‘Crossovers’ in the Flemish education system:
An exploratory study
Contents

• Language policies in Belgian education systems
• Exploratory study
• Next steps
• Conclusions
Language policies Belgian education (McAndrew, 2013)

• Educational structures in Belgium: ‘the most complex of the cases discussed in this book. The large number of structures, both governmental and educational, is beyond compare’ (McAndrew, 2013: 25)

• **Three economy-based** regions: Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels-Capital Region

• **Three language-based** communities: Dutch, French and German-speaking

• **Two pillars**: secular and religious

• **Four levels** of organizing authority: communities, provinces, municipalities, and civil society associations

• (!) **Brussels region**: FL + WL education systems side-by-side
Language policies Belgian education (Mc Andrew, 2013)

1830 – 1932

• In theory: Wallonia (French) and Flanders (French and Dutch)
• In practice: French remained ‘the dominant language in both [Flemish and Walloon] school systems, which reflected the status of this language with the upper social classes and political elites of the two groups’ (Mc Andrew, 2013: 26)
• The law of 14 July 1932: use of Dutch in primary and secondary schools
• Catholic schools dominated the system and were slow in changing teaching practices → French still privileged position
Language policies Belgian education (Mc Andrew, 2013; Van der Jeught, 2017)

1960s
• The law of 30 July 1963
• Prescribed use of Dutch, French and German as language of instruction
• Based on: constitutional division of the state into four language regions

Today
• Quite unequivocal
• Pupils in Flanders and Wallonia study in Dutch or in French respectively
• (!) French: taught as a subject in Flanders < in Wallonia Dutch (as a foreign language) is often optional
• Another possibility: crossing language boundary to attend school
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 and 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
Mobilité en aantrekkringskracht van basis- en secundair onderwijs

Gemeente woongemeente

Leuven Antwerpen 1
Leuven Arlon 1
Leuven Beersel 1
Leuven Braine-le-Château 1
Leuven Brakel 1
Leuven Charleroi 3
Leuven Duffel 1
Leuven Eupen 1
Leuven Genk 1
Leuven Halle 1
Leuven Herenthout 1
Leuven Kortrijk 1
Leuven Lokeren 1
Leuven Malmedy 1
Leuven Marche-en-Flandre 1
Leuven Meerbeek 1
Leuven Mervent 1
Leuven Namur 1
Leuven Schaerbeek 1
Leuven Stavelot 1
Leuven Tervuren 1
Leuven Tournai 1
Leuven Ukkel 1
Leuven Vilvoorde 1
Leuven Wevelgem 1
Leuven Willebroek 1
Leuven Woluwe-Saint-Lambert 1
Leuven Zaventem 1

Valideer & stel opties in

Wij hebben deze befehlsinstructie gemaakt van jouw gegevens, maar kijk even na of het doet. En als het doet, is het klaar.
ATTRACTION (2016-2017)

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

- MESO:
  The amount of Walloon pupils in Flemish education (primary and secondary), per Flemish hotspot (top 10)

EVOLUTION OF THIS PhD PROJECT (1st year)

- micro:
  The amount of Walloon 'crossovers' in each primary and secondary school in Flanders which hosts this kind of pupil.

Interesting for school authorities: "Where do our Walloon pupils come from?"

Highest amount of 'crossovers' per school according to our data: 282.

FURTHER RESEARCH

- SOME OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS:
  - Can we explain the increase of French-speaking students in Flemish education?
  - How do French-speaking youngsters look back upon (retrospection) a school career in a Flemish context?
  - [One handout for more questions]

- HYPOTHESES:
  - PISA tests illustrate that the Flemish education system scores significantly better than the schooling in Wallonia.
  - Increasing economic importance of Dutch.
  - The poor quality of Dutch classes in Wallonia.

- NEXT STEPS:
  - Starting feedback on project, coming in contact with international researchers in this field, analyzing data 2017-2018 + updating website, interviewing former 'crossovers'.
Next steps?

• **Exploratory study** as an **essential starting point**

• Popularizing character → significant media coverage in Belgium

• Quantitative and geographical range of the phenomenon

• **Now** 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: 126)
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 → 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


References


