

Mediation of Language Attitudes Through Linguistic Landscapes in Minority Language Education



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Abstract The province of Fryslân is home to a complex language ecology. The majority language Dutch and the regional language Frisian are the two only official languages in the region, but there is also a strong presence of English as well as an increasing number of migrant languages. Within this context, the province of Fryslân has the responsibility to maintain the Frisian minority language. Improving Frisian's societal position through education may be necessary, as students currently have rather negative attitudes towards Frisian, which decreases motivation and performance. It has been suggested that language awareness approaches that connect the language to society can improve language attitudes and influence language behaviour. One way in which language awareness may be raised, is by using the linguistic landscape (LL). In the current mixed-method study, the affordances of the LL in the Frisian context of minority language education identified by three different stakeholder groups will be explored. Survey data showed that secondary school students indeed held negative attitudes towards Frisian, but that they were also most positive about seeing the language in the LL. Incorporating an experts' viewpoint, interviews showed that both teachers and provincial policymakers identified the potential of LL for the mediation of pupils' language attitudes. All stakeholders therefore believed that while there are some obstacles to overcome, LL-interventions can be a useful way to improve minority language education and the position of the minority language itself. In combining data from all three perspectives, this study offers an in-depth understanding of the interrelation between various stakeholders, their beliefs and how the LL may be useful in a minority language context.

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1 Introduction

In general, language has always been viewed as the “key component for nation building” (Kelly, 2015, p. 65). This belief has been deeply rooted in the language policies in European education, and monolingual ideologies have been influencing teaching practices for decades. This means that school languages are often taught separately (Cummins, 2017) and therefore that implicit language hierarchies make teaching languages with a higher status more urgent than focusing on languages with a lower status, such as minority languages. Regarding the situation in minority language regions, it has been argued that these minority languages must be preserved due to their cultural, linguistic and local economic value (Sallabank, 2012). To protect and improve proficiency in minority languages, schools tend to maintain the ideology of keeping languages strictly separated so as to maximise input (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017), which has been found to cause “emotional disempowerment” of young learners (Osterkorn & Vetter, 2015). West Frisian (henceforth Frisian) is one example of such a minority language.

The current study was conducted in the bilingual province of Fryslân, where Dutch and Frisian are official languages. Frisian is the mother tongue of approximately 65% of the province’s population, while 30% has Dutch as their mother tongue and 15% speaks other languages (Provinsje Fryslân, 2015). Frisian is primarily an oral language, and all Frisian speakers are also proficient in Dutch (Hilton & Gooskens, 2013). Attitudes towards Frisian are rather negative, particularly in urban areas (Hilton & Gooskens, 2013). However, the language is protected under (inter)national treaties and law (Council of Europe, 1992, 1995; Provinsje Fryslân, 2019), and the regional government actively encourages the use of the language in a variety of domains, including literature and arts (Kuipers-Zandberg & Kircher, 2020). As Duarte & van der Meij (2018) point out, Fryslân is in the process of consolidating the position of Frisian in education. Over the last decades, there has been increasing attention to improving Frisian education (Gorter et al., 2008). However, several difficulties were identified: teachers lack materials and time to improve the quality of education (Egaña et al., 2015), and they are confronted with somewhat negative attitudes towards Frisian, as a language and as a subject (Duarte, 2020). This demotivates students and causes the subject to be regarded as a burden in the curriculum.

This is where linguistic landscapes (henceforth LL) may become a valuable resource in minority language education. LLs describe the visibility of languages in physical public space and are thought to influence the perceived vitality of minority languages like Frisian (Kuipers-Zandberg & Kircher, 2020). The LL signals to passers-by which languages are valuable in a specific context, and which are not. Consequently, this influences speakers’ language attitudes and use (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). As a tool in language management, LLs may be used as educational strategies (Hewitt-Bradshaw, 2014). Engaging students with the LL helps them

become aware of the language structures and language use in their surroundings. While it provides a good example of how a language can be used in common situations, it may also teach pupils about criticality: the societal influence and importance of languages (Hancock, 2012). This may help students' linguistic development and creates more positive attitudes towards the language. Improving attitudes is important in the Frisian context, as Makarova (2020) found that secondary school pupils have more negative attitudes towards learning Frisian than towards learning other languages. Such results reinforce the need to focus on attitudinal aspects when investigating issues of minority language education.

Teachers' ideologies and beliefs also play a crucial role in pupils' attitudes towards languages (Lasagabaster & Huguët, 2006). As teachers' beliefs are directly linked to their pedagogical practices in the class, their choice of teaching strategies and approaches plays a vital role in the development of pupils' motivation and attitudes towards learning the minority language (Pajares, 1992). As mentioned in previous studies (Hélot, 2017; Ibarraran et al., 2008), acknowledging pupils' linguistic backgrounds as resources for learning can increase their positive attitudes and motivation (Duarte & van der Meij, 2018). A tool that can be used in working towards this is mediation. As one of the four modes of communication, mediation has been embedded in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (Council of Europe, 2018). It does not only focus on cross-linguistic mediation, but also entails general communication, learning and social and cultural mediation. Mediation in this sense means that ideas and inputs are shared, information is explained, and collaborative work is done in the classroom to achieve a certain goal (Council of Europe, 2018); in this case increasing positive attitudes and motivation towards the Frisian language and Frisian as a course within the curriculum.

Implementing such a language education strategy involves three different types of stakeholders, whose perception of LLs and Frisian are crucial in determining the applicability and value of the strategies. The first stakeholders concerned are pupils, whose current language attitudes must be charted to determine whether negative attitudes are indeed an obstacle for learning Frisian. Secondly, the beliefs of teachers of Frisian are important, as they can indicate what the aim of Frisian education is and what is needed to improve it. The third stakeholders concerned are policymakers at the provincial level, who are involved in shaping education policy as well as the LL. Identifying the attitudes and beliefs of these three stakeholder-groups may explain how the LL can influence language attitudes and behaviour, and it sheds light on how the LL could be used in education. This study will therefore attempt to answer the following question: To what extent and in which ways can LL be implemented in Frisian minority language education? Three sub-questions can be posed in order to find an answer to this question. Firstly, we ask what the students' current attitudes towards the Frisian language and Frisian in the LL are, as they will identify the necessity of LL-implementation in Frisian education. Secondly, the topic of mediation will be discussed: this section will particularly focus on the teachers' attitudes towards Frisian minority education, the use of the LL in this and how they use mediation to improve the language attitudes of their students. Finally, the affordances explicitly identified by policymakers will be discussed. This reflects

the perceived implications of using the LL in minority education from various points of view.

These research questions will be addressed by implementing a questionnaire with 17 secondary-school students and by interviewing 11 secondary school language teachers and 2 provincial policymakers.

2 The Role of LL in Minority Language Education

2.1 *Linguistic Landscapes in Education in Minority Language Regions*

In regions with a minority language, the survival of these languages is often not the *status quo*: they must be actively protected. This is the case as minority languages are often perceived to have little economic and societal value when compared to majority languages and lingua francas such as English, as the latter languages offer access to wider economic and cultural opportunities (Grin, 2003). As a result, negative attitudes may exist towards minority languages: languages such as Frisian are often perceived as ‘backwards’ or ‘rural’ (Makarova et al., 2021). As language attitudes influence language use and language transmission, it is crucial that minority language attitudes are positive if the language is to be maintained (Knops & van Hout, 1988).

Within Fryslân, Frisian itself is often still regarded negatively. This is problematic in education, as it is suggested that a positive attitude boosts motivation and facilitates the learning of a language leading to improved academic performance (Krashen, 1982). Especially students who do not speak the minority language often have a negative attitude towards it (Ibarraran et al., 2008), as was confirmed to also be the case in the Frisian context (Makarova et al., 2021). Overall, secondary school students in Fryslân were found to be most positive towards English, probably due to its high status as an international language within Dutch society (Gorter, 2008), followed by the majority language Dutch. The students were least positive towards Frisian and other minority languages (Makarova et al., 2021). This suggests that home-language significantly influences language attitude. Teachers’ beliefs and attitudes are also found to influence the students’ attitudes, due to their exemplary role in the classroom and their influence on implementing educational policies.

Education is thought to be important for minority language maintenance as it improves students’ language proficiency, as well as that it is a space in which the students encounter the language regularly, increasing the prestige of the language in question (Sallabank, 2012). Therefore, education is often used as a vehicle to improve language position in minority language regions such as the Basque-country, Wales and Fryslân (Ytsma, 2006). However, it has proven essential that attention must be paid to the teaching approaches used in minority language education: a lack of time, a persisting monolingual bias (Gogolin, 2013) and the limited availability of skilled teachers and quality material have shown to be obstacles in improving

students' attitudes towards minority languages as a language and as a subject. The LL may be a tool in minority language education, as it may offer a source of raw material that can be used as examples in minority language education, and as it may increase the students' language awareness and intercultural competence.

LL refers to "the language on public road signs advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs and public signs on government buildings [that] combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 25). Language use in public spaces has two main functions: a LL can be a marker of, and a contributor to the ethnolinguistic vitality of a language (Edelman, 2014; Kuipers-Zandberg & Kircher, 2020). A LL provides a passer-by with information about the linguistic composition in a particular region, as well as that it symbolises the value of a particular language in that region. Through these functions, the LL can influence beliefs regarding the worth and vitality of a language, and thus may influence language behaviour (Baker, 1992). A low perceived vitality may decrease minority language transmission, causing language shift and potentially language loss or death (Fishman, 1991).

In Fryslân, speakers do not perceive Frisian to be particularly present in the LL (Kuipers-Zandberg & Kircher, 2020). This belief echoes data showing that Frisian is included in as little as 5% of signs in Ljouwert, Fryslân's capital, while Dutch appears in 90% and English in 37% of signs (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). Frisians have claimed that they would like to see more Frisian (Kuipers-Zandberg & Kircher, 2020). Frisian is thought to be more visible in rural areas than in urban spaces. This reflects the high number of speakers in rural as opposed to urban areas. This variability may be reflected in commercial as well as institutional signs: based on the Act on the Use of the Frisian Language, each municipality in Fryslân can devise their own rules and regulations regarding LLs (Kuipers-Zandberg & Kircher, 2020). Therefore, some municipalities have monolingual Frisian signage, while others use bilingual signs.

Awareness of such facts regarding the LL in Fryslân may be used in education to highlight the social functions of language, and is based on the students' abilities to reflect on their own dispositions regarding languages and language management processes (Duarte & van der Meij, 2018). Bringing students actively and openly into contact with their LL can develop students' linguistic and cultural sensitivity (Hélot et al., 2018). Language variations, their origin and implications may be explored and discussed. The LL may be incorporated in one of two ways: by learning in the LL, such as when students are sent onto the streets to document what they find in the LL (Dagenais et al., 2009), or by learning through the LL, such as when the LL is used as an example in a classroom setting (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). Using the LL in education allows students to actively reflect on their sense of identity, as well as on their language use, which may influence their language attitudes and use (Hewitt-Bradshaw, 2014). Therefore, using the LL to raise language awareness and improve language attitudes is particularly important in a minority language setting, such as in Fryslân.

2.2 *Mediation in Minority Language Education*

A suitable framework regarding language education in general, and minority language education in particular, is the emphasis on mediation. Within the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 13) a larger emphasis has been put on modes of communication that lie outside of the four traditional spoken and written respective and production skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading). One of these ‘non-traditional’ modes of communication is *mediation* (Piccardo, North & Goodier, 2019). Mediation skills are said to be important in classrooms that are continuously becoming more ‘dynamic, iterative, contextually and socially driven’ (Piccardo et al., 2019, p. 20). It can enable and support the user/learner as a social agent in its personal development (*idem*, p. 20). The importance of mediation derives from the fact that it can help construct ‘new meaning, in the sense of understanding, new knowledge and concepts’ (*idem*, p. 21).

There are three strategies of mediation identified in the CEFR; mediating text, mediating communication and mediating concepts. Mediating texts includes expressing a personal response, analysing and criticising any type of text, including literature. Findings need to be brought to class and discussions should be held. As for mediating communication, the aims are to facilitate a pluricultural space, to act as an intermediary in informal situations and to facilitate communication in delicate situations and disagreements. Mediating concepts focusses on facilitating a collaborative interaction with peers in order to construct meaning and to manage these interactions. In addition, users/learners are encouraged to engage in conceptual talk (CEFR Descriptors, 2020).

Research into minority language teaching has provided another important aspect that can be added to these mediation descriptors, namely *mediating attitudes*. In the Frisian case, it has been found that in general, Frisian-speakers hold negative attitudes towards their Frisian language (Gorter, Jelsma, Plank, & Vos, 1984; Hilton & Gooskens, 2013). Research into the language attitudes of older learners of Frisian (Belmar, 2019) found that learners have a more positive attitude towards Dutch and English. The more negative attitudes towards Frisian also resulted in the fact that the classroom was the only setting where Frisian was used to some extent (Belmar, 2019, p. 83). Improving attitudes could lead to using the language in more settings throughout the day. Teachers’ language attitudes can greatly influence the development of and attitudes towards both home and school languages. Adding a space of mediation where both teachers and learners speak openly about language attitudes will be beneficial for language education in general and minority language education specifically (Duarte & van der Meij, 2018).

In our study we will analyse how LL can mediate language attitudes of secondary school pupils, teachers and policy makers in the officially bilingual region of Fryslân.

3 Methodology

To identify the perceptions of the various stakeholders regarding LL in education, a mixed-method study was employed (Creswell, 2013). This design was used as it allows the study to be adapted to the needs of the various stakeholder-groups. Students' perception of Frisian and the LL was measured through a questionnaire, while the teachers' and the policymakers' attitudes were investigated using semi-structured interviews (Galletta & Cross, 2013).

3.1 Instruments

An online questionnaire was used to determine the students' attitudes towards English, Dutch and Frisian and the LL in Fryslân. The questionnaire was administered in a school setting and was designed in Dutch, as all students were fully proficient and familiar with the language in a school setting. The questionnaire consisted of 41 items, which were divided into 8 subsections (Table 1).

In addition, qualitative research methods were used to study the perceptions and beliefs of teachers and policymakers. Online semi-structured interviews were conducted with both groups to gather in depth-data (Galletta & Cross, 2013). The

Table 1 Overview of questionnaire

Sections	Aim	No. of items	Type of question	Sources
1	Overt attitude Frisian subject	2	Multiple choice & open answer	Marakova et al. (2021)
2	Language attitudes Frisian, Dutch & English	7	5-point Likert scale	Marakova et al. (2021)
3	Attitudes towards Frisian, Dutch & English in the LL	5	5-point Likert scale	Landry and Bourhis (1997)
4	Degree of cosmopolitanism	2	5-point Likert scale	Edwards (2016)
5	Language background	10	Multiple choice & open answer	Anderson et al. (2018)
6	Language proficiency in Frisian, Dutch, English & possible 4th language	5	5-point Likert scale	Anderson et al. (2018)
7	Language	2	Multiple choice matrix table	Anderson et al. (2018)
8	Personal background	8	Multiple choice & open answer	Anderson et al. (2018)

Table 2 Overview of interview guides

Sections	Topic	Teachers	Policy makers	No. of questions
1	Language background	✓	✓	3
2	Professional background	✓	✓	6
3	Language attitudes students	✓		3
4	Attitudes towards Frisian		✓	6
5	Teaching approaches	✓		6
6	Linguistic landscapes	✓		2
7	Language policy		✓	3
8	Linguistic landscapes (in education)	✓		10

teachers' data was gathered using two similar interview guides and was collected based on two studies (Makarova et al., 2021; van Dijk, 2021). While the focus of the interviews was slightly different, similar topics such as language attitudes, the role of LL and language awareness were addressed (see Table 2).

3.2 Sample

The first research question addressed students' attitudes towards their languages and the LL in Fryslân. The sample consisted of 17 students from various secondary schools in Fryslân (Table 3). All students were enrolled in Senior General Secondary Education (HAVO) or Pre-Academic Education (VWO). These are the two most academic tracks of secondary education in the Netherlands, eventually leading to higher education. A purposive sampling method (Wilmot, 2005) was used to select a homogenous group of participants consisting of students who chose to study Frisian in upper secondary education.

The second and third research questions studied teachers' and policy makers' attitudes towards Frisian and LLs in education. Eleven secondary school teachers of Frisian and two policy makers were interviewed for this purpose (Table 4).

3.3 Data Analysis

To answer the first research question, the data of the survey were entered into JASP (0.12.2), so that the dependent variables of language attitude and attitude towards languages in the LL could be analysed in light of the independent variables such as the students' language background, use, proficiency as well as identification and gender. A Cronbach's Alpha test showed that scales were sufficiently reliable (Table 5).

Table 3 Students' sample

Measure	Item	Count	Percentage (%)
School	School 1 (Leeuwarden)	15	88
	School 2 (Leeuwarden)	1	6
	School 3 (Leeuwarden)	1	6
Academic track	HAVO	6	35
	VWO	11	65
Age	14	1	6
	15	10	59
	16	5	29
	17	1	6
Gender	Male	6	35
	Female	9	53
	Other	2	12
Highest educational level parents	Vocational training (MBO)	7	41
	Applied university (HBO)	4	24
	University (WO)	6	35
Country of birth	The Netherlands	17	100
First language	Dutch	3	18
	Frisian	4	41
	Dutch/Frisian	6	35
	Dutch/Russian	1	6

To address the second research question, as to what the teachers' attitudes towards the Frisian minority language education are, how they make use of LL and how they use mediation in order to improve the language attitudes of their students, the 11 interviews were analysed in Atlas.ti 8 using an inductive method of analysis in qualitative research proposed by Boeije (2010). Boeije pictures data analysis as a spiral. In the initial stage of analysis, open coding was used, meaning that there are no predetermined categories in which the segments must be put. In the second stage of axial coding, categories were created with loose segments. Finally, the data was reassembled through the process of selective coding. In this stage, the categories found in the data are related to each other to create a full image of the information gathered. In total, 198 codes were used for the teachers' interviews for the categories 'students' attitudes' (27.9% of codings), 'teaching approaches' (40.4%) and 'LL' (31.7%). In addition, the category of 'mediation of attitudes' was analysed a posteriori. The transcripts of the interviews were read again in detail with a new focus on mediation with relation to texts, communication, concepts and in addition to this language attitudes. Assignments provided and activities done by the teachers were analysed and where possible placed within the categories of mediation. A second

Table 4 Interviewee sample

Participant number	Gender	Function	Years of experience in this function	Duration of the interview
T.1	Female	Frisian teacher	6	46:02
T.2	Female	Frisian teacher	20	29:16
T.3	Female	Frisian teacher	9	43:03
T.4	Male	Frisian teacher	3	43:15
T.5	Female	Frisian teacher	3	55:01
T.6	Male	Frisian teacher	42	58:15
T.7	Female	Frisian teacher	5	75:41
T.8	Male	Frisian teacher at the university	40	32:35
T.9	Female	Frisian teacher	30	52:38
T.10	Female	Frisian teacher	19	45:49
T.11	Female	Frisian teacher	11	31:20
A.1	Female	Policy advisor language and education	6	43:48
A.2	Female	Policy advisor language	1	43:48

Table 5 Reliability of scale

Topic	Language	Cronbach's alpha
Language attitudes	Dutch	0.828
	English	0.824
	Frisian	0.847
Language proficiency	Dutch	0.789
	English	0.740
	Frisian	0.763
Attitudes towards language in the LL	Dutch	0.807
	English	0.847
	Frisian	0.919

focus was put on the motivation of teachers as to why these acts of mediation are implemented in their classroom.

The third research question, aimed at unveiling what policymakers identify as affordances of the LL, was also addressed by analysing the interviews using Boeije's (2010) inductive method of qualitative analysis. A total of 113 codes were attributed to the transcribed corpus of the interviews with the following main categories: 'attitudes towards Frisian' (23.9% of codings), 'visibility of Frisian' (47.8%) and 'Frisian in education' (28.3%).

4 Results

4.1 Students' Attitudes Towards Frisian and Frisian in the LL

The questionnaire showed that the students held the most positive attitudes towards the Dutch majority language, followed by English. The students were least positive towards Frisian (Table 6). The attitudes towards the separate languages were found to be unrelated to each other.

Further, a Kendall's correlation coefficient showed that gender, socioeconomic status, educational level and language background were not significantly correlated to the students' language attitudes. Only language proficiency in Frisian seemed to significantly impact language attitudes ($b = 0.46, p = 0.01$): students with a high proficiency in Frisian generally held more positive attitudes towards Frisian.

Contrary to the general language attitudes, when it comes to the LL, the students were most positive towards seeing Frisian, followed by English and finally Dutch (Table 7). A Kendall's correlation coefficient and a paired samples T-test showed that the attitudes towards each language in the LL were independent.

Gender, language background or educational level of the parents did not significantly influence the pupils' attitudes towards any language in the LL. Socioeconomic status did appear to be influential in the attitudes towards Dutch ($b = 0.52, p = 0.01$) and Frisian ($b = -0.51, p = 0.01$): the higher one's socioeconomic status, the more likely one was to have a positive attitude towards Dutch in the LL, while, the less likely it was to have a positive attitude towards Frisian. Language proficiency in both Dutch and Frisian were also positively related to positive attitudes towards Frisian in the LL; this may be explained by the fact that Dutch language proficiency and Frisian language proficiency were strongly correlated in this sample ($b = 0.54, p = 0.01$). Finally, a Kendall's Tau test revealed a significant correlation between the students' attitudes towards the Frisian language and their attitudes towards Frisian in the LL ($b = 0.74, p = 0.001$). No significant correlations were found between the students'

Table 6 Students' language attitudes

Attitudes towards language	Mean attitudes (scale 1–5)	N
Attitudes towards Dutch	4.10	17
Attitudes towards English	3.50	17
Attitudes towards Frisian	3.23	17

Table 7 Attitudes towards languages in LL

Attitudes towards language	Mean attitudes (scale 1–5)	N
Frisian in LL	3.98	17
English in LL	3.02	17
Dutch LL	2.76	17

attitude towards English ($b = 0.16, p = 0.39$) or Dutch ($b = 0.18, p = 0.33$) and their appearance in the LL.

4.2 Mediation and Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Use of LL in Frisian Minority Education

A few general tendencies were found across the Frisian teachers in relation to the role of mediation of attitudes within minority language education. All teachers acknowledged the importance of providing space for other (home) languages in the classroom, as this enhances motivation to work on the Frisian language. As T.2 indicates, providing this space comforts the students and makes them at ease with all their languages. It also heightens the interest in languages in general which can lead to more positive attitudes and higher motivation for the Frisian class:

Students are interested in that, also in each other. Yeah, they like it when they can speak in another language. And sometimes they are proud, and they tell me about it. Yes ... or Chinese or English or French... (T.2).

To achieve these positive attitudes several different types of activities can be carried out, however, most teachers opt for an assignment where students need to find differences and similarities between their languages and Frisian or between typologically similar languages such as German. The findings are then later discussed in class, providing the opportunity to mediate concepts and also communication.

Students that are in the Frisian classes have highly heterogeneous attitudes towards the language. During the first year of high school, Frisian is compulsory. This has an influence on the attitude of students. They ask themselves why the language is needed as Dutch is the lingua franca in which they already know how to read and write. Therefore, teachers highlight the importance of working on attitudes and other aspects of the language that are not directly related to, for example, spelling and grammar. As T.11 indicates:

In the first year there is a lot of focus on language skills, while I think the focus should be much more on attitudes.

In addition, T.4 highlights that practical assignments, such as reading a play or exchanging experiences with languages, help to take the prejudice towards Frisian away and attitudes become more positive. When students have opted for Frisian in the last years of high school, attitudes become more positive. However, the levels of proficiency can still highly differ within one class.

Besides the actual learning of the Frisian language, there is also a significant amount of time that needs to be dedicated to Frisian culture, history and identity. Teachers mention that going on excursions to, for example, important landmarks helps with enlarging students' motivation for the course in general. In addition, LLs are used to show that the Frisian language is indeed used as a written form of communication by the community outside of the classroom. Making use of LL

exercises is found to be important by the teachers. Being able to see the language around you is highly motivating. T.9 puts it like this:

If they don't come across it, then it also isn't important and when you come across it here or there then unconsciously students, and people in general, notice that. And that it matters after all, and that it is there.

After using LL within their classes, teachers found that students' language awareness improved and that their negative attitudes changed towards being more positive. In addition, analytic research skills are developed during LL assignments as a small research project needs to be executed and the findings need to be interpreted. Next to this, overtly talking about and discussing what it means to be Frisian, to speak Frisian and to having Frisian around as a minority language throughout the course is crucial for the Frisian courses to succeed and for the language attitudes to become more and more positive. Students need to become actively aware of when they use Frisian and how this influences behaviour and attitudes.

All of the items described above contribute to showing that Frisian is not just a foreign language but a language that can be productive and that can be used in every aspect of daily life within the province of Fryslân. As T.11 puts it:

It's mostly the attitudes and trying to get them to use the language a bit, and also to realise that it is normal that other people use the language here in the province so that they should be able to understand the language.

All actions that are done in this context can be placed within the field of mediating attitudes. As a result, it can be concluded that teachers agree that general language attitudes will improve by engaging with LL and that Frisian courses will become more significant within the school curricula.

4.3 Policy Makers

Several affordances were identified by the policymakers in relation to the LL in Fryslân and its use in education. Firstly, it must be noted that the policymakers expressed very positive attitudes towards the Frisian language and felt personally responsible for maintaining the language. They felt that the language should not be policed, but rather that enthusiasm should be generated among citizens to speak the language.

The policymakers believe that they have a duty to represent the Frisian language. Furthermore, they argue that the external visibility of Frisian in the LL should stress the 'Frisianness' of the region towards visitors, as it may benefit Fryslân's image. More importantly though, the presence of Frisian was thought to be important for the maintenance of the Frisian language as it improves attitudes. As advisor 2 states:

I think it is all connected, when you see it more, then your attitude towards Frisian may change, but also the other way around: when your attitude improves then you probably will see it more too, because people will use it more (A2).

When it comes to education, the policymakers vigorously supported the improvement of Frisian education across all levels and forms of education. The particularities of the school, such as its location, number of students and their home languages are considered when creating educational policy, as the policy advisors believed such factors can greatly influence language attitudes and thus the students' approach to Frisian education. Other factors influencing the students' language attitudes are believed to be their parents' attitudes. Considering the students' background and attitudes is thus regarded as essential in improving the quality of Frisian education, while education is also regarded as a tool to improve such attitudes. According to the policymakers, increasing awareness of the value of languages is an important aspect of minority language education, as they thought that the functional economic value of Frisian is higher than most students believe. According to advisor 1:

Awareness has two sides: it is being aware that it is the language of a lot of people here, and also knowing the background of the language a bit. [...] But there is a big component of how functional it really is if you later encounter it in practicing your job" (A1).

The policymakers also recognised the importance of language visibility in increasing language awareness and improving attitudes and advocated an increased presence of Frisian inside schools and their communication.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to determine to what extent and in which ways the LL can be implemented in Frisian minority education. This was done by considering various points of view. Our first objective was to determine students' attitudes towards Frisian and its presence in the LL. Secondly, minority language teachers' attitudes were discussed to determine how mediation is used in combination with the LL in Frisian education. The third objective was to determine the affordances of the LL identified by policymakers.

5.1 *Explaining Students' Attitudes Towards Languages and the LL*

The current study showed that students had the most positive attitudes towards Dutch, followed by respectively English and Frisian. The students' positive views regarding Dutch may be explained by the perceived high social status and functional value of the language in the Frisian context (Knops & Hout, 1988; Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Nettle & Romaine, 2000). It must be considered that location may be relevant: as Belmar (2018) stated, Dutch is overwhelmingly dominant and Frisian is regarded quite negatively in the city of Leeuwarden, where the students studied. Their attitudes may thus have been more positive towards Dutch and more negative towards Frisian

than students in a school in a rural town. English' second position reflects its global status as a *lingua franca*, as well as its strong role in media (Ytsma, 2006).

Interestingly, language background was not found to be a determining factor: students rated Dutch most positive regardless of their first language. This confirms previous findings that while Frisians are generally more positive towards their own mother tongue than non-Frisians, all have rather negative attitudes towards Frisian (Hilton & Gooskens, 2013; Ytsma, 2006), and shows that societal factors may be more influential than language background. Language proficiency was also not found to be influential, contradicting previous findings that positive attitudes are interrelated with higher performance through motivation (Krashen, 1982). However, this may be explained by the sample-bias: all students were quite proficient and motivated to begin with. Factors such as gender, cosmopolitan identity, educational level, and language use were not found to be relevant either, indicating that societal value of the languages does not differ across these groups.

Furthermore, the students' positive attitudes towards Frisian in LLs reflects Kuipers-Zandberg and Kircher's (2020) finding that Frisians want to see more Frisian reflected in the LL; Students with a high proficiency in Dutch and Frisian were particularly positive towards Frisian in the LL: this may be explained by the fact that Dutch correlated strongly with Frisian proficiency. Students with high proficiency in Frisian are likely to be positive towards visibility in the LL, as it may increase the use and value of the language in which the student is proficient (Bourhis, 1992). The negative attitudes towards Dutch in the LL, as compared to those towards English, may be explained by the fact that Dutch texts are regarded as standard, while those in English appeal to the teenagers' identities (Edwards, 2016). Finally, students with a higher socio-economic status were more likely to be positive towards Dutch in the LL, and more likely to be negative towards Frisian. This suggests that Frisian is still associated with lower socio-economic standards, especially by non-speakers (Hilton & Gooskens, 2013).

The fact that the student's attitudes towards Frisian in the LL were the polar opposite of their general language attitudes is particularly interesting. General attitudes may reflect the current LL (Shohamy, 2006), in which Frisian is scarcely present (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). Furthermore, it may reflect a difference between cognitive and affective attitudes (Baker, 1992): the students may believe logically that Dutch is more valuable than Frisian, while they would feel it would be nicer to see Frisian in their LL. It may also show the power of awareness: by drawing the students' attention to language visibility, they may have examined their attitudes more closely, evaluating the languages differently. If this is indeed the case, increasing Frisian's visibility is crucial, as it would improve the perceived importance of the language.

5.2 *Explaining Teachers' Beliefs and Attitudes Towards Frisian and the LL*

As previously suggested, teachers' beliefs are incredibly influential on teaching approaches (Menken, Funk, & Kleyn, 2011), and by extension on the attitudes and beliefs of students (Byrnes, Kiger, & Manning, 1997). Therefore, this section discusses Frisian teachers' beliefs regarding the role of LL in mediating attitudes towards the language. Overall, it was found that teachers believe that language visibility can influence attitudes, in line with previous studies (Bourhis, 1992). This explains why the teachers are predominantly positive about including the LL in education. Implementing LL-interventions may improve the students' attitudes as it familiarises students with the language and increases language awareness by highlighting social functions of Frisian (Dagenais et al., 2009), so that students may reflect on their own dispositions, behaviours, and beliefs regarding languages (Duarte & van der Meij, 2018; Hewitt-Bradshaw, 2014). This type of reflection provides an excellent starting point for teachers and students to engage in the act of mediation. Not only the three fields of mediation provided by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018) can be touched upon, namely mediating texts, communication and concepts. Also attitudes can be mediated consciously within the classroom following a critical LL-assignment. As the teachers in this study mentioned, it was important for them to actively touch upon the subject of language awareness and language attitudes. This should therefore be incorporated into all Frisian language and culture courses throughout all types of education.

The teachers were particularly positive about learning in the LL rather than learning in a classroom-setting: all teachers highlighted that project- and inquiry-based assignments work best to engage and motivate students, as suggested by Hélot et al. (2018). Furthermore, active LL-assignments were believed to enhance analytic, teamwork, and writing skills as well. This was deemed important to maintain the relevance of Frisian as a subject and the motivation of the students.

However, the teachers named several obstacles for LL-implementation. They highlight that the beliefs of the school's management are often negative. This negatively impacts the quality of minority language education: little time is allocated to Frisian lessons, leading to a lack of time and inconvenient group sizes especially for first-year students; Frisian is often not included in overarching activities such as language squares, undermining the position of Frisian in the school; as such, Frisian is barely visible in the school. This is in line with previous research (Gorter et al., 2008; Johnson, 1996; Sallabank, 2012), but highlights the importance of management rather than of teachers.

5.3 Explaining Policymakers' Beliefs and Attitudes Towards Frisian and the LL

The policymakers identified increasing awareness and positive attitudes as affordances of the LL, reflecting Bourhis & Landry's theory (1997). The policymakers argued that such positive attitudes are necessary for language protection, making LLs a vehicle for language maintenance. Moreover, the policymakers stressed their duty to represent Frisian regardless of effects of the LL, which may be explained by the provinces' responsibility for protecting and maintaining Frisian as according to the BFTK (Provinsje Fryslân, 2019). Therefore, the advisors actively work on increasing the presence of Frisian in their external communication.

Like Landry and Bourhis (1997), the policymakers stressed that visibility and positive attitudes are interrelated. As was suggested by Gorter et al. (2008), the policymakers work towards improving the quality of Frisian education, especially across different levels and types of education. Again, much attention was paid to particular differences, such as location and background of students, so that policy could be effectively carried out across Fryslân. Furthermore, the policymakers were positive regarding language awareness techniques in education. They especially stressed the importance of functional awareness, as they believe that the economic value of the Frisian language is larger than students often believe.

To fully grasp the affordances of the LL, the theory explaining the function of LL-interventions in education must be confirmed. It is therefore proposed that in future research, the students' attitudes towards languages and the LL be tested before and after an LL-intervention. The students' attitudes towards the assignments may then also be included to document how such approaches are received. Future research may also include tests of language proficiency or more implicit language attitudes. Furthermore, the teachers' implementation of the LL-approach must be documented, as their cognitive, affective and behavioural attitudes may differ (Baker, 1992; Makarova et al., 2021). The policymakers' perspective could also be studied more by comparing the policymakers' attitudes to the actual policy plans and their execution. Finally, the topic of this study should be extended to include other languages that are part of the Frisian context, in order to investigate what the influence of the inclusion of such languages would be on the students' attitudes and the teachers' teaching approaches. While this study is limited in its extent, its suggestions and findings may prove useful for further research in the field of multilingual pedagogies and the LL.

6 Conclusion

The current study addressed the issue of LL in minority language education. The three perspectives analysed are closely interrelated. Effectively, the perspectives of the students, teachers, and policymakers can be placed on a continuum of influence and perspective. While the students' perspective represents a documentation of current

language attitudes and the direct implications of LL-intervention on their daily lives, the policymakers are not confronted with direct implications, but take a broader perspective in which they consider the vitality of languages. Furthermore, they have a more active role to play, as they are constantly exerting influence. The teachers' perspective mediates between these two, as it implements language and education policy designed by the policymakers, but must consider the students' perspective to teach successfully (Menken et al., 2011). It is crucial to realise that all perspectives are valuable, and that the perspectives are interdependent.

The relation between the various perspectives is evident when we think of the degree to which both policymakers and teachers consider the particular circumstances of schools and students in their actions. Students' attitudes therefore indirectly influence teaching approaches and language policies, both in the LL and in education. This is also where the influence of LL-approaches can be beneficial: by introducing language awareness into the curriculum, improving the students' knowledge & attitudes, the attitudes of the broader public can be changed, improving subjective and possibly objective ethnolinguistic vitality. In turn, this would alter educational and policy perspectives. Figure 1 depicts the interactions between the various stakeholders and influential factors suggested by this study.

Furthermore, it seems that the knowledge and attitudes of the three stakeholder groups mostly converge. Data from all groups confirm that Frisian is perceived negatively when compared with Dutch and English, and that language proficiency and familiarity may be influential in this. All groups would also like to see an increase in Frisian's visibility in the LL, although other languages must also be included according to teachers and policymakers. This reflects awareness of the complexity of the linguistic composition of Fryslân (Duarte, 2020). Furthermore, the results from all three groups supported the implementation of LL-assignments within broader multilingual pedagogies.

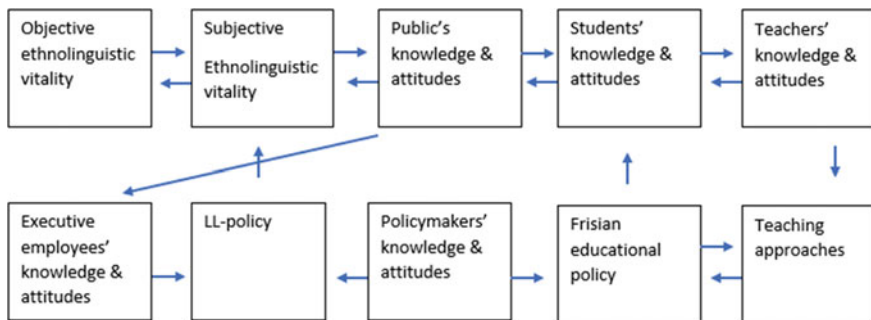


Fig. 1 The interactions between stakeholders

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