

Do you speak your modersmål?

*How the organization of mother tongue instruction in
Malmö can be translated to education in Utrecht*

*Grandmothers and Grandfathers
Thank you for our language
that you have saved for us.
It is now our turn to save it
for the ones who are not yet born.*

May that be the truth.

Imelda Perley, Moon of the whirling wind, 1994

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Preface

It was 25 September 2015. I attended the fourth *Drongo Festival* in Utrecht, an annual two-days event about language, linguistics and bilingualism. The key note lecture I attended was titled *One country, many languages* and was given by the South-African professor Mamokgethi Phakeng. This was my first introduction to the concept of mother tongue instruction and I was astonished by the complexity and simultaneous simplicity of the matter and the sudden curiosity I felt. This curiosity only grew when Ellen-Rose Kambel, the founder of the Rutu Foundation (an organization that strives for the development and acceptance of mother tongue education), gave a guest lecture during one of my Master's courses on 20 October 2015. The self-evidence with which she spoke about mother tongue instruction and all the benefits inspired me and many others in the room. These two women laid the foundations for my enthusiasm about this, which from then on only expanded.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thankfulness to a few people, without whom I would not have been able to write this thesis. First of all, I would like to thank Jacomine Nortier, who triggered me during her course *Dutch as a second language*, for your supervision, feedback and inspiration, and our conversations about classical music. Hans Sakkers, for your supervision during my internship at the Municipality of Utrecht. Pia Håland Anveden, employee of the Språkcentralen, for arranging the interviews and appointments for my study visit to Malmö. The Språkcentralen in general, for having me and making me feel so welcome. All interviewees, for clearing their schedule to meet me and for their willingness to share their experiences and thoughts. Erik and Henriëtte, for providing the objective helicopter view. Kim, for the duo study sessions, which so often gave me new insights and boosted my confidence. And last, but definitely not least, Thijs, for your listening, for embracing your role as punching bag when I needed it, for knowing when to let me flutter around and when to bring back my peace, but most of all for your support and your faith in me.

Abstract

For children with a mother tongue other than the official language of the country they live in, it is important to maintain their mother tongue. In many countries, there are no programs (anymore) that respond to this necessity. One of the countries in which children have the right to be educated in their mother tongue is Sweden, where mother tongue instruction (MTI) is decentralized to the municipalities. In the Netherlands, neither the national nor the local government organize these programs. Scientific evidence shows that maintaining the mother tongue has cognitive, emotional, cultural and social benefits, and that it can improve overall school performances.

This study investigates whether aspects of the organization in Sweden can be implemented in the Netherlands. Since the Swedish system is decentralized, the study focuses on two municipalities, Malmö and Utrecht, rather than on Sweden and the Netherlands. The research question is *What can Utrecht learn from Malmö about their system of mother tongue instruction?* To answer the research question, interviews were held in Malmö with people involved in the organization of MTI.

Some components of Malmö's organization can be adopted without further concern: politicians need to be informed about and by the scientific field; the organization should be in close contact with the municipality; knowledge of the practical field and the drive for improvement and innovation contribute to the success of the system. Other practices need some adjustment to fit in well into the Utrecht situation: the establishment of a curriculum; the inclusion of MTI in existing programs that focus on fighting language delays; how to train less-experienced schools in educating newcomers; and how information gathered in newcomers' intakes can enrich the current procedure.

Definitions of concepts

<i>children with a foreign background</i>	children who are “born outside of Sweden by foreign parents or whose parents were both born abroad (but the student himself born in Sweden) (Skolverket, 2004)
<i>newcomers</i>	people who immigrated less than four years ago
<i>Skolverket</i>	The Swedish National Agency for Education
<i>semi-lingualism</i>	when a person has less command of all languages compared to peers
<i>balanced bilingualism</i>	when a person has peer-like command of all languages
<i>additive bilingualism</i>	a newly acquired language does not cause other languages to decrease
<i>subtractive bilingualism</i>	a newly acquired language suppresses the other languages
<i>language loss</i>	losing the ability to speak a language
<i>BICS</i>	basic interpersonal communication skills
<i>CALP</i>	cognitive academic language proficiency
<i>mother tongue/home language</i>	someone’s firstly acquired language
<i>transitional bi- and multilingual programs</i>	programs in which the language of instruction is replaced by another language after several years
<i>maintenance bi- and multilingual programs</i>	programs in which a second language is added to the language of instruction after several years
<i>enrichment programs</i>	programs of which the outcome is additive bilingualism

1. Introduction

A German teacher once said: The process of learning foreign languages can be depicted like a house. The house contains no windows, so when you enter the house, it is all dark. Every time you learn a new language, a new window pops up and brings more light into the house. The front door is your mother tongue. The width of that door represents your command of your mother tongue, thus how well you are able to enter the house, and therefore your ability to learn new languages (P. Gervalla (employee of the Språkcentralen), personal communication, 14 October 2016).

This anecdote introduces the importance of a well-developed mother tongue. It forms the basis for development and acquisition, as will be explained in section 2. In Sweden, children with a mother tongue other than Swedish can follow Mother Tongue Instruction (MTI), Study Guidance in the mother tongue and Swedish as a second language (SSL). MTI includes group lessons in and about the shared mother tongue, which are commonly held outside school hours. Study Guidance is individual tuition during school hours for children who experience difficulties with a particular school subject (Reath Warren, 2013, p. 95).

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the organization of MTI and Study Guidance in the Swedish city of Malmö. These findings are adjusted to the situation of the Dutch city of Utrecht. The choice for these two cities will be elaborated on in the last paragraph of section 2. SSL is a school subject and does not include any involvement of the mother tongue. Therefore, this thesis does not go deeper into the concept of SSL.

The theoretical background relevant for this investigation is elaborated on in section 2. Section 3 explains the methodology and section 4 presents the results. My own observations are covered in section 5, in addition to the discussion of the results and answering the research question. This answer comes in the form of recommendations. Section 6 is a concluding section and section 7 presents the study's limitations.

2. Theoretical background

In this chapter, the investigation's theoretical background is discussed. The chapter is divided into four themes. First, MTI will be covered in general in section 2.1.. Sections 2.2. and 2.3. discuss MTI in the Netherlands and in Sweden. Section 2.4. covers current initiatives in Utrecht. The chapter is ends with the research question this thesis aims to answer.

2.1. Mother tongue instruction

2.1.1. What is mother tongue instruction?

MTI includes “any form of schooling that makes use of the language or languages that children are most familiar with” (Rutu, n.d.). Children of majority groups generally receive education in their mother tongue. For children of minority groups, however, this is much less common (Rutu, n.d.). MTI aims for students with a foreign background to “develop their language, their identity and their understanding of the surrounding world [and] their knowledge of how they can formulate their own opinions and thoughts in different types of texts” (Skolverket, 2011, p. 83). In many countries, there is still room for improvement regarding education of minority children (Mohan, Leung & Davidson, 2004, as cited in Lindberg, 2007). Mohan, Leung & Davidson (2004) think that this is a missed opportunity, stooled on some myths, namely:

- “Language minorities will acquire an education and a second language easily and quickly simply by exposure;
- All that language minorities need is a basic course in the second language;
- The education of language minorities can safely be isolated from the mainstream of education;
- Educational changes for the benefit of the language minority students will happen automatically or by the efforts of second language teachers or bilingual teachers acting without curricular change, institutional support or professional development” (as cited in Lindberg, 2007, p. 82-83).

That these bullet points are indeed myths will become clear throughout the rest of this chapter, which elaborates on MTI’s benefits, the forms in which it exist and some case studies.

2.1.2. Why is mother tongue instruction important?

De Oliveira, Gilmetdinova & Palaez-Morales (2016) distinguish four different types of benefits resulting from MTI, namely cognitive, emotional, cultural and social benefits. These will be presented below.

Cognitive benefits

Cummins (1976, 1979) introduced the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis, which consists of the Threshold Hypothesis and the Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis. According to the Threshold Hypothesis, the question whether bilingualism enhances cognitive abilities cannot be answered with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’. The answer depends on the level to which the mother tongue and the second language are acquired. The theory can be explained by the image of a three-story house, as illustrated in Figure 1 (Baker, 2011, p. 168). Each floor represents a combination of linguistic competence in the mother tongue and the second language. On the bottom level, the linguistic competence is less than that of peers for both languages. This situation may cause negative cognitive effects and ‘semi-lingualism’. The middle floor represents a situation in which the linguistic competence of the mother tongue is strong and the linguistic competence of the second language is weak. This situation causes no negative nor positive cognitive effects. On the top floor, the linguistic competence of both languages is appropriate in comparison with peers, which may enhance cognitive abilities and cause ‘balanced bilingualism’ (Jørgensen & Quist, 2009; Baker et al., 2011). Thus, the development of the mother tongue can prevent semi-lingualism and negative cognitive consequences. Only a well-developed mother tongue gives a child a chance at becoming bilingual.

The Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis is not concerned with cognitive abilities, but with how the mother tongue and the second language are connected. Cummins proposes that all acquired languages are interdependent. The development of competence in the mother tongue provides the building blocks, the “cognitive and linguistic foundation” (Rutu, n.d.) for the second language to be acquired (Cummins, 1979; Hugué et al., 2000), which means that “the more developed the first language, the easier it will be to develop a second language” (Baker, 2011, p. 196). In reverse, a child may experience difficulties with the acquisition of a second language if the mother tongue is underdeveloped (Baker, 2011; Hugué et al., 2000).

A distinction can be made between two types of bilingualism and two forms of linguistic competence. Additive bilingualism means that the languages exist in complement of each other. In subtractive bilingualism, a language other than the mother tongue is or becomes predominant. The mother tongue is not maintained and the person will experience language loss (Lindberg, 2007). The forms of linguistic competence are *basic interpersonal communicative skills* (BICS) and *cognitive-academic language proficiency* (CALP). BICS is the informal language children use at the playground and at home. CALP is the academic language used in schools (Cummins, 1979). Baker (2011) states that “[t]he language used when playing with a ball in the school’s playground is very different from ‘calculate, using a protractor, the obtuse angle of the parallelogram and then construct a diagonal line between the two obtuse angles and investigate if this creates congruent triangles’” (p. 170). Baker (2011) claims that BICS can develop in two years, but it can take up to eight years before CALP is acquired.



Figure 1 The idea of the Threshold Hypothesis as a house with three floors (Baker, 2011, p. 168).

In education, “it is a well-known and seldom-contested fact that learning is more successful in a language that one can understand” (Lindberg, 2007, p. 75). In addition, learning can occur more easily when new knowledge can build upon existing knowledge (Laguarda & Woodward, 2013). This implies that the best language of instruction is one’s

mother tongue and that a second language is acquired most accurately when learners can build it upon their mother tongue.

Emotional benefits

Whether a learning environment is open to different mother tongues and heritages is important for a child's emotional development, because language is closely connected to someone's identity (Axelsson, 2005). A school environment that welcomes linguistic diversity, an environment "in which each child's competence and experience is the point of departure" (Axelsson, 2005, p. 118), will convey "a willingness to care about basic equality in society" (Axelsson, 2005, p. 119). Cummins (2001) claims that "to reject a child's language in the school is to reject the child" (p. 19). This rejection does not have to be explicitly propagated for children to feel it and to cause them to "sincerely devalue or even condemn their own home language" (Bean et al., 2003, as cited in de Oliveira, Gilmetdinova & Palaez-Morales, 2016, p. 24). Instead, embracing the home languages may result in higher confidence and self-esteem among students, better bonds between student and teacher, better school performances, and less polarization due to inclusivity (Lindberg, 2007; Ganuza & Hedman, 2015).

Cultural benefits

Haglund (2005) claims that "domination and discrimination" by teachers towards students with another mother tongue who do not yet fully speak the official language, is not unheard of (as cited in Lindberg, 2007, p. 80). In multilingual classrooms where pluralism is celebrated and been given attention, children are more accustomed to this diversity and are more likely to respect other cultures (de Oliveira et al., 2016; Helot & Young, 2012). Active dismissal of this "difference blindness" (the ignoring of diversity) can cause decreasing chasms because of the respectful and inclusive atmosphere in the classroom (Lindberg, 2007, p. 83; Ganuza & Hedman, 2015, p. 135).

Social benefits

When the mother tongue is not maintained, the child will not only be less likely to experience the benefits resulting from bilingualism, but "by the time children become adolescents, the linguistic gap between parents and children" (p. 19) can become insurmountable (Cummins, 2001). Cummins claims that it only takes two to three years

after the first attendance of primary school for children of minority languages to lose the ability to actively use the mother tongue. When parents and their children do not speak the same language, parents are unable to “transmit knowledge, cultural values and belief systems effectively” (Lee, 1996, p. 516, as cited in de Oliveira et al., 2016, p. 25). Not only linguistic knowledge is lost, but also children’s identification with their own family and culture. Skutnabb-Kangas (2004) even speaks about “linguistic genocide” (p. 2). Furthermore, Laguarda & Woodward (2013) report that in MTI classrooms, “[t]here appeared to be fewer behaviour problems from students, which also meant fewer interruptions in the instruction” (p. 462).

2.1.3. In which forms does mother tongue instruction exist?

MTI is a form of bi- or multilingual education. Bi- or multilingual education can be offered through transitional and maintenance programs. In a transitional bi- or multilingual education system, the mother tongue is exclusively used as language of instruction in the first few years of primary education. At a certain moment, there is a shift to instruction in the official language. In maintenance bi- or multilingual education, however, the mother tongue is kept in function as language of instruction after the official language has been introduced as additional language of instruction. There are systems in which both languages are used for instruction from the beginning of primary education onwards as well (UNESCO, 2008). Furthermore, as will be explained below, MTI can take form as language support programs that exist in addition to monolingual education in which a majority language is the language of instruction.

Transitional and maintenance programs fall under the umbrella term *enrichment programs*, of which the objective outcome is additive bilingualism. Contrarily, educational programs where only the official language is used are called compensatory programs and correspond to the concept of subtractive bilingualism (Lindberg, 2007). Thomas & Collier (1997; 2002, as cited in Lindberg, 2007) found that only enrichment programs can provide minority children with the opportunity to eventually match the school performances of majority peers. To clarify, MTI thus is an enrichment program, in which the mother tongue and the official language are used as medium of instruction, albeit both in marked situations.

2.1.4. Does it work?

In addition to the benefits explained above, many researchers have demonstrated the academic benefits of MTI. In 2008, UNESCO published a report which covers success stories of MTI. Below, the main findings of four cases are summarized.

The first case study focuses on Mali. In the education program *Pédagogie convergente*, the language of instruction is the children's mother tongue. *Pédagogie convergente* was introduced in 1987, because the official language of Mali, French, is a second language for most students. After the students have become literate in their mother tongue, French is taught as school subject. In the last years of primary education, the language of instruction is French. Several investigations showed that students who were enrolled in the *Pédagogie convergente* performed better on both linguistic and mathematical tasks than students who were enrolled in a monolingual French program (UNESCO, 2008).

In Papua New Guinea, approximately 820 languages are spoken by the 5.4 million inhabitants. Halfway through the 20th century, English became the language of instruction at the expense of mother tongues, under the influence of the occupation by Australia. As a result, school performances dropped and the education was believed to be "contributing to the alienation of the nation's youth" (UNESCO, 2008, p. 17). The Tok Ples Pri Skul movement stepped up to this alienation and initiated a preschool where children were taught linguistic and mathematic skills in their mother tongues. The children who attended pre-school outperformed their later classmates in the regular education system. The Tok Ples Pri Skul movement inspired communities to establish their own pre-schools. This resulted in the existence of more than 2300 pre-school programs in more than 200 languages in 1994. The government recognized the success of the pre-school and education in the mother tongue in 1995 and revised the national education system. The current system is a transitional bilingual system. The students are offered education in their mother tongue in the first few years and in English in the last years. Not only are the students who are enrolled in this bilingual system better at English than children enrolled in the monolingual system, they also participate more actively in class and show higher self-esteem (UNESCO, 2008).

Peru's system shows many resemblances with the system in Papua New Guinea. The main difference with the program in Papua New Guinea is that the program in Peru not only

aims at enhancing knowledge of two linguistic systems, but also emphasizes and recognizes cultural diversity. Consequently, students with varying cultural backgrounds are more respected. The academic effects are comparative to those of the system in Papua New Guinea. In addition to the effects mentioned previously, school performances predicted by gender and whether children live in urban or rural districts showed convergence. Furthermore, not only linguistic and mathematic skills developed better, but children's overall school performance improved (UNESCO, 2008).

In contrast to the systems in Mali, Papua New Guinea and Peru, which are developed to provide a solution for the discrepancy between mother tongues of majority groups and the official language, the system in the United States is aimed at immigrant children. Thomas & Collier (1997, referred to in UNESCO, 2008) found several different programs, ranging from maintenance programs to programs aimed at “more assimilationist perspectives that use bilingual education to integrate students into the mainstream, English-language American education system” (p. 29). Thomas & Collier found that school performances were best when the mother tongue had a place in education for at least six years. The number of years of enrollment in MTI was “the strongest predictor of learner success at upper secondary levels in the dominant language” (p. 30).

2.2. Mother tongue instruction in the Netherlands

2.2.1. OET(C) and OALT

The Dutch history of MTI goes back to the 1960s (Turkenburg, 2002). When the first guest and migrant workers came to the Netherlands after WWII, there was a strong consensus that they would eventually return to their home countries. Therefore, the development and maintenance of the mother tongue was essential, especially for children, to prevent language barriers and educational disadvantages upon reintegrating in their (parents') home country (Driessen, 2000). In the late 1960s, MTI was organized by parents and local language communities, and received financial support from the home countries' embassies (Turkenburg, 2002). When it became evident that the guest and migrant workers would stay, the Dutch government became involved. *Onderwijs in Eigen Taal en Cultuur* (OETC, Education in One's Own Language and Culture) (Extra & Yağmur, 2006, p.54) was introduced in 1974, but it was not until 1984 that the program was legislated. Before 1984, there was a maximum of five hours of MTI lessons per week, but schools were free to

decide how to schedule those hours. The law postulated a restriction of maximally 2.5 hours of MTI lessons within and maximally 2.5 hours outside school hours per week. Since the cultural component was regarded less important than the linguistic component, the ‘C’ in OETC was dropped (Turkenburg, 2002). The program aimed at the development of identity and self-esteem. In practice, however, the development of the Dutch language was the main focus point (Driessen et al., 2003). During the years of OET(C), teachers were recruited from the home countries. They often did not speak Dutch very well and had little knowledge of the Dutch society. From the 1990s onwards, the MTI teachers were required to have a certain command of the Dutch language. After evaluations of OET in 1998, the aims of the program altered and it was renamed *Onderwijs in Allochtone Levende Talen* (OALT, Education in Non Indigenous Living Languages) (Extra & Yağmur, 2006, p. 54-55; Turkenburg, 2002, p. 6).

One of the main differences with OET was that OALT was implemented locally instead of nationally. In theory, language education could be integrated within the curriculum of grades 1 to 4 of primary education (Turkenburg, 2002). In grades 5 to 8, OALT mainly aimed at cultural enrichment. Although there were no restrictions to the practical implementation of OALT, the Inspectorate of Education identifies five practices commonly found within the program: assistance during lessons inside the classroom; language lessons with no association with the regular curriculum (both inside or outside the classroom); lessons to prepare for the regular curriculum beforehand (both inside or outside the classroom); lessons that covered the curriculum afterward to practice, repeat and/or control the subjects; and assistance for children who were in need of special (medical) care and/or attention for specific problems (Inspectorate, 2001, as referred to in Driessen et al., 2003). Visser & Van Antwerpen (2000, as referred to in Driessen et al., 2003) found that the preparatory lessons beforehand, held outside the classroom, were most common.

2.2.2. Problems

According to Driessen (2005), the programs never could have succeeded, due to major problems and disadvantageous circumstances. The political opinion regarding minority groups, and with that the MTI system, went down-hill after the terrorist attacks in America at 11 September 2001 (Driessen, 2005; Extra & Yağmur, 2006). Growing insecurities and changing circumstances led to the need for black sheep, which were “individuals in the

most unfavourable positions” (Driessen, 2005, p. 89), in this case individuals belonging to minority groups (Driessen, 2005).

Most of the MTI teachers studied in their home country. It was not uncommon that the educational aims and standards in those countries differed from those in the Netherlands. Moreover, the MTI teachers’ often insufficient command of Dutch hindered discussion with regular teachers (Driessen, 2005). It was not until 1995 that MTI teachers were obliged to pass level 2 of the State exam Dutch as a second language. However, MTI teachers who were already employed did not have to pass this exam, since they were hired under different conditions (Algemene Rekenkamer, 2001). Furthermore, MTI teachers generally were not motivated, because most lessons took place outside school hours. Many teachers were used to and preferred working within school hours and regarded the schedule as degradation. Consequently, high absence among MTI teachers was not uncommon. This was also due to the pressure to keep all parties that were involved in MTI satisfied (parents, school boards, the media, researchers and politics), since their desires and expectations about the outcomes of the program differed (Driessen, 2005). Since there already was a shortage of teachers, replacement was not available in many cases. The inevitable cancellation of lessons caused decreasing interest and increasing absenteeism amongst students (Algemene Rekenkamer, 2001). Furthermore, the rooms in which the lessons took place were often unsuitable. Many lessons took place in hallways or small offices that did not meet equipment standards (Driessen, 2005).

With each alteration in name of the program, the objectives changed as well. This made it difficult to keep up adjusting methods and materials, resulting in insufficient materials. Therefore, the MTI teachers could to a certain extent develop their own lesson plans. Due to the lack of communication between MTI teachers and regular teachers, the methods and content often were not aligned. Another difficulty was that teachers worked at several schools, “which made it difficult for them to take part in team-meetings and consultations” (Driessen, 2005, p. 89). The reason why this difficulty existed, was that regular teachers and principals often rejected their responsibilities for MTI (Driessen, 2005).

Mainly children from Turkish and Moroccan origin were enrolled in MTI. The children were taught the official language of their home countries. However, the official language

of Morocco, Standard Arabic, is the mother tongue of very few Moroccans (Driessen, 2000; 2005). Thus, these children were not taught their mother tongue, but an additional language. It is therefore unsurprising that the effects of MTI are not unanimously positive and that the results were better for Turkish children than Moroccan children (Driessen, 2003). Moreover, since the OALT program mainly served Turkish and Moroccan children, a large group of children with other mother tongues could not benefit from MTI (Driessen, 2005).

The MTI system was implemented by municipalities. A positive consequence was that each municipality could adjust the system to the locally existing needs, since not all municipalities dealt with the same numbers and origins of minority children. However, each municipality had to reinvent the wheel by themselves (Turkenburg, 2002). Consequently, many different forms of MTI existed, which also hampered the possibility to properly investigate the program's outcomes.

2.3. Sweden

2.3.1. Background

School system

Preschool is not mandatory and is predominantly attended by children, aged one to five, of parents who work full-time or who are unemployed. *Preschool class* is a successive one-year program most children six-year-olds attend, however still not mandatory. The first school type that is obligatory is *compulsory school*, which lasts for nine years. All children start compulsory school when they turn seven. Compulsory school is followed by *gymnasium*, in which students follow one of eighteen three-year programs (Sweden.se, n.d., *Education*).

Linguistic ecology

The majority language of Sweden is Swedish. In addition, there are five acknowledged minority languages: Finnish (200,000 speakers), Meänkieli (40,000 speakers), Romani (35,000-40,000 speakers), Sami (15,000-20,000 speakers) and Yiddish (2,500 speakers) (Cabau, 2009, p. 3). Furthermore, around 200 immigrant minority languages are present (Lindberg, 2007). Some of these immigrant minority languages have more speakers than the acknowledged minority languages. Arabic, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Farsi and

Turkish are all “‘immigrant’ languages with more than 100,000 speakers” (Lindberg, 2007, p. 72).

In 2004, almost one in six children enrolled in preschool and compulsory school had a mother tongue other than Swedish (Axelsson, 2005). This number dramatically increases when narrowing the scope to the largest cities of the country, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. The main groups of immigrants originate from “Finland, Norway, Denmark, the former Yugoslavia, Iraq and Iran” (p. 108), who moved to Sweden from the 1970s onwards (Axelsson, 2005) and more recently from Syria, Eritrea, Afghanistan and Somalia (Sweden.se, n.d., *Migration*). There are great differences in linguistic competence in both Swedish and the mother tongues. One of the main challenges for language policy makers therefore is the heterogeneity of the target population and the greatly varying needs of this population (Lindberg, 2007). In coordination with the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (United Nations, 1992), the Swedish Language Law emphasizes the right to develop one’s own language and states that MTI is provided for children up to nineteen years of age (Lilama, 2009).

2.3.2. Mother tongue instruction in Sweden

History

The 1977 Home Language Reform introduced MTI in Sweden (Lindberg, 2007). The main objectives were twofold: “to provide support for the retention of ethnic or cultural identity” and “to allow for a normal linguistic, academic and cognitive development of immigrant and minority students” (Axelsson, 2005, p. 109). The implementation of the reform benefited from favorable political circumstances. There was consensus about the theory that the mother tongue is the foundation upon which the second language is built. Besides, the need for an educational language policy was high, due to the increase of the number of bilingual children enrolled in education (Axelsson, 2005). Initially, schools could divide the financial resources as they wished and there were no mandates concerning hours of MTI per week (Reath Warren, 2013). However, many schools had a tight budget and a lack of regular teachers, so it was not uncommon that MTI funds were spent on hiring regular teachers. In the 1980s, the number of bilingual children began to drop. Consequently, the expansion of MTI slowed down and dismissals of MTI teachers were inevitable (Axelsson, 2005). A report published in 1990 by the Swedish Court of Audit questioned financial and

organizational components of MTI. The Parliament slightly adjusted the program in reaction to the report, and expanded the minimal group size to five children. MTI was decentralized in 1991 (Axelsson, 2005). Nowadays, MTI is ensured in the Education Law and the program is aimed at constant development and improvement (B. Engels Andersson and P. Gervalla (employees of the Språkcentralen), personal communication, 11 October 2016).

Since the implementation of the reform, the wide range of eligible children was narrowed down by the establishment of requirements. Nowadays, the children's mother tongue has to be the language through which the child communicates with at least one parent. Besides the minimum group size of five children, children need to have at least basic linguistic skills in their mother tongue. The national minority groups of Sweden are exempted from these regulations, as are adopted children (Ganuza & Hedman, 2015).

Teacher training

Initially, the Home Language Reform included a two-year teacher training program. However, the program ceased to exist in 1988. From then onwards, the training for MTI teachers was organized as a specialty within the standard teacher training. However, nowadays, this specialty does not exist anymore (P. Gervalla, personal communication, 11 October 2016). Currently, teachers can follow courses to enhance their knowledge of multilingualism and the importance of MTI (Reath Warren, 2013). Stockholm University offers the course *Bilingual children's language acquisition and academic achievement* (Axelsson, 2005; Reath Warren, 2013), which discusses "migration, culture and communication, bilingual development, performance assessment and academic achievement in a second language" (Axelsson, 2005, p. 111). Teachers who took this course claimed that they

"developed new approaches on how to work with bilingual children aimed at promoting language ability and successful academic development; show more respect for the children's bilingualism and multicultural competence; allot more time for interaction and production; have increased collaboration with other teachers and parents; and use performance assessment" (Axelsson, 2005, p. 111).

In line with these personal evaluations, school's headmasters noticed

“a change in teacher’s attitudes towards children and parents; more encouragement of L1 and increased collaboration with parents; more dialogue and interaction with the children; performance assessment and with it a new way of looking at Swedish as a second language; a strengthened focus on language in subjects like math and science; new approaches to and new choices of texts; a new organization of the teaching of Swedish and Swedish as a second language; increased confidence and respect from colleagues; and positive effects on children and parents” (Axelsson, 2005, p. 111).

The improvement of teachers’ attitudes towards bilingualism and mother tongues thus enhances classroom environments.

Problems

Although the Swedish system is often seen as a success story (Cabau, 2009), the Swedish MTI program has to deal with problems as well. Ganuza & Hedman (2015) provide an overview of those problems. To begin with, they claim that the objectives of Home Language Reform were underspecified and did not provide guidelines for how these objectives were to be met. In addition, as elaborated on above, the organization of teacher training leaves much to be desired and “only about 40% of the practicing mother tongue teachers in Sweden have received formal schooling in education” (Ganuza & Hedman, 2015, p. 126). As a consequence, MTI teachers experience pressure to defend the existence of their job and their own qualities. They may feel pressured to keep both children and parents happy, because children can be withdrawn from MTI at any point (Ganuza & Hedman, 2015). Furthermore, the number of mother tongues present in the country is a challenge. For some rare languages, there might not be MTI teachers available. Furthermore, it happens that less than five children are signed up for a particular language and thus cannot be placed in an MTI group. Consequently, not all children eligible for MTI receive it (Ganuza & Hedman, 2015).

The MTI lessons are mainly taught in the afternoon. Although it is positive that regular lessons are not missed in this way, children have to attend lessons when they already are tired. Partly because of the attention span of the children and partly because of financial resources, the time available for MTI lessons is limited. However, the main problem with the schedule of MTI lessons is that MTI teachers do not frequently encounter regular

teachers (Ganuza & Hedman, 2015). The distinction between MTI and the regular curriculum may lead to a situation in which regular teachers and principals “regard the educational needs of bilingual students as a concern of the mother tongue and Swedish as a second language teachers only” (Lindberg, 2007, p. 82). This is harmful, because no connection between the curricula can be established and the two groups of teachers are unable to combine their forces to help the children (Ganuza & Hedman, 2015).

Despite the practical and political challenges, MTI teachers believe that they make a difference for their pupils (Ganuza & Hedman, 2015). This postulates a contradiction. On the one hand, MTI has a somewhat “marginalized position” (Ganuza & Hedman, 2015, p. 130) in the education system, but on the other hand, MTI teachers experience “how mother tongue instruction contributes to their pupils’ success in life and makes them into complete individuals” (Ganuza & Hedman, 2015, p. 130). This is also shown in scientific results. Children enrolled in MTI have higher average grades than children who are enrolled in SSL, even higher than native Swedish children (for statistics, see Skolverket, 2009, p. 47). Furthermore, it shows that MTI is especially effective for second generation immigrants, even when family background is taken into account. The mother tongues of these children might not have the broad foundation that children who are born in the country of origin may have. Therefore, MTI might have a larger effect for these children (Skolverket, 2009).

2.4. Current initiatives in Utrecht

As said before, there are no state funded MTI programs in the Netherlands at the moment. Like other major Dutch cities, Utrecht has developed initiatives to fight language delays that aim for all children. Over the years, several language programs have been initiated and the municipality has paid attention to language delays. The main educational policy is the *Utrechtse Onderwijs Agenda* (UOA, Utrecht’s Education Agenda). Not only are educational institutes involved in the execution of this policy, health organizations participate as well (Taal doet meer, 2014). In the UOA 2010-2014, that focused on the development of students’ talents, language was an important theme. Subsequently, the *Utrechts Taalcurriculum* (Utrecht’s Language Curriculum) was developed, which is a series of goals and guidelines that prescribe which skills ought to be acquired at any point in the curriculum. It provides school boards and other educational organizations with handlebars for unequivocal language education throughout the city. The main theme of

UOA 2014-2018 is the schools' adjustment to the needs of each child. Language development stays high in priority (Taal doet meer, 2014).

Utrecht knows a well-developed system of preschool education, the *Voor- en Vroegschoolse Educatie* (VVE). Children enrolled in VVE have or are at risk of developing language delays. *Voorschoolse Educatie* is offered to children of 2.5 to four years old and is organized at day care centers. *Vroegschoolse Educatie* is the continuation of *Voorschoolse Educatie*, and focuses on children in groups 1 and 2 of elementary school (Kindergarten) (Inspectie, 2013). The development of Dutch is one of the focus points of the program. The majority of the children who attend *Vroegschoolse Educatie* are also enrolled in *Voorschoolse Educatie* (Taal doet meer, 2014). Although VVE is a national initiative, municipalities and cities are responsible for its organization in their region. In Utrecht, VVE is organized under the umbrella organization *Spelenderwijs*. During home visits, nurses from the public dispensary detect any risks of developmental delays and indicate whether the child will be eligible for VVE (W. Kooijman (Utrecht's Department for Education), personal communication, 28 July 2016). After the VVE program, language support is provided to children from groups 4 to 8 (age 7-12) by means of two to four extra hours of education per week (Taal doet meer, 2014).

A national initiative to prevent and fight language delays is the establishment of *Brede Scholen* (Broad School). In 2014, Utrecht counted fourteen *Brede Scholen*. In this program, schools and organizations outside the educational field cooperate in order to help the children develop to their maximum abilities. In addition, the Brede School Academie ("Broad School Academy") aims to prevent talented, intelligent children in groups 6 to 8 from ending up in the lower levels of secondary school, only because of their language delay. The lessons of this program are held twice a week outside school hours. They focus, among other skills, on vocabulary and reading comprehension. Children who need or want extra education in addition to the *Brede School Academie* can enroll in a summer school program (Taal doet meer, 2014).

Although all these initiatives contribute to the diminishing of language delays, none of them actively recognize the importance of mother tongue development. There are language communities in the city that independently organize their own language lessons. The

Chinese School, for example, offers language courses for both native and non-native speakers of Chinese (Chinese School, n.d.). However, these lessons are not connected to the national education system. A primary school in Utrecht that does recognize the benefits of maintaining mother tongues is *Taalschool Het Mozaïek* (Language school Het Mozaïek). The concept of language schools was introduced nationwide by the *Onderwijsraad* (Education Council of the Netherlands) in 2001. Newcomers attend a language school for one or two years before attending a regular school (Taalschool, n.d.). The teachers of *Taalschool Het Mozaïek* generally are proponents of the use of children's mother tongue in education. However, many teachers experience practical difficulties. Many different mother tongues might be represented in one classroom and there is a lack of study materials in the present languages. Therefore, the only attention to the mother tongues consists of translations the children make themselves, encouragement of older students to explain concepts to younger students in the mother tongue, and students telling the other students about their home language (Van Wijk, 2016).

2.5. Research question

The literature discussed above gives rise to the question why MTI in the Netherlands has failed, while MTI in Sweden still exists and is actively supported by the government and legislation. What is it that the Swedes do right, in which the Dutch could not succeed and what can we learn from them? More specifically, when a Dutch city and a Swedish city are compared, would it be possible to implement the Swedish system to the Dutch situation? This leads to this investigation's research question *What can Utrecht learn from Malmö about their organization of mother tongue instruction?* The combination of Utrecht and Malmö is chosen for several reasons. The cities are quite similar in size. The number of inhabitants are just over 339,000 for Utrecht (Gemeente Utrecht, 2016) and just over 325,000 for Malmö (A. Malmquist (Malmö's Department for Education), personal communication, 18 October 2016). In addition, there are connections between both municipalities. Furthermore, of the three large cities in Sweden, Malmö houses relatively most immigrants and therefore has had to face the biggest challenge regarding education for their non-Swedish-speaking citizens. Their organization of MTI is therefore somewhat more developed than that the other cities (A. Malmquist, personal communication, 18 October 2016).

3. Methodology

To answer the research question, a qualitative research was conducted. In this qualitative research, the data were gathered by means of unstructured interviews. During eight work days, I spoke with the head of the municipal education department, three chiefs, one section manager, one employee of the registration office, one development manager, four school principals and twelve MTI teachers, two of whom were first teachers (the concept of first teacher will be explained below). Two of the chiefs and two of the MTI teachers were met in Lund instead of in Malmö. Of these contributors, eleven participants were actually interviewed, namely the head of Malmö's Department of Education, three chiefs, one section manager, three principals, two first teachers and one MTI teacher. The interviewees are coded for referencing. These codes can be found in Table 1. The principals of the Örtagård School and the chiefs of the *Modersmålscentrum* (Center for mother tongues) in Lund are taken together as one, since they were interviewed together and generally shared each other's opinions. Prior to each interview, permission was asked to record the interview. In addition, written notes were made. The interviews were organized by the Språkcentralen. Because of the tight schedules of MTI teachers, only three teachers were interviewed. The list of questions used in the interviews can be found in Appendix A. All interviews lasted approximately 50 minutes. Each participant was interviewed once, with the exception of the section manager, who was interviewed twice.

Function of the interviewee	Code
Chief of the Språkcentralen	P1
Section manager of the Språkcentralen	P2
Head of Department for Compulsory School, municipality of Malmö	P3
Three principals of the Örtagård School	P4
First teacher	P5
First teacher	P6
MTI teacher	P7
Two chiefs of Modersmålscentrum, Lund	P8

Table 1 Reference codes per interviewee

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The answers and viewpoints are structured into two parts, namely a section that aims for the description of the system and a section that focuses on the interviewees' personal experiences. Next, these sections will be analyzed and interpreted, taking the theoretical framework in section 2 as a starting point.

Afterwards, my own analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of MTI in Malmö are elaborated on. The thesis concludes with recommendations for the city of Utrecht, which are based on the outcomes of the interviews and the researchers personal observations. The programs that already exist in Utrecht are taken into account.

4. Results

The results obtained in this investigation consist of two components. Section 4.1. describes the organization of MTI in Malmö. Section 4.2. provides an overview of the interviewees' personal opinions and viewpoints. The comments presented in subsections 4.2.1. to 4.2.3. are summarized in Table 2.

4.1. Description of the MTI system in Malmö

4.1.1. Numbers

About a third of Malmö's citizens have foreign backgrounds and the city counts 177 nationalities. There are approximately 28,000 pupils in compulsory school. 70 compulsory schools are run by the municipality. All teachers, including the approximately 250 MTI teachers, are employed by the municipality. In addition, there are 30 so-called free schools, which are run by private boards. Approximately 12,500 pupils are enrolled in MTI in one of 47 languages. Furthermore, about 2,400 pupils receive Study Guidance (to be explained below).

4.1.2. Organizational structure

Since January 2015, MTI is organized by the Språkcentralen, which is a sub department of the municipality's Department for Education. The Språkcentralen includes the following five branches: Study Guidance, MTI, Newcomers Registration, Mosaic School, and Mapping, Directions & Help, which will be unraveled below. Before the establishment of the Språkcentralen in 2015, the different branches, except the recently developed branch Mapping, Directions & Help, were organized by different parties. The combination of all units has made the organization stronger and more efficient. The chief of the Språkcentralen is supported by five section managers, who all work with their own branch. There are four MTI teachers who have extra tasks and responsibilities, the so-called first teachers. For clarification, I depicted a schematic representation of the organizational structure in Figure 2.

4.1.3. The branches of the Språkcentralen

Study Guidance

Newcomers may experience difficulties with the school subjects taught in Swedish. Therefore, these children are offered up to 60 minutes per week of Study Guidance in their mother tongue, with a maximum of four years. It differs from MTI in that MTI covers the target language versus language of instruction, is requested by parents, is taught in groups with a minimum of five pupils outside school hours. Study Guidance covers the school subjects, is requested by the teacher of the respective school subject and mostly occurs individually within school hours. Whether it takes place inside or outside the classroom depends on the pupil's best interest. Although the concepts differ, both are taught by MTI teachers. The subject teacher and the MTI teacher discuss the difficulties their pupils experience, and their progressions. Furthermore, the MTI teacher can assist these pupils in comprehending test questions.

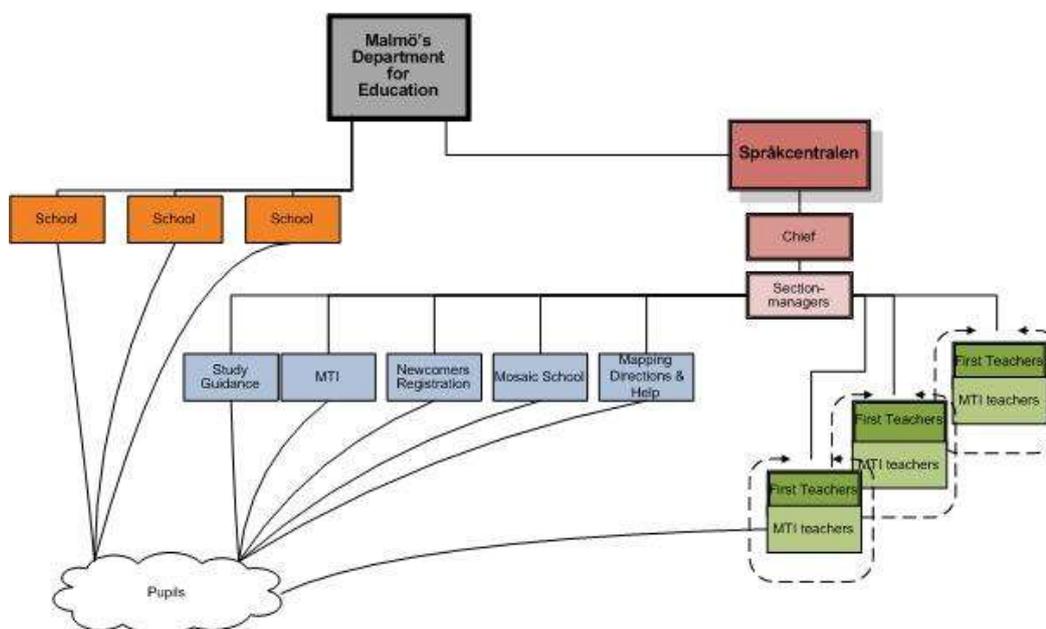


Figure 2 Organization diagram of the Språkcentralen, Malmö

MTI

MTI lessons take place once a week and last up to 80 minutes. Although enrollment in MTI is voluntary, it becomes mandatory once a pupil has been signed up. Generally, the language of instruction is the mother tongue. Although the mother tongue is the main point of focus, it is always linked to Swedish. Moreover, Swedish may be used for the sake of clarification. MTI in compulsory school focuses mainly on the development of linguistic skills. In gymnasium, the home country and its history, culture, traditions and literature

become more involved. However, in some cases this is not straightforward. Some groups of children with a shared mother tongue may have home countries from all over the world, as is the case with the English-speaking population. The teacher then has to cover these countries' cultures and traditions more superficially.

As section 2.3.2. introduced, for children to be eligible for enrollment in MTI, a certain command of the mother tongue is required. Besides that, the mother tongue has to be the language the children communicate in with at least one of their parents. There are no tests or home visits to control for these requirements. An MTI teacher judges during an intake whether a child's command of the language is enough to be enrolled in the program.

Registration

Generally, newcomers should be enrolled in education within three to five months after arrival. When families with children between the ages of six and sixteen are registered at the Migration Office, they are directed to the Språkcentralen for registration in the education system. During the intake, practical information about the children is filed. Afterwards, the children see a nurse, who measures their visual and auditory abilities in addition to a more general examination.

The children who are placed in grades 1 to 3 are sent out to local schools immediately. Children who are placed in grades 4 to 6 stay in the Mosaic School (Malmö's school for newcomers) for two weeks and will attend a local school afterwards. Children who are placed in grades 7 to 9 stay at the Mosaic School up to 22 weeks before being placed in a local school. Which local school the children will attend generally depends on their place of residence. For grades 1 to 3, the school has to be within 1.5 kilometers distance of the children's homes. For grades 4 to 6 and 7 to 9, this is respectively 2.5 and 3.5 kilometers. However, because of the rapid increase in the number of newcomers that have to be placed, the schools are filling up. Therefore, it might happen that children have to travel a bit further than the prescribed distances.

Mosaic School

The Mosaic School offers all school subjects. The lessons are taught in Swedish, but the mother tongue plays an important role and most pupils receive Study Guidance. The school is situated in the same building as the Språkcentralen. Therefore, the Språkcentralen can relatively easily monitor, evaluate and optimize the lessons.

Mapping

Since April 2016, the knowledge of all newcomers between six and sixteen years old is mapped. Mapping is the process of identifying newcomers' school background, their thinking level and previously acquired knowledge and skills. Furthermore, it indicates in which grade the child should be placed. The philosophy behind mapping is twofold. First, there is the possibility that newcomers fail an exam because of the language barrier and not because of a lack of knowledge. Mapping prevents this from happening. When mapping has shown that a child masters certain knowledge, teachers cannot mark a false answer on a test about that topic as an error. They know that the problem in that case is the phrasing of the question, not the content. Second, mapping allows teachers to construct individualized lesson plans. However, this is a challenge when there are more newcomers in one classroom.

Mapping consists of three stages, which should take place within twelve weeks after registration at the Språkcentralen. Children in grades 1 to 3 are mapped by the teachers of the local school they attend. All other children are mapped at the Språkcentralen. Mapping should not be seen as a test, but as a chance for development. It provides a chance for the children to be met at their own level.

Stage 1

The mapping procedure starts with a conversation between an employee of the Språkcentralen, the parents and the child(ren). First, the family is introduced to the Swedish school system. In addition, the child's previous experiences are discussed, especially in the case of refugees. It is also established whether the child has any problems, learning disabilities or special needs. Furthermore, the conversation covers the parents' expectations concerning the mapping procedure and the education system, and what

possibilities children have to fulfill their wishes for the future. It lasts up to 70 minutes, but can be ended early under certain circumstances.

Stage 2

The first part of this stage is a conversation with a psychologist. The conditions are as mentioned in the first stage. Secondly, literacy and numeracy are indicated. In literacy, plain skills are tested, such as the ability to read and write, but the main focus is reading comprehension. The mapping of literacy can be executed by MTI or SSL teachers. Numeracy is indicated by means of a range of tasks such as recognizing patterns, estimating distances, heights and weights, etc. Again, not plain skills but thinking level is the issue here. This part has to be executed by a math teacher.

After the second stage, the outcomes are compared to average school performances in order to indicate the grade in which the child should be placed. The mapping report consists of the child's strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations for ways to overcome these weaknesses. The report is sent to the principal of the school the child will attend. The principal eventually places the child in a class. This might postulate difficulties. The knowledge level of a fourteen-year-old child who has never had education before or has not had access to education in a long time would require placement in a low grade. However, it is almost impossible to place a fourteen-year-old in a group of eight-year-olds. In such cases, the child will be placed in a grade that (roughly) matches their age to prevent social exclusion and will be offered extra help instead. There are no special classes for these children within schools.

Stage 3

Children's knowledge of all fifteen school subjects of the Swedish school system is indicated in this stage. Subject teachers map this knowledge. The materials that can be used in this stage are being developed by Skolverket. However, since this stage is still in the developing phase, not all materials for all subjects have yet been published in all languages. Consequently, stage 3 is not yet mandatory, as opposed to stages 1 and 2. Schools can develop their own materials for subjects and languages that are lacking.

In all three stages, MTI teachers can function as interpreters if necessary. The use of MTI teachers as interpreters has advantages over hiring official interpreters. MTI teachers are already engaged in the school system and the curriculum and know the aims of the procedure.

Directions & Help

The Språkcentralen offers help to schools that have to map children up to grade 3. Not all teachers of the receiving schools have sufficient knowledge of mapping. Therefore, MTI teachers of the Mosaic School help these teachers with the mapping process. In addition, the Språkcentralen advises schools and teachers that are about to receive their first newcomer about ways to integrate these children into the classes and to make them feel welcome. The principals and teachers are invited to dialogue meetings at the Språkcentralen, where, among others, the Mosaic School's activities and ways to interpret and use mapping results are discussed. Moreover, specific pupil's backgrounds will be on the agenda.

4.1.4. First teachers

One of the main objectives of first teachers is developing teachers' abilities and teaching methods. Their activities include the organization of courses and conferences for MTI teachers, national gatherings of MTI teachers of a specific language and study visits abroad. Courses are developed to meet existing needs about a specific topic. Furthermore, first teachers can be asked by Skolverket to be involved in the revision of the law or the curriculum. Moreover, the first teachers introduce new MTI teachers to Malmö's MTI system.

All first teachers work with their own themes and projects, such as mapping. According to Skolverket, the ideal situation would be that stage 3 were mapped by MTI teachers instead of the teachers of the local school they attend. However, some regular teachers oppose this ideal because they believe MTI teachers are not up to the task. Therefore, a pilot has started in which 21 MTI teachers are trained by a first teacher to become qualified to do the mapping in this stage. Another first teacher assists MTI teachers who work with pupils with special needs, such as children with dyslexia or ADHD. In addition, each first teacher maintains contact with MTI teachers of a specific school type, such as preschool or gymnasium.

4.1.5. MTI teachers

Most MTI teachers have been educated in their home countries. However, they are required to get Swedish qualifications and have a good command of Swedish in order to be able to teach in Sweden. Therefore, they take additional courses to learn Swedish and to learn about the Swedish school system. MTI teachers of the same language meet once a month at the Språkcentralen to discuss teaching methods and materials, and textbooks that might be purchased from their home countries. Furthermore, they decide which parts of those books can be used with or without adaptation. Adaptation is necessary when pupils in Sweden cannot relate to a described situation or concept from their home country. Besides these language groups, there are meetings in which MTI teachers of different languages gather to discuss more general questions.

In some city districts, there is one foreign language which is predominantly spoken by the citizens. In this case, many pupils may be involved in the same MTI lessons. This provides the possibility for their MTI teachers to work full time in one school. They teach Study Guidance in the mornings and MTI in the afternoons. Consequently, they can meet the regular teachers more often and they do not lose time due to traveling. In Malmö there are approximately 30, mainly Arabic teachers who work this way.

4.1.6. Teaching materials

Specific teaching materials for MTI lessons do not exist in Sweden. In the above mentioned language meetings, the MTI teachers discuss which textbooks from their home countries could be used. Stencils with assignments teachers create themselves are often used to complement these textbooks. In addition, many schools have libraries in which books in different languages are represented. The MTI teachers advise the schools which books to purchase.

4.1.7. Languages

At the moment, MTI is offered in 47 languages in Malmö, but this fluctuates from year to year. In the Arabic MTI lessons, Standard Arabic is offered. According to the Språkcentralen, this is the only way in which Arabic MTI can be organized. At the moment, only written languages are taught. It has not occurred yet that a language without a written system has been requested. It is possible to apply for sign languages, but currently no sign languages are taught in Malmö's MTI system.

4.1.8. Education Law & curriculum

The Swedish Education Law dictates that newcomers ought to start education within three to four months after arrival. Generally, these regulations are met. However, when the influx of refugees was at its peak in 2015, the process could take up to five or six months.

All MTI lessons have to follow a nationally established curriculum, which is developed by Skolverket. The establishment of the curriculum followed the wish to make MTI and the school subjects more similar. The MTI teachers that were involved in the process taught a variety of languages and consequently had different needs. Eventually, a curriculum was determined that holds for all MTI lessons. The acknowledged minority languages received their own curriculum on 1 July 2016.

4.1.9. Networks

Malmö is one of the three principal Swedish cities, together with Stockholm and Gothenburg. These three cities are represented in a network that discusses and focuses on Study Guidance and MTI. The representatives meet twice a year to exchange their best practices. Furthermore, Malmö is part of a larger network that consists of ten municipalities and Skolverket. This network meets four times a year and focuses on the increasing number of newcomers.

4.2. Interviewees' personal experiences

4.2.1. Internal factors

P2 classifies the municipal organization of MTI as a strength of the system. Associations and communities that organize their own MTI lessons do exist, but the majority is organized by the local authorities. A downside of independently organized MTI is that the content cannot be controlled and the quality of the lessons cannot be guaranteed. The municipality aims for MTI lessons to be in concordance with the school subjects in terms of purpose and quality.

P6 claims that most MTI teachers have experienced the same situation as newcomers, having to adjust to a new country. Some of the MTI teachers once were refugees themselves and understand the situation of today's refugees. Therefore, the teachers can relate to the pupils and vice versa. P3 highlights the importance of this phenomenon since consequently, MTI teachers can function as role models.

P6 considers the schedule of MTI lessons to be a major problem. She experiences that pupils are tired and out of concentration once their MTI lessons start. However, the lessons can only commence when all pupils of a group have finished their regular classes, which varies. P5 and P6 add that a heterogeneous group considering ages and levels might lower lesson effectiveness as well. For the common languages, it is relatively easy to form groups according to age or level. However, this is more difficult for the rare languages. The MTI teachers then have to use creative methods to involve all pupils in the lesson, which requires considerable classroom management and planning time.

P6 and P7 think MTI teachers and regular teachers should meet more frequently to discuss pupils' progress and difficulties. P7 claims that when class mentors meet parents, only the regular school subjects are discussed. MTI teachers themselves have to inform parents about their children. In P7's opinion, MTI's voluntary character causes it to fall in a grey zone between school subjects and hobbies. He wishes MTI to be incorporated in the school system. Since it becomes compulsory once a child has been signed up, it can be seen as a school subject.

P4 noticed that regular teachers interact differently with full time and part time MTI teachers at their school. The regular teachers know the full time MTI teachers and see them every day. Forces can be joined to gain the most for the child. Furthermore, the full time MTI teachers know the ins and outs of a particular school, which gains more respect and understanding from regular teachers. P6 claims that there are regular teachers who have studied the benefits of multilingualism and MTI. Those teachers generally respect MTI teachers. However, among teachers who are less informed about the system, the idea might exist that development of the mother tongue hampers the acquisition of Swedish and a successful integration. This belief can lead to negative attitudes towards MTI. P7 experiences that parents tend to respect MTI teachers more than regular teachers, especially when the language community is close. In that case, maintenance of the language is often highly valued and parents often personally know the teacher.

P2 believes that MTI teachers might feel left out because they do not belong to a unified team. They meet once a week at the Språkcentralen and spend the rest of their time either on the road or in a school in which they are strangers. Working at several schools hampers

the establishment of a professional and/or personal relationship with regular teachers. The result is that MTI teachers are on their own most of the time.

P4 and P7 claim that many young pupils are enrolled in MTI because their parents want them to. For this group, it is important that the lessons are enjoyable. If they are not, pupils may become unmotivated, which hampers learning processes. Older pupils often recognize the benefits themselves and enroll in MTI without pressure of their parents. Besides signing up, parents can actively contribute to their children's education. P7 emphasizes that 80 minutes for an MTI lesson is fairly short. Therefore, parents should be aware of the importance of MTI and their role in the learning process.

According to P2, P3 and P6, MTI teachers' traveling time is a problem. Some work full time at one school, but most work at several schools. They therefore spend much of their working hours on the road. Combined with schedule, this leads to limited contact between MTI teachers and regular teachers. P3 reveals that the option of centralizing MTI is currently being explored. In an ideal world, the common languages were taught in a few school buildings only, where MTI teachers can work together. However, he adds that this would lead to fewer locations where rare languages would be offered, which may increase pupils' travelling time.

P7 labels the schools' principals as the system's weakest link. He argues that if principals would educate regular teachers more thoroughly about the aims and importance of MTI, the status of MTI teachers might improve. P6 explains that this does not always occur because some principals are not interested in MTI.

P2 claims that the lack of textbooks is not in concordance with the well-coordinated curriculum. The teachers' adjustment of textbooks takes time. Textbooks for the acknowledged minority languages exist, but not for the immigrant languages. P2 argues that more standardized materials should be developed for the immigrant languages as well.

4.2.2. External factors

P3 appreciates the politicians' awareness of the scientific evidence on which MTI is based. He believes that this awareness directly causes the recognition of pupils' mother tongues and heritages. P1 and P2 experience that many local politicians are curious and willing to

improve the system. Even better, this is expressed in the assignment of financial resources. P2 adds that the coverage of MTI in the Education Law and the curriculum also shows the positive political climate. P2 and P3 emphasize that there are political parties that oppose MTI, such as the Swedish Democrats, but these parties do not have enough power to abolish the program.

P5 and P7 think that criticism among native Swedes mainly includes the thought that MTI is a special treatment, while Swedish children may have special needs as well. P4 emphasizes that the presence of this idea varies per city district. Their school is situated in an area which is predominantly populated by immigrants. In this district, the aforementioned criticism is not present. However, the criticism might gain ground in a more heterogeneous district. P7 thinks that opponents of immigration in general, will also oppose MTI. He thinks the opponents do not fully realize that strengthening the mother tongue helps the acquisition of Swedish and thus enhances integration.

It is difficult for second and third generation immigrants to become MTI teachers. P2 considers this regrettable, because many second generation immigrants cannot pass on their own MTI experiences to the next generation. However, universities currently do not offer suitable study programs. P2 argues that nowadays, the only way for second generation immigrants to become MTI teachers is to return to their home countries, study the language there and complete their studies in Sweden.

4.2.3. Additional aspects

P3, P6 and P7 believe that the existence of MTI and the effort being made for their children to maintain their mother tongue contribute to making immigrating families feel welcome. P7 adds that MTI contributes to an increase of self-esteem and a sense of belonging. However, he points out that some languages are spoken all over the world, so the pupils enrolled in these MTI lessons do not necessarily share a common heritage. Therefore, their sense of belonging is likely to be weaker than for pupils whose mother tongue represents a more homogenous community.

P5 thinks schools should embrace MTI teachers, since they can act as interpreters. Involving an MTI teacher is cheaper than hiring an official interpreter. Moreover, the assistance of an MTI teacher can lower both pupils' and teachers' frustration levels that

might arise due to misunderstanding. Furthermore, all interviewed MTI teachers experience that they regularly function as a bridge between parents and school and are asked for assistance by both teachers and parents.

Positive comments	Negative comments
The municipal organization of MTI	The schedule and the traveling of MTI teachers it causes
MTI teachers' backgrounds may be similar to newcomers' backgrounds	The limited contact between regular teachers and MTI teachers
The politicians' awareness of scientific evidence and the importance of MTI	No incorporation of MTI in the regular curriculum
MTI makes families feel welcome and increases self-esteem and a sense of belonging	Some schools' principles are not actively involved
MTI teachers function as bridge between schools and parents	The lack of textbooks
	Public unawareness may feed criticism
	Second and third generation immigrants are practically unable to become MTI teachers

Table 2 Summary of positive and negative comments

4.2.4. Hopes and views for the future

The use of digital programs

P2, P3, P4 and P7 think digital programs might increase the incorporation of mother tongues in the regular school subjects. However, there is yet no consensus about the implementation and use of these programs. P7 emphasizes that digital programs could never replace the MTI teacher, but should always be used as a complement. He adds that digital programs would be most effective as an aid for Study Guidance in plurilingual classes. P4 thinks digital programs might help teachers of multilingual classrooms taking away their frustration, especially when there are varying competence levels.

The Språkcentralen is actively engaged in exploring digital programs. P2 points at the time it takes to test the variety of programs in order to decide which programs are suitable. He proposes that MTI teachers should do this testing. In the near future, the Språkcentralen will purchase iPads on which some applications will be installed. Selected teachers will work with these applications and evaluate them. If digital programs were to be implemented in MTI, P2 thinks the first teachers should organize courses to teach MTI teachers how to use the programs, so the digital world will not be an obstacle, but a source

of help for them. Additionally, P3 states that by next year, all students will have their own device, so the implementation of digital programs could indeed flourish.

Currently, all teachers and pupils use the Google Classroom application, which is an online environment in which teachers can give and comment on assignments. P2 considers it a possibility that some aspects of MTI eventually become online courses, offered through the Google Classroom application. He thinks this will make it easier to teach children from different schools.

The future of MTI

P2 and P3 believe that in the future, MTI will be better integrated into the regular classroom. P2 proposes that translanguaging could be used more frequently. In this method, he explains, newcomers can write assignments in their own language. Afterwards, the teacher and the pupil work together to discover which Swedish words and phrases are necessary to rewrite the assignment in Swedish. However, he recognizes the difficulties of implementing such an intensive method throughout the city.

P5 hopes that a handbook will be developed that provides MTI teachers with practical handlebars for lesson planning, the active adoption of mapping outcomes and the combination of varying competence levels. She thinks the only way to develop this handbook and to improve policies and their implementation is to include MTI teachers in a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches.

How to start up a program in Utrecht

If Utrecht were to develop an MTI program, many aspects should be taken into consideration. P2 believes that the municipality has to establish clear regulations, since there is no Education Law to fall back on in the Netherlands. In addition, he argues for agreements on qualifications and documentations MTI teachers should have. P3 adds that from the beginning, the availability of financial resources should be on the agenda. Moreover, P2 thinks that MTI teachers should be employed by the municipality, since they will not work at one single school.

P2 also emphasizes the necessity of a curriculum. He explains that without a curriculum, both policy makers and teachers lack handlebars. Once a curriculum has been established,

it can be used to inform principals, teachers and parents about the aims and proposed outcomes of the program.

P3 emphasizes that involved parties should not try to reinvent the wheel. He strongly recommends that countries and cities with MTI systems be visited to learn from their best practices. P6 agrees and adds that countries and cities that have recently developed an MTI system are particularly interesting.

P2 and P6 argue that communication and the provision of information is critical when implementing a new program. Awareness of the importance and impact of MTI should be raised among politicians, principals and teachers. P2 suggests scholars should provide politicians with the scientific evidence. P6 points to the importance of educating future teachers in the fields of multilingualism and MTI and recommends that the topic become a standard part of the study program. Furthermore, P2 and P6 emphasize that unifying and informing parents is crucial, since parents are the ones signing up their children. P2 thinks it is important to meet the people involved, especially parents, in person.

5. Discussion

Section 5.1. elaborates on my observations of MTI in Malmö. In the second subsection, the research question will be answered.

5.1. The researcher's observations

Organization

The Språkcentralen is of great importance to the MTI system. It is not only the organizational cobweb of Malmö's MTI, but additionally functions as knowledge base and a meeting point for MTI teachers. Although these teachers are still much on their own, they have a place to exchange their experiences and feel supported by those of other MTI teachers.

None of the interviewees mentioned the Språkcentralen when asked about the system's strengths. However, I do not believe they did not do so because they do not recognize the importance of the center. My observation is that, despite the fact that in its current form it merely exists for 1.5 years, the center is so well integrated in the system that its employees consider it self-evident. This is positive, since it implies that the center is not being questioned and is seen as a matter of course by the people who encounter it on a daily basis. It needs notification that Malmö is not unique in this sense. Many Swedish municipalities have their own MTI organization center. Another example is the *Modersmålscentrum* in Lund. Although all organizations function differently, it is fair to say that this is a strength of the entire Swedish MTI system.

At least one of the Språkcentralen's section managers is a former MTI teacher. The first teachers still work as MTI teachers in addition to their extra tasks. The presence of practical experience can be considered a key factor and a bottom-up approach. These employees know the field's opportunities and threats and can use these insights in their daily work. Since the first teachers develop courses that match the field's needs, any existing problems are actively approached and attempted to be tackled.

MTI is nationally supported by Skolverket, which, among others, develops and provides mapping materials. The concept of mapping would not be this advanced if all organizers

were to develop their own materials. Furthermore, with one organization being responsible for these materials, the quality is guaranteed and equal throughout the country.

In my observation, the help the Språkcentralen offers to schools that have little experience with newcomers is of great value. Educating newcomers is a special practice and the less-experienced should benefit from the knowledge of the well-experienced. If this were neglected, children might be offered education that would not correspond to their levels and experiences, or become involved in an environment that might not understand their position, which hampers development.

The establishment of a national database for textbooks could make the organization of MTI more efficient. The texts adjusted by MTI teachers can be combined to create standard textbooks. If a national database were to be installed, the hours MTI teachers spend on the adjustments could be spent otherwise. Moreover, the process of developing standard texts would entail selection of the best texts available, which would improve the quality of the lessons. The use of standardized texts would enhance equality throughout the country as well.

P3 elaborated on the possibility of offering MTI at a few schools only. Although serious difficulties would have to be overcome for this idea to work, it could solve several of the problems mentioned in section 4. First, the MTI teachers would not have to travel around town anymore. Furthermore, the MTI teachers would be less isolated, because they would have the opportunity to work together with other MTI teachers. I believe this could create the team spirit that currently lacks. In addition, the MTI teachers would be able to spend their time more efficiently, which might reduce the shortage of MTI teachers and lower necessary financial resources. A downside might be that it could further limit the contact between regular teachers and MTI teachers.

Communication and information

Municipal networks contribute to the system's success. Smaller municipalities can learn from the approaches of larger ones, since the latter generally encounter more challenges. Moreover, the smaller municipalities might have fresh insights that could be adjusted to the

larger ones. In addition, the networks make it easier for MTI teachers to be employed by other municipalities should they move to another city.

Since the Språkcentralen is a sub department of the municipal Department for Education, the communication between the two is easier to establish and maintain than if MTI were organized by an external party. The provision of information by the Språkcentralen contributes to the existing favorable political climate. Besides this, the two departments meet on a regular basis. I believe that such a strong relation is essential for a system to work.

The Språkcentralen works hard to change possible negative attitudes among involved people and parties. As is the case with politicians, communication with and the provision of information for schools' principals and parents are very important. However, in a city the size of Malmö, it is difficult to reach all principals and all parents. Communication is easier in a smaller city such as Lund, because simply fewer people are involved. Nevertheless, the Språkcentralen actively tries to get all parties on the same page, even though not all of them are undividedly positive. For example, not all parents have positive attitudes towards MTI. Since all children enrolled in MTI are signed up by their parents, it might be argued that all parents are actively involved. However, once their children have started the program, some parents are more involved than others. Highly-educated parents tend to be more concerned with their children's homework, their development and the organization of the lessons than parents who are less educated. The former group is also more present at information meetings than the latter. I expect that these attitudes can become more positive once all parents have been reached personally by the Språkcentralen.

Innovation and development

The Språkcentralen constantly aims to develop the system. This is reflected in the organization of the previously mentioned courses, but also in the aim to innovate the system by exploring the possibilities of digital programs. In my opinion, the use of digital programs matches digitalization in other sectors and the growing digital competence of pupils. Digital programs could make MTI more appealing to pupils, which is important because of MTI's voluntary character. Moreover, digital programs can aid pupils and

teachers in Study Guidance in a multilingual classroom. Although I agree with P7 that digital programs could never replace interpersonal contact between pupils and MTI teachers, I do think they can bring MTI to the next level.

An area which shows room for further improvement is general teacher education. I believe that mother tongues and multilingualism should play a more central role in the education of regular teachers. Currently, some attention is being paid to multilingualism. However, I think it should be expanded and become a more standard part of the study program. By doing so, all new teachers will become aware of the aims and importance of MTI, which might cause more positive attitudes towards the system and its teachers. Moreover, second generation immigrants should have the opportunity to become MTI teachers. Yet, in order for that to happen, universities ought to develop study programs, which demands great financial resources. If these programs were to be developed, MTI teachers should be involved in the process.

5.2. Implications and recommendations for Utrecht

Since currently there is no consensus about the importance of MTI among Dutch politicians, the establishment of a national program in the near future is an unrealistic aim. However, implementing MTI in local approaches might be an answer to the growing diversity in cities. Therefore, a number of recommendations for both the municipality of Utrecht and the field (organizations concerned with education and the fight against language delays) are presented below. These recommendations are based on Malmö's organization of MTI and the outcomes of the interviews. Some best practices can be copied, others need adaptation to Utrecht's current situation. Although the existing initiatives concerning language delays focus on all children regardless of their mother tongue, a sub track could be established within these initiatives to help children with a mother tongue other than Dutch. The section below elaborates on considerations necessary when incorporating MTI in Utrecht.

Recommendations for the municipality

The municipality should invite scholars and organizations involved in MTI to explore the scientific field and discuss existing initiatives. For any form of mother tongue education to be implemented, the local politicians should be convinced of its importance.

Malmö's politicians are informed about scientific evidence by scholars. This approach should be copied in Utrecht. The Utrecht region knows several scholars who have the expertise to provide politicians with the relevant scientific evidence. Furthermore, there are organizations committed to increasing awareness about MTI and the development of teaching methods, such as the Rutu Foundation. These organizations should be consulted as well.

When implementing MTI, one central organization should become responsible. The Malmö Språkcentralen provides an excellent example. This organization should be closely connected to the Department of Education, preferably in the form of a sub department, thereby following Malmö's example. The Dutch education system and the Swedish education system work differently, however. In the Netherlands, schools are run by school boards. To set an example, there are school boards that handle a particular religion, such as the board for Catholic schools. In Utrecht, public education is organized by *Stichting openbaar Primair Onderwijs* (SPO, Foundation for public Primary Education) (SPO, n.d.). These boards form an extra intermediary party between the municipality and the schools. Therefore, the proposed organization needs to be in close contact with these school boards as well.

Recommendations for the municipality in combination with the field

The bottom-up approach the Språkcentralen embraces should be adopted in Utrecht. However, this is one of the approaches that cannot simply be copied from Malmö. As said before, the education systems of both countries differ. At present, there are fewer experienced MTI teachers in Utrecht. Therefore, it is recommended that the bottom-up approach be filled in by including members of the above-mentioned school boards in the organization, in addition to specialists in the field of educating newcomers, such as the teachers of *Het Mozaïek*. Teachers of language courses organized by communities could be included as well.

A working group consisting of the municipality and professionals should be established to develop clear regulations and guidelines. In section 4.2., it is made clear that the backbone of Swedish MTI is the Education Law. Since MTI is not covered in the Dutch Education Law, such regulations are to be established by policy makers, the

organizational body and teachers. These regulations and guidelines should not only cover the implementation of an MTI education system, but also the required teacher qualifications and the ways in which these qualifications can be obtained. To decide on these qualifications, professionals in the field of teacher training should be consulted. The establishment and clarification of MTI's aims could be achieved by including it in the *Utrechts Taalcurriculum*, introduced in section 2.4., and thereby creating Utrecht's MTI curriculum.

The wheel should not be reinvented. The establishment of MTI will require much time, effort and development. Therefore, a key aspect of the developmental phase is that countries and cities that have (recently developed) a system of MTI be visited. These cities' best practices concerning MTI's financial management, lesson plans and other aspects should be explored and, if necessary, adjusted.

The municipality of Utrecht and the field should combine their forces to explore the possibility of establishing an international collaboration. By doing so, the city could benefit maximally from the above mentioned best practices. This collaboration could for example consist of Utrecht, Malmö and two other European cities, together with non-governmental organizations that have interests concerning MTI in these cities. Furthermore, the possibilities of submitting a European grant application should be researched.

Recommendations for the field

It is recommended that MTI be included in the already existing initiatives of VVE and Brede School (Academie). Section 2.4. introduced Utrecht's system of VVE. In the case of non-Dutch speaking parents, an insufficient language environment could not only endanger their children's acquisition of Dutch, but also their mother tongue development. The expertise concerning judging language environments that is already present could be used to indicate a need for MTI as well. Furthermore, the examples of MTI stated in section 2.1.4. and Skolverket's research results referred to in section 2.3.2. show that MTI not only enhances linguistic skills but improves overall school performance. These outcomes suit the aims of the Brede School (Academie) in that both initiatives' proposed outcome is the enhancement of overall performance.

Digital programs and methods such as translanguaging should be explored. It is known that teachers of the language school *Het Mozaïek* are willing to pay attention to mother tongues in their lessons. This is an advantageous starting point, since these teachers are already convinced of the importance of MTI. However, the practical handlebars to actually include mother tongues generally are absent. Digital programs and translanguaging could provide a solution to this lack.

The expertise of the teachers of Het Mozaïek should be deployed in informing and training less-experienced schools and teachers. This more coordinating role resembles the Direction & Help branch of the Språkcentralen, which aims at preparing schools for welcoming newcomers. Since *Het Mozaïek* is a school for newcomers, its employees are highly-experienced concerning educating children with foreign backgrounds.

It is recommended that teachers show interest in how their foreign pupils express certain phrases and sentences in their language. In section 2.1.2., the impact of rejecting a child's language is sketched. When teachers allow their pupils to tell their classmates about their home language, this rejection would be absent. Even though their language is not used as a means of instruction, the child feels that their mother tongue is appreciated by their teacher.

The ways Malmö follows up on mapping should be added to the Dutch intake procedure. The observations made in Malmö concerning mapping have led to the gathering of extra information about the Dutch situation. As is the case in Sweden, newcomers' knowledge is mapped. This information leads to an indication of development, which is presented to each school the child attends and is evaluated every 10 weeks (B. Bakker (employee of the PO-Raad, Utrecht), personal communication, 7 November 2016). Although this procedure is not insufficient, it could be even more enriched if some aspects of Malmö's procedure, such as using mapping outcomes to develop individualized lesson plans and taking the outcomes into account when correcting tests, were included.

General recommendations

A pilot should be run to test the program. Running a pilot within one of the aforementioned school boards provides the opportunity to introduce the program to a selection of schools in the city. In addition, some locations where VVE is offered should be included. By doing so, a wide range of ages will be included, while maintaining the small-scale character of a pilot.

It should be noted that the development and implementation of MTI takes time. Not only is the process of spreading MTI throughout the city a long-term project, the results of an MTI program should not be expected to show immediately. Furthermore, components should be implemented one step at the time. It is unrealistic to aspire for all above aspects to be developed and implemented at once.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to investigate which components of Malmö's MTI system are suitable for adjustment to and implementation in Utrecht. A combination of a literature study and unstructured interviews has led to the answer to the research question. Utrecht should follow Malmö in the way politicians are being informed by the scientific field, since a favorable political climate is a prerequisite for implementing an MTI program. The existence of the Språkcentralen and its place within the municipal Department of Education is regarded essential in Malmö's organization of MTI. If MTI were to gain ground in Utrecht, its organization should be a municipal sub department as well. Furthermore, Malmö shows Utrecht that the existence of practical experience within the organization is beneficial for the system. Swedish MTI strongly abides by its coverage in the Education Law and the existence of a curriculum. The regulations concerning the program's implementation and teacher qualifications are considered a necessity. Utrecht should establish these regulations, since they currently do not exist. Inclusion of the program's aims in the *Utrechts Taalcurriculum* could function as MTI curriculum. In addition, MTI should be included in the existing programs *VVE* and *Brede School (Academie)*, since these programs match with MTI in aims and proposed outcomes. Digital applications and specific teaching methods could introduce mother tongues in regular classrooms. The Språkcentralen actively prepares schools for educating newcomers, a practice which should be adopted in Utrecht. The well-experienced language school *Het Mozaïek* could play a role in this procedure. Malmö's mapping procedure can enrich the Dutch intake procedure for newcomers. It can introduce the concept of individualized lesson plans and be used in test grading as a follow-up to the indication of development. To benefit maximally from other cities' best practices, it is recommended that an international cooperation of European cities be established.

7. Limitations

The presented study knows certain limitations. First, the interviews held in Malmö were unstructured. Unstructured interviews have lower validity than structured interviews. However, due to the wide variety of interviewees' backgrounds, structured interviews were considered inappropriate. Second, it should be noted that people tend to elaborate and focus more on negative than positive aspects. Therefore, the interviewees' personal opinions stated in section 4.2. might sketch a more negative image of the situation than the interviewees actually perceive it to be.

Although this thesis aims to discuss Malmö's organization of MTI and its implications for the Utrecht situation, the complexity of the matter inevitably causes certain topics to remain underspecified. Due to limited time and space, the investigation of the Utrecht situation is not exhaustive. Further research could include a more thorough overview of mother tongue lessons that are offered in Utrecht by independent associations or communities, such as the *Chinese School*. In addition, no interviews were organized with policy makers, school boards and teachers in Utrecht, so it remains uncertain whether these parties actually would be willing to include pupils' mother tongues in the education system. Furthermore, although this thesis does cover political viewpoints, the political landscape of the municipality and its consequences for implementing MTI should be mapped in further research.

Section 5.2. includes recommendations on what Utrecht's organization of MTI should look like and in which currently existing initiatives it would suit. However, it does not include guidelines for the actual practical design of lesson plans. Pedagogues and experts in didactics should be involved in the development of such handlebars.

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Appendix A – List of interview questions

Chiefs/headmasters:

MTI languages

- In the Netherlands, there is no education in spoken languages, such as the dialect spoken in the east and south of the country. Does MTI include Swedish dialects, in addition to the national languages and immigrant minority languages?
- Are there separate MTI lessons for the different dialects of Arabic (Moroccan Arabic, Syrian Arabic, Algerian Arabic etc.) or is Standard Arabic offered?
- Does the status of immigrant minority languages influence how much the language is requested for MTI? When a language has a low status in the country of origin, is the development and maintenance of that language valued by the speakers and thus requested?
- Are political situations in the country of origin considered when making language groups? Are for example Kurdish children placed in Turkish (language of their oppressors) MTI groups, or Syrian Arabic? Or do parents already make that decision?
- What is done to be able to teach MTI lessons in languages that are unwritten? Does corpus planning occur for these languages?
- Are there any MTI lessons for sign languages?

MTI curriculum

- Are there any guidelines concerning the number of MTI hours per week?
- Are there any efforts being made to connect the MTI and regular curriculums?
- Are there any final exams in which the students' progress and the skills prescribed in the curriculum aims are measured? If yes, which organization(s) is/are responsible for making these tests?
- Do you think mother tongues should have a place in the regular classroom, for example by using programmes as E-Validiv (explain)?
- Are children in the later years of Compulsory School and in Upper Secondary School enrolled in the same type of MTI, or are there different forms for very young and older children?

Teachers

- Where and how does teacher training occur? And what is the municipal contribution to that training?
- Where do you recruit new MTI teachers, for example for a language that is never requested before?
- Do you coordinate the registration and employment of teachers?

Political climate

- Have you sensed any change in the political/public opinion about MTI after respectively 9/11 and the recent refugee crisis?
- Is there contact between neighbour municipalities, or comparable municipalities, to exchange teachers, best practices and experiences of how the municipal policies affect the outcomes of MTI?
- Are MTI students involved in the process of improving MTI lessons?
- How are the Language Centre and the municipality working together to create and/or support the MTI system?
- What do you think the national and local government should do to facilitate and improve the MTI system?
- Does the Language Centre try to stay in contact and perhaps to put pressure on the (local) politicians for them to change policies? Does it function as labour-union for MTI teachers?
- Which threats and difficulties are there according to you in addition to the point we already discussed? And how do you envision the future of MTI?

Parents

- How are the parents of potential MTI students informed about the rights to MTI and the 'terms and conditions' for application?
- Are parents actively involved in the MTI lessons? Are they encouraged to help their children with homework, or read books to/with them in the mother tongue at home?
- How is awareness of the importance of MTI created, both among parents and politicians (and other involved parties)?
- Do you think parents benefit from the MTI lessons of their children as well?

Subscription

- What is the procedure for subscription for MTI?
- How long does it take on average before subscribed children actually attend their first MTI lesson?

Teachers:

MTI and regular curriculum

- Are you in contact with the teachers of the regular curriculum and school headmasters?
- Are there any efforts being made to connect the MTI and regular curriculums?
- Are children who share their mother tongue allowed to use that language in the regular classroom/on the school's playground?
- Are there any final exams in which the students' progress and the skills prescribed in the curriculum aims are measured? If yes, which organization(s) is/are responsible for making these tests?
- Do you think mother tongues should have a place in the regular classroom, for example by using programmes as E-Validiv (explain)?
- Which method and materials do you use in MTI lessons?
- Is the mother tongue visually present in the classroom?
- Do you make use of songs in the mother tongue?

Teacher training

- Where and how did you receive your teacher training?
- Do you meet with other MTI teachers of your particular language?
- Do you have the opportunity to follow courses to refresh your knowledge and skills?

Organization/implementation

- Are children who attend MTI lessons outside school hours very tired and out of concentration?
- What does the Language Centre do for you in terms of organization?
- What do you think school headmasters need to do to facilitate and improve the MTI system?
- Are you employed by the school, the Language Centre or the municipality?
- Which threats and difficulties are there according to you in addition to the point we already discussed? And how do you envision the future of MTI?

Parents

- Do you feel that the children like the MTI lessons or are they forced by their parents?
- Are parents actively involved in the MTI lessons and/or the homework?
- Do you think parents are feeling more valued due to the existence of MTI? If so, do you think parents are trying to be more involved in the regular curriculum as well, because of that feeling?
- Do you think parents benefit from the MTI lessons of their children as well?

Effects MTI

- What do you feel is the most important thing you offer the children by means of the lessons? Is it greater self-esteem, sense of belonging, identity, or mainly language skills?

