Actual Position of, and recent Developments in Frisian Language Planning

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Introduction

• Actual Position of Frisian

• Recent Developments in Frisian Language Policies & Planning

• Challenges for Europe
Frisian in Fryslân (Netherlands)

- Autochthonous minority language
- Western Germanic language
- Spoken in one province (out of 12) in the Netherlands: Fryslân / Friesland
- Fryslân has 640,000 inhabitants
- 55% has Frisian as mother tongue
- School subject and medium of instruction
Frisian language characteristics

- Ik haw west - I have been
- *Ik ben geweest* – *Ich bin gewesen*
- Tsiis – cheese
- *Kaas* - *Käse*
- Tsjerke – church
- *Kerk* – *Kirche*
- Twa skiep – two sheep
Frisian Language Command

- Understand: 94%
- Speak: 74%
- Read: 65%
- Write: 17%
Frisian in practise

• Language of social cohesion:
  - sports
  - health care
  - associations

• Language of (local) cultural affairs:
  - music & theatre playing

• Strong in oral use, but weak in writing

• Attitude: Frisian language and culture belong “to all of us”
Formal Status of Frisian

- Unique minority language in homogeneous linguistic area
- Recognised in the European Charter – part III + 48 undertakings
- Recognised second official language of the Netherlands
- No Language Act as yet, but:
  - Covenant state + province of Fryslân
Status of Frisian in Domains (1)

• Judicial authorities
  - limited use; dictionary
• Public authorities & services:
  - place names & signage (double);
  - oral use, no interpretation
• Media:
  - Radio & Television
  - No daily nor weekly
Status of Frisian in Domains (2)

- Cultural affairs:
  - 1 Professional theatre company
  - > 100 Amateur theatre playing groups
  - choir singing
  - music (classic, pop)
  - Liet International (song contest)
  - poetry & novel writing
  - children’s literature
Status of Frisian in Domains (3)

• Economic life:
  - informal and oral use mainly
  - few marketing activities / commercials

• Social life:
  - informal and oral use mainly, but awareness in:
    - health care services
    - social security services
Frisian in Education

- Pre-school (2.5 – 4 year):
  > 100 Frisian medium & bilingual provisions

- Primary school (4-12 year):
  Frisian obligatory subject (1 hour/week)
  > 100 schools: medium of instruction
  > 43 trilingual schools: integrated Dutch, Frisian & English
Trilingual education in Fryslân

• Model used (with flexibility):
  - Grade 1-6: 50 % Frisian, 50 % Dutch
  - Grade 7-8: 40 % Frisian, 40 % Dutch, 20% English

• Systematic use of Frisian, Dutch and English as a medium of instruction

• Conciously separated use of languages: person / time / themes
Trilingual education in Fryslân

- Expected (& proved) results:
  - Good quality of Frisian
  - Results of Dutch at the same level at the end of grade 8 as all other pupils
  - Results for English slightly better
  - Self consciousness in English better, but not significantly
Trilingual education in Fryslân

• Developments:
  2012 > 50 primary schools (= 10%)

• Continuity to secondary education:
  2012: 3 pilot schools with the concept of multilingual clil (= medium of instruction)

• Teacher training:
  2011: Trilingual stream
  2011: Minor (30 ECTS)
Frisian in Education

- Secondary education:
  1st grade: obligatory subject (1 hr/week)
  optional exam subject (few candidates)

- Vocational training:
  few modules for practitioners
Frisian in Education

• Development from transitional bilingualism > “full bilingualism, biliteracy” (Fishman)

• Results:
  awareness and language attitude
  equal command Dutch
  much better command Frisian
  self confidence in English
EU Parliament Resolutions

• 1981 Arfé > EBLUL 1982 – 2006; province of Fryslân active partner always
• 1983 Vandenmeulenchoecke (EFA-member) > earmarked budget € 1,2 million
• 1987 Kuijpers > Mercator project (1987-2006) 3 partners; >
• Mercator Network (2009-2011) 5 partners, lead: Mercator Ljouwert / Leeuwarden
Education

- 1985 Conference on pre-school provisions
  - 1989 Frisian medium pre-school
  - 2010: 100 provisions with certification

- 1995 EU policy on M + 2 > 2 M + 2
  - trilingual primary school project
  - 2010: 30 schools with certification

- Ambition: Trilingual stream at secondary education and teacher training
Culture

• 2001 European Year of Languages
  > Frisian poem “Bitterswiet” translated into 82 languages; permanent attention at the radio broadcasting of Omrop Fryslân

• 1990 Frisian Song Contest “Liet”
  > Liet International for European regional and minority languages as from 2002: Ljouwert – Östersund – Luleå – Inverness
Council of Europe

• European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1998) &

• European Charter stimulated:
  - new spirit and the holistic approach of Frisian language policy;
  - active and continuous dialogue between national government and regional authorities;
  - debate on minimum standards.
EU language policy

Challenges for 2014-2017

• EU > treaty party of the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages
• Development of Common European Standards for RMLs treatment in the EU
• Development of common implementation strategies: From Act to Action
EU Programmes Challenges for 2014-2017

- Teacher Training & Quality
- Language Command > Testing / PISA & Eurobarometer
- Master’s Programme on Multilingualism & Language Planning
- More flexibility in project planning
Europe and Fryslân

• Fitting in EU policy towards:
  - linguistic diversity
  - mother tongue + 2 more languages
• Frisian as a good example in Europe:
  - multilingualism of the individual citizen and of the society
• Pupils feel at ease:
  at home, at school, in society, in Europe