



European Research Centre on  
Multilingualism and Language Learning

**Languages and Language Education in Fryslân**  
**The role and position of Frisian in the province**  
**of Fryslân and in Frisian education**



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## Summary

Since 2007, the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning of the *Fryske Akademy* and the University of the Basque Country have been working together on a comparative research project entitled “The added value of multilingualism and multilingual education”. This research project is carried out in two different European regions where a minority language is spoken: Fryslân in the Netherlands and the Basque Autonomous Community in Spain. In this project the Mercator Research Centre cooperates with the University of the Basque Country with the aim to: 1) analyze bilingualism and multilingualism as resources for the individual and society; 2) analyze bilingualism and multilingualism as resources in school.

Part of the analysis involves a comparison of the ways in which languages and multilingualism are dealt with in both regions. To this end, it is necessary to extend and enhance existing knowledge about the two regions and about the developments concerning language(s). This report describes the role of languages in Fryslân and in education, with an emphasis on Frisian.

### **Fryslân and the Frisian language**

Fryslân is one of the twelve Dutch provinces and currently has 643,000 inhabitants. The province is located in the north of the Netherlands. Since 1997 the Frisian name for the province (Fryslân) has been used as its official name. In Fryslân, Frisian is spoken alongside with Dutch. It is recognized as a second official language in the Netherlands. Frisian is spoken throughout the province of Fryslân, although in some areas Frisian is not traditionally used. These areas are De Stellingwerven in the south eastern part of the province, *It Bildt* in the northwest and the islands of *Flylân* and *Amelân*. Around 440,000 people are able to speak Frisian, of whom 350,000 speak the language as their mother tongue. A standardized version of the Frisian language exists, with an official spelling, but different dialects of the language are also spoken throughout the province. These dialects are mutually intelligible.

Surveys indicate that the number of people speaking Frisian as their first language has remained more or less stable since 1980 (54%). The number



of Dutch speakers, on the other hand, would seem to grow – at the expense of regional dialects. In addition to the immigration of Dutch-speaking people into Fryslân, another reason for the growing number of Dutch speakers is the fact that the number of parents speaking Frisian to their children is decreasing. In 2007, 48% of all parents spoke Frisian to their children; 47% spoke Dutch. Moreover, 16% of the Frisian couples decide to raise their children in the Dutch language (Provinsje Fryslân, 2007b). A third reason is that relatively many children from Frisian families speak (mostly) Dutch to their friends. Still, this not only holds for children. Amongst Frisians, there is a strong tendency for an entire group to switch to Dutch when one person in this group speaks Dutch.

For a few decades now, as one of the provincial government's tasks, policy makers and politicians have prepared and taken certain legal measures to improve the position of Frisian in several domains of society. In this respect, a significant development has been witnessed over the years, from little attention for the (legal) position of Frisian and the status of the language in the 1950's to an official language policy that has been in place since 1985. A non-stop series of changes in legislation and political measures related to the role of Frisian in several domains has led to today's situation in which the use of Frisian is possible in many different domains. The legal position of Frisian is equal to the position of Dutch in the province. In the Dutch context, Frisian has the status of a minority language, and as such is recognized under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Although, from a legal point of view people in Fryslân are free to use either Frisian or Dutch, in daily life this freedom of choice is somewhat limited as a result of social pressure. Speakers of Frisian learn the Dutch language to participate in society. Dutch is also the language associated with a high job and social status. Of the domains targeted by official language policies (judiciary, administration, economics, healthcare, media, culture), education has received by far the most attention.

### **Education in Fryslân**

In Fryslân about 180,000 children receive formal education. Of all these children, 4% is enrolled in pre-school education; 36% in ordinary primary schools; 35% in ordinary secondary schools; 14% in vocational training and 11% in tertiary education. Fryslân has three institutes for higher professional

education offering initial primary teacher training (PABO). There are two types of training for teachers of secondary education: grade two (for the lower levels and lower grades of secondary education) and grade one (for the upper grades and the higher levels of secondary education). Frisian can be studied as a subject at three universities in the Netherlands, but only one university offers a full Bachelor's and Master's programme.

### *Quality of education*

Pupils in primary education in Fryslân perform less well on Dutch language and mathematics compared with their peers on a national level. This is particularly apparent in groups with low socio-economic status, but also in the middle and higher social classes (Van Ruijven, 2003). Lower performance rates are especially visible in the upper grades of primary education. The socio-emotional development of Frisian pupils is no different from that of pupils in the rest of the country. The position of Frisian as a subject is not too favourable. Of the primary schools that are obliged to teach Frisian, 6% fail to do so; of the secondary schools that are obliged to teach Frisian, only 70% provide the lessons. And this is not the only area where Frisian schools perform badly. Compared with the rest of the Netherlands, in Fryslân less students receive education at the highest level of secondary education. In the Frisian educational context, the Frisian language has become the provincial government's main point of interest, and with the policy document Boppeslach formulated in 2006, the Province of Fryslân shows the ambition to support schools in the improvement of their educational quality. The teaching of the Frisian language is part of these plans.

### *Teaching materials*

Most teaching materials in the Netherlands have been developed for nationwide use and are in Dutch (or English in tertiary education). Two recent teaching methods are available for the Frisian language: *Studio F* (for primary education) and *Freemwurk* (for secondary education). In addition, specific teaching materials are available in Frisian for other subjects: history, world orientation, and biology and the environment.

## **Multilingualism in education**

Frisian has been a compulsory subject in primary education since 1980 and in the first grades of secondary education since 1993. Attainment targets are

different from the targets set for Dutch they differ for mother tongue speakers and non-mother-tongue speakers. It is possible to choose Frisian as an exam subject in secondary education, but the number of pupils involved are not very high (in the school year 2008, 78 pupils enrolled in the different levels of secondary education took a final exam in Frisian).

In vocational training and higher education there are no obligations for Frisian, and except for teacher training there is no education in Frisian as a subject. Also, in these types of education, Frisian is rarely used as a medium of instruction.

An important language project in Fryslân is the *Trijetalige Skoalle* (trilingual school). The participating schools offer education in three languages: Dutch, Frisian and English. The number of trilingual schools is growing steadily, and the Provincial government of Fryslân intends to raise the number of trilingual schools from 7 in 1997 to 50 by 2012, which is considerable but still involves only about 10% of all primary schools in Fryslân (Provinsje Fryslân, 2006).

Research results concerning the performance of pupils at these trilingual schools are positive and promising. Examinations show that trilingual education leads to important gains for two languages (Frisian and English) and does not lead to any losses (for Dutch) (Van der Meij, 2008).

In schools that do not participate in the trilingual school-project, Dutch is the main language used in the curriculum and as a medium of instruction, although a growing number of schools use Frisian as a medium for a half day or one full day a week. In the Netherlands and in Fryslân there is no legal obligation for the number of hours to be spent on language education. Schools are only expected to reach certain attainment targets for all subjects, including languages, and they are free to decide how much teaching time they wish to use in enabling their pupils to achieve these goals.

Next to trilingual primary schools, Fryslân also has three bilingual (Dutch-English) secondary schools, this provision is offered in the first three grades of secondary education only and Frisian is taught as a subject.

# 1 The Frisian language

This first chapter starts with a brief description of the history of the Frisian language, followed by sections focusing on specific sociolinguistic characteristics demonstrated by the inhabitants of Fryslân, on the languages spoken in the province and finally on the position of Frisian in society.

## 1.1 Introduction to the history of Fryslân and the Frisian language

Fryslân<sup>1</sup> is one of the twelve provinces of the Netherlands and is situated in the northern part of the country. The Frisian language goes back many centuries, to days well before the documented history of the language started in the 8th century. Frisian forms part of the Indo-European language group, together with, amongst others, English, Danish, Dutch and German. At one point, the language was spoken along parts of the North Sea coast (see figure 1.1).

In the Middle Ages, multiple languages played a role in the area that is now called Fryslân. It is assumed that Frisian was the main language at the time, but it is highly likely that also Lower Saxon, Hollandic, Latin and French played a role besides Frisian (Vogl, 2002). It is generally thought that especially in the countryside people spoke Frisian only, that merchants had knowledge of Low Saxon, that the upper classes knew French, and that scientists and clergymen knew Latin.

Since the 15th century, the role of Frisian came under pressure. From that time onwards, texts were mostly written in an early form of Dutch. Dutch was also adopted as the language of the church, starting with the reformation in the 16th century. Also, in domains such as education and jurisdiction the main languages were Latin, Dutch and Town Frisian. Dutch slowly became the language associated with higher job status and higher social status. In the countryside, however, Frisian remained the most important language. The language represented a common ancestry and a common history (Vogl, 2002).

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<sup>1</sup> In 1997, the official name of the province was changed from the Dutch 'Friesland' to the Frisian 'Fryslân'.

The situation of Dutch with its high job and social status in combination with the low status of Frisian lasted until the 20th century. It was not until the 1950's that the job and social status of Frisian improved. A non-stop series of changes in legislation and political measures concerning the role of Frisian in education, in politics and in jurisdiction has led to the present situation in which the use of Frisian in many domains is not only possible but also widely accepted (Vogl, 2002). The legal position of Frisian in Fryslân is, in theory, equal to the position of Dutch in the province. In the wider context of the Netherlands, Frisian has the status of a minority language and is protected, together with Limburgish and Lower Saxon as regional languages, under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages<sup>2</sup>. Three Frisian languages can be distinguished: West Frisian (*Wester(jauwers)-Frysk*), spoken in Fryslân in the Netherlands; North Frisian (*Noard Frysk*), spoken south of the Danish border in the region of the Land Schleswig-Holstein in Germany, and East Frisian (*East Frysk*), of which only Saterland Frisian (*Saterfrysk*) has remained in a small part of Germany (Lower Saxony).

### *West Frisian*

In Fryslân, 414,000<sup>3</sup> people can speak West Frisian, of whom almost 350,000<sup>4</sup> has Frisian as their mother tongue. West Frisian can be subdivided into the following dialects:

- *Klaaifrysk* (Frisian spoken in areas with clay soil);
- *Wâldfrysk* (Frisian spoken in peaty areas with shrubs and trees);
- *Súdwesthoeks* (Frisian spoken in the south-western regions);
- *Noardhoeks* (Frisian spoken in the northern areas);
- *Hylpersk* (spoken in *Hylpen/Hindeloopen*);
- *Aastersk* (spoken on the western half of the Wadden Island of *Skylge/Terschelling*);
- *Skylgersk* (spoken in the eastern area of the Wadden Island of *Skylge/Terschelling*).
- *Skiermûntseagersk* (spoken on the island of *Skiermûntseach/Schiermonnikoog*);

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<sup>2</sup> Of the three languages concerned here, Frisian has the highest status of protection. For Limburgish and Lower Saxon no sections from part III have been ratified. For more information consult The Council of Europe, *A Report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the Charter, pt. III: The Netherlands, Strasbourg, 20 February 2001*.

<sup>3</sup> 64% of all inhabitants (646,168) is able to speak the language (Quicksan Friese taal, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> 54% of all inhabitants (646,168) speaks Frisian as mother tongue (Quicksan Friese taal, 2007).

The final four Frisian dialects listed above have very few mother tongue speakers. Figure 1.1 shows the areas in which each dialect is spoken.

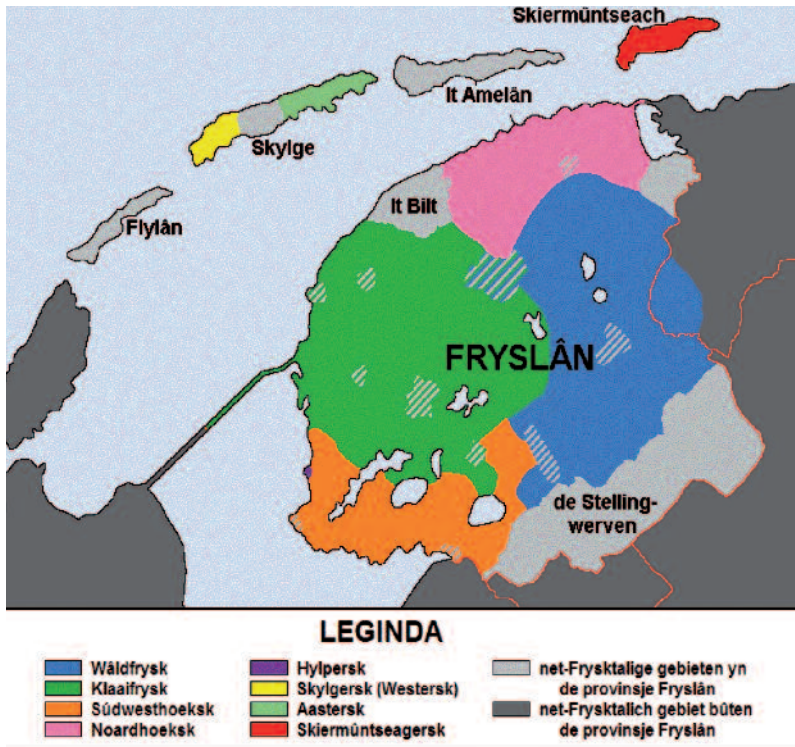


Figure 1.1. Geographical overview of Frisian dialects  
 (source: [http://fy.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fryske\\_dialekten](http://fy.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fryske_dialekten))

The names of the dialects refer to the region where these dialects are spoken. For instance, *Klaaifrysk* (Clay Frisian) is spoken in the north-western part of the province, and the term refers to the part of the province that has clay soil. The standard Frisian language mainly evolved on the basis of *Klaaifrysk* and *Wâldfrysk* (Frisian spoken in peaty areas with shrubs and small trees). The first official spelling dates back to 1879. The orthography of the language was changed several times and was ultimately laid down in the *Steatestavering* (States Orthography) in 1976 (implemented in 1980).

Another dialect that is spoken within the borders of Fryslân is *Stedsfrysk* (Town Frisian). This is a collective term for the dialects spoken in a number of Frisian cities. Town Frisian is characterized by Frisian syntax and pronunciation as well as Dutch vocabulary (Pietersen, 1978). Today, two explanations are offered for the existence of the language variant known as Town Frisian. One claims that Town Frisian is the language of those Frisians who tried to adapt to the new Dutch upper social layers (i.e. who spoke 'Dutchified Frisian'). According to the other explanation, Town Frisian may well be a further development of 16th and 17th century Holland dialect under the influence of Frisian (i.e. a variant of the dialect that was spoken in Holland (Van Bree & Versloot, 2009)).

Fryslân also has areas where Frisian is not traditionally spoken. These areas are de *Stellingwerven* in the south-eastern part of the province, it Bildt in the northwest and the islands of *Flylân/Vlieland* and *Amelân/Ameland* (see figure 1.1).

## 1.2 Background information on the inhabitants of Fryslân

In this paragraph, specific background variables of the inhabitants of Fryslân are discussed. It will be shown here how these numbers relate to those for the Netherlands as a whole.

### *Age structure in Fryslân*

The total population in the Netherlands is around 16,500,000, with a little over 646,000 (3.9%) people living in Fryslân.<sup>5</sup> The capital of *Ljouwert* has approximately 93,000 inhabitants.<sup>6</sup>

In comparison with the Netherlands as a whole, in Fryslân both the number of young people (aged 0-19) and the number of older people (aged 65 years and over) are higher than in the rest of the country (Provinsje Fryslân, 2007c). In Fryslân, 25% of all inhabitants are between 0-19 years of age and 15,2% are aged 65 or over. Nationally, these percentages are 24.3% and 14.3%. A different pattern is visible for people aged between 12 and 25. Until age 18, results for the province are positive. From age 19 onwards, people are less well represented in the province compared with the rest of the Netherlands. A possible explanation is that when young people start tertiary education, they tend to leave the province to continue their studies in a different part of

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<sup>5</sup> Situation in October, 2009. (CBS Statline). Exact number of inhabitants of the Netherlands: 16,564,029. Exact number of inhabitants of Fryslân: 646,168.

<sup>6</sup> On January 1, 2009, the exact number of inhabitants was 93,498 (CBS Statline).

the country. It may also be that they leave the province to find a job.

#### *Size of family homes*

Fryslân has over 275,000 households.<sup>7</sup> Almost one third (32%) of these are single-person households. At a national level, this figure is 35% (CBS).<sup>8</sup> Similar to the national level, and especially in the urban areas of Fryslân, this percentage is relatively high.

#### *Working population and income*

Fryslân has relatively more unemployed people than is the case on a national level: 8.4% versus 7%.<sup>9</sup> The province stays behind compared with the Netherlands as a whole as far as economic growth is concerned. National economic growth was 1.6% in 2006. In Fryslân, growth amounted to 0.9% (CBS). Another indicator of the province's less favourable economic position is the level of income per capita. On the national level, the average real disposable income per capita is €17,700. In Fryslân this is €16,500<sup>10</sup> In Fryslân, a relatively large part of the working population has a job in the agricultural or industrial sector.

#### *Religion*

Almost half of the population in the province (48%) does not report any religious beliefs or specific denominations. This percentage is higher than in the country as a whole (41%).<sup>11</sup> People in Fryslân who do report religious convictions are mostly Protestant (37% of the population), whereas in the whole of the Netherlands Catholicism has the most followers (30% of the Dutch population is Catholic, with most Catholics living in the southern part of the country).

#### *Political preferences*

In Fryslân, the Social Democrats (PvdA) and the Christian Democratic Party (CDA), in line with tradition, gained the most votes at the most recent general Dutch elections (held in 2006). This is no different in the rest of the country.

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<sup>7</sup> Households consist of one or multiple person(s) who live by themselves or together in a home and take care of their own daily needs.

<sup>8</sup> Situation on January 1, 2007 (CBS Statline).

<sup>9</sup> Numbers of 2006, *Fryslân in cijfers* (2007).

<sup>10</sup> Numbers of 2003, *Fryslân in cijfers* (2007).

<sup>11</sup> CBS Statline, numbers of 2003.



The liberal party VVD is less popular in Fryslân than is the case nationally. The Socialist Party (SP) managed to secure many seats at the elections in 2006, both in the Netherlands and in Fryslân. At the provincial and municipal level, the Frisian National Party (FNP) traditionally receives a considerable number of votes. At the previous municipal elections in 2006, FNP was the fourth-largest party in Fryslân.<sup>12</sup> At the provincial elections of 2007, they gained 7 of the 55 seats.

### *Diversity*

On 1 January 2007, the number of non-western immigrant inhabitants in Fryslân was 22,408 people, which is 3.5% of the Frisian population. This is significantly lower than in the Netherlands as a whole, where 10.5% of the inhabitants are migrants. In Fryslân, Surinamese people form the largest group of migrants. On a national level, the largest group of non-western immigrants is formed by Turkish people. The country's immigrant population is relatively young: only 3.1% is aged 65 or over (in comparison: nationwide this is 15%). In Fryslân, the immigrant population is even younger. Here, only 1.7% is 65 years old or over. In Fryslân, the majority of migrants have taken up residence in the more urban areas.<sup>13</sup>

## **1.3 Mother tongues in Fryslân**

### **1.3.1 First languages in Fryslân**

In 2007, 54% of the inhabitants of Fryslân spoke Frisian as their mother tongue. Another 35% spoke Dutch as their mother tongue (Provinsje Fryslân, 2007b). About 10% spoke a regional dialect (for regional dialects see section 1.1). Research carried out on behalf of the provincial government has shown that 1% of the inhabitants of Fryslân speaks a foreign language as their mother tongue. Little is known about these foreign languages: only a few projects have focused on the topic. One study held amongst children in primary education showed that in total more than 60 mother tongues other than Frisian or Dutch were spoken amongst school children in *Ljouwert*, with English appearing to be the mother tongue spoken by most of the children

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<sup>12</sup> The party gained 9.5% of all votes.

<sup>13</sup> Fryslân has 4 'city municipalities': *Ljouwert*, *Snits*, *Harns* and *Boalsert*. These are cities with traditional, now folkloric, city rights. This does not mean, however, that these cities are the largest in Fryslân. Although *Ljouwert* is the biggest city, second biggest is *Drachten*, third comes *Snits* and fourth is *Hearrenfean*. Based on the number of inhabitants, *Drachten* and *Hearrenfean* can be considered cities, although they have not been granted city rights.

with a mother tongue other than Frisian or Dutch. Arabic came second, followed by Kurdish (Extra, 1989).

### 1.3.2 Developments in the language map of Fryslân

In the past few decades, several studies have been completed concerning the language map of Fryslân: in 1967 (Pietersen), 1980 (Gorter et al.), 1994 (Gorter & Jonkman)<sup>14</sup> and finally a quick scan was carried out in 2007 (Provinsje Fryslân, 2007b). This final research project was not as elaborate as the first three. However, it offers a reliable image of the current linguistic situation in Fryslân and confirms the relatively stable situation of Frisian as a community language. In 2010 a start will be made with a new extensive language survey that will be carried out by the *Fryske Akademy* (Frisian Academy).

#### *The language map between 1967-2007*

Pietersen was the first to conduct an extensive survey on the Frisian language in 1967. His results (published in 1969) showed that 71% of the inhabitants spoke Frisian, that 13% of the inhabitants of the province spoke Dutch as first language, and that 16% spoke a dialect.

In 1980, 54% of the inhabitants of Fryslân spoke Frisian as their first language. Dutch was the first language for 31% and another 13% spoke a regional dialect (Gorter et al. 1984). Compared with the numbers of 1967, this would indicate a substantial decline for Frisian. An important difference between both surveys is however in the sampling methods used and thus comparisons of the results of both surveys should be made with caution. Other reasons for this are the immigration from outside the province discussed above and language transmission (Gorter et al, 1984).

Between 1980 and 1994, the percentage of speakers of Frisian remained stable (Gorter and Jonkman, 1995). In 1994, Frisian was the first language for 55% of the Frisians. This is not different from the results of the survey held in 1980. Dutch was the first language for 28%, while 15% spoke a regional dialect. A small part was reported to speak a foreign language as their mother tongue (2%).

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<sup>14</sup> Pietersen's study was published in 1969, the study by Gorter et al in 1984 and the study by Gorter & Jonkman in 1995.

In 2007, 54% of all Frisians spoke Frisian as their first language. Dutch was the first language for 35%, while 10% spoke a regional dialect (Provincje Fryslân, 2007b). So, compared with the numbers of 1995, the number of Dutch-speaking inhabitants grew at the cost of those using regional dialects. Only 1% speaks a foreign language as a first language. Between 1980 and 2007, the number of mother tongue speakers of Frisian seems to have remained stable. The number of Dutch-speaking inhabitants seems to have grown, mostly at the cost of the number of people speaking a dialect.

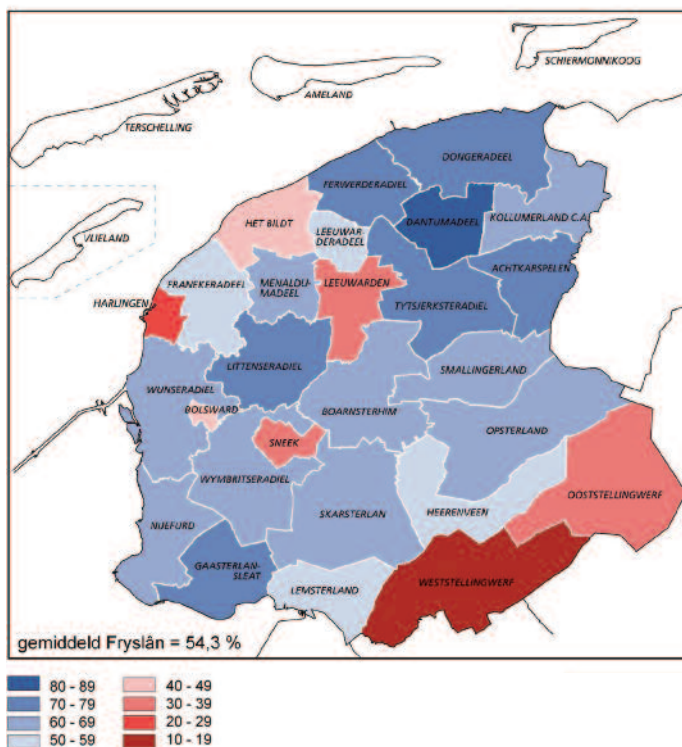


Figure 1.2. Frisian as mother language per municipality in percentages (Provincje Fryslân, 2007d)

The Frisian language has a strong basis in the countryside. All four studies show a difference in the amount of Frisian spoken in the cities and the amount spoken in the villages. In 2007, for example, in municipalities without a larger central town, Frisian was spoken by around 80% of the inhabitants. Figure 1.2 shows an overview per municipal community of the percentage of inhabitants with Frisian as the mother tongue. An overview of the number of people with Frisian, Dutch, a dialect or a foreign language over the years is given in the table 1.1.

Table 1.1. First language of the inhabitants of the province of Fryslân in percentages

	Frisian	Dutch	Dialect	Other
1967	71	13	16	*
1980	54	31	13	*
1994	55	28	15	2
2007	54	35	10	1

\* not investigated

### 1.3.3 Language command of Frisian

In all four language surveys, the language command of Frisian has also been investigated. Respondents were asked to self-report on their Frisian language skills for understanding, speaking, reading and writing. Results are presented in figure 1.3.

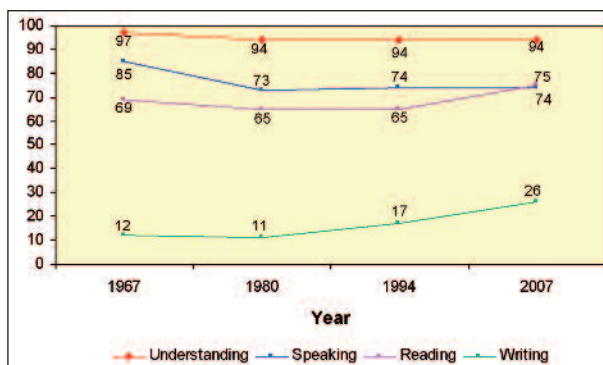


Figure 1.3. Language command of Frisian over the years

As the graph shows, the ability to understand and speak Frisian has remained stable since 1980. The ability to read and write has grown. It must be noted here that all these numbers represent perceptions of people's own abilities: no language tests have been held.

With results differentiated according to region, it can be concluded that in the more rural municipalities the language command of Frisian is better than in other municipalities (not presented in the figure).

### 1.3.4 Influencing factors on the language one speaks

#### *Age*

Certain demographic and sociological factors affect the number of people that speak Frisian. Next to the place of residence (city versus countryside), there is also a relation with age. Younger inhabitants of Fryslân speak Dutch as a mother language more often than older people (Provinsje Fryslân, 2007b). This may be illustrated by the following example. Of the inhabitants aged between 18-29, 52% had Frisian as their mother tongue, and of those who were 65 years and older 59% spoke Frisian as the mother language. Dutch as a mother language seems to have spread at the cost of Frisian, but even more at the cost of other regional languages.

Also with respect to understanding, reading and writing, this growing use of Dutch may also explain why it is older people who have a better command of the language.

#### *Level of education and profession*

With regard to the level of education, it appears that the higher the level, the lower the number of people that speak Frisian as their first language. The number of people with Frisian as their first language is over-represented in the lower levels of education. A slightly different pattern is visible for the *ability* to speak Frisian. Amongst Dutch-speaking inhabitants of Fryslân, this ability is positively related to educational level. For immigrated<sup>15</sup> Dutch-speaking inhabitants, the opposite is the case: the higher the level of education, the lower the number of people who can speak Frisian.

As far as understanding goes, there would not seem to be a relation with the level of education: on average, people from all levels of education are able to understand Frisian to the same degree. Reading and writing skills for Frisian become better when the level of education is higher.

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20 <sup>15</sup> Immigrated means that the person came to live in Fryslân at a later age.

Frisian-speaking people are mostly represented in the lower professional levels and in lower-income groups (Gorter et al, 1984). This is supported by hard numbers: in 1980, 2% of the Frisian-speaking community were employed at the highest level. Of the Dutch-speaking people, 10% were employed at the highest level.

#### **1.4 Language status and language use**

Although, from a legal point of view people in Fryslân are free to use either Frisian or Dutch, in daily life this freedom of choice is somewhat limited as a result of social pressure. Frisian-speaking people learn the Dutch language to participate in society. The choice of which language to use generally lies with the majority of Dutch-speaking people: the role of Frisian is only as substantial as Dutch-speaking people allow it to be (Vogl, 2002). For instance: if Frisian speakers are addressed in Frisian in a shop, 98% of them respond in Frisian. If Frisians are addressed in Dutch, 22% respond in Frisian. When Dutch-speaking people are spoken to in Frisian, only 33% respond in Frisian (Gorter & Jonkman, 1995).

In groups, when one person does not speak the Frisian language, there is a tendency that the whole group switches to Dutch (Foekema, 2004). For instance: of the Frisian children, 35% speak to their friends (mostly) in Frisian, and 39% (mostly) in Dutch. Children from bilingual (Frisian-Dutch) families and Dutch families hardly speak Frisian to their friends.

Several reasons may be given for this language accommodation by Frisians towards the majority language. One may not know if the conversation partner understands Frisian well enough, and, more importantly (also in the light of status), not assimilating leaves the impression of not accepting the approaching person (Jonkman, 1989). Although Frisians tend to adapt to their conversation partners, they are nevertheless proud of their language. A short survey conducted by the NHL (2008) shows that 86% of the respondents are to some extent proud of the Frisian language and culture.

The language status in society for Frisian is rather low. An indicator of this is the fact that more and more Frisian-speaking people raise their children in the Dutch language (in 2007 this applied to 16%, Provinsje Fryslân, 2007b). This phenomenon is particularly visible in the higher social classes (Gorter et al, 1984), which could indicate that Frisian is seen as a language with a limited status in terms of climbing the social ladder.

The provincial government recently launched a campaign to increase bilingual awareness and to make people proud of the fact that they are bilingual.<sup>16</sup> In addition, a language promotion campaign was started aimed at parents and their young children (aged 0-4). The language spoken by parents at home is important for the future use of a language. Most of the time, children are spoken to in the language the parents speak to each other. In 2007, 48% of the parents spoke Frisian to their children, and 47% spoke Dutch (Provinsje Fryslân, 2007b).

## 1.5 Linguistic landscape

The study of the linguistic landscape, the written languages on signs in the public space, aims at presenting additional information about the role of languages in society. More specifically, the linguistic landscape serves as a distinctive marker of the geographical territory inhabited by a given language community, and it can also provide information about the sociolinguistic composition of the language groups inhabiting the territory in question. The predominance of one language on public signs in relation to other languages can reflect the relative power and status of competing language groups.

Specific research has been done on the linguistic landscape in certain areas in Fryslân (Gorter & Cenoz, 2006; Gorter & Hanenburg, 2007).<sup>17</sup> Results show that Dutch is the dominant language on signs in the main shopping street in *Ljouwert*. Bilingual (Dutch-English) and English signs are also commonly used. The role of Frisian appears to be only marginal.

Although the study is not representative for a large geographical territory, its findings indicate that the linguistic landscape is also related to the language status of minority languages. *Ljouwert* is not a typical Frisian-speaking municipality, and it is in line with this fact that relatively little Frisian is visible in the linguistic landscape. Another possible explanation for this fact is that

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22 <sup>16</sup> One initiative, for instance, is the "*Praat mar Frysk*" (Speak Frisian) campaign. This campaign is an initiative of *Afûk* to create a larger awareness amongst Frisians with respect to their language.

<sup>17</sup> Abstract available at <http://www.meertens.knaw.nl/ss17/contributions/abstract.php?paperID=384>

Frisian is mainly used as an oral language, and that its use in writing is much more limited (Gorter & Jonkman, 1995).



## 2 General educational context

As is the case in the rest of the Netherlands, Fryslân has schools and institutions for all educational levels: pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, vocational and adult education, and tertiary education. This section will present relevant language-related policies and basic statistics on education in Fryslân. Also, a brief overview will be given of the way in which education is organized at different levels in the Netherlands and in Fryslân.

To ensure a thorough understanding of the policies we describe in this chapter, we shall briefly explain how Dutch language policy works and elaborate on the relationship between European, national and provincial legislation.

### 2.1 Relation between European, national and provincial policies

In 1996, the Netherlands ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (in short: the Charter). With this ratification, the state government recognized Frisian as a minority language that contributes to the cultural wealth of Europe. Ratification of the Charter has specific implications for education. The Charter consists of different regulations, from which parties can choose the ones they deem the most appropriate. The Dutch government has opted for eight regulations in relation to Frisian and education. These are the following:

1. *Make available a substantial part of pre-primary education in the relevant regional or minority language (art. 8, subsection 1a, part ii);*
2. *Make available a substantial part of primary education in the relevant regional or minority language (art. 8, subsection 1b, part ii);*
3. *To provide, within secondary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum (art. 8, subsection 1c, part iii);*
4. *To provide facilities for the study of these languages as university and higher education subjects (art. 8, subsection e, part ii);*
5. *Make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language (art. 8, subsection 1g);*
6. *With regard to education and in respect of territories other than those in*

*which the regional or minority languages are traditionally used, the Parties undertake, if the number of users of a regional or minority language justifies it, to allow, encourage or provide teaching in or of the regional or minority language at all the appropriate stages of education (art. 8, subsection 2);*

7. *To provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those paragraphs [concerning education] accepted by the Party (art. 8, subsection 1, part h);*
8. *To set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public (art.8, subsection 1, part i).*

The Dutch government is responsible for legislation on language and education. The government determines laws and regulations concerning Frisian and also checks if these laws and regulations are in line with European regulations. In the third report on the application of the Charter (2008), the Committee of Experts appears to be very critical towards the measures that the national government has taken in order to reach the goals agreed upon by ratifying the Charter. More specifically, the Committee of Experts comments that the national government does not show enough responsibility in fulfilling the undertakings agreed upon, but instead places this responsibility with lower governments.

What is typical of the educational system in the Netherlands is the fact that there is no vertical delegation of the responsibility for the provision of education from the national government to the local authorities. The national government *does*, however, have an influence set by law on the attainment targets specifying the level of knowledge and skills that all pupils should have reached at the end of their education. On the basis of the principles of 'freedom of founding, direction and content', as written down in the Constitution, the school authorities are responsible for the way in which they educate their pupils and for the content of their lessons. As a consequence, national policies on education are limited to creating conditions for education by means of dictating laws and regulations (De Jong & Riemersma, 1994). The provincial government of Fryslân does not have any direct legislative or executive power in education. One exception is the policy on Frisian in education. In the current situation, the provincial government, together with

the state authorities, carries a first responsibility for Frisian language policies.

The power of the provincial government in the domain of education is limited, except with respect to the role of Frisian in education. To ensure the proper execution of the regulations stipulated in the European Charter, the national government and the provincial government have drawn up a covenant (*Covenant on Frisian language and culture 2001-2010*) in which 108 ambitions are agreed. The implementation of this covenant is divided into three periods: 2001-2004, 2004-2007 and 2007-2010. The plans for this last period are described in the policy plan *Fan Rjocht nei Praktyk* (From right to practice). For the period until 2010, the provincial government focuses on two issues: improving the image of Frisian as a modern language and enlarging the support for the language. Plans for the coming years coincide with the agreements of the Charter and with the recommendations made by the Committee of Experts.

The provincial government receives funding from the national government that has to be used for securing and stimulating the position of Frisian in education. The amount of money granted for this purpose is negotiated and determined on an annual basis (Hemminga, 2007). The agreement states that the provincial government should stimulate schools in Fryslân to adopt a language education policy, to survey the position of Frisian in quality policies drawn up for primary schools, and to encourage the ongoing training of teachers in the province. At the moment, the most important issues scheduled in the current annotation can be summarised as follows: education quality control, implementation of language policies at schools, the provision of guidance and support for these language policies and the development of a new learning method for Frisian. Today, the first three issues are being executed in an increasing number of schools and the teaching method has been completed - and is now in use at most schools in Fryslân.

The province itself intends to use the period until 2010 for making arrangements with municipalities about the use of Frisian. In relation with the national government, the provincial authorities aim at the mention in the Dutch constitution of Frisian as the official second language in the Netherlands. Secondly, a new covenant has to be agreed upon with the national government for the period from 2011 onwards. This is due to take place in 2010. Thirdly, the provincial government wishes to plead for a wider authority with regard to the Frisian language and cultural affairs in education.

## 2.2 Basic statistics and different school types

### 2.2.1 Pre-school education

#### *Overview of language-related legislation*

From 1989 onwards, the establishment of Frisian-speaking pre-school provisions for young children has been furthered. This ties in with policy plans formulated by the province to enhance the number of Frisian and/or bilingual playgroups and with the aim to inform parents on the advantages of bilingualism.<sup>18</sup> The *Stifting Frysktalige Berneopfang (SFBO)*, the Frisian foundation for Frisian-language child-minding facilities, is responsible for the running of bilingual day-care centres.<sup>19</sup> The foundation establishes Frisian-speaking playgroups that accept both Frisian and Dutch-speaking children.

In 2004, a law was introduced with regard to Frisian in pre-school education stating that Frisian can be used on a voluntary basis.

#### *Basic statistics*

Pre-school child care provisions in Fryslân, as in the rest of the Netherlands, can be divided into two types: *bernedeferbliuwen* (day-care centres) for children aged 0-4,<sup>20</sup> and *pjutteboartersplakken* (playgroups) catering for children aged 2½-4. A third, small-scale form of child care is that offered by registered child minders, who are allowed to take care of a maximum of six children in a family setting (usually their own home) (Eurydice, 2007).

Currently, Fryslân has approximately 300 centres for pre-school education in the form of playgroups and day-care centres. They cater for children until the age of 4, the moment at which primary education starts. Approximately 7,500 children were enrolled in pre-school education in Fryslân in the year 2006-2007 (De Jong & Riemersma, 2007). No figures are available for the number of teachers and group leaders involved in this type of education.

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<sup>18</sup> Policy document *Fan rjocht nei praktyk: Frysk yn Fryslân, taal tusken minsken*. (2007a)

<sup>19</sup> SFBO is based on cooperation between *Frysktalige Berneopfang (FBO)*, a foundation with an explicit policy that promotes a Frisian environment for the youngest children, and *Partoer CMO Fryslân*, a centre for public and social development. Within SFBO, the first group is responsible for the recruitment of new pre-school provisions to take part in the project, while the latter concentrates on the evaluation of the process concerning the introduction of bilingual groups (Boneschansker 2006). FBO is the successor of the *Stifting Pjutteboartersplak*, founded in 1989, which concentrated on Frisian immersion education in pre-school provisions.

<sup>20</sup> Day-care centres also accommodate children aged 4-12 in the hours before and after school, but they do not provide education for them.

In a survey held in 2000 among more than 100 pre-school provisions in Fryslân, group leaders were asked to report the first language of the children. The vast majority of pre-school groups had either predominantly Frisian-speaking children or predominantly Dutch-speaking children. A very small number of groups consisted predominantly of children with a regional dialect as their mother tongue,<sup>21</sup> and although immigrant languages with no historical origin in the Netherlands were reported as the first language of some of the children, there were no groups with children who spoke predominantly immigrant languages (Boneschansker & LeRütte, 2000). Results show that 46% of the groups in pre-school provisions contained predominantly Frisian-speaking children, that 52% contained predominantly Dutch-speaking children, and that 2% consisted predominantly of children who spoke a Frisian regional language.

The language background of the toddlers is related to geographic spread: there were more groups with predominantly Frisian-speaking children situated in the countryside while groups with predominantly Dutch-speaking children were mostly based in the cities (Boneschansker & LeRütte, 2000). In the same investigation, more than 400 teachers and group leaders in pre-school education in Fryslân were asked about their mother tongue. It was shown that 55% have Frisian as their mother language, 36% Dutch, and that the remaining 9% have a regional Frisian language or an immigrant language as the first language. This is comparable to the percentages seen in the entire population in Fryslân (see section 1.3.1).

### *Target group*

In the Netherlands, institutions that look after children under the age of 4 offer a type of childcare that cannot be termed 'education' in a literal sense: they provide environments in which children can play and sometimes educational aspects are added. Responsibility for the provisions lies with the local government of the municipalities.<sup>22</sup> The Child Care Act regulates the costs and quality of pre-school education and states that the language of communication should be Dutch, but that Frisian or regional languages can be used as well in regions where these are in living use.<sup>23</sup>

Since 2000, the government has funded a form of early childhood education

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<sup>21</sup> For the different dialects and regional languages of Fryslân see section 1.1.

<sup>22</sup> Regulations on the responsibility for pre-school education are laid down in two laws: the *Welzijnswet* (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees, 1994) (Welfare Act) and, since 2007, the *Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning* (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees, 2006) (Social Support Act), see Hemminga (2007).

<sup>23</sup> *Wet kinderopvang* (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees, 2004, art.55) (Child Care Act) see Van der Good (ed) (2007) and Regional Dossier (2007).

for children aged 2 to 5 from disadvantaged backgrounds. This VVE (Early and Pre-school Education) is envisaged to optimize development opportunities for indigenous Dutch children with poorly educated parents and for children from ethnic minority groups who do not speak Dutch. The education of children aged between 2 and 4 is the responsibility of pre-school provisions, while VVE involving 4 and 5-year-olds takes place in the first years of primary education (Eurydice, 2007).

#### *Sizes & distribution*

Pre-school provisions vary considerably in size. Playgroups usually consist of 10-13 children per group, while day-care centres may have more than 50 children, divided into different groups. The pre-school provisions are well distributed over the province: most villages (even the smaller ones) have at least some type of provision. The cities have a higher concentration of provisions, which results in a somewhat wider choice.

#### *General management & finances*

According to the Child Care Act, the municipalities have been responsible, since 2005, for the monitoring of the quality of childcare and for the partial subsidizing of the costs for childcare for some parents. The municipalities have delegated the quality control task to the GGD's (the Municipal Health Services) (Eurydice, 2007).

Although the organization of pre-school provisions is sometimes carried out in cooperation with a primary school, the activities of both day-care centres and playgroups are usually carried out under different administrative responsibilities, with other leading staff, and take place in separate buildings. However, a new trend has become more and more popular since the middle of the 1990s: the so-called 'brede school' (broad school). This broad school is based on cooperation between institutions involved with children who are growing up, such as child care provisions, educational institutions, sports and culture associations, to name but a few. Fryslân currently has four 'brede school' institutions and plans have been developed to establish more.

Day-care centres are in charge of a considerable number of children divided into different groups. These centres work with qualified teachers only and generally receive their subsidies from the municipalities, except for a few privately run provisions. Playgroups are smaller: these usually consist of around 10 children in the charge of an official group leader who is assisted

by one or more volunteers. Children do not usually attend the activities in playgroups for more than two days a week. It is not unusual for children in playgroups to visit day-care centres on other days of the week as well. In both types of centres, the activities are intended to prepare children for primary education, with specific attention being paid to the development of creativity, language and social skills as well as to special programmes for children with (linguistic) arrears (De Jong & Riemersma, 2007).

A substantial financial contribution has to be paid by the parents for both types of pre-school child care. As mentioned above, some parents receive a subsidy from the municipalities. Since the primary aim of these child-care centres is to provide parents with the possibility of combining their jobs with professional care for their children, in the past many employers offered contributions towards the costs of day care. As of 1 January 2007, such contributions have become compulsory in the Child Care Act (Eurydice, 2007). This is regulated by the Dutch Tax Administration.

## 2.2.2 Primary education

### *Overview of language-related legislation*

Since 1980, Frisian has been a compulsory subject in primary education. Before 1980, all legislation concerning Frisian in education focused on creating possibilities to teach the language. The official role of Frisian in primary education dates back to 1907, when the provincial government started to support Frisian lessons, although these were extracurricular and had to be taken after school hours. In 1937 it became possible by law to give lessons in a 'regional language that is spoken alongside Dutch'. This change in legislation created the possibility to teach Frisian as a regional language. Then, in 1955, another law change made it possible to use Frisian as the language of instruction in the lower grades, and the language became an optional subject throughout primary school.

### *Basic statistics*

Fryslân has 486 schools for ordinary primary education, in which 62,815 pupils are enrolled, and 13 primary schools for pupils with special needs, with a total enrolment of 2,050 (Provinsje Fryslân, 2008; De Jong & Riemersma, 2007).<sup>24</sup> Children in primary education in Fryslân have different mother tongues: Dutch, Frisian, a Frisian regional language or a foreign

(immigrant) language. Considerable differences can be seen in the distribution of the pupils' mother tongues among the different communities in Fryslân (Frisian as a first language is more often found in the countryside than in the cities, and immigrant languages as a first language are mostly found in the cities). A considerable number of schools have witnessed a decrease in the percentage of Frisian-speaking children in their population (Educational Inspectorate, 2006). No mother tongue figures are available for the teachers involved in primary education in Fryslân.<sup>25</sup>

As for the teachers' command of Frisian: an investigation among more than 800 of them showed that although the majority felt to have a sufficient or good command in all language skills, 29% of the teachers stated that they were able to write Frisian only with difficulty or not at all (Educational Inspectorate, 2006). It must be noted here that these teachers are not necessarily involved in the lessons of Frisian.

### *Target group*

Primary education in the Netherlands is available for children aged 4 to 12 and is divided into 8 grades. Although compulsory education in the Netherlands starts at the age of 5, approximately 99% of the children enter primary school at the age of 4 (Hemminga, 2007).

Primary education in the Netherlands can be subdivided into ordinary primary education and special primary education. The great majority of children take part in ordinary primary education, which is regulated in the Primary Education Act (WPO). The *WPO* also regulates education for children with learning difficulties, for children with learning and behavioral problems and for children who are threatened in their personal development. Special education is meant for children with physical disabilities and children with severe learning difficulties. The school institutions for special education usually offer both primary and secondary education. Special education for primary as well as secondary level is regulated in the Expertise Centres Act (WEC).<sup>26</sup>

Two important characteristics of education in the Netherlands are the

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<sup>25</sup> On qualifications to teach the Frisian language, see also section 2.3.

<sup>26</sup> The full names of the acts in Dutch are *Wet op het Primair Onderwijs* (WPO, Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1998) and *Wet op de Expertisecentra* (WEC, Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1998) (Expertise Centres Act), see Hemminga (2007).



constitutionally established 'freedom of education'<sup>27</sup> and 'equality of education'.<sup>28</sup> The former implies that everyone is free to organize or to take part in the type of privately run education<sup>29</sup> that fits his or her personal religious or ideological beliefs; the latter that public education and private education are treated equally under the law and that they receive the same financial support from the government. The majority of the privately run schools are denominational (mostly Roman Catholic or Protestant, but Muslim, Hindu and Jewish schools also exist, although not in Fryslân) (Eurydice, 2007; De Jong & Riemersma, 1994). Education organized according to a specific pedagogic or didactic principle, for instance Dalton or Montessori, can be either public or private. Besides government-funded public and private schools, a relatively small number of privately owned schools exist that do not receive any subsidies from the Dutch government and therefore usually charge parents considerable school fees.<sup>30</sup> Specific general provisions from the Primary Education Act apply to these private sector schools (Eurydice, 2007).

As a result of the principles of freedom of education and equality of education, differences between public schools and private schools based upon a religion or ideology are negligible in comparison with the situation in other European countries. Beside the fact that a specific religion or ideology is likely to be reflected in the curriculum in private schools and not in public schools, the main difference lies in the fact that public schools are administered by the municipalities in which they are located and have to admit all pupils who wish to enrol. Private schools, on the other hand, are managed by associations or foundations and are allowed to select pupils based on religion or ideology of the parents.<sup>31</sup> Thus, while educational policy and enabling conditions are developed at national level,<sup>32</sup> the management of educational institutions, public and private schools alike, is organized at the level of the community: the municipalities are responsible for the (delegation of the) management of

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<sup>27</sup> In Dutch: vrijheid van onderwijs, also named vrijheid van stichting, richting en inrichting (Constitution, art. 26, subsection 2).

<sup>28</sup> In Dutch: onderwijsgelijkheid (Constitution, art.26, subsection 8).

<sup>29</sup> The Dutch term used in this respect is 'bijzonder onderwijs' (special education).

<sup>30</sup> These are, for instance, international schools. It is estimated that in 2005 there were 34 of these schools in the Netherlands, one of which is situated in the province of Fryslân (Van der Wel & Van der Ploeg 2005).

<sup>31</sup> In the case of public schools, the municipal executive usually forms the competent authority, or the school board. Alternatively, the municipal council may delegate the task pertaining to the competent authority to other bodies governed by public law. The foundations or associations that form the competent authorities for private schools are always governed by private law (Eurydice, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> An exception is the language policy followed by the province of Fryslân: since the Frisian language is in living use in this province of the Netherlands only, language policy concerning Frisian is developed at the provincial level, not at national level.

public schools, and the school boards ('competent authorities') are responsible for private schools (Eurydice, 2007). The quality of education is guaranteed by the fact that the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences sets requirements that all public and private educational institutions have to meet. These requirements include directives for the qualification of teachers, the minimum number of lessons per year and compulsory subjects in the curriculum.

Pupils in primary education in Fryslân perform less well on Dutch language and mathematics compared with their peers on a national level. This is particularly apparent in groups with low socio-economic status, but also in the middle and higher social classes (Van Ruijven, 2003). Lower performance rates are especially visible in the upper grades of primary education. The socio-emotional development of Frisian pupils is no different from that of pupils in the rest of the country. According to Van Ruijven, reasons why pupils perform less well on language and mathematics include the size of the schools, their level of effectiveness (i.e. how much of the pupils' potential is developed), pupil care and special needs, teaching strategies, staff stability and time spent on teaching mathematics and language.

In 1993, an important addition to the Ministry of Education requirements was made in the form of attainment targets. In 2005, a revision of these targets took place.<sup>33</sup> The attainment targets describe the minimum level that pupils should reach for the compulsory subjects at the end of primary education in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills.<sup>34</sup> Attainment targets have been formulated for all compulsory subjects in education, and three sections are relevant in relation to languages and multilingualism: Dutch and English - obligatory for all primary schools in the Netherlands - and Frisian, obligatory for schools in Fryslân only.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The revision of the attainment targets can be found in the Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 2005.

<sup>34</sup> Attainment targets also exist for the first three years of secondary education, see paragraph 2.2.3.

<sup>35</sup> Primary schools can offer education in French and German on a voluntary basis. The Ministry of Education advises these schools to use the attainment targets for English as a guideline. As of 2007, schools have the option to train class teachers as French or German teachers (see Eurydice, 2007). The attainment targets for the languages concentrate on oral and written language competence and in strategies for communication and the acquirement of information. While the attainment targets for Dutch and Frisian were the same at their introduction in 1993, the targets for Frisian in the 2005 decision have been revised to make them more suitable to the actual language situation. This means that knowledge of the Frisian language does not have to be as thorough as that of Dutch, and that pupils need to acquire basic skills for reception and active use of Frisian. Furthermore, in a specification of the attainment targets of 2005, there is attention for the differentiation between pupils who have Frisian as their first language and those who do not. For more information on the attainment targets for Frisian, see section 3.1.1.

Schools in Fryslân may apply for an exemption from the obligation to teach Frisian and from the accompanying attainment targets, provided that they are located in a non-Frisian speaking area of the province. Primary schools on the Wadden isles are granted such an exemption, while schools in the Stellingwerwen are not relieved from their obligation to teach Frisian but may offer it in a special combination with regional geography and history (Educational Inspectorate, 2006). Special primary schools that fall under the WEC are free to decide whether and how they offer education in and of Frisian (Educational Inspectorate, 2006).

### *Parent involvement*

The Participation in School Decision-making Act of 2007 (WMS)<sup>36</sup> stipulates that every primary school should have a participation council consisting of staff and parents. This council has specific general powers and has a say in the school's decision-making process as envisaged by the school board. Participation takes place in the form of giving advice and suggesting proposals (Eurydice, 2007).

Besides the joint authorities with teachers, parents in the participation council also have an authority of their own when decisions are concerned that are of particular importance to them, for instance decisions related to parental contributions or the determination of timetables.

In addition, primary schools often have a parents' council, although this is not obligatory. This council consists of parents and is put in charge of the organization of festivities. The council may also offer advice to the participation council.

Primary schools are obligated to ask parents for their opinion on timetables and out-of-school care for pupils. Schools also organize evening sessions for parents during which a specific topic or the quality of education is discussed. In addition, schools often organize evenings for parents during which they are informed by the teachers on the performance of their child.

In primary education, parents often assist with school activities, for instance with reading lessons or swimming lessons. Also, parents often help with school excursions and organize stay-over facilities during the school lunch breaks.

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<sup>36</sup> The full name of the Act in Dutch is Wet Medezeggenschap op Scholen (WMS, Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 2006, 658), see Eurydice (2007).

### *Sizes & distribution*

In the Netherlands, there are twice as many private schools as there are public schools (Eurydice, 2007).<sup>37</sup> No exact figures are available for Fryslân, but the situation would seem to be similar: around 70% of the primary schools. (De Jong & Riemersma, 2007). The size of many primary schools in the province of Fryslân is modest in comparison with schools in the rest of the country. Because of the limited number of pupils per grade in some schools, two grades are sometimes combined and put under the responsibility of one teacher (De Jong & Riemersma, 2007). There are differences in the number of pupils per grade in primary education between the various municipalities in Fryslân. In the urban municipalities of *Ljouwert*, *Boalsert* and *Snits*, each grade has around 30 pupils, while in more rural municipalities this number does not generally exceed 15 (Provinsje Fryslân, 2008).

### *General management and finances*

All ordinary and special primary schools, whether publicly or privately run, receive financial support from the government in the form of a lump sum for staff and materials. The management of the school, the school board or 'competent authority', is responsible for a fair and qualitative expense system. Schools have a rather large autonomy in the distribution of these funds, as long as they meet the preset criteria for quality. Compensation for housing costs is organized in a decentralized manner through the municipalities.<sup>38</sup> Primary education in the Netherlands is free of charge and no obligatory tuition fees from the parents are asked for. Primary schools may generate extra income through voluntary contributions by parents or participation in fund-raising projects (Eurydice, 2007).

The day-to-day management of primary and special schools is the responsibility of the head teacher, who may be assisted by one or more deputy heads (Eurydice, 2007). A tendency of scaling up this process can be perceived today: multi-school management is becoming more and more popular in which the same team of people (the competent authority) manages more than one school (Eurydice, 2007).

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<sup>37</sup> The figures from CBS StatLine are: 2,380 public schools (2,291 of which concern ordinary education and 89 special education) as against 4,881 private schools (4,650 of which concern ordinary education and 231 special education) (information available from <http://statline.cbs.nl/>).

<sup>38</sup> This way of financing is regulated in the WPO (Primary Education Act) and WEC (Expertise Centres Act). Schools for special secondary education receive financial support in the same way.

### **2.2.3 Secondary education**

#### *Language-related legislation*

Developments concerning Frisian in secondary education are relatively recent. In secondary education, Frisian has been an optional subject for all schools from 1948 onwards. Until 1990, secondary schools were free to teach Frisian, and Frisian lessons were offered in some secondary schools up to examination level. In 1993 it became an obligatory subject in the first grades of secondary education. These years are called the 'basisvorming' (basic education). In higher grades, Frisian is offered as an optional course and exam subject. Frisian is an additional school subject in the province, but the schools do not receive any supplementary financing for the teaching of the minority language (Gorter, Riemersma & Ytsma, 2001).

Schools can be exempted from the obligation to teach Frisian. This applies, for instance, to schools located on the Wadden isles that belong to Fryslân because these are not traditionally Frisian-speaking areas (Educational Inspectorate 2006).

#### *Basic statistics*

In the school year 2005-2006, there were 30 schools for ordinary secondary education and 17 schools for secondary education for pupils with special needs. The 30 schools for ordinary secondary education operated from 58 locations in Fryslân. The number of pupils enrolled in these types of education were 60,670 and 2,377, respectively (Provinsje Fryslân, 2008; De Jong & Riemersma, 2007). No figures are available for the number of teachers, nor for the (linguistic) backgrounds of students and teachers. Around 80% of secondary schools are private (De Jong & Riemersma, 2007).

#### *Target group*

Secondary education in the Netherlands is intended for pupils from the age of 12 and lasts at least four years, that is until the pupils reach the age of 16 and full compulsory education ends. Full compulsory education is followed by two years of compulsory school attendance for pupils aged 16-18 until they obtain a basic qualification. This basic qualification may consist of a secondary school diploma at HAVO or VWO-level (see below) or a diploma at level four from a vocational training institute (MBO, see section 2.2.4) (Eurydice, 2007). Pupils need to be assessed before they can start in one of the different types of secondary education. The school boards of secondary

schools are responsible for the admission of pupils. The head teachers of primary schools are required to write reports for all pupils listing their educational potential and their level of attainment.

Ordinary secondary education in the Netherlands is described by the Secondary Education Act (WVO) and special secondary education for disabled children by the Expertise Centres Act (WEC).<sup>39</sup> To date, secondary education consists of three types (with increasing level of difficulty):

- *Vorbereidend Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs - VMBO* - pre-vocational secondary education taking four years and intended for pupils aged twelve to sixteen;
- *Hoger Algemeen Vormend Onderwijs - HAVO* - general secondary education taking five years and intended for pupils aged twelve to seventeen;
- *Vorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs - VWO* - pre-university secondary education taking six years and intended for pupils aged twelve to eighteen.

VMBO education is divided into four 'learning pathways' (more or less with increasing levels of difficulty):

- basic vocational
- middle-management vocational
- combined
- theoretical

All four learning pathways in VMBO schooling are offered in different sectors: technical skills, healthcare and welfare, economics and agriculture. HAVO and VWO provide broader and more general education, but pupils still have to choose a combination of subjects that together form one of four pre-defined profiles: science and technology; science and health; economics and society; culture and society. VWO education is subdivided into 'athenaeum' (the default programme) and 'gymnasium' (the athenaeum programme with Greek, Latin and classical culture as additional subjects).

Many secondary schools in the Netherlands do not offer one single type of secondary education only, but cater for pupils who attend courses offered in two or three types of secondary education. The same holds for Fryslân.

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<sup>39</sup> The full names of the Acts in Dutch are *Wet op het Voortgezet Onderwijs* (WVO, Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1963) and *Wet op de Expertisecentra* (WEC, Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1998, 496), see Eurydice (2007).

VMBO is meant as a preparation for vocational training, HAVO for higher professional education (HBO) and VWO for tertiary education at university level. In practice, however, many pupils from VMBO (the theoretical programme) continue their education at HAVO level; HAVO students may choose to proceed either to vocational training or to secondary education at VWO level, and VWO students may continue their education at HBO level. The possibilities for continuation of education after secondary education are shown in figure 2.1.

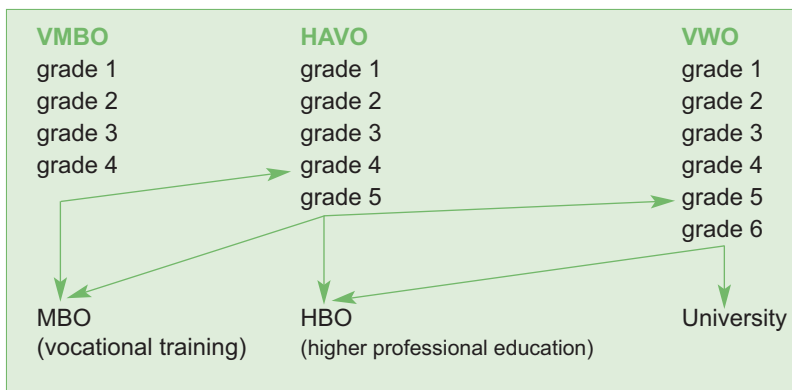


Figure 2.1. Continuation of education after secondary education

The administration and management of secondary schools are the responsibility of a 'competent authority' or 'school board'. For public schools, the municipal executive may act as the school board, or may delegate this task to another body governed by public law. The school boards of private schools are associations or foundations governed by private law (Eurydice, 2007). The day-to-day management of secondary schools is the responsibility of the head of the school, assisted by one or more deputy heads (Eurydice, 2007).

Secondary education is divided into two cycles: the lower grades and the upper grades. For the lower grades, the Ministry of Education has developed attainment targets that pupils should reach, in continuation of the targets set for primary education (see section 2.2.2). These targets describe the minimum level of knowledge, understanding and skills that students should reach for different compulsory subjects during the first two or three years of secondary education. The upper grades are designed to prepare students for

vocational training (VMBO) or tertiary education (HAVO and VWO) and are concluded by examinations for all students in the final grade. The examination criteria form the guidelines for the curriculum set-up in the upper grades.

The attainment targets for the lower grades of secondary education that are relevant with respect to multilingualism are the targets for Dutch and English (applicable to all pupils in secondary education in the Netherlands) and Frisian (only for pupils in secondary education in Fryslân). French and German, although these are compulsory subjects in the lower grades of all three types of secondary education, do not have their own attainment targets. The Ministry of Education recommends the use of the attainment targets formulated for English. The attainment targets for Frisian are characterized by a differentiation between students with Frisian as their mother tongue and those who learn it as a second language.<sup>40</sup>

The final school examination for all three types of secondary education consists of two parts: the school examination and the national examination. The examination syllabus, which has to be approved by the Minister of Education, specifies the elements that need to be tested in both examinations. The schools set up the school exams themselves, which they have to justify to the Educational Inspectorate. The national examination is held every year in May, with two resit sessions in June and August. The exams are developed at national level by the testing and assessment institute CITO. A few subjects are tested in school exams only. For all other subjects, the final result consists of the average mark for the school exam and the national exam (Eurydice, 2007).

Little information is available on secondary school achievements demonstrated by students in Fryslân. For vocational education, VMBO, the only indicator is the rate of pupils in *Ljouwert* passing their final exams.<sup>41</sup> In *Ljouwert*, this rate is 89% compared with 95% on the national level. Secondary school pupils at HAVO and VWO level perform equally well as pupils in Dutch provinces that are comparable to Fryslân (Drenthe and Limburg) in terms of final exam grades (Van Ruijven, 2003).

A gap can be seen between Fryslân and the rest of the Netherlands in the number of students choosing the highest level of secondary education (14%

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<sup>40</sup> Attainment targets Lower years Secondary Education Decree (Besluit kerndoelen onderbouw VO, Bulletin of Acts Decrees 2006). For an overview of the attainment targets see section 3.1.

<sup>41</sup> This comparison must be interpreted with care; rates of passing exams in individual cities often vary with the national numbers.



in Fryslân versus 16% nationally in the school year 2005-2006).<sup>42</sup> Van Ruijven mentions several reasons for this gap. First of all, Fryslân has a smaller number of pupils in the highest grades performing at the highest level. Secondly, in Fryslân pupils show a greater tendency to enrol in secondary education at a lower level than advised, as opposed to what is generally witnessed nationwide, especially in groups with lower socio-economic status. Thirdly, in Fryslân the number of VWO pupils who switch to HAVO is larger than the national average.

### *General management & finances*

Secondary school financing is organized in a way that is similar to primary school financing.<sup>43</sup> A lump sum is made available by the government to cover the costs of staff and materials. This lump sum may be spent by the secondary schools with rather large autonomy. The municipalities contribute towards housing costs.<sup>44</sup> Further sources of income for secondary schools include voluntary contributions by the parents or participation in fund-raising projects (Eurydice, 2007). Schools for secondary education are only seldomly located in the same building as primary schools. It is only in special education, for pupils with physical disabilities or severe learning problems, that primary and secondary school facilities are generally combined in the same building.

Secondary education for all pupils until the age of 18 is free of charge, except for educational expenses.<sup>45</sup> These involve costs related to education which are not paid for by the government, e.g. travel costs. The government has decided that as of the school year 2009-2010 schools will supply secondary education course books to their pupils free of charge. For parents with limited income, allowances are available for the educational expenses they incur for their children in secondary education and for the fees that full-time students in secondary education aged 18 or over have to pay (Eurydice, 2007).

### *Involvement of parents and pupils*

Parents have a say in school affairs through the participation council. At institutions for secondary education, the number of parents in the council has

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<sup>42</sup> CBS Statline.

<sup>43</sup> Special secondary education is subject to the Expertise Centres Act (WEC) and is therefore formally financed in the same way as ordinary and special primary education, see paragraph 3.2.2.

<sup>44</sup> This way of financing is regulated in the WPO (Primary Education Act) and WEC (Expertise Centres Act). Schools for special secondary education receive financial support in the same way.

40 <sup>45</sup> The age at which fees must be paid was raised from 16 to 18 as of August 2005 (Eurydice, 2007).

to be equal to the number of pupils in the council. If there is a lack of pupils willing to join, seats can be taken by parents. In primary as well as secondary education, council representatives are elected from and by the group of parents of the school's pupils.

Most schools have a student council which looks after the interests of students, but this is not an obligation. Activities undertaken by a student council include the organization of activities in the school (e.g. school parties), participating in several commissions and, most importantly, the student council has the authority to offer advice (either invited or uninvited) to the participation council. Many secondary schools also have a school journal designed and published by pupils.

#### **2.2.4 Vocational and adult education**

##### *Language related legislation*

In general, Frisian has no formal position in the curricula for vocational education. Frisian may be used as a means of instruction, but since no Frisian teaching materials for vocational education are available, this only happens on a very modest scale.

Before the ratification of the Charter, no special government policy existed on language use in adult education. With the ratification of the Charter, however, the state of the Netherlands has committed itself to offering courses which are partly or totally provided in Frisian. Nevertheless, the provincial government has not developed any policy measures in this respect. There is no actual use of the language. One exception is the *Afûk*, the provincial organization that promotes the Frisian language and has offered Frisian language courses since 1925.

Adult education is frequently offered by institutes for vocational training. In legislation concerning both types of education, no specific regulations for Frisian in education have been formulated. However, a possibility exists to grant Frisian a specific role in the education programme. The act states that Dutch is the official language, but also that the use of other languages is allowed when education is specifically related to that particular language or if certain characteristics or the quality of the programme or the students' origin offer reasons to use another language.

### *Basic statistics*

Two Regional Training Centres (ROCs) and one Agricultural Training Centre (AOC) provide senior vocational education and adult education in Fryslân for students aged 16 or over. In the school year 2006-2007, 24,483 students were enrolled at these centres.<sup>46</sup> The total number of teachers and teacher-assistants in the same year, expressed in full-time appointments, was 1282.4.<sup>47</sup> No figures are available on the (linguistic) backgrounds of students and teachers.<sup>48</sup>

### *Target group*

Secondary vocational training is intended for young people aged 16 years or over, and adult education is accessible for people who are at least 18 years old. Senior vocational training usually consists of courses that last for three or four years, while adult education is available in many different forms, varying from one-month courses to multi-year instruction. Strictly speaking, vocational training consists of VMBO (pre-vocational secondary education), MBO (secondary vocational education) and HBO (higher professional education). As VMBO education is regulated by the Secondary Education Act (see section 2.2.3), and HBO education by the Tertiary Education Act (see section 2.2.5), this section will only consider vocational training at MBO level.

Vocational training at MBO level and adult education are regulated by the government in agreement with the Adult and Vocational Education Act (WEB).<sup>49</sup> With the introduction of the WEB in 1998, the Regional Training Centre became the most common institution for vocational and adult education.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> The division between the three centres is as follows: 10,400 students at Friesland College (Friesland College, 2006), 12,464 students at Friese Poort (Friese Poort, 2006), and 1,619 students at AOC (AOC, 2006).

<sup>47</sup> The division between the three centres is as follows: 588.1 full-time teaching appointments at Friesland College (Friesland College, 2006), 629.5 full-time teaching appointments at Friese Poort (Friese Poort, 2006), and 64.8 full-time teaching appointments at AOC (AOC, 2006).

<sup>48</sup> One of the ROCs, Friese Poort, distinguishes between autochthonous and allochthonous (=immigrant) students: 12,098 autochthonous vs. 366 allochthonous students (Friese Poort, 2006).

<sup>49</sup> The full name of the Act in Dutch is: Wet Educatie en Beroepsonderwijs (WEB) (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees, 1995).

<sup>50</sup> Institutions that are not part of an ROC do not receive government funding, except for 13 specialist colleges and 4 other institutes who have been granted exemption for different reasons (Eurydice, 2007).

These training centres generally offer secondary vocational MBO courses as well as adult education in a number of sectors: business, personal and social services/health care, and engineering and technology. Agricultural Training Centres, on the other hand, offer vocational education in the sector of agriculture and natural environment, the responsibility for which does not lie with the Ministry of Education (as is the case for all other forms of education) but with the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV).

Secondary vocational education (MBO) is open to everyone aged 16 or over. This means that in practice a highly diverse range of subjects and educational counseling needs to be available. MBO prepares students for a wide range of occupations by offering theoretical instruction and practical training. MBO training can be followed at four levels, with increasing difficulty:

Level 1: training to assistant level;

Level 2: basic vocational training;

Level 3: professional training;

Level 4: middle-management training and specialist training.

A diploma at level 2 or higher is valid as basic qualification, which exempts young people aged 16-18 from following compulsory education.<sup>51</sup>

Two learning pathways are available for all levels: vocational training with practical training for 20% to 60% of the course (BOL), and block or day-release with practical training for more than 60% of the course (BBL).<sup>52</sup> Most courses in the BOL pathway are offered full-time as well as part-time. The practical training for students in the BOL pathway is usually offered by the ROC and AOC institutions or by companies. Students in the BBL pathway, on the other hand, tend to be employed (and paid) by an enterprise or company and attend only a few lessons at the MBO institution (ROC or AOC).

Adult education is available in many forms. The best known include secondary education courses for adults (Voortgezet Algemeen Volwassenenonderwijs (VAVO)), courses of Dutch as a second language (NT2) for immigrants, and the so-called Volksuniversiteit (The People's University) which offers short-term courses on various subjects, mostly

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51 Education is compulsory for all until the age of 16. Students aged 16-18 are obliged to attend some form of education until they obtain a basic qualification. Besides the MBO level 2, this basic qualification may consist of a HAVO or VWO diploma from secondary education (see section 3.2.3).

52 The full Dutch names for the two pathways are 'beroepsopleidende leerweg' (BOL) and 'beroepsbegeleidende leerweg' (BBL) (see Eurydice 2007).

culture-oriented. Most adult courses are offered by or in cooperation with the Regional Training Centres. An institution for adult education that operates only in Fryslân is *Afûk*. *Afûk* provides courses on the Frisian language to adults, to native speakers as well as non-native speakers. More than 1,000 adults take courses at the *Afûk* each year (*Afûk*, 2008).

Languages and multilingualism play a relatively minor role in the curriculum for secondary vocational training. For most courses at MBO level, Dutch is used as a language of instruction and communication. Some courses may require somewhat more attention for language proficiency and the development of skills in Dutch and English, for example courses intended for administrative work or trade. Foreign languages other than English are less common, with only some courses including education on French or German. In Fryslân, Frisian may be used as a language of instruction in secondary vocational training. Although the Netherlands, by ratifying the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, has committed itself to encouraging continuing adult education (not vocational training) with Frisian as the language of instruction, the use of Frisian is still marginal and badly organized. However, the two ROCs in Fryslân are currently involved in a process of investigation and language policy development concerning the use of Frisian (Hemminga, 2007).

For students to start with a course at the first two levels of MBO, the assistant level and the basic vocational level, no requirements are set regarding any form of previous education. Courses at these levels are open to everyone aged 16 or over. Students who wish to follow courses at the middle-management (level 3) and professional levels (level 4) need a certificate from a pre-vocational training institute (VMBO) or proof that they have successfully completed the first three years of general secondary education (HAVO) or pre-university education (VWO).

Admission to courses in adult education varies according to the type of course. In principle, every resident in the Netherlands aged 18 or over can take part in adult education. Courses leading to a secondary education diploma (VAVO education) are open to all, but those with certain results from previous secondary education may step in at a higher level. Courses at *Volksuniversiteiten* are open to all adults. Since 2007, the courses of Dutch as a second language (NT2) have been made compulsory for all new immigrants from outside Europe and for some of the immigrants who settled

in the Netherlands in the past.<sup>53</sup> NT2 courses are also open to adults who are not obliged to learn Dutch by law. It is not compulsory for immigrants to acquire a basic knowledge of the Frisian language (Hemminga, 2007). Participation in the courses on the Frisian language offered by Afûk is voluntary, although employers may encourage their non-Frisian-speaking employees to take a course in order to fit in with their colleagues better.

#### *Sizes & distribution*

Of the 42 Regional Training Centres operating in the Netherlands (figures from 2005), two are located in Fryslân: Friesland College (public) and ROC Friese Poort (private, Christian denomination). With more than 12,000 students and more than 10,000 students respectively, these are rather large in comparison with the Dutch average.<sup>54</sup>

The Netherlands counted 12 Agricultural Training Centres in 2007, one of which is located in Fryslân: the AOC Friesland. With 1,609 students it is a middle-sized institute in comparison with the other Agricultural Training Centres in the Netherlands. Furthermore, two MBO institutes that have their main offices in other parts of the Netherlands have branches in Fryslân.

#### *General management & finances*

Institutes for vocational training at MBO level are financed by the national and local governments. Again, there is no difference in funding between public and private institutions. The contribution they receive is partly dependent on the number of students who have successfully completed their education and obtained a diploma. In addition, vocational training institutes charge their students tuition fees, and they receive money from contract activities with companies and private individuals (Eurydice, 2007).

#### *Involvement of parents and pupils*

In vocational training, involvement of parents and pupils is similar to the involvement in secondary education.

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<sup>53</sup> The prerequisites concerning the knowledge of Dutch are laid down in the Habituation Act (Wet Inburgering, Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 2007). Some immigrants are exempted from the obligation to learn Dutch, e.g. immigrants from the USA or Japan and professionals.

<sup>54</sup> The Dutch average number of students per ROC was almost 8300 for the year 2006/2007, see <http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=03753&D1=a&D2=10,13,15&D3=0-2&D4=0&D5=15,16&VW=T>

## 2.2.5 Tertiary education

### *Language-related legislation*

At the institutes for higher professional education in Fryslân, Frisian is only used in teacher training education. The institutes for higher professional education (HBOs) receive a financial contribution to maintain this situation (Hemminga, 2007). However, Dutch remains the officially prescribed language of instruction for tertiary education. Some exceptions to this rule may be made, for instance in language studies, during guest lectures or lessons given by a teacher who speaks a foreign language, and finally if the characteristics or quality of the education or origins of students justify using a foreign language. Institutions for tertiary education in Fryslân have committed themselves to an agreement to define a code of conduct concerning language (Hemminga, 2007).

### *Basic statistics*

Fryslân houses three institutes for tertiary education: the Noordelijke Hogeschool Leeuwarden (NHL), the Stenden Hogeschool,<sup>55</sup> and the Hogeschool Van Hall-Larenstein. There have not been universities in Fryslân since Napoleon Bonaparte closed down the Academy at *Frjentsjer* in 1811, but, there are plans for a 'University Campus Fryslân'. This is a network organization that forms a link between HBO schools in Fryslân, centres of knowledge and businesses. The University Campus would provide possibilities for HBO students to do a master study in the province of Fryslân. In the next ten years, the campus is planned to be 'built'. Also, as in the rest of the Netherlands, long-distance learning is available to inhabitants of the province through the Open University.<sup>56</sup> In 2006, the total number of students enrolled at the NHL was 9,606; at the Stenden Hogeschool this figure was 6,494, and in 2005 Van Hall-Larenstein counted 3,965 students.

The total number of students in tertiary education in Fryslân in 2006 thus equaled 20,065. The number of staff members in the three institutes, expressed in the number of full-time appointments, was 779 (NHL in 2006), 391 (Stenden in 2006), and 428 (Van Hall-Larenstein in 2005).

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<sup>55</sup> The institution has used this name since 2008; it was formerly known as Christelijke Hogeschool Nederland (CHN). On this occasion, the institute also merged with a similar one in another Dutch province (Drenthe), the Hogeschool Drenthe. The institute is also known under the name of Stenden University, as a "university of applied science".

<sup>56</sup> In 2007 more than 29,000 students were enrolled at the Dutch Open University, of whom nearly 5,900 had done so for the first time. It is unclear what share the inhabitants of the province of Fryslân have in this number.

It has not been specified how many of these positions were occupied by lecturers, teachers, student supervisors and other staff members with a direct link to education in the institutes, and how many were occupied by members in supportive or organizational occupations. No information is available on the linguistic background of the staff members in tertiary education, but since most courses at the moment have Dutch as the language of instruction and a yearly increasing part of the courses is given in English, it can be assumed that a greater part of the teachers originate from the Netherlands (there is no institutional need for teachers to come from Frisian-speaking backgrounds), and that the number of international staff members is growing.

#### *Target group & legislation*

Tertiary education in the Netherlands is intended for students aged 17-18 or over who have a diploma from an institute of secondary education at HAVO or VWO level or who have completed a vocational training course. Tertiary education can be split up into higher professional education (Hoger BeroepsOnderwijs, HBO) offered at HBO-institutions (hogescholen) and university education, available at universities. HBO institutions offer programmes and courses that are more practically oriented than those at traditional universities. These institutes can be compared to institutions for tertiary vocational education, polytechnic universities, academies or colleges in other European countries. A third form of tertiary education is higher education offered by the Open University (Open Universiteit, OU), which is available at both HBO and university level.

In order to be admitted to any HBO programme, students need a diploma from HAVO or VWO secondary education or a diploma from vocational training (MBO at level 4). For university admission, a VWO secondary education diploma is needed or a certificate from an HBO institute. Besides these general admittance criteria, tertiary education institutes may set further prerequisites (for instance for courses with intake restrictions or a 'numerus fixus', such as medical sciences) or they may offer alternative admittance possibilities (for example when diplomas from foreign institutions are concerned).

#### *Size & distribution*

Of the 42 government-funded HBO institutes, three are located in Fryslân. The NHL and Stenden Hogeschool offer education in a large variety of subjects, ranging from business management to teacher training. Van Hall-



Larenstein operates mainly in the field of agriculture and environmental management. There are 13 traditional universities in the Netherlands, none of which is located in Fryslân. Instruction at the 14<sup>th</sup> university, the Open University for long-distance learning, is of course open to all inhabitants of the Netherlands, including those of Fryslân. All three HBO institutes are based in the capital *Ljouwert*.

#### *General management & finances*

Institutes for tertiary education receive their budgets from the national government, and the amount of funds is partly based on the number of students enrolled and partly on the number of diplomas conferred on them. There is no difference in funding for public and private institutions. Tuition fees and contracts with companies are additional sources of income (Eurydice, 2007).

One of the institutes for tertiary education in Fryslân, Stenden Hogeschool, is working on a concept to enlarge the current education programmes. By offering both higher education and scientific education, they aim to strike a better match with international standards. The institutes have embarked on an intensive cooperation with universities in and outside the Netherlands, and there are currently four research institutes in *Ljouwert* that offer PhD positions (De Jong & Riemersma, 2007). These institutions are The *Fryske Akademy*, Cartesius (for sustainable innovations), Wetsus (for water management) and the Wadden Academy (which focuses on all aspects of the Wadden Sea and its islands).

#### *Involvement of parents and students*

In tertiary education, parents have no formal role. Students themselves are responsible. In tertiary education, students may exert an influence on their educational institution on the level of their studies, on a faculty level and on a university level. Students operating in the different councils are elected for a period of one year. Regulations on participation in tertiary education are laid down in the Law on Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (Wet op het Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek).

## 2.3 Teacher training

### 2.3.1 Pre-school education training

Training for pre-school education is organized at MBO-level (senior vocational training) and is offered by ROCs. The training programme takes 3 years (for level 3, child minder) or 4 years (for level 4, supervisor of child minders).

In the training programme for pre-school education, training practice is an important component. At the moment, attention for the bilingual situation in Fryslân during the training period is limited. With the growing number of bilingual or Frisian-speaking playgroups and day-care centres<sup>57</sup> and the objectives expressed by Fryslân<sup>58</sup> to further increase such facilities, this is expected to change in the near future. Specific initiatives have been taken to develop special pedagogical courses in the initial training period. The Frisian foundation for Frisian-language child-minding facilities SFBO has developed in-service training courses which form part of the certification procedure for funding by the SFBO.

### 2.3.2 Primary education training

Initial teacher training courses for primary education are organized at higher professional level (HBO). In Fryslân, the two institutions that offer the course are NHL and Stenden Hogeschool. The Dutch name for initial primary teacher training institutes is PABO (Pedagogische Academie Basisonderwijs). Students who successfully complete the PABO obtain the title of Bachelor of Education.

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<sup>57</sup> The association SFBO is responsible for support to these centres, see section 3.1.1.

<sup>58</sup> In the *Nota Boppeslach* (Provinsje Fryslân, 2006).

In 2007, almost 55,000 students were enrolled in teacher training courses at Bachelor's level in the Netherlands. In that same year, the two HBO institutes in Fryslân registered 2,091 (NHL) and 1,185 (Stenden Hogeschool) students who were enrolled in their Bachelor's programmes in the teacher training sector.<sup>59</sup>

Training consists of a four-year full-time course (240 ECTS credits). Exemptions for part of the curriculum may be granted to students on the basis of previous educational qualifications or other relevant experience. It is also possible to study part-time or to take the training as a dual course, i.e. combined with work experience.

The teacher training course prepares students to become 'all-round' teachers, which means that qualified teachers in primary education are allowed to teach all subjects from grade 1 to grade 8 (4 to 12-year-olds). An exception is made for physical education, for which a special qualification has been required since 2005. An important component of primary teacher training is teaching practice, which is a compulsory part of the course. Teaching practice takes up approximately one quarter of the course (i.e. 60 ECTS) and starts in the first year of teacher training. Usually, teachers working in special primary education also opt for an additional Master's course in special educational needs, but this is not compulsory (Eurydice, 2007).

In Fryslân, teaching Frisian in primary school is compulsory. In addition to the standard programme offered by PABO institutes in the Netherlands, the NHL and Stenden Hogeschool also provide training in the Frisian language and the didactics to teach Frisian. The two institutes are in the process of developing a common curriculum for Frisian as a subject and as a means of instruction in primary education teacher training. Frisian language courses are compulsory for all students in the first two years of the programme.

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<sup>59</sup> Statistical data on student numbers in higher professional education are available from the HBO-raad, see <http://www.hbo-raad.nl/>. Teacher training at Bachelor's level does not consist of training for primary education only. Teacher training for the first grades of secondary education and for vocational and adult education (so-called 'second degree teaching education') is also offered in the form of a Bachelor's degree. The enrolment numbers mentioned above include students for primary education as well as second degree teachers for secondary and vocational education. No information is available on how this number can be split up between the two types of training.

Streams for Frisian and non-Frisian speaking students are differentiated. If they complete the entire Frisian programme, students obtain a formal qualification for teaching Frisian at primary level (in Frisian: *it foech*). This certificate is worth 9 ECTS for non-Frisian-speaking students and 7 ECTS for Frisian-speaking students. It is also possible for already qualified teachers to study for *it foech* (the qualification to teach Frisian) in a separate course. Acquisition of the qualification does not always imply a fluent command of the Frisian language. A survey in 2001 revealed that 38 percent of the teachers in primary education were not qualified to teach Frisian.<sup>60</sup>

Although teachers in primary education are qualified to teach all subjects except physical education, schools may employ specialist teachers for specific subjects such as music, handicrafts or religious education (Eurydice, 2007). These specialist teachers usually have a diploma from tertiary education in their discipline, sometimes complemented by educational courses or modules.

Since 1997, schools have been allowed to employ teacher assistants to assist teachers in grades 1 to 4. Teaching assistants help the teacher with routine teaching activities and may give pupils extra personal attention (Eurydice, 2007). Teaching assistants need an MBO-diploma at level 4, which is granted after a four-year full-time programme. In Fryslân, ROC Friesland College offers the possibility to study for the position of teaching assistant.

### **2.3.3 Secondary education training**

Training for teachers in secondary education can be divided into two types: training for 'grade two' teachers, who will be able to work with pupils at VMBO level and the lower grades of HAVO and VWO level, and, secondly, training for 'grade one' teachers, who have the same qualification as grade two teachers, but who are also allowed to teach in the higher grades of HAVO and VWO. Grade two teacher training is provided by HBO institutes in the form of a Bachelor of Education programme, while grade one training at Master's level is offered by some HBO institutes and by most universities.

The only institute in Fryslân that provides teacher training for grade one teachers is NHL. They also offer first en second grade training programmes to become a teacher for Frisian. In 2007, 169 students were enrolled in one

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<sup>60</sup> Inspectorate (2001)

of the Master's programmes in the teacher training sector. In contrast with the PABO, teacher training for secondary education is organized according to school subjects in secondary education.

### **2.3.4 Vocational and adult education training**

Teachers in vocational and adult education in a regional training centre (ROC) need a qualification from an institute for higher professional education (HBO). The programme is the same as for second degree teachers.

## **2.4 Teaching methods and didactics**

It follows from the legally anchored 'freedom of education' in the Netherlands that schools are free to choose their teaching methods and didactics, as long as they meet certain preset criteria and the educational attainment targets.<sup>61</sup> As a result, considerable differences may appear in the teaching methods adopted by different schools, and it is difficult to give a brief description that can justify this variation in the field of didactics. Nevertheless, one important general tendency can be witnessed.

The most recent reforms in education, starting in the nineteen-nineties with the introduction of what is known as the 'studiehuis' (study house) and the 'tweede fase' (second phase) in secondary education, aimed at a more fluid transition from secondary education to tertiary university education.<sup>62</sup> These reforms brought about a change in teaching methods. The classic model with an active role for the teacher and a more receptive one for the student, which had prevailed until then, made room for a teaching style that encourages independent study by all students (Eurydice, 2007). The new style also focuses less on reproduction of input and more on the collection and analysis of information. As a consequence, students spend more time on independent study, for instance in the library or at the computer, and assessment now takes place not only through tests but also by assignments in the form of papers.

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<sup>61</sup> For more information on the 'freedom of education' see 3.2.2.

52 <sup>62</sup> More information on the educational reforms can be found in 3.2.3.

This tendency is mostly witnessed in secondary education, but to a lesser extent also in primary schools, where education has become more interdisciplinary through the use of project structures. Stronger attention for self-study does not necessarily involve homework: this is not compulsory in the Netherlands and is in fact quite uncommon in primary education (Eurydice, 2007). In secondary education, homework and assignments are set in the majority of schools. Universities and institutes for higher professional education have also adapted their education programmes to the reforms: they usually offer courses on academic and research skills in the first year of study, intended to facilitate the transition to the new education environment.

## **2.5 Use of ICT**

Information and communication technology has by now become an important part of the curriculum and administration of nearly every school in the Netherlands. Almost all schools use ICT applications to some extent, and the number of schools that use these intensively is increasing. On average, one computer is available for seven pupils. This number has become stable, so that a certain saturation level seems to have been reached. 84% of the staff in primary education and about 50% of the staff in secondary education use a computer when they teach: approximately 3 to 6 hours a week (Eurydice, 2007).

Around 2000, when ICT was gradually introduced in Dutch education on increasingly larger scales, it turned out to be a goal in itself, which was reflected in the purchase of hardware and educational software. In recent years, however, the position of ICT in education has evolved into a means to solving other educational matters. ICT is now used to make education more attractive and to better suit the personal learning styles of students. Moreover, the vast opportunities that ICT offers, such as student administration, e-portfolio's and web conferencing, are also used to reduce the number of student drop-outs, to reinforce the students' position on the job market, and as a (partial) solution to the current teacher shortages. A major challenge for future years will undoubtedly be the digitalization of existing teaching materials, a process that has already been enthusiastically embarked on by teachers and educational publishing houses. Another important step to be made in the implementation of ICT is the training of educational professionals (Herijking Stichting Kennisnet, 2008).

Several educational publishing houses and online communities offer support for the implementation of ICT in education, mainly in the form of teaching materials. Furthermore, the ICT support service Kennisnet Ict has been set up, funded by the Ministry of Education, which offers public help services but refrains from commercial activities.

## 2.6 Student assessment

During their educational careers, students are subjected to continuous assessment. The professionals first responsible for this are the schools' teachers and headmasters and the staff members at institutes for senior vocational training, higher professional education and universities. They see the students on a daily - or almost daily - basis and report on the intellectual development and, where possible, the socio-emotional development of their students. Schools use the attainment targets set by the government to formulate intermediate and final goals on which to base their student assessments.<sup>63</sup> Support for the application of these descriptive tools is offered by a number of institutes, for instance SLO, the national expertise centre on curriculum development. All schools document intellectual development, social background information and test scores in student files, which form the basis of a pupil monitoring system. Students may be held back a year if they have failed to reach the attainment targets.

A national assessment is held at two moments in the students' curriculum: at the end of primary school and at the end of secondary school. The test at the end of primary school, developed by CITO (the National Institute for Educational Measurement), assesses pupils for mathematical, linguistic and study skills.<sup>64</sup> In the linguistic part, only the Dutch language is tested: Frisian and foreign languages are not assessed. Although the CITO test is not compulsory, more than 80% of the primary schools let their pupils take the test (Eurydice, 2007, 43). The result is not reported in terms of (in)sufficiency or intelligence level: test scores range from 501 to 550, thus avoiding an association with the common grade system in the Netherlands (with scores ranging from 1 to 10) or IQ scores. The results of this test, in combination with pupil reports drawn up by the teachers, are used in the admission procedure for different types of secondary schools. No certificate is handed out to pupils who complete primary education.

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<sup>63</sup> For the attainment targets, see section 3.1.

<sup>64</sup> The CITO test also has an optional section on world orientation (history and geography), the results of which are not used for the final outcome and advice. The CITO test is the most widely used and best known test to assess pupils at the end of primary schools, but other tests are also available. These are mainly intelligence tests, e.g. GIVO, Drempeltest, NIO-test and tests developed by Eduforce.

A separate test is available for Frisian at the end of primary school. It has been developed by Afûk, the foundation that promotes the Frisian language in Fryslân. In 2007, 1138 pupils from 72 primary schools in Fryslân took this test, of whom 1084 were awarded a diploma.

Examination at the end of secondary school consists of a set of tests for different subjects, supplied by the same national institute, CITO. It is important to note that the national exams<sup>65</sup> only make up 50% of the final marks given to students; the other 50% consist of the results achieved in school exams. Grades range from 1 (=very poor) to 10 (= excellent), and a 6 is a pass (due to rounding-off procedures, in practice this means 5.5 and higher). Students may have a score below 6 for one or two subjects, as long as the score for the entire package of subjects<sup>66</sup> is sufficient. Students who successfully complete secondary education receive a certificate and a grades list for the subjects they took. The certificate is required to enter higher professional training and university education.<sup>67</sup>

The assessment of Frisian in Fryslân is intended to take place in the same manner as is common for other subjects. However, the Educational Inspectorate (Inspectie van het Onderwijs) found that for Frisian as a subject, assessment is not very often based on actual testing. Most primary school teachers do not assess pupils with the help of tests, although they do give them marks. In secondary education only 60% of the teachers test their pupils for Frisian as a subject (Educational Inspectorate, 2006). The defective assessment system in secondary schools is found in the first few years only, when Frisian is still compulsory. If students opt for Frisian in higher grades, they are tested regularly and sit the school and national exams.

Within the Boppeslach project initiated by the provincial government of Fryslân, a large number of primary school pupils are tested on different issues related to their command of Frisian, Dutch (vocabulary, reading skills) and also English. In the school year 2009-2010, 88 of the 486 primary schools take part in the project and an intention has been formulated to increase this number. Pupils will be tested in nursery school, grade 2, grade 4 and grade 6. So far, no results have become publicly available. This form of assessment is not meant to judge the progress of individual pupils but rather to be used as an assessment of schools as a whole.

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65 See also section 3.2.3.

66 The subjects which students in secondary education take depend on the profile they choose, see section 3.2.3.

67 Also for senior vocational training a certificate used to be part of the admittance procedure. In recent years, institutes for senior vocational training have also welcomed students who followed several years of secondary education, but did not obtain the certificate.



## 2.7 Teaching materials

Most teaching materials for pre-primary, primary, secondary, vocational and adult education have been developed for nationwide use and are put in Dutch. Teaching materials for the foreign languages in the curriculum are usually put in the target language, with occasional learner support in Dutch. In tertiary education, Dutch or English teaching materials are used the most frequently. Material in other languages is generally only used in disciplines related to the language of study and its culture.

The development of teaching materials in the Netherlands is a commercial activity. Several publishing houses specialized in educational materials operate in the country. A school's teaching materials may originate from publishing houses, but may also be developed by the teachers themselves. Most schools use both. The different players in the field of teaching materials – the publishing houses, the schools and the Ministry of Education – often act in mutual consultation.

Materials for Frisian language education and, to a lesser extent, material for different subjects in Frisian are developed in Fryslân.

The two most important institutes for educational material in Frisian are *Afûk* (General Commission for Frisian Education) and the *Taalsintrum Frysk* (Language Centre for Frisian) of the educational support service CEDIN. Written and oral courses are offered for Frisian as well as for non-Frisian people. Quite recently, an opportunity has been created to learn Frisian through the medium of Internet<sup>68</sup> or by means of a combination course: online and a meeting once a month. The aim of *eduFrysk* is to learn the Frisian language by experiencing it (finding your own way). The online environment contains (spoken) texts, videos and music fragments. Its content is changed and updated frequently.

*Taalsintrum Frysk* has a wide range of materials on offer for primary and secondary education. They also support primary and secondary schools with the implementation of Frisian in the curriculum. Together, *Taalsintrum Frysk* and *Afûk* have developed new teaching methods for the Frisian language: *Studio F* for primary school and *Freemwurk* for secondary school. These methods have been used by schools since 2006. They are innovative in comparison with older Frisian language methods, because they offer possibilities to differentiate between Frisian and non-Frisian-speaking children without changing topics: the same issues are discussed in the entire group. Most primary schools have bought the new *Studio F* books. CEDIN also develops teaching materials in Frisian for other subjects: history, world orientation, and biology and the environment. For pre-primary level there are the thematic method *Sânglêsrige* and the *Tomke* series of picture booklets meant for reading aloud.

Teaching materials for primary schools are the property of the school. Schools receive funding from the Ministry of Education which is supposed to enable them to renew the materials at least once every eight years. In the past, secondary education had a long tradition of parents buying the necessary teaching materials for their children, but this situation has changed. In the school year 2008-2009, all parents received financial compensation by the government for the costs for schools books. From the year 2009-2010 onwards, secondary schools themselves are responsible for the purchase of teaching materials and receive funding by the government, just like primary schools. In tertiary education and in vocational and adult education, students need to buy the necessary teaching materials themselves. The annual amount of money needed for teaching materials may vary greatly, depending on the discipline and institution.

## **2.8 Evaluation of results**

The evaluation of the education system in the Netherlands is carried out by the Educational Inspectorate. The Educational Inspectorate was founded in 1801, when the government adopted the country's first Education Act, which stipulated that the State would bear responsibility for the education system. During the last two centuries, the Educational Inspectorate has always been the watchdog of quality in education. Today, the tasks of the Inspectorate involve:

- the evaluation of the quality of educational institutions;
- the promotion of the quality of educational institutions;
- the compilation of reports on the development of education.

For some decades, a tendency has been witnessed in the field of education towards a lower level of government interference and wider responsibility for the schools. In 2002 the Education Inspection Act (WOT) came into force applying to the primary, secondary, tertiary, and adult and vocational education sectors.<sup>69</sup> All government-funded educational institutions, and also some of the schools that do not receive state funding, are to be examined by the Educational Inspectorate.<sup>70</sup> The WOT states that the schools and educational institutions are responsible for the quality of education, and thus also for the way in which this quality is measured and evaluated. The Educational Inspectorate operates in accordance with the WOT and reports on the institutions' own responsibilities, for instance by making use of self-evaluations by schools. It adopts an approach that may be termed as 'risk-based' supervision in the educational field, which means that it keeps the level of inspection to a minimum for those institutions that have implemented a well-developed quality assurance programme, while institutions that demonstrate insufficient performance in one or more fields are visited more often. All institutions, regardless of any positive or negative evaluations in the past, are inspected at least once every four years (Eurydice, 2007).

As of January 2008 the Educational Inspectorate is responsible for 'secondary surveillance' of the pre-school education sector. The municipalities form the first body responsible for quality control in this section, but the Educational Inspectorate is charged with the evaluation of the supervision by the municipalities. The Educational Inspectorate yearly draws up a work plan in which the activities for the coming year are specified. At the closing of the year, a report is written with a summary and evaluation of the work done. Both documents have to be approved by the Minister and are subsequently made publicly available.<sup>71</sup>

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69 At the time, pre-primary education was not one of the policy fields of the Ministry of Education, and the Inspectorate did not evaluate the results in this sector.

70 There are four types of non-government-funded education in the Netherlands: international or foreign schools, home education by parents, official examination centres for secondary education, and privately run schools for primary and secondary education. Only the last category of schools is controlled by the Inspectorate.

In the annual report on the school year 2006-2007, the Educational Inspectorate described certain tendencies it registered in the field of education. Although the quality of education at most institutions in the Netherlands was evaluated as sufficient or good, there were four negative aspects:

- the number of students with insufficient basic competences (language and basic mathematics) is increasing;
- the number of students that leave education without a diploma is very high;
- the number of schools qualified as weak or very weak is high;
- the number of schools that cannot meet the legal minimum of teaching hours required is extremely high.

Primary schools in the three northern provinces of Fryslân, Groningen and Drenthe are lagging behind even more than the average in the Netherlands. Research carried out by the Educational Inspectorate (2009) has shown that 17 percent of the primary schools in the northern provinces are weak or very weak. In the Netherlands as a whole this is 10 percent. With 24 primary schools, it is especially Fryslân that ranks high on the list of very weak primary schools (at the beginning of 2009 there were 108 in the Netherlands as a whole).

Research by the *Fryske Akademy* (Van Ruijven, 2003) shows that, compared to the Netherlands as a whole, pupils from Frisian primary schools are lagging behind in language and mathematics. Results from other research shows bigger arrears for pupils from higher grades than for pupils from lower grades of primary education in Fryslân (Van Ruijven, 2000; Van Lange & Van Hulsen, 2001; Van der Vegt & Van Velzen, 2002; De Jager, Klunder en Ytsma, 2002).

## **2.9 Future perspectives concerning educational systems**

As can be seen from the description of the Dutch educational system presented earlier in this chapter, the past two decades have demonstrated a trend towards greater continuity and harmonization in education in terms of decisions and actions. Examples include the attainment targets for primary and secondary education and the fact that pre-school education has become the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences. This

tendency towards a greater union is expected to continue in the future, as there are plans to unify (pre-) primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary education in a single new act. This new act is planned to contain fewer rules and to offer schools and professionals more room for individual implementation. No date has so far been set for this new act (Eurydice, 2007).

Fryslân does not have the legal powers to change the educational system; its main task in the educational context lies with the Frisian language. The policy document Boppeslach of 2006 demonstrates, as we have seen, that the provincial body has broadened its ambition and not only wishes to assist schools with the implementation of a language policy that comprises Frisian, but also to support them with the general improvement of educational quality. This means that the ambition is to raise the number of schools taking part in the Boppeslach project (currently 105) to at least 200 and that they aim to increase the number of trilingual schools to 50 by 2012 (by the end of 2008, there were 17) (Provinsje Fryslân, 2006).

## 3 Multilingualism in education

The previous chapters illustrated the general linguistic situation in Fryslân and the organization of the educational system in the Netherlands and in Fryslân. This chapter deals with the position of multilingualism in education in Fryslân, both within and outside the curriculum. A description will be given of the various languages in the curriculum and in the schools and institutions (section 3.1), and specific information will be provided on language attitudes and language proficiencies related to the educational sector (section 3.2-3.4).

### 3.1 Languages in education across the curriculum

#### 3.1.1 The minority language: Frisian

In all types of education, from pre-primary to tertiary education, the minority language Frisian has been given a certain position in the curriculum. However, as has been mentioned before, the ways in which the Frisian language is incorporated in the curriculum, both as a subject and as a language of instruction, vary from school to school and level to level, also depending on the linguistic situation in the environment and the language policies formulated by the school boards.

##### *Pre-primary education*

For pre-primary education, the Frisian day-care umbrella organization *Sintrum Frysktalige Berneopfang* (SFBO) is the most important actor when it comes to the promotion of Frisian. In 2003, SFBO initiated the establishment of pre-school facilities across the province that were willing to adopt a Frisian language policy for their work in the playgroups and day-care centres. In 2004, attention shifted from a more exclusive focus on the Frisian language to attention for bilingualism (Frisian-Dutch), since this resulted in a greater range of pre-school provisions becoming interested in taking part in the project (Boneschansker, 2006). The project still continues today, with SFBO offering support for the pre-school facilities with respect to the implementation of a tailor-made language policy that includes Frisian. Playgroups and day-care centres can now follow a path that leads to official certification as a bilingual provision.

At the start of the project launched by SFBO in 2003, the number for Frisian and bilingual provisions in Fryslân was limited to 11, and by 2007 it had increased to 55 (13 day-care centres and 42 playgroups).<sup>72</sup> This growth is impressive, and even today the Frisian and bilingual facilities make up a quarter of all pre-school provisions in Fryslân (approximately 300, see section 2.2.1). Hard figures are lacking, but in the majority of pre-school provisions in Fryslân, Dutch is the main or the only language used in the activities with the children.

An evaluation held in 2006 showed that the results for the increase in pre-school provisions taking part in the SFBO project were even better than expected, and that SFBO offered good-quality support. This support was not limited to the topic of Frisian language use, but also extended to the general policy of the pre-school provisions, thereby offering them an extra motive to participate in the project (Boneschansker, 2006). Supported by the positive results of the SFBO project, Fryslân formulated in its policy documents the aim to further increase pre-school provisions with Frisian or bilingual groups (both day-care centres and playgroups), with a minimum of 100 of such provisions by 2010. Moreover, a wider aim is to develop a professional system of support, self-assessment and inspection for Frisian pre-school education in Fryslân (Provinsje Fryslân, 2006).

### *Primary education*

The national government has developed attainment targets specifying the level of knowledge and skills in the Frisian language that all pupils should have obtained at the end of primary education. The attainment targets were first introduced in 1993. In 2005 new attainment targets were formulated, which have been in use in primary education in the Netherlands since 2006. The attainment targets of 1993 had shown that it was unrealistic to expect all pupils in Fryslân (both Frisian-speaking and non-Frisian-speaking) to achieve these targets. The new attainment targets for Frisian, introduced in 2006, are less ambitious and more explicitly focused on a positive attitude towards the language. The new six attainment targets for Frisian in primary education in Fryslân are summarized in table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Summary: attainment targets for Frisian in primary education.  
(Adapted from: Greven & Letschert, 2006)

### Summary: new attainment targets for Frisian in primary education

1. Positive attitude towards Frisian.
2. Obtain information from spoken language on familiar topics.
3. Expression in spoken language in familiar situations.
4. Obtain information from written language on familiar topics.
5. Expression in written language in familiar situations.
6. Basic vocabulary and strategies for new words.

The most recent widespread investigation of the quality of Frisian as a subject in primary education predates the introduction of the new attainment targets formulated in 2006: it was conducted in the school year 2004-2005 by the Educational Inspectorate. It showed that many primary schools had not developed a language policy to secure the position of Frisian in the school. Despite the legal obligation, 6% of primary schools in Fryslân<sup>73</sup> do not teach the Frisian language at all. Although there were considerable differences between schools, the average amount of time spent on Frisian lessons varied between 30 and 45 minutes a week. Thus, the total amount of Frisian in primary education did not generally exceed 200 hours. With respect to the content of the lessons of Frisian, the Educational Inspectorate noticed that a focus lay on language attitudes as well as on understanding and speaking of Frisian, whereas the training of reading and writing in Frisian and the use of computers during the lessons was not very common (Educational Inspectorate, 2006).

Another conclusion drawn by the Educational Inspectorate was that the Frisian education offered in the year 2004-2005 did not agree with the old attainment targets. What was more alarming, however, was the fact that on the eve of the introduction of the new, adapted attainment targets in 2006, Frisian education in Fryslân was only partly in agreement with the new attainment targets. As has been seen already, the Inspectorate not only describes goals for language attitude and spoken Frisian, as included in the curriculum for Frisian in most primary schools, but it also describes targets for written Frisian and vocabulary. According to the report published by the Educational Inspectorate (2006), this was not reflected in the education programme offered at primary schools.

<sup>73</sup> at <http://www.edufrysk.nl>



Unfortunately, no information has so far become available on the status of Frisian in primary education after the introduction of the new attainment targets in Fryslân in 2006. As a result, it is impossible to say whether these have had a positive influence on education in and of Frisian in primary education. It is worth mentioning here that the new teaching method *Studio F*, which has already been purchased by approximately 300 of all 486 primary schools in Fryslân, is especially designed to differentiate between pupils from various linguistic backgrounds. If all the schools were to use the method in all grades, they would likely reach the attainment targets more easily. Continued research remains necessary, as is currently carried out by the *Fryske Akademy*. It should also be noted that a small number of primary schools in Fryslân deviate positively from the averages presented by the Educational Inspectorate concerning teaching hours, language policy plans and content of the lessons of Frisian. Most of these schools take part in the project *Trijetalige Skoalle* (trilingual school), which focuses on balanced education in Frisian, Dutch and English. The pupils of schools in this project are being monitored, so that more recent information is available. The trilingual school project and the outcomes will be detailed in section 3.1.5.

### *Secondary education*

Of the secondary schools that are obliged to teach Frisian,<sup>74</sup> only 70% actually provide lessons. In secondary education, students usually receive one hour of Frisian a week in the first year, which is a total number of about 40 hours per year. In a few schools in Fryslân, students follow the same number of lessons in the second year. After that, pupils may choose whether they wish to continue their lessons of Frisian as a subject and prepare for the final exams. Frisian as an exam subject is available at all three types of secondary education: VMBO (pre-vocational secondary education), HAVO (general secondary education) and VWO (pre-university secondary education). Not all secondary schools in Fryslân offer the possibility to take Frisian as an exam subject. The number of pupils who choose Frisian in the final exams is low. In 2008, in the entire province, a total number of 78 exam candidates are reported for Frisian: 24 at VMBO-level, 45 at HAVO-level and 9 at VWO-level.<sup>75</sup> Frisian is hardly ever used as a language of instruction for other subjects. Only one third of all secondary schools in Fryslân occasionally uses Frisian as a language of instruction (Educational Inspectorate, 2006).<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Those with an exemption from the obligation to teach Frisian were excluded from the investigation.

<sup>75</sup> Figures for 2008 are available at [www.cito.nl](http://www.cito.nl).

<sup>76</sup> The number of students that are (sometimes) taught through Frisian is estimated at 20,000.

For the higher grades of secondary education, teachers may use the criteria for the final exams as guidance. This combination of attainment targets for the lower grades and exam criteria for the upper grades does not exclusively apply to the subject of Frisian; it is the same for all exam subjects in secondary education.

In the new attainment targets for Frisian, pupils who have Frisian as their mother tongue and pupils who learn Frisian as a second language are no longer treated equally. Three of the attainment targets apply to all pupils in secondary education, while the other three differentiate between pupils who have Frisian as their first language and those who learn it as their second language. Table 3.2 presents a summary of the attainment targets for Frisian in secondary education.

The most recent elaborate investigations into the status of Frisian in secondary education were carried out before the introduction of the new attainment targets in 2006. Van der Bij & Valk (2005) carried out a project from 1997 until 2002, while the Educational Inspectorate (2006) based its latest report on the school year 2004-2005. At the time, the position of Frisian in secondary education was described as marginal and lacking continuity in the curriculum (Van der Bij & Valk 2005), the lessons in Frisian were only partly in line with the attainment targets and, although it had sufficient pedagogical quality, the teaching of Frisian did not score well with respect to differentiation and activation of pupils. Finally, it was found that very few schools had developed a language policy plan including Frisian (Educational Inspectorate, 2006). No studies have been carried out since the introduction of the new attainment targets, so unfortunately it is impossible to report whether the position of Frisian in secondary education has become stronger or better defined in the past few years.

Table 3.2. Attainment targets for Frisian for the lower grades of secondary education (Adapted from: Greven & Letschert, 2006)

<b>Summary: new attainment targets for Frisian in secondary education (lower grades)</b>	
<p><b>All pupils:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appreciate expressions of Frisian culture.</li> <li>2. Understand the bilingual situation in Fryslân in comparison with rest of the Netherlands.</li> <li>3. Are familiar with specific characteristics of Frisian culture.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Frisian L2:</b></p> <p>4a. Have an ability to use Frisian vocabulary in appropriate language situations.</p>	<p><b>Frisian L1:</b></p> <p>4b. Use expressions in spoken and written form, observe language conventions (orthography, grammar, word choice).</p>
<p>5a. Extract and organize information from written and digital sources on topics from spheres of interests.</p>	<p>5b. Know the importance of communication in Frisian and follow language rules in formal situations.</p>
<p>6a. Engage in informal conversation with peers.</p>	<p>6b. Select and read Frisian stories, poetry and informative texts that meet their interests.</p>

#### *Vocational and tertiary education*

The use of Frisian in vocational training and in tertiary education in Fryslân is minimal, although agricultural education forms an exception. In this sector, Frisian is regularly used as a medium of instruction and sometimes self-made Frisian learning materials are also used. Students may also choose Frisian as an optional part of their programme (De Jong & Riemersma, 2007). Frisian-medium teaching materials for these sectors in education are virtually non-existent; they have to be prepared by teachers themselves. No information is available on the actual use of Frisian in these sectors of education. The only sectors in tertiary education where Frisian has been given a fixed place in the curriculum are the teacher training courses for primary and secondary education. Students in teacher training institutes for primary education are trained as all-round teachers, and language-related subjects (including Frisian) only form a limited part of the curriculum. Students who are educated as teachers of Frisian for secondary education receive more substantial instruction in and of Frisian, including pedagogical and didactic training and an internship.

### *Universities*

Outside Fryslân, the universities of Groningen, Amsterdam and Leiden offer the possibility to study Frisian at tertiary educational level. The university of Groningen is the only one to offer full Bachelor's and Master's programmes on Frisian language and culture. In 2008, 23 students took Frisian as their main field of study at Groningen University, while a larger number took one or two Frisian classes as part of another study programme.<sup>77</sup> In Amsterdam, following the introduction of the Bachelor-Master system in 2002, Frisian is no longer offered as a full programme. Nevertheless, subjects such as Frisian linguistics, literature and language policy are still offered as part of the Dutch studies and general linguistics programmes. At the University of Leiden, one course on Frisian language is taught annually.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the position of Frisian in education in Fryslân is becoming more clearly defined and somewhat stronger than it used to be in the past. Frisian is present at all levels in education, but the amount of time spent on the subject, on average, remains limited. While the use of Frisian in pre-primary education is increasing, Frisian by comparison has the strongest presence in primary education. In secondary education, few students take the option of Frisian as a subject after the compulsory programme. Despite the legal obligation, there are children in Fryslân who hardly receive any teaching related to the Frisian language. In tertiary education, Frisian is not formally present except for the curricula of the teacher training institutes for primary and secondary education.

### **3.1.2 The state language: Dutch**

The state language Dutch is part of the curriculum in all forms of education in Fryslân, except in a limited number of playgroups and day-care centres that provide pre-primary education in Frisian exclusively. Dutch has a more prominent place than the minority language Frisian. From the age of four onwards, at the start of primary education, all children in Fryslân receive instruction in Dutch. The teaching of reading and writing skills always takes place through Dutch. On average, Dutch is the dominant language in education in Fryslân. This Dutch supremacy is evident, for instance, in the CITO test. This is the national test administered to almost all pupils at the end of primary education. The language section in the exam is exclusively about Dutch. In secondary education, both Dutch and English are compulsory subjects for the final exam, whereas Frisian is optional. Instruction is in Dutch.

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<sup>77</sup> This is a substantial increase, since in 1999 only 7 full-time students were enrolled for Frisian at university.

Because of the absence of national guidelines for the teaching time that should be spent on specific subjects, the number of hours spent on Dutch may differ from school to school. In primary education, an estimated 7 hours per week in the lower grades and 4 hours per week in the upper grades are spent on the Dutch language. In addition, all other subjects are taught through Dutch in most primary schools in Fryslân. In secondary education, pupils usually follow Dutch language courses for 2 or 3 hours a week every year. The other non-language subjects are taught almost exclusively by means of the Dutch language. Even in Frisian and foreign language classes Dutch is often used.

*Table 3.3. Attainment targets for Dutch in primary education  
(Adapted from: Greven & Letschert, 2006)*

### **Summary: attainment targets for Dutch in primary education**

#### **Oral language education**

1. Extract and reproduce information from oral language.
2. Use appropriate expressions in specific situations for asking or giving information, reporting, explaining and discussing.
3. Evaluate information in informative or persuasive discussions and react with arguments.

#### **Written language education**

4. Extract information from written language, including schemes, tables and digital sources.
5. Write texts with different functions (informative, instructive, persuasive, entertaining).
6. Organize information and opinions from written educational texts, including digital ones.
7. Compare and evaluate information and opinions from different written texts.
8. Organize information and opinions when writing a text (letter, report, form or essay).
9. Feel pleasure in reading and writing appropriate texts.

#### **Language strategies**

10. Apply strategies for the above-mentioned skills.
11. Apply linguistic principles and rules: basis sentence analysis, orthography, punctuation.
12. Develop an adequate vocabulary and strategies for learning new words, including terminology to think and talk about language.

Table 3.4. Summary of attainment targets for Dutch for the lower grades of secondary education (Adapted from: Ministry of Education, 2006)

**Summary: attainment targets for Dutch in secondary education (lower grades)**

1. Use understandable expressions (orally and in written form).
2. Use correct orthography, grammar, syntax and word choice conventions.
3. Apply strategies to enlarge vocabulary.
4. Apply strategies for the extraction of information from spoken and written texts.
5. Find, organize and judge information from written and digital sources.
6. Develop adequate discussion and planning skills.
7. Develop oral presentation skills.
8. Read stories, poetries and informative texts that are appropriate.
9. Plan and execute language activities (speaking, listening, writing, reading).
10. Reflect on language activities and planning of new language activities.

In vocational training, Dutch is not taught as a separate subject, but almost all subjects are taught with Dutch as the language of instruction. In tertiary education, education through English is becoming more and more common at the cost of Dutch. The latter still remains the dominant language of instruction at this educational level. Other languages, for instance Frisian or foreign languages, are only used in the courses in which they are the principal object of study, but not as a language of instruction for other disciplines. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 present a summary of the attainment targets concerned. Targets have been defined for the end of primary education (age 12) and the lower grades of secondary education (ages 14 and 15). For the final exam in secondary education (ages 16, 17 or 18) attainment targets have also been set, but these are too elaborate to be described. They focus not only on practical language use (conversation, learning strategies), but also include literature and the language system.

### 3.1.3 The third language: English

Education in English starts in primary school. As is the case with the other subjects, there are no specifications for the number of teaching hours. The generally described attainment targets allow schools to organize the teaching of English as they deem fit.

The teaching of English usually starts at the age of ten. Attainment targets for primary education are listed in table 3.5.

*Table 3.5. Summary of attainment targets for English in primary education  
(Adapted from: Greven & Letschert, 2006)*

#### **Summary: attainment targets for English in primary education**

1. Extract information from simple spoken and written English texts.
2. Ask and give information on simple topics and develop confident attitude towards English.
3. Use correct orthography of some simple words on every-day topics.
4. Develop dictionary skills.

English is a compulsory subject until the end of every child's school career, which means until age 16 for pupils at VMBO level, until age 17 for pupils at HAVO level and age 18 for pupils at VWO level. In the last two grades of primary education, pupils usually receive one or two hours of English language instruction every week. In secondary education, this amounts to two hours a week. Table 3.6 shows the attainment targets for the lower grades of secondary education. For the upper grades, targets are determined for five (vocational training) or seven (HAVO/VWO) domains:

- reading skills
- watching and listening skills
- conversational skills
- writing skills
- literature (HAVO/VWO)
- orientation on study and profession (HAVO/VWO)

Table 3.6. Summary of attainment targets for English in lower grades of secondary education (Adapted from Ministry of Education, 2006)

### **Summary: attainment targets for English in secondary education (lower grades)**

1. Become habituated to English sounds by listening to spoken and sung texts.
2. Apply strategies to enlarge English vocabulary.
3. Apply strategies to extract information from spoken and written English texts.
4. Find, organize and judge information from written and digital sources in English.
5. Give an impression of daily life in colloquial language.
6. Engage in standard conversations for shopping, information and help.
7. Establish informal contact in English by email, letters and chats.
8. Understand the role of English in different types of international contacts.

English as a subject is generally believed to be important for a student's later position in society or for his or her professional career. This may help the children develop a positive attitude towards the language. There is a substantial amount of English-language input in every day life in Fryslân in the form of television programmes and films, which are always subtitled in Dutch and never dubbed. Children also become acquainted with the English language via computer games, the use of the Internet and holidays abroad.

#### **3.1.4 Other foreign languages**

In the Netherlands, the most commonly taught foreign languages besides English are French and German, the state languages of the two neighbouring countries. Education in these languages usually starts in the first year of secondary education, at the age of 12. Primary schools may choose to offer instruction in French and German, but since this is not compulsory very few schools do so. In Fryslân there are no primary schools offering French or German as a school subject.

In the lower grades of secondary education, French and German are compulsory subjects: in grades 1 and 2 (until the age of 14) for pupils at



VMBO level and in grades 1, 2 and 3 (until the age of 15) for pupils at HAVO and VWO level. Pupils usually receive instruction between 1.5 and 2 hours a week per language. After the compulsory programme, pupils are free to choose French and German as optional exam subjects in all secondary schools. The attainment targets and exam terms for French and German in secondary education are the same as for the English language (see section 3.1.3).

A few other foreign languages may also be taken as an exam subject but are only offered by a few secondary schools in the Netherlands: Spanish, Russian, Turkish and Arabic. Fryslân has no schools that offer any of the immigrant languages as exam subjects. Only one school in Fryslân offers Spanish as an exam subject. The level of the final exams for all foreign languages offered in secondary education can be linked to the levels mentioned in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages as follows:

VMBO (pre-vocational education)	–	A2;
HAVO (general secondary education)	–	B1;
VWO (pre-university education)	–	B2.

### 3.1.5 Special language-related programmes at school

#### *Trilingual schools*

One important language project in Fryslân is the *Trijetalige Skoalle* (trilingual school). In 1997, at the instigation of the *Fryske Akademy* and the *Taalsintrum Frysk*, a group of 7 primary schools cooperated on the formulation of an active language policy and the improvement of educational results. Most visibly, these schools showed a consistent pattern of three languages used as a medium of instruction. The first two languages of instruction were Frisian and Dutch, which had also been present as languages of instruction before the start of the pilot project, but with Dutch usually prevailing over Frisian. The third language was English, which used to be taught as a subject and - for the first time - became a language of instruction during the pilot. The aim was to improve the quality of language education, mainly for Frisian and English. The language use suggested by the *Taalsintrum Frysk* is presented in figure 3.1.

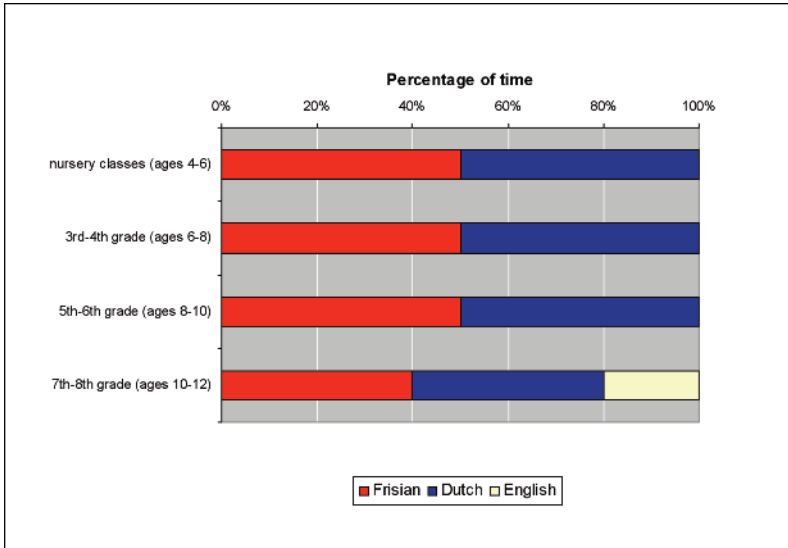


Figure 3.1. Languages of instruction at the trilingual primary schools in Fryslân

Some schools divert somewhat from the percentages given in the graph, for instance in first grade when reading classes start. These take up a substantial part of the timetable and are always taught in Dutch.

The results of the pilot project's initial 8 years were promising and positive (Van Ruijven & Ytsma, 2008). Since then, a school network has been set up which consisted of 17 primary schools in the school year 2007-2008. As mentioned before Fryslân intends to raise the number of trilingual schools to 50 by 2012, which is considerable but still a mere 10% of all primary schools in Fryslân (Provinsje Fryslân, 2006).

With the help of a subsidy granted by the province of Fryslân, the *Fryske Akademy* studied the results of the pilot project during the years 1997-2006 (Van Ruijven & Ytsma, 2008). The researchers investigated the language proficiency demonstrated by the pupils by testing vocabulary, technical reading, reading comprehension and spelling for all three languages. For English, listening skills were tested as well. The results were compared with those of pupils in control schools that had not adopted the trilingual language policy. The following results were reported:

- with respect to Dutch, the pupils in the project schools perform equally well as the pupils in the control schools;
- with respect to Frisian, the pupils in the project schools perform significantly better than the pupils in the control schools;
- with respect to English, the pupils in the project schools perform at the same level as the pupils at the control schools, but they feel more confident in using the English language.

Van der Meij (2008) conducted an investigation into the oral skills demonstrated for all three languages by the pupils at one of the project schools and one control school. In the study, vocabulary and grammar were tested for the three languages with pupils in the last two grades of primary education. No statistical differences were found between the pupils of the two schools with respect to the oral language skills in Frisian and Dutch. For English oral language skills, however, pupils of the trilingual school scored significantly better than their peers at the control school.

Although research is still in progress, first examinations show that the trilingual schools lead to gains for two languages and, very importantly, that it does not lead to any losses. Better profits are shown by pupils at the project schools in terms of overall Frisian language proficiency and English oral language proficiency, and it has also been demonstrated that the increased attention for these languages does not have any negative influence on the overall Dutch language proficiency exhibited by the pupils at the trilingual schools.

#### *Bilingual and trilingual secondary education*

In secondary education, three Frisian schools provide bilingual education in Dutch and English.<sup>78</sup> In these schools, English is not only offered as a school subject, but also used as a medium of instruction for other subjects for approximately 50% of the time.

The provision is offered in the first three grades of secondary education only. At the end of the third grade, pupils can sit an exam for a certificate proving their knowledge of the English language (for instance the Cambridge First Certificate of English, level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference). In the upper grades of secondary education, all three schools offer extra English language support and they prepare the students for other certificates or tests (such as the Cambridge Advanced and Proficiency or the

<sup>78</sup> A website with information on all secondary schools in the Netherlands with a bilingual programme is maintained by the European Platform for internationalisation in education: <http://www.netwerktto.europesplatform.nl>.

International Baccalaureate Language A2). Teachers receive special training to offer their lessons in the English language. The subjects commonly taught in English are mathematics, geography, history, biology, physical education and drama. Native speakers are also invited to speak with the pupils in the schools via special activities. Children who wish to take part in the bilingual programme are specifically selected and their parents pay an extra fee.

From the schoolyear 2010-2011, one school for secondary education starts with a pilot for trilingual secondary education. From the school year 2011-2012, a second school will join the pilot. Students are free whether they want to be in the 'regular' school programme or in the trilingual programme.

### **3.1.6 Summary of languages across the curriculum**

As described earlier, there is no legal obligation for the number of hours spent on language education in the Netherlands and in Fryslân. Schools are only expected to work in line with the attainment targets for all subjects, including languages, and they are free to decide on the amount of time they believe is required to achieve these goals. As a result, only approximations can be given of the number of hours spent on the different languages across the curriculum in education in Fryslân.

From primary school onwards, Dutch is the language that receives the most attention in the curriculum. Also, Dutch is the main language of instruction. Frisian is taught as a subject and used as a medium of instruction on a low scale. Teachers use Frisian as a language of instruction almost exclusively on a personal basis with children for whom it is the first language. Foreign languages are taught as a subject and are not used as a medium of instruction outside the language lessons. Exceptions to this general picture (at the beginning of 2009) are the trilingual schools (Frisian-Dutch-English trilingual schools) and the secondary schools that offer a Dutch-English bilingual programme to a selected group of the pupils. At the moment, these multilingual educational provisions cater to a small group of Frisian students only, but this may be expected to grow in the (near) future.

## 3.2 Languages in education outside the curriculum

### 3.2.1 Languages used for communication in school

For the investigation of the quality of Frisian as a subject in primary and secondary education in Fryslân in the year 2004-2005, the Educational Inspectorate interviewed school directors, teachers and pupils about the language(s) used in formal and informal situations outside the classroom. These results are the most recent figures to have become available for language use at school *outside* the curriculum. They are reported in tables 3.7 and 3.8.

Table 3.7. Language use outside the curriculum at primary schools in Fryslân (in percentages of time spent) (Educational Inspectorate, 2006)

	Frisian	Dutch	Both*
Teachers to teachers (informal)	66	34	-
Teachers to teachers (in meetings)	49	51	-
Teachers to parents	48	52	-
Parents to teachers	50	48	-
Teachers to pupils (informal)	43	57	-
Pupils among themselves (informal)	30	60	10

\* The 'both' category was not an answer option for the language use of teachers.

Table 3.8. Language use outside the curriculum at secondary schools in Fryslân (in percentages of time spent) (Educational Inspectorate, 2006)

	Frisian	Dutch	Both
Teachers to teachers (informal)	60	26	14
Teachers to teachers (in meetings)	17	77	6
Teachers to parents	31	51	18
Parents to teachers	43	43	16
Teachers to pupils (informal)	43	38	19
Pupils among themselves (informal)	34	54	8

As can be seen from these tables, and as is confirmed by further research carried out by the Educational Inspectorate, discrepancies may sometimes occur in the preferred or supposedly preferred language for formal and informal situations. Parents speak to teachers more often in Frisian than teachers do to parents, although teachers among themselves speak Frisian

more frequently. School directors and teachers often believe that parents do not think of Frisian as an important subject in the curriculum, while a majority of the parents state they believe it is a good thing that Frisian is available to their children (Educational Inspectorate, 2006).

### **3.2.2 Languages used for external communication**

As investigation by the Educational Inspectorate showed that Frisian has no prominent role in written communication at schools in Fryslân. School plans and school guides are almost exclusively written in Dutch, with the occasional section on the Frisian language written in Frisian. Records of meetings, invitations for parents, newsletters and school journals are almost exclusively written in Dutch. At primary level, only 3% of the schools write this type of documentation in Frisian as well as in Dutch, and only 1% produces these documents exclusively in Frisian. For secondary education, the use of Frisian for official communication is even more limited: only 1% of the parents reports to receive school messages in Frisian every now and then, while all other documentation is in Dutch (Educational Inspectorate, 2006). The websites of most schools, even those of some of the trilingual primary schools and the bilingual secondary schools, are in Dutch only. Sometimes, the website contains a small section in Frisian or in English, but this is not very common.

### **3.2.3 Linguistic landscape inside the school**

Little is known about the linguistic landscape inside the schools, i.e. the written language on the walls. Because of the predominance of Dutch in various types of communication, it is to be expected that Dutch is also the most visible language in the school buildings. In secondary education, posters and announcements may contain slogans in English, which is common in the Netherlands.

The *Taalsintrum Frysk* advises the trilingual schools to create a multilingual learning environment for their pupils, including visual support.<sup>79</sup> Teachers may use Frisian, Dutch and English flags, for instance, to indicate the language that is spoken on a specific day. Some of the trilingual schools use labels in different languages attached to objects in the classroom to make it easier for the pupils to expand their vocabulary.

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<sup>79</sup> The website dealing with the trilingual schools set up by *Taalsintrum Frysk* (in Frisian only) can be found at [http://www.taalsintrum.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=5&Itemid=56](http://www.taalsintrum.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5&Itemid=56).

### 3.3 Language attitudes and multilingual awareness

As has been mentioned in different types of research on bi- and multilingualism<sup>80</sup>, important influencing factors for education in and of a language are language attitudes and multilingual awareness. This section presents information on these topics in relation to students, teachers and parents in Fryslân.

Research on language attitudes of pupils in Fryslân (for instance Ytsma, 1995) shows that the general attitude towards Frisian held by pupils with Dutch as a first language was fairly negative, whilst the attitude expressed by pupils with Frisian as a first language was moderately positive. It was interesting to note that language attitudes held by Dutch children were less unfavourable in an environment with a greater percentage of Frisian-speaking children. The language attitudes held by the parents were comparable to those expressed by their children. This indicates that the environment (at school or at home) may be of influence on the development of language attitudes held by children (Ytsma, 1995).

Van der Bij and Valk (2005) evaluated a project set up by the provincial government to improve the position of Frisian in secondary education. Results indicate that this position shows the characteristics of an implicit learning plan. Frisian and Dutch both have their own little-discussed positions: Dutch is the language of the school and Frisian is for unofficial moments and situations. Students adopt the language attitudes of their teachers and management. To change this, the implicit language plan has to be made explicit.

The most recent investigation carried out by the Educational Inspectorate (2006) on the position of Frisian in primary and secondary education in Fryslân included questions on language attitudes for students, parents and school directorates. In primary education, these groups were asked to indicate how they perceived the importance of Frisian in comparison with the two other languages in the curriculum: Dutch and English. The outcomes are presented in table 3.9.

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78 <sup>80</sup> For instance Ytsma (1995), Baker (1996) and Cenoz in Hoffmann & Ytsma (2003).

Table 3.9. The importance of Frisian, Dutch and English in primary education according to different groups (in percentages per group). (Educational Inspectorate, 2006)

	Directors	Parents according to directors	Parents	Pupils
Frisian not important	27	57	24	27
Dutch not important	-	-	-	16
English not important	11	5	9	5
Frisian important	64	43	64	61
Dutch important	9	10	13	49
English important	75	76	52	33
Frisian very important	9	1	12	12
Dutch very important	91	90	87	35
English very important	14	19	39	62

It can be seen from table 3.9 that there are some discrepancies between the different groups of respondents: school directors tend to underestimate the importance that parents attach to the Frisian and English languages. A similar tendency is present for the subject of Frisian in secondary education. Table 3.10 shows the opinion held by students in secondary education in Fryslân for the subject of Frisian.

Table 3.10. Opinion of students on the subject of Frisian in secondary education (in percentages) (Educational Inspectorate, 2006)

	Students according to directors (n=36)	Students according to Frisian teachers (n=58)	Students (n=526)
Poor motivation/ Frisian not important	31	30	52
Neutral motivation/ Frisian (somewhat) important	66	70	41
Strong motivation/ Frisian very important	3	-	7



In sum, it may be stated that the overall language attitudes towards Frisian expressed by students, parents and school directors is not too positive, whereas Dutch is viewed as an important state language and English is viewed as an important international language. The attitudes held by parents and pupils, however, is somewhat more positive for Frisian and somewhat less positive for English and Dutch than is believed to be the case by primary and secondary school management.

### *Reading attitudes*

In Fryslân, some research has been carried out into reading pleasure and attitudes, with a focus on Frisian (LeRütte, 1996; De Jager, 2003, 2004).

LeRütte (1996) sampled a reading attitude scale to measure the promotion of reading pleasure at primary schools with respect to Dutch and Frisian literature. Language background proved to be of considerable influence: Dutch children are more negative towards reading Frisian and Frisian children are more positive. Another significant result shows that teachers do in fact have a positive attitude, but do not systematically pay attention to Frisian literature - and barely have any knowledge about the topic. Another result presented by LeRütte (1996) was that children at primary level read little Frisian. A possible explanation for this phenomenon could be that pupils think that reading Frisian is difficult or that they do not enjoy reading Frisian. On average, children tend to be 'neutral' towards reading Frisian.

Research carried out by De Jager (2003) shows similar figures. Most children at primary level have a negative attitude towards reading Frisian (55% of the pupils is negative/very negative). A mere but nevertheless respectable 16% of the pupils are positive towards reading Frisian. Important findings made by De Jager (2004) indicate that students at VMBO level are not explicitly positive towards reading Frisian either. The reading attitudes towards Frisian expressed by VMBO pupils are much more negative than towards reading Dutch. VMBO pupils do not read much Frisian (81% states not reading Frisian at all). Frisian pupils do in fact read more Frisian than Dutch pupils, but still only occasionally. More than half of the VMBO students state they experience difficulties in reading Frisian.

On the basis of the above, it can be concluded that the attitude towards reading Frisian is less positive than the general attitude towards the Frisian language. This attitude and the difficulties children encounter in reading

Frisian would seem to explain why children do not read much Frisian. In addition, it has to be mentioned that the availability of Frisian books is not comparable to the number of books available in Dutch.

### **3.4 Language proficiency**

The previous sections described the place of the different languages in and outside the curriculum and of language attitudes held by students, teachers and parents in Fryslân. It is of course important to know how these factors influence language skills. For a thorough insight into this issue, an elaborate system of regular assessments would be needed of all students and teachers in education for the different languages concerned. Such a system does not exist in Fryslân at the moment. Students are assessed on languages, but differences exist regarding the types of test administered, the frequency of testing and the language(s) being assessed. Thus, the information on language proficiency of students and teachers is limited. Nevertheless, this section will give an overview of the results that are available in the field of primary and secondary education.

#### **3.4.1 Students**

Over the past decades, several researchers have studied the achievements demonstrated by students in Fryslân. Many studies focus on primary school children's Dutch language proficiency levels and compare the results with the average language proficiency levels shown by pupils in the Netherlands. The results, in general, are not favourable: Van Langen & Hulsen (2001), Van Ruijven (2003, 2004, 2006) all reported scores below the Dutch average for pupils in Fryslân in terms of technical reading skills in the Dutch language. A more positive outcome was recently found in the trilingual primary schools: although pupils receive less education through the Dutch language because of the use of two other languages of instruction, the test results for Dutch language proficiency levels shown by the pupils were comparable to the Dutch average (Van Ruijven & Ytsma, 2008).

In secondary education less research has become available, but it would seem that students' Dutch language proficiency is lagging behind in comparison with the national average (Van Ruijven, 2000, 2004).

For Frisian language proficiency, few data are available. Not all pupils are

tested on Frisian in primary education, although it is a compulsory subject. De Jong and Riemersma (2004) found that primary school children's reading comprehension and listening skills for Frisian in Fryslân were sufficient, while the results for technical reading, orthography, speaking and writing were not satisfactory. A specific test is available for Frisian language proficiency to be held at the end of primary education: the *Eintoets Frysk* (Final test Frisian). The number of pupils taking part in this exam is small, and has remained stable over the last five years.

Frisian language proficiency levels in the trilingual primary schools have been analyzed and the result was that pupils in these schools scored somewhat better than in the other primary schools in the province (Van Ruijven & Ytsma, 2008). The Educational Inspectorate has asked primary school management boards to what extent they believe the attainment targets for Frisian language are met by their pupils. According to the school directors, few pupils reach the criteria set in the attainment targets, as table 3.11 shows. Still, the figures also indicate that the pupils' achievements tend to be underestimated, particularly in the case of Frisian-speaking pupils.

*Table 3.11. Attainment targets in the 2004-2005 curriculum according to school directors (n=400), in percentages and the extent to which they are met by pupils (Educational Inspectorate, 2006)*

	<b>Aimed for in current curriculum for Frisian</b>	<b>Met by percentage of Frisian-speaking pupils</b>	<b>Met by percentage of non-Frisian-speaking pupils</b>
Positive attitude towards use of Frisian	77	81	56
Extract information from spoken Frisian	62	80	60
Express themselves in Frisian in daily life situations	57	85	44
Vocabulary of highly frequent Frisian words	45	74	50
Extract information from written Frisian	40	80	55
Write easy texts in Frisian	19	63	47

In secondary education, the final exams are the only regular language proficiency tests for Frisian. The level of the exams is comparable to that for the Dutch exams, in other words: language proficiency is required to be at first-language levels. The number of pupils that take the exam is very low (78 in 2008, see section 3.1.1). No information is available on results scored by pupils that take the exam.

English is a compulsory subject in the final grades of primary education, and pupils are assessed on their English language proficiency. Still, no provincial or nationwide test is available. A study that takes into account the oral English language skills of pupils in primary education is that by Van der Meij (2008). In this research project, pupils from a trilingual and from a normal (bilingual) primary school in Fryslân had to tell a story in English in a test setting. It turned out that the pupils of the trilingual school scored slightly better on oral English language proficiency than the pupils in the other school.

Over the past few years, the media have been reporting on poor Dutch language proficiency levels demonstrated by students entering tertiary education on a nationwide scale. An investigation held by the VU University in Amsterdam among its 1,100 first-year students in 2007 revealed that almost 30% of them performed insufficiently on a Dutch language test. In addition, it became alarmingly clear that of the approximately 10,000 students in teacher training in the Netherlands as many as two thirds failed a test on Dutch language and mathematics at the end of their first year of training. These tests were only slightly more difficult than tests administered at the end of primary education.<sup>81</sup> Given the negative scores for Dutch language proficiency in primary and secondary education in Fryslân, there is no reason to assume that the situation at the start of tertiary education in Fryslân will deviate positively from the situation depicted in the national studies.

### 3.4.2 Teachers

Teachers in the Netherlands are not tested on language proficiency after they have graduated and started a job. This means that two sources are left to obtain information on the teachers' language proficiency levels: the criteria for languages used in the teacher training programmes that all qualified teachers have successfully completed, and, secondly, self-reports drawn up by these teachers.

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<sup>81</sup> Links to news articles (in Dutch) on these two research studies can be found at:  
<http://www.kennislink.nl/web/show?id=186255> and  
[http://www.nos.nl/nosjournaal/artikelen/2007/1/16/160107\\_taaltoets.html](http://www.nos.nl/nosjournaal/artikelen/2007/1/16/160107_taaltoets.html).

Different modules in the curriculum of teacher training institutes concentrate on the language proficiency of future teachers and on the didactics of teaching languages. In pre-service teacher training for primary education, more or less one third of the curriculum is dedicated to language(s). Most of the training focuses on the Dutch language. The other two languages addressed in the training programme in Fryslân are Frisian and English. Still, these receive only limited attention: in the entire four-year curriculum (240 ECTS), the module for Frisian is 7 ECTS for Frisian-speaking students and 9 ECTS for non-Frisian speaking students. English is given as a subject in the first and second year of the programme. Pre-service teacher training for secondary education focuses on one specific language: Dutch, Frisian or a foreign language. For Dutch and Frisian, students are supposed to have a thorough first-language proficiency background, and for the foreign languages a high second-language competence is expected (comparable to level C1-C2 of the European Framework of Reference).

The Educational Inspectorate has asked primary and secondary school teachers in Fryslân to self-report on the level of different skills for Frisian language proficiency. Table 3.12 shows the results for the school year 2004-2005.

*Table 3.12. Proficiency of Frisian self-reported by teachers in 2004-2005 (n=808) in percentages (Educational Inspectorate, 2006)*

	<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>
Fluently	78	62	42	11
Well	20	23	39	25
Satisfactorily	2	9	15	33
With effort	-	4	3	22
Not at all	-	2	1	9

Despite the difficulties involved in a process of self-evaluation, the average division of language skills for Frisian is clear: the oral skills, understanding and also speaking, do not often present a problem. Greater difficulties are associated with reading and especially with writing.

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