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Guus Extra and Ton Vallen

The Sociolinguistic Status of Immigrant Minority Groups in the Netherlands

1. Introduction

The great variety of indigenous and immigrant languages used by the inhabitants of the Netherlands has been a striking characteristic of Dutch society for a long time. As a consequence of recent international processes of migration and minorization – which have resulted in the introduction of a large number of 'new' languages into Dutch society – but also as a result of changes in the indigenous Dutch language situation and of linguistic changes in the wake of the developing European Union, the traditional pattern of multilingualism and language contact in the Netherlands has become much more dynamic and diversified than in the past. These developments have had a strong societal impact and have consequently led to substantial political attention during the last decades. For most indigenous and immigrant minority groups, language is a core value of ethnocultural identity which may come into conflict with the language use and the opinions about language issues of the majority population. Education is one of the most important domains where language diversity, language conflict, and diverging language attitudes become manifest.

After a description of demographic trends of immigration and minorization processes in Dutch society and education, this review deals with recent reactions in Dutch policy, research and practice on the changes in the multilingual composition and linguistic diversification of Dutch society. Within that framework, special attention will be paid to the field of compulsory education of ethnic minority (henceforward EM) children, both in terms of instruction in Dutch as a second language and home language instruction.

2. Demographic trends in society and education

As in other industrialized Western European countries, the number of immigrants in the Netherlands at any time is strongly correlated with the country's relative cultural and economic prosperity (cf. Lucassen & Penninx 1985 for an historical overview). It is not easy to give a complete and reliable overview of the actual sizes of the many different immigrant minority groups in the Netherlands and to present a description of relevant longitudinal trends. As in all other Western European countries, a tradition of all-population censuses with respect to self-categorisation or home language use is lacking, whereas the traditional criteria of nationality and country of birth are suffering from increasing erosion over time, owing to naturalization and births in the country of residence. In addition, what is typical of the Netherlands as compared with neighbouring countries like

Germany and Belgium, is that specific immigrant groups have had the Dutch nationality since birth. These include all Antilleans (> 90,000) and most of the Surinamese (> 260,000) who came to the Netherlands in the last few decades from former Dutch colonies in the Caribbean, and the so-called 'repatriates' from the former Dutch East Indies (the present Republic of Indonesia; > 280,000), who arrived in the Netherlands after Indonesia's independence. Bearing in mind the biased character of all available nationality statistics, some longitudinal trends in the size and growth of indigenous and non-indigenous population groups during the last decade can nevertheless be derived from recent data published by the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS 1995). In the period 1985-1994 about 25 % of the increase in the population of the Netherlands (890,000) was from immigrants, though they constitute less than 5% of the total population (> 15.5 million). Within the immigrant population, the strongest proportional growth stems from the Turkish. Moroccan, Surinamese, and (former) Yugoslav communities, and from people belonging to the CBS category 'other non-European countries' (mainly refugees). The latter group and the Turks and Moroccans also show the most substantial increase in terms of absolute figures.

The Dutch Ministry of the Interior has attempted to reduce the increasing erosion of statistics on EM groups by proposing a different set of criteria in all municipal population statistics. Parliamentary support was ultimately given for a try-out and gradual introduction of a so-called combined birth-country criterion (birth-country of person, and/or father and/or mother). Obviously, this criterion only suffices for first and second generation groups and it will therefore become increasingly difficult to identify EM groups over time. Statistics to which this criterion has been applied are presented in Table 1 and date from 1992.

In addition to the information given in Table 1, it should be noted that from the more than 197,000 requests for asylum, about 57,000 were granted in the period 1985–1994 (CBS 1995). Estimates of the number of illegal residents in the Netherlands vary between 50,000 and 150,000. Table 1 shows significant differences resulting from the application of different identification criteria. On the basis of the nationality criterion, it appears that less than 5 % of the population have a non-Dutch passport, whereas the combined birth-country criterion in Table 1 shows a proportion of citizens of foreign origin of more than 15 %. Compared with the nationality criterion, the combined birth-country criterion also leads to a remarkable fall and rise in the number of indigenous and non-indigenous inhabitants of the Netherlands respectively. The latter especially holds for those immigrant groups who have had Dutch nationality since birth.

Not all the groups or all the members of the groups listed in Table 1 have been targeted by Dutch policy since the *Minderhedennota* (Policy Plan on Minorities) of the Ministry of the Interior (1983). The recognized target groups are:

- inhabitants of the Netherlands who are of Moluccan, Surinamese, or Antillean origin;
- foreign workers, their families and descendants originating from one of the eight Mediterranean countries with which bilateral labour contracts were concluded in the past (i.e., Portugal, Spain, Italy, former Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Tunisia, and Morocco);
- political refugees;
- caravan dwellers and gypsies.

Table 1: Population of the Netherlands based on different identification criteria (BCPMF = combination of birth-country person, mother and father; NAT = nationality; BCP = birth-country person; BCM = birth-country mother; BCF = birth-country father) on January 1, 1992 (source Martens, Roijen & Veenman 1994)

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Groups	Absolute figures		Index (column 1 = 100)			
	BCPMF	NAT	ВСР	всм	BCF	
Dutch	12,764,767	113	108	104	105	
Turks	240,810	89	66	96	99	
Moroccans	195,536	84	67	95	99	
Surinamese	262,839	8	65	87	86	
Antilleans	90,650	_	71	69	63	
Greeks	10,369	50	59	62	84	
Italians	32,818	52	46	51	88	
Former Yugoslavs	27,117	56	63 .	86	82	
Portuguese	12,587	69	· 68	81	88	
Spaniards	29,046	58	61	75	81	
Cape Verdians	14,330	19	65	99	96	
Tunisians	5,631	46	56	66	94	
Chinese	39,762	17	61	91	97	
Vietnamese	10,435	46	83	99	96	
Other groups	1,392,435	18	47	69	58	
Total non-Dutch	2,364,383	31	54	71	77	
Total Netherlands	15,129,150	100	100	100	100	

It is a striking phenomenon that the government merely lists population groups in terms of target groups for the allocation of public funding and specific facilities rather than defining the concept of EM groups or explaining why certain groups are targeted and others are not. In practice, the identification of target groups for the allocation of public funding shows a strong correlation with the policy issue or even the policy maker concerned. As a result, there may be remarkable funding differences at the national level between and even within ministries. To give an illustration of the latter, the Ministry of Education has made special school facilities available for second language instruction and home language instruction; those EM children who are entitled to the former type of education do not qualify, by definition, for the latter.

The demographic changes in Dutch society presented before have had important consequences for the ethnic composition of schools and for a wide range of specific arrangements and innovations in educational practice. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Education has not yet been able to provide consistent and valid figures about the number of EM pupils participating in compulsory (primary and secondary) education. For instance, the (rough) governmental figures reported in CBS (1995) are based on the nationality criterion and lead to lower proportions of EM children in primary education than the figures

presented in the most recent statistics (CBS 1996), in which the birth-country criterion has been applied. From the latter figures (which are related to the school year 1995/96) it emerges that 13 % of the pupils in primary school come from abroad. On the basis of the same criterion, it appears that in the same school year, on the national level, 77 % of Dutch primary schools were attended by EM children. In 50 % of these schools their proportion is less than 10 %, in 16 % it is 10 %-30 %, and in 5 % and 6 % of the schools it is 30 %-50 % and higher than 50 % respectively. In the four largest Dutch cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht), however, these figures are strikingly different: the percentage of schools attended by children from another country of origin is 93 % or higher and the proportions of schools in these cities where more than 50 % of the children are of non-Dutch origin are 57 %, 49 %, 37 % and 33 % respectively. At present more than 50 % of the first-year intake into primary education in the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague consists of EM children, which is comparable with other large Western European cities (Kroon & Vallen 1994).

With respect to secondary education, only figures based on the nationality criterion are available. In the period 1988/89-1994/95 the absolute number of children of non-Dutch nationality in secondary education increased by more than 50%, whereas in the same period the number of native Dutch pupils decreased by 12 %. This has caused a proportional rise from 4% to 7% of pupils of non-Dutch nationality in secondary schools in that period. With respect to the distribution of non-Dutch pupils among the different types of secondary education it can be observed that the widespread Western European phenomenon of an underrepresentation of non-indigenous students in higher types of secondary education and an overrepresentation in the lower types also holds for the Netherlands. In the school year 1994/95, for instance, 42 % of the non-Dutch and 67 % of the native Dutch students participated in General Secondary Education, whereas the proportions for Lower Vocational Education were 58 % and 33 % respectively (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken 'Home Office' 1995). Recent evaluative research by Mulder (1996) has demonstrated that the distributional figures and the educational success of non-Dutch students have improved slightly during the last decade. This is not due to the government's ambitious Educational Priority Policy, but is mainly a consequence of the growing number of non-Dutch students who start their secondary school career on the basis of previous Dutch elementary schooling.

Both nationality and birth-country based figures show an underestimation of the actual presence of EM children in education. From the figures presented before it can, for instance, be derived that on the basis of the combined birth-country criterion the proportion of EM children in compulsory education (for all children between 5 and 17) and the percentages of schools attented by these children will increase substantially. When the criterion of home language use is applied, which probably is the most relevant in view of specific educational arrangements and measurements, the proportional increase will even be more (cf. Broeder & Extra 1995).

The great linguistic diversity in the Netherlands combined with the fact that native and non-native Dutch citizens are living in the same areas and parts of Dutch cities, leads to the inevitable conclusion that it is necessary to develop programmes which take into account the language diversity in present day Dutch classrooms. On the other hand, it

will be clear that the mosaic classroom situation makes it very difficult to initiate forms of bilingual education. Probably for that reason the number of 'pure' bilingual initiatives and experiments is very limited in the Netherlands. At present there are about three dozens of Dutch schools which try to realise some form of systematic bilingual education (in most cases focusing on Dutch/Turkish, Dutch/Arabic or Dutch/Frisian) during the first years of elementary education. Most of these schools cooperate within the Dutch Association of Bilingual Schools, which was founded in 1991 (VTSN 1995).

3. Dutch as a second language in education

Learning Dutch as a second language (henceforward DSL) is commonly interpreted in terms of learning standard Dutch in an educational context. This makes sense, because standard Dutch has the highest social prestige, the largest number of speakers and the most oral and written public functions in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, about 25 % of native Dutch parents with children at primary school age say that at home and in other informal settings they speak another indigenous language (Frisian) or a Dutch or Lower Saxon dialect which is different from standard Dutch (Jungbluth et al. 1996). The highest dialect figures are found in the Province of Limburg (36 %), whereas Frisian is spoken at home by 46 % of the inhabitants of the Province of Friesland (Boves & Vousten 1996).

Immigrant minority groups have to cope with a complex language learning task from their first day of arrival in the Netherlands. Apart from, if they so wish, maintaining their home languages, they are confronted with the learning of standard Dutch in view of their societal and educational perspectives and with the need to have some command of the other indigenous language varieties in their region of residence for informal everyday communication. According to Boves & Vousten (1996), at present about 20% of the Surinamese mothers with children at primary school age say that they speak a Dutch dialect (or Frisian) with their children at home. For Moroccan and Turkish mothers, the figures are about 18% and 19% respectively.

As far as research on DSL is concerned, we restrict ourselves to the most important results of recent studies carried out in the context of compulsory education. Appel (1986), Extra & Vallen (1988; 1993) and Klatter-Folmer (1996) also report about previous work. Information about DSL policy and results of other research and innovation in secondary education are presented in Spliethoff (1996). The available evidence indicates that EM children enter Dutch primary schools with a highly variable proficiency in L1 and L2. Verhoeven et al. (1990) report that in the first three years of primary education (age 4–7) Turkish and Moroccan children have a higher proficiency in L1 (Turkish and Moroccan Arabic respectively) than in Dutch (L2) at a variety of linguistic levels, whereas Antillean children have a more balanced level in Papiamentu and Dutch (detailed information about the latter group is given in Narain 1995). These findings are in line with Boogaard et al. (1990), who also found a lower L2 level for 6-year-old EM children belonging to several minority groups. In these studies, large group differences were evidenced in productive and receptive vocabulary, both in L1 and L2. Lexical, syntactic, and textual abilities in L2 Dutch develop faster and there is greater progress after some time than there

is in L1. Nevertheless, the lexical and textual skills in L2 Dutch remain substantially lower than those of native Dutch pupils, which inevitably leads to comprehension problems in school subjects other than Dutch language lessons. For an operationalization of school language skills of EM children in the context of primary education we refer to De Haan (1994). On the basis of the results of a number of studies on L2 vocabulary development (Appel & Vermeer 1994; 1996), new vocabulary training programmes and diagnostic tests have been developed. Verhoeven & Vermeer (1989; 1996) found evidence that Turkish and Moroccan primary-school pupils lag more than two years behind their native Dutch schoolmates as far as Dutch language proficiency is concerned. The effectiveness of instructing EM children in primary education is in many cases reduced because teacher explanations in Dutch are not sufficiently modified.

Kerkhoff (1988), Hacquebord (1989), Uiterwijk (1994), and Klatter-Folmer (1996) carried out studies on L2 development and L2 proficiency among older EM children. Kerkhoff focused on 11 to 14-year-old Dutch and EM children in grades 5-6 of primary education and reported lower Dutch scores for Turkish and Moroccan children on cloze, editing, and vocabulary tests. Hacquebord studied Dutch text comprehension development of Turkish and Dutch youngsters in the first 3 years of two different types of secondary schooling. The Turkish pupils had relatively low scores on the local level of text comprehension (vocabulary comprehension and grammar), but they made successful use of 'compensatory' strategies at the general text comprehension level. The latter was also found by Uiterwijk (1994) in his research on the Final Primary School Tests of the National Institute for Test Development, which are administered annually to more than 100,000 children. His research, which focused on test and item bias, shows that various groups of EM children had lower scores on Dutch language proficiency than native Dutch pupils; Turkish and Moroccan children had the lowest scores. Klatter-Folmer (1996) studied the educational status and achievement of Turkish children in the last years of primary education and the first years of secondary school. Her in-depth study focused primarily on the role of socio-cultural orientation, bilingual proficiency, and educational characteristics in view of the educational success of these children. With respect to the L2 tests administered, she found results that were comparable to those reported by the researchers mentioned above, but gave other explanations for the test score differences found within the Turkish group (see below). Kerkhoff, Uiterwijk, and Klatter-Folmer have also demonstrated that the L2 test scores of EM children are strongly influenced by the cultural content dimensions of the texts and items used in tests. In a recent study by Hajer (1996), which was carried out in secondary education, it was not L2 proficiency as such that was the primary object of research, but the role of L2 in subjects like biology and mathematics. Hajer studied the interaction between teachers and pupils in these lessons in great detail and found that in many cases the teachers did not use opportunities for stimulating conceptual and L2 development.

At present, one of the central topics of DSL in education is the question whether specific or additional L2 instruction is more or less effective for EM children than a well structured and integrated Dutch language instruction programme for all children. Obviously, completely integrated Dutch language instruction is impossible for immigrant children who have only recently arrived. The results of most of the research mentioned

above indicate that integrated Dutch language instruction will certainly fail without substantial content-oriented, didactic, and organisational changes in classrooms (cf. Kroon & Vallen 1996 for an overview).

With respect to the improvement of educational results of EM children, it is important to concentrate on variables which can be manipulated in the context of education or at home. This is, for instance, impossible with respect to factors like SES or migration history; neither the educational system nor individual teachers can manipulate these factors to any significant degree. In our view, language is a crucial factor in this respect, because language (both L1 and L2) is a powerful medium for introducing children to the school system and for improving their school results. Another important factor is the educational aspiration and support of the home environment (Klatter-Folmer 1996). On the basis of her research results and the reports from a new generation of home intervention programmes in the Netherlands, it becomes evident that those programmes which focus on parent-child interaction in order to develop cognitive and language abilities have a positive effect on the educational career of EM children.

4. Home language instruction for ethnic minority children

In contrast to the growing number of studies on DSL, far less empirical research has been done on the status and use of EM languages in the Netherlands. This holds, in particular, for lesser used languages of relatively small communities. De Ruiter (1991) and Extra & Verhoeven (1993) cover a variety of the most widely used EM languages in the Netherlands. As yet, no nationwide data have been collected on the home language use of EM children in Dutch schools. Broeder & Extra (1995) reported on the results of a home language survey amongst almost 35,000 primary-school children in 5 medium-sized Dutch cities and presented data on the language vitality of the 10 most widely mentioned EM languages. In decreasing order of mention, these languages are Turkish, Arabic, Berber, Papiamentu, English, Surinamese/Sranan, Chinese, Malay, Spanish, and Hindi, The study shows that there is strong variation in the vitality of EM languages in the Netherlands. This variation, both between and within different communities, needs further exploration from a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspective. Moreover, reliable data on home language use should be considered prerequisites for answering basic policy questions about home language instruction (henceforward HLI). Periodically collected data amongst school children would provide the basis for a dynamic language policy and for intergenerational trend studies on processes of language maintenance and language shift.

For various reasons, HLI policy is a complex and challenging task for schools in the Netherlands. First of all, given the multicultural and multilingual composition of many elementary schools, this task is not restricted to the implementation of bilingual programmes, but it is extended to arranging multilingual education. Practical experience with and empirical evidence on education in a bilingual context can therefore only be transferred to a limited extent. Secondly, there is wide variation in the type and degree of bilingualism of EM children, both within and across different ethnic groups. Viewed from an intergenerational perspective, these differences show a steady increase over time, with

language dominance patterns tending to shift towards Dutch. Thirdly, embedding HLI for a variety of target groups in the school curriculum is no easy task. Some EM groups receive HLI in addition to the core curriculum, whereas other groups receive it instead of instruction in other subjects in the core curriculum. Finally, the feasibility of HLI is often questioned in cases where there is a relatively small demand because of small-sized and/or widely scattered groups.

Developments in this much-debated domain of Dutch education should be evaluated against the background of a policy perspective on EM children in terms of socio-economic and second-language 'deficits' rather than ethno-cultural differences. In the early seventies, the deficiencies of low SES children in all elementary schools were targeted by the Ministry of Education. Consequently, schools with many low-SES children received funding for additional teaching personnel. While the influx of EM children from low-SES families in Dutch schools increased sharply in the seventies and eighties, the minorities policy became exclusively associated with the struggle to eliminate educational deficiencies at the cost of ethno-cultural differences. In 1992, the CALO report Ceders in de tuin ('Cedars in the garden'), an advisory report for the Dutch Ministry of Education, proposed a reconsideration of current concepts in educational policy on EM children. The CALO report argued for a change in the conceptualisation of HLI from a deficit perspective to a cultural perspective. The perspective chosen has widely different consequences for the target groups, goals, target languages, and evaluation of HLI. These consequences will be addressed successively.

Since 1974, access to HLI in Dutch elementary schools has been granted to the following target groups: children who have at least one parent of Moluccan or Mediterranean origin (the latter originating from one of the eight Mediterranean countries mentioned before) and children of at least one parent with a recognized refugee status. The list is indicative of multiple policy restrictions. Firstly, it is meant to be exhaustive in terms of source countries and/or target groups. Secondly, it is meant as a temporary facility, with a focus on first/second generation children of EM groups. Finally, the list takes a deficit perspective by excluding higher SES groups like the Chinese, and by excluding Antillean and Surinamese children who are more or less fluent speakers of Dutch as a result of the colonial status of Dutch in the respective source countries. Chinese children are explicitly excluded from HLI, because of the government's view that it has not been demonstrated that the Chinese community in the Netherlands has an SES comparable to the Mediterranean target groups (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken 'Home Office' 1983). The CALO (1992) proposal was that both the SES and the generation criterion be disregarded, and HLI be allowed for all children who make use of another language at home, in addition to or instead of Dutch, in contact with at least one of the parents.

The goals of HLI have traditionally been formulated in terms of dependence. In the current policy conception, HLI's main contribution should be to bridge the gap between the home and school environment and to promote second language learning and/or school success. Only rarely has the primacy of intrinsic goals in terms of promoting first language proficiency been advocated. It is interesting to note that such intrinsic goals for HLI at the secondary level have been accepted earlier and more widely. The National Examination Board for Turkish and Arabic at secondary schools defined the target proficiency

level for these languages in great detail. The CALO (1992) argued for the primacy of intrinsic rather than dependent goals in both elementary and secondary schools.

The choice of the target language variety for HLI has in the past led to the problematising of programmes in which the home language of EM children diverges widely from the standard language of the source country. This holds, in particular, for Moroccan children who often speak a Berber variety at home. In cases of home and standard language divergence, the CALO (1992) proposed a conditional right of option for parents of elementary school children and for youngsters at secondary schools, derived from the principles of cultural self-orientation and freedom of choice. At this time, the only groups who are currently receiving non-standard language instruction are Moluccan children (who learn Moluccan Malay instead of standard Indonesian) and Syrian-Orthodox children from Turkey (who may opt for Aramese instead of Turkish).

The evaluation of HLI programmes for EM children suffers from a bias similar to that of many American studies on bilingual education in its focus on HLI effects on L2 learning and/or school achievement in other subjects. In this conception, progress in L1 proficiency is rarely thought of and measured in terms of school success. The empirical evidence for HLI effects on L2 learning and/or school achievement is rather ambiguous (cf. Appel 1984, Teunissen 1986, Driessen 1990) and there are very few empirical studies of HLI effects on L1 proficiency. Aarts, De Ruiter & Verhoeven (1993) reported that Turkish instruction had a positive effect on the Turkish proficiency of Turkish elementary school children in the Netherlands, whereas similar effects of Arabic instruction emerged to a much lesser degree for Moroccan children (cf. Driessen 1990).

Recent educational policy in the Netherlands can be characterized in terms of a growing tendency towards decentralization. Consequently, the responsibilities and tasks of the Ministry of Education, municipalities, and schools are being redistributed in an attempt to strike the right balance. In the context of this decentralization tendency and in reaction to the CALO (1992) report, the Ministry of Education published a policy document (*Uitwerkingsnotitie* 'Implementation paper' 1995) on HLI. The document acknowledged three basic elements:

- the broad support of HLI as expressed by minority parents and minority organizations;
- governmental responsibility for the provision and quality of HLI;
- the relevance of the home language criterion instead of SES or generation criteria for determining a child's entitlement to HLI.

These three elements were taken over from the CALO (1992) report. A new element, however, is the focus on local educational policy. In the view of the Ministry, municipalities should have the responsibility for public information about HLI facilities, for HLI needs assessment, for a selective distribution of the local HLI budget across schools, for interscholastic cooperation on HLI for smaller language groups, and for the role of EM groups as actors rather than just target groups for the implementation of a municipal HLI policy. Finally, schools should retain responsibility for the recruitment and employment of qualified HLI teachers and for the quality of HLI.

Very recently, the Ministry of Education has proposed changing the law regarding the implementation of this policy in elementary education. However, much remains unclear

and uncertain with respect to the newly assigned roles of the Ministry, the municipalities, and the schools. Whereas the roles of the latter two are spelled out in great detail, the responsibilities of the Ministry remain vague. Moreover, serious concern has been expressed about the local budgets that will be made available and about the local expertise and commitment presently available for the implementation of the new law.

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