

# Language provision and inclusion in Scottish mainstream education.

Róisín McKelvey  
University of Edinburgh



The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme under grant agreement No. 613344 (Project MIME).



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of* EDINBURGH



# Overview

- Increased multilingualism among pupils in Scottish mainstream education
  - Language teaching and the 1+2 Strategy
  - Growing demand for language support and a need to foster more positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity in schools
    - English as an additional language (EAL) services
- Challenges faced by EAL services: practical and attitudinal
- Implications for Scottish mainstream education



# Allochthonous languages in Scotland

**Table 1.** 2011 Scottish Census: Language spoken at home

<b>Language spoken at home</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
All usual residents aged 3+	5,118,223
People who speak only English at home	4,740,547
Polish	54,186
Chinese	27,381
Urdu	23,394
Punjabi	23,150
French	14,623
German	11,317
Spanish	10,556
Arabic	9,097
Italian	8,252

The figures for Chinese include responses that recorded Mandarin, Cantonese, Min Nan and 'unspecified' Chinese.



# Linguistic composition of Scottish mainstream schools

**Table 2.** Main home languages of state school pupils in 2016 (School Statistics – supplementary data, 2016).

Language	Number of pupils
Polish	14,739
Urdu	5,814
Scots	5,889
Punjabi	3,922
Arabic	3,174
Chinese (Mandarin & Cantonese)	2,743
Romanian	1,312
Russian	1,024
French	989

Total recorded languages spoken in Scottish mainstream schools: 149.



# Scottish education

- Education is one of the policy areas that has been devolved to Scotland
- Local authorities (LAs) are given a fair amount of autonomy with regard to education and are able to use their discretion in language teaching choices
- Despite some promising frameworks, options for language learning in mainstream education are fairly limited



# The Scottish Government 1+2 Language Strategy (2012)

- The Scottish Government guidance for the 2012 Language Strategy encourages an inclusive approach that takes into account local circumstances and languages spoken at home by pupils
- In reality, language teaching is somewhat limited, with traditionally-taught European languages such as French and Spanish still common, while even languages with significant speaker numbers, such as Polish, are often overlooked.



# Scottish mainstream language teaching

- The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) secondary school qualifications have been developed in: Cantonese, French, German, Italian, Mandarin, Spanish, Urdu and Latin. (Also in Scottish Gaelic.)
  - Other languages have been offered and then dropped, e.g. Russian, Norwegian and Swedish.
  - Polish and Arabic, for example, are not available – although they may still be taught in primary education, for example.



# Language support in Scottish mainstream schools

- The *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004*
  - Guidance around the Act identifies having English as an additional language (EAL) as an additional support need
  - EAL provision identified is also as an example of good practice
- Inclusion and recognition of EAL provision in national education policy could be argued to be a positive development.
- On the other hand, the categorisation of EAL pupils as having additional support needs could reinforce negative connotations of linguistic diversity



# EAL services

- EAL services are part of local authorities and provide both in-class support, and training and capacity-building within schools
- They face a number of practical and attitudinal challenges in meeting the needs of pupils and encouraging inclusive approaches in schools
- Strategy changes to accommodate some of these challenges are currently being implemented:
  - Greater reliance on peripatetic teachers
  - Increased focus on and pilot projects exploring capacity-building



# Challenges - practical

- Limited EAL resources/resources not increased proportionally with demand
  - Both financial & human resources (reduced staff numbers)
  - Increased caseloads → negative impact on pupil experiences
- Insufficient mechanisms in place to disseminate good EAL practice/training within schools
- Teacher training, curricula & resources developed for well-established teaching languages such as French, but lead-in time necessary if skills & resources in less well-established teaching languages are to be developed



# Challenges - attitudinal

- Criticisms of the enduring “monolingual mentality” in Scotland (and the UK) and the economic, cultural and educational limitations it poses
- Contradictory attitudes and recommendations found among professionals, such as social workers and healthcare providers
  - This can impact speakers’ attitudes towards their own languages, and discourage intergenerational transmission
- Ongoing importance of challenging negative perceptions of multilingualism – among professionals, pupils and families



# Implications

- The role of schools and teachers in influencing attitudes towards languages other than English, both within the wider school community and on a more individual level with bilingual/EAL pupils and families, can be significant
- There is a lack of coherency and collaboration across services, in addition to enduring negativity towards bi/multilingualism, which can result in contradictory information and internalised stigma among speakers
- Lack of provision for significant language communities in mainstream education may reinforce perceived low status of languages such as Polish
- Complementary schools are significant sources of language education for allochthonous language communities, but they are restricted by limited resources and mainstream collaboration
- Such messages can impede intergenerational transmission and also lead to “impoverished input”/”restricted code” within families



# Conclusions

- Significant work is needed to shift the educational culture around language teaching
- Development of teacher training and materials required if language teaching is to be diversified
- Necessary to challenge attitudes that stigmatise multilingualism, especially in terms of non-Western European languages, among professionals and within families and communities
- Practical resource constraints cannot be overlooked
- Potential for collaboration with and support for complementary schools and linguistic benefits for mainstream education



# References

- Akoğlu, G., & Yağmur, K. (2016). First-language skills of bilingual Turkish immigrant children growing up in a Dutch submersion context. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 19(6), 706–721.
- Hancock, A. (2014). Language education policy in multilingual Scotland: Opportunities, imbalances and debates. *Language Problems & Language Planning*, 38(2), 167–191.
- Hancock, A. (2017). *Heritage language learning in Scotland: A case of linguistic apartheid?* Paper presented at Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES) Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland.
- McLeod, W. (2008). An opportunity avoided? The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and UK language policy. In D. Ó Riagáin (Ed.), *The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: Legal challenges and opportunities* (pp. 201–218). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum. (2011). *National ethnic minority achievement education survey: A summary of findings. October 2011*. Retrieved from <https://www.naldic.org.uk/Resources/NALDIC/Advocacy/Documents/NUT%20NALDIC%20SurveyOctober%202011.pdf>
- National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum. (2014). The national audit of English as an additional language training and development provision: Report October 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.naldic.org.uk/Resources/NALDIC/Research%20and%20Information/Documents/NALDIC%20-%20EAL%20Audit%202014%20FINAL%20FINAL%20YF%20Oct%2014.pdf>
- Scott, S., EAL teacher, personal communication, 7 August 2017.
- Scottish Government. (2016a). School Statistics 2016. Edinburgh: National Statistics.
- Scottish Government. (2016b). Pupil census 2016 supplementary data. Edinburgh: National Statistics
- Sorace, A., Director of Bilingualism Matters, personal communication, 10 June 2013 & 2 May 2017.
- Wang, X. (2011). *Learning to read and write in the multilingual family* (Vol. 14). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.



# Thank you!

R.R.McKelvey@sms.ed.ac.uk



The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme under grant agreement No. 613344 (Project MIME).

