Contents

• Exploratory study

• Next steps

• Conclusion
Exploratory study – Terminology

• ‘Crossovers’ (McAndrew & Eid 2003; McGlynn et al. 2009): non-native speakers who cross language boundaries in order to attend school
• Canada: identity (Magnan 2010; Pilote 2006) or education (McAndrew 2013)
• Belgium: in particular in the case of Brussels
• Emphasis on own and parental attitudes/motivations (Mettewie 2004, 2007; Van Mensel 2014)
• Babault & Puren (2005): sociolinguistic research, focus on families, border region with France
Exploratory study – Methodology

• Impact of inter-community ‘crossing’ of French-speaking pupils into primary and secondary schools in the Dutch-speaking area of Belgium as a whole: lacuna current debate

• Describing and mapping the increase of Walloon pupils in the Flemish education system

• Data: the Flemish Department of Education and Training (Dataloep)

• Processing data (Excel)

• Mapping quantitatively and geographically (Batchgeo)

• Dedicated website: www.crossoversinbelgium.com
Exploratory study – Early findings

‘CROSSOVERS’ IN THE FLEMISH EDUCATION SYSTEM: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY
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ATTRACTION (2016-2017)

• MACRO:
The percentage of Walloon pupils in Flemish education (primary and secondary) per Flemish province.

• MICRO:
The number of Walloon pupils in Flemish education (primary and secondary) per Flemish municipality (top 10).

MOBILITY (2016-2017)

• MACRO:
The percentage of Walloon ‘crossover’ in Flemish education (primary and secondary) per province.

• MICRO:
The number of Walloon pupils in Flemish education (primary and secondary) per municipality (top 10).

ABSTRACT

Official statistics of the Flemish Department of Education and Training indicate that in the past decade (2008-2017) the number of French-speaking (Walloon) children in Flemish education (primary and secondary) has increased from 3.75% in 2008 to 6.25% in 2017. This type of non-native speakers who have chosen Flemish education is known as a ‘crossover’. In Canadian literature, this phenomenon is called ‘bilingualism’ (Codde & Bortolotto, 2009). The phenomenon has been studied largely by Canadian researchers, focusing on patterns of language shift and its impact on the identity of the Walloon community. However, there is limited research on Walloon children who choose to attend Flemish schools.

This study aims to shed light on the phenomenon of ‘crossover’ in the Flemish education system. The research is expected to reveal patterns and factors that influence this decision, and to provide insights into the experiences of these children. The study is part of a larger research project on the integration of Walloon-speaking children in the Flemish education system.

FURTHER RESEARCH

• SOME OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS:
  - How significant is the size of the crossover group in the Flemish education system?
  - How do socio-economic factors influence the decision to choose a French-speaking school?
  - What are the long-term effects of crossover on the Walloon community?

• HYPOTHESIS:
  - Cross-border children who choose French-speaking schools are more likely to maintain their language profile.
  - Cross-border children who choose French-speaking schools are more likely to have higher academic achievement.

• NEXT STEPS:
  - Further research on the socio-economic background of crossover children.
  - Longitudinal study on the language and identity development of crossover children.

Want to know more about my research? Please contact me or have a look on www.crossoversinbelgium.com
Next steps?

• Exploratory study as an essential starting point
• Popularizing character
• Quantitative and geographical range of the phenomenon
• Focus on the development of my research project
• *Examining linguistic ‘crossing’ of French-speaking learners of Dutch in Belgium: A longitudinal approach to L2 proficiency development*
Next steps – Purpose

• L2 proficiency development can be approached from different perspectives

• Use of chunks: excellent discriminator (Verspoor, Schmid & Xu 2012)

• Multiword units, formulaic sequences, MEU (Westoff 2007; Wray 2002: 9)

• ‘more or less fixed word sequences characteristic of fluent native-like language use’. Smiskova-Gustafsson (2013: 81)

• “Real” chunks >> “Quasi” chunks (Westhoff 2007)
Next steps – Purpose

• **Typology** of *chunks* (Granger & Paquot, 2008: 43-44; Smiskova-Gustafsson 2013: 139-140).

• Referential, textual and communicative

• E.g. *heavy rain; in other words; you’re welcome*

• Characteristic feature of native-like language use, spoken and written (i.a. Wray 2002)

• Processing advantages and social function (Smiskova-Gustafsson 2013: 6)
Next steps – Purpose

Chunks are often a distinguishing factor between native and non-native speakers (Pawley & Syder, 1983), between natural, idiomatic ways of expression and what may be rather awkward-sounding (though grammatically correct) use of language. Native-like chunks not only help L2 learners sound fluent, accurate and authentic, they also have the potential to speed up linguistic development (Eyckmans, Boers, & Stengers, 2007; Pawley & Syder, 1983). Clearly, when tracing the acquisition of L2 in relation to native-like norms, chunks are a highly relevant developmental variable. Smiskova-Gustafsson (2013: 2)
Next steps – Purpose

Main aim:

• Analyze language development, particularly development of *chunks* in French-speaking learners of Dutch who attend Flemish schools;

• Through examining written learner texts;

• Focus on low, intermediate and high proficiency groups;

• And variability within learners.
Next steps – Methodology

• **Longitudinal**
  Frequent measurements; 1st-3rd-5th year of secondary; 2 years

• **Dynamic Systems Theory** (i.a. Verspoor, de Bot & Lowie 2011)
  Examine the variability in individual trajectories
  capture a more detailed developmental process

• **Usage-Based** (i.a. Tomasello 2003)
  Learning of constructions through usage; mapping form onto meaning
  Frequency of forms in input = important factor language learning
Next steps – Data

• Aimed at French-speaking ‘crossovers’ in Flemish secondary schools
• 3 schools (geographically well-balanced)
• n=30
• Different measurements during two years of their secondary school education
• Writing tasks (informal subject: e.g. *holiday*)
• Advantages writing: e.g. more reflection $\rightarrow$ complexity conceptually and linguistically; easier to collect (Smiskova-Gustafsson 2013: 52)
• Sociolinguistic questionnaire in order to interpret background and contextual information
Next steps – Research questions

• Do high-proficient L2 learners use more chunks / chunk types than their low-proficient counterparts?

• When zooming in on one (average) chunk profile of each proficiency level (low-intermediate-high) from a longitudinal and DST perspective, would we discover qualitative differences in the development of these individuals?

• What are the most frequent types of errors produced by learners of Dutch (in a situation of ‘total immersion’) across different proficiency levels?
Conclusions

• Preliminary study: essential starting point
• Further course: L2 proficiency development of French-speaking ‘crossovers’
• Use of chunks
• Longitudinal, dynamic usage-based approach
• L2 writing tasks
• Capture both between-group differences and individual development
References


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