe. The language policy is often aimed at remedial teaching, after an evaluation, after a failed test. At that moment, pupils can be advised to take remedial classes, teachers provide extra materials. That is all available. But, thinking about our pupils, they need continuous remediation and support.

Findings: in-depth interviews school 1

- ❑ Deficiency paradigm: Problem of ineffectiveness of the monolingual policy is perceived as a problem of the pupils (not taking up the opportunities provided by the school) and their social environment (peers, parents) who stick to their L1 (see also current Debate in Flanders)

–Yet for them (the pupils), often it is too much. The more support – extra exercises, extra classes, reading suggestions – we offer them, the more they say they don't need it. They are just not open to it. They don't see the problem.

–As soon as they go home – the mother speaks Turkish, the father speaks Turkish. I think, by now we must be at the third generation and yet, they continue to speak that foreign language at home. And that is not an enrichment at all.

Findings: in-depth interviews school 1

- ❏ However, few indications can be found that not only the effectiveness of the monolingual policy is questioned but the policy itself.
 - For example, I don't have a problem with two Turkish pupils sitting next to each other and explaining things in Turkish one to the other.
 - If pupils are in the playground and they speak Turkish, of course. Before in Flanders, you were punished for speaking Dutch (dialects) at school. We don't want to go back to this. They need to relax. If they can express themselves during recreation in Turkish – why not?

Findings: in-depth interviews

school 2: metropolitan context (+70%)

- ☐ Teacher beliefs were monolingual
 - I always said I was against pupils speaking their home language at school. Now I am starting to have doubts about this.
- ☐ Due to changing inter-subjective relationships teacher – pupils, these beliefs tend to change
 - My pupils are tired of always being treated in a negative way. They are always told, try to imagine this: ‘Stop speaking French, stop that!’ And that is their mother tongue! If you hear this all day long, you feel negative about yourself. And when you are 14 or 15 years old, you need positive messages to be willing to work hard. Sometimes I think, if we give them a more positive feeling, they would be more willing to embrace Dutch.

Findings: in-depth interviews school 2

- 📄 Also extra muros experiences seem to change teacher's monolingual beliefs
 - A few weeks ago, we went to Paris. This was mainly for the French class. So we told the pupils they could speak French in Paris. And it was striking how much Dutch was spoken. This surprised me. French-speaking pupils switched to Dutch much easier when I joined them. Because they felt they could (speak French). They felt more relaxed. They felt better about themselves, that they could speak their own language.

Conclusions

Quantitative:

- Confirm how monolingual subnational policy interacts with school policy making.
- Confirm that language varieties are scaled down in school spaces enacted by school agents: monolingual school policy impacts teachers' beliefs and in turn the intersubjective teacher-pupil relations, low trust and expectations.
- Strong adherence to monolingual ideologies => low trust in pupils => lowering teachers' expectations & lowering pupils' beliefs, self esteem, motivation and involvement => low school outcomes
- As a consequence one can argue that the current monolingual education policies might be less effective than assumed by policy makers

Conclusions

☐ Qualitative

- Confirm the survey findings:
 - Monolingual beliefs from the survey were echoed in the teacher interviews and clearly impact intersubjective relations teacher-pupil;
- Voices of uncertainty:
 - School 1: experience more and more ineffectiveness of the current monolingual school policies but do not yet see opportunities for change;
 - School 2: based on powerful extra muros ML experience and open teacher-pupil interaction, this school plans to actively change their monolingual school policy
 - An example of how, slowly, bottom up and based on constructive intersubjective teacher-pupil relationships monolingual school policies can be contested and reconstructed

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Thank you!

piet.vanavermaet@ugent.be



- ❏ vb. van andere ervaring met IIn: willen zoeken naar alternatieven. Zij hebben in een andere context (when in Paris) de kracht van de MT competenties van hun leerlingen ervaren en vastgesteld dat die IIn dan wel spontaan voor intralln interactie kiezen voor het nederlands (juist omdat er geen druk van straf is)

Findings: in-depth interviews school 2

- ❑ Paris was context where languages (Dutch and French) had opposite status as in school: teachers experience:
 - ❑ changing power relations
 - ❑ Pupils' multiple identities (
 - ❑ how the pupils functionally exploit their ML competencies in Paris
 - ❑ Dealing with ML repertoires of pupils in a positive way ...