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Slovene

The Slovene language in
education in Austria

2nd edition



* numerically small language communities

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Foreword

background

For several years now, Mercator-Education has made efforts to achieve one of its principal goals: to gather, store and distribute information on minority language education in European regions. Regional or minority languages are languages which differ from the official language of the state where they are spoken and which are traditionally used within a given territory by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the population.

The success of this series of regional dossiers has shown a need for documents stating briefly the most essential features of the educational system of regions with an autochthonous lesser used language. With the establishment of regional dossiers we intend to meet this need.

aim

Regional dossiers aim at providing concise descriptive information and basic educational statistics about minority language education in a specific region of the European Union. This kind of information, such as features of the educational system, recent educational policies, division of responsibilities, main actors, legal arrangements, support structures and also quantitative information on the number of schools, teachers, pupils and financial investments, can serve several purposes.

target group

Policy makers, researchers, teachers, students and journalists may use the information provided to assess developments in European minority language schooling. They can also use a regional dossier as a first orientation towards further research or as a source of ideas for improving educational provision in their own region.

link with EURYDICE

In order to link these regional descriptions with those of national educational systems, it was decided to follow the format used by EURYDICE, the European education information network in the European Union. EURYDICE provides information on the administration and structure of education in member states of the European Union. The

information provided in the regional dossiers is focussed on language use at the various levels of education.

contents

The remainder of this dossier consists firstly of an introduction to the region being studied, followed by six sections which each deal with a specific level of the educational system. These brief descriptions contain factual information presented in a readily accessible way. Sections eight to ten cover research, prospects and summary statistics. For detailed information and political discussions about language use at the various levels of education, the reader is referred to other sources.

1

Introduction

language

Slovene is an autochthonous language spoken in the southern part of two Austrian provinces, Carinthia and Styria. That these two provinces are home to an autochthonous Slovene ethnic minority is a vestige of former Slavic groups that once populated the area in the south and east of today's Austria. Slovene was the language of the Slovenes in former Yugoslavia and has been the state language in the neighbouring Republic of Slovenia since 1991. This report focuses on Carinthia, where the vast majority of the Slovene-speaking minority in Austria live. Slovene belongs to the southern Slavic language group and has been used in writing since the 16th century (translation of the Bible). The interplay of a number of geographical, cultural and historical factors have led to the development of an unusually large number of dialects with pronounced differences on the phonological and lexical level.

Sociolinguistic factors have prevented the evolution of a single, common, colloquial variety of Slovene, which could be used as a functional means of communication throughout the bilingual area in Carinthia. Sociolinguistic research has made clear that the language shift from Slovene to German which took place in Carinthia occurred with surprising speed.¹

population

The first official census in Austria was carried out under the Second Republic in 1951. Since that time the censuses have asked for current language use, the figures from subsequent years are therefore comparable. In 1951 approximately 42,000 Carinthians said that they were Slovene speakers. This figure dropped steadily and rapidly to a low of just under 17,000 in 1981, a trend which proceeded to stabilize between 1981 and 1991.² According to the census of 1991 14,850 people (2.79% of the population in Carinthia) spoke Slovene. Ten years later this figure was approximately 10% less. In the last census, carried out in 2001, some 13,109 people said that they use Slovene language in everyday life.³ However, representatives from minority organisations in the region and the Catholic Church estimate that the figure is at least twice as high.⁴

Using administrative population censuses to determine the size of speech communities is often considered problematic. Minority organisations in Carinthia have repeatedly contested taking these results as a measure of the size of the minority group. The assumption that the actual number of Slovene speakers is much higher than the census figures indicate from the censuses seems justified if we consider two surveys.⁵ The first was a telephone survey carried out in 1990. The results of this survey seem to validate an estimation of about 40,000 people who speak Slovene but also use German on a regular basis as an everyday language.⁶ A second inquiry carried out by Catholic priests in the region suggests as many as 50,000 understanding Slovene and, 33,000 speaking it on a fairly regular basis. The majority of Carinthian Slovenes are of Catholic denomination and there have always been strong ties between the Slovene-speaking population and their spiritual leaders.

Social changes within the Slovene speaking population have meant that there has been a considerable migration towards the regional capital Klagenfurt/Celovec, which originally was not part of the bilingual territory according to Austrian legislation. The Austrian Supreme Court has since decided that primary bilingual education should be offered in the town of Klagenfurt/Celovec and other non- Slovene regions,

as well as in the original bilingual territory, if enough parents enrol their children in bilingual classes. Today there are two bilingual kindergartens and two bilingual primary schools in Klagenfurt/Celovec, but not any others in non-Slovene areas.

language status

Minority rights for Slovenes in Carinthia are recognized under Article 7 of the State Treaty of 1955 and are based on territorial principles. Therefore, access to minority schools is granted according to those principles. This means that it is not subject to personal declaration. An extension of this law in 1989 lessened the importance of the territorial question, allowing for bilingual education to be offered in regions not covered by the Minority Education Act. Minority rights in Austria are also guaranteed by a number of European conventions. Austria has signed and ratified the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Both these documents guarantee some basic linguistic rights, although in practice they are unlikely to bring any considerable changes to the status of the Slovene language. Austrian Constitutional Law, the State Treaty and the *Volksgruppengesetz* (Ethnic Group Law) of 1976 do not contain any direct guarantee of protection for the ethnic group itself, but to some extent regulate language use. Nevertheless, the absence of any coordinated language planning and language policy in Austria very often leaves questions of language use and language planning to party politics. The result is that there are numerous different laws and regulations concerning language use.

The Austrian Constitutional Court declared in 2001 that bilingual topographic signs have to be put up in all municipalities, where the Slovene or Croatian minority makes up more than 10 percent of the population, thus overruling legislation from 1976 allowing bilingual signs in municipalities where more than 25 percent of the population belong to the minority. The ruling was, however, not observed as the political parties in Carinthia refused to fulfil this law. The Austrian Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel has since called a series of Consensus

Conferences, at both federal and regional levels, in an effort to resolve this issue. These endeavours have yet failed to produce any acceptable solution. There are still somewhere in the region of 300 bilingual topographic signs missing.

Slovene has the status of an officially recognized minority language, but official use of Slovene is restricted to very few spheres. As public language use is regulated by a complicated set of laws, it is difficult to know exactly when and where Slovene can be used.⁷ In some municipalities, it is an official language and can be used in administrative procedures; in others, it can only be used in court. This goes some way to explaining the fact that there is a diglossic functional division between German and Slovene. Even where Slovene is spoken as a first language during primary language socialisation, German is simultaneously present in the mass media and the social environment. Slovenes now have only one weekly newspaper, *Novice*, and a radio frequency for 16 hours a day. *Radio Dva*, the only round-the-clock Slovene radio programme in the province, was forced off the air in 2003 because it ran out of money. The government no longer financially supported the radio programme and the Austrian public broadcaster, ORF, cancelled their contract. The relationship between the minority, the government, and ORF became very fraught over this issue, with employees of the radio station even staging two minor hunger strikes. A solution was eventually negotiated. The new 16-hour Slovene radio programme was then launched following the signing of a new contract in December 2003 between two private radio stations in Carinthia and ORF. Under the new contract, ORF provides 8 hours of radio programme, while the two private radio stations, *Radio Dva* and *Radio Agora*, provide the remaining 16 hours. In the Austrian state television, Slovenes have one half an hour programme per week on Sundays. The Slovene-speaking community is probably without exception bilingual, whereas only very few German speakers master Slovene. The relationship between the two languages differs greatly from speaker to speaker. The situation has been characterized as “one-sided, natural, collective Slovene-German bilingualism”.⁸

*status of language
education*

The minority school system dates back to the times of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. At that time, in the south of Carinthia almost everybody spoke Slovene and had to learn German in school. Prior to the law of 1869, which permitted the population of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to use their own language in education, the Church was the main provider of education and ran some 28 schools in southern Carinthia. Then, in 1891 'utraqustic' schools were established, with lessons in the mother tongues of the different language groups only taught in the first three grades of primary school in order to enable pupils to follow lessons in the German language as soon as possible. School was considered as a means of homogenizing the heterogeneous population. The Austrian school system was based on the German language and all other languages were considered merely auxiliary. In 1938, Austria was annexed to the Third Reich. Minority schools were abolished and minorities severely persecuted. Throughout the Hitler regime, many members of the Slovene-speaking community were sent to concentration camps and the Slovene language was forbidden. One of the consequences of this was that Slovene then became a symbol of resistance. Following the end of WWII, under the guise of the Allied Forces, a policy granting minority rights was adopted, but under German national pressure was never fully implemented.

In 1945, lessons in minority languages were taken up again and a new school system was introduced. The School Language Ordinance of 1945 basically defined the area in which bilingual education was organised up to 1958. Minority language teaching was compulsory in 107 schools throughout the bilingual area and all subjects in primary schools were taught simultaneously in both languages - German and Slovene. All pupils were supposed to learn both languages at school. However, even throughout this period, from the third grade onward, German was the medium of instruction, and Slovene was only taught as a subject. Nevertheless, this was the only period in the history of the Austrian minority schools system when a minority language had some regional relevance for the majority

population as well. In 1958, due to German nationalist pressure, this limited concession was retracted; compulsory bilingual schooling was abolished and parents were required to declare whether they wanted their children to learn Slovene at school or not. Despite the fact that minority rights were granted by law on a territorial principle, a new personal declaration principle was introduced. Pressure was exerted on parents to remove their children from Slovene lessons. As a consequence, after 1958, only about 20% of the children in the region attended bilingual lessons in primary schools. In subsequent years, the number continued to fall, but since the late nineteen-eighties there has been a new rise in the number of pupils attending bilingual schools. In the school year 2003/04 more than a third of pupils within the territory covered by the Minority Education Act for Carinthia were registered for bilingual classes.⁹ This increase is due partly to the social and political changes that took place in the early nineteen- nineties, when the state border between Austria and Slovenia was no longer considered a dividing line between two different political systems. Membership of the European Union, with its open borders, may to some extent have helped to emphasize not just the removal of physical borders but also the borders in people's minds.¹⁰ In May 2004, the Republic of Slovenia became a member of the EU. This should also continue to have a positive effect on the development of the status of Slovene and the role of the language in education in Carinthia.

Today the legal basis for bilingual upbringing and education within the area covered by the Minority Education Act for Carinthia is the Austrian State Treaty. Within this area it is possible to set up primary schools, primary school classes and (within one class) primary school sections with German and Slovene as the medium of instruction. The provisions of the Minority Education Act for Carinthia cover some 83 primary schools and 22 general secondary schools for the duration of compulsory education.

As bilingual education is organized on a territorial principle, it is up to the parents to decide, no matter what their own language background is, whether they want bilingual

education within the public system for their children. Of late there has been an increase in the number of German-speaking pupils in bilingual schools. About 60% do not speak or understand Slovene any more when they enter school.¹¹

education system

The cornerstone for Austria's education system was the "General School Regulations" decreed by Empress Maria Theresa in 1774. As early as the nineteenth century it seems that in Austria general schools, vocational schools and teacher training colleges had reached an advanced stage of development. In 1869, eight-year compulsory education was introduced.

Compulsory schooling in modern-day Austria lasts for nine years. It starts for children at the age of six and ends at the age of fifteen. (A table of the Austrian education system: see Appendix 1). Primary education lasts for four years (from age six to ten). Secondary education is divided into lower secondary school, which lasts for four years, and upper secondary school, which lasts for four or five years. At lower secondary level, there are three options: *Volkschule*, *Hauptschule* (general secondary) and *Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schulen* (academic secondary). *Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schulen* are divided into *Gymnasium* (general), *Realgymnasium* (science-based) and *Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium* (home economics). Vocational secondary education lasts for five years. All streams of upper secondary education lead to the *Reifeprüfung/Matura*, which gives access to higher education.

The first division into separately organized school types occurs at the lower level of secondary education. About 70% of all primary school leavers attend general secondary school (*Hauptschule*); about 30% go to academic secondary school, (*Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule*).¹² General secondary school covers grades 5 to 8 (10- to 14-year-olds), and provides general education preparing pupils for employment and for the transition to intermediate and higher secondary schools. Academic secondary school comprises four years at the lower level (10- to 14-year-olds) and four years at the upper level (14- to 18-year-olds). After

having completed the upper level, a matriculation examination (Matura) provides access to university studies. A number of upper secondary schools lead towards qualification at a vocational level.

private and public

In Austria, public (state) schools have always played a much more important role than private schools. The Austrian state guarantees children general access to public schools without distinction of birth, gender, race, status, class, language or religion. Private schools, by contrast, may select pupils according to religion, language or gender, although this is rarely applied. Churches or special interest groups run the majority of private schools. Some private schools teach the official curriculum and some have their own curriculum. There is only one private bilingual school in Carinthia located in Klagenfurt/Celovec. It is a private confessional school run by the Hermagoras Brotherhood.¹³ At this school the official curriculum is taught, the school is subsidized by the state (payment of teaching staff, other expenses) and parents pay a monthly school fee. The amount of support given to private schools depends mainly on who runs them. Those run by an officially recognized church can claim to have their teaching staff paid by the State.

bilingual education forms

Education in Slovene is integrated into the Austrian school system. The Austrian State Treaty provides the legal basis for bilingual upbringing and education within the area covered by the Minority Education Act for Carinthia. This is based on territorial principles and within the area there are different forms of bilingual education. Outside of the area covered by the Minority Education Act for Carinthia, it is also possible to organize bilingual education where there is a “sustained need” for bilingual teaching.¹⁴ This means that Slovene can be offered as an obligatory or an optional practical subject, an optional additional subject or as a compulsory subject at every primary school and general secondary school as well as at academic secondary schools – if there is enough demand, suitably qualified teachers and the necessary quota of teaching hours available.

It is possible to set up primary schools, primary school classes and (within one class) primary school sections with German and Slovene as the medium of instruction. The curriculum at primary schools where both German and Slovene are used as the medium of instruction provides for the same educational objectives as the curriculum at all other Austrian primary schools. True bilingualism is aspired to, taking the pupils' linguistic starting position into consideration. When the curriculum is drawn up, allowances are made for the pupils' differing linguistic competence.

At general secondary schools, Slovene can be taught as a compulsory subject in accordance with the Minority Education Act (teaching of the mother tongue). In this case Slovene is on a par with German. Slovene can also be taught as a foreign language. Pupils can choose English, Slovene or another language as a foreign language. The third option available is that Slovene can be learnt as an optional additional subject at general secondary schools.

administration

The responsibility for schools and universities was combined in 2000 by setting up the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht und kulturelle Angelegenheiten, or bm:bwk in abbreviated form*). The Federation has exclusive responsibility for basic legislation at all levels, except for nursery schools (kindergarten). Separate federal bodies have been established for the implementation of areas which fall under the responsibility of the Federation: District School Boards at the level of political 'districts'; Provincial School Boards at the level of the Länder; and the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture which is responsible for the entire area of education. The District and Provincial School Boards are the federal school authorities in the Länder. This functions as a two-tier administration, which means that Provincial School Boards have designated jurisdiction in matters referred to a District School Board, while the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (bm:bwk) deals with cases referred directly to Provincial School Boards.¹⁵ School Boards at the different levels are also responsible for minority education in Slovene (*Minderheitenschulwesen*).

inspection

Austria has a long tradition of school inspection with a rather hierarchical form of organisation: the provincial inspector in Carinthia is assisted by district school inspectors in compulsory education and by subject inspectors in higher secondary education. Two of these inspectors are responsible for the minority school system. The inspector for compulsory minority school supervises bilingual schooling at the levels from the 1st to the 8th form and at secondary level the subject inspector for Slovene is at the same time responsible for bilingual higher and vocational education.

support structure

The Federal Pedagogical Institute in Klagenfurt/Celovec is responsible for in-service training for teachers, but also offers a support for bilingual teachers, Slovene teachers and team teachers, in the form of further education. Slovene language classes have been on offer at the institute for a number of years. One of the main reasons for this is that particularly those teachers who are employed as team teachers are obliged to improve their knowledge of Slovene. Teachers wishing to maintain the necessary additional qualification to become bilingual teachers can also do so at this Pedagogical Institute within a number of months.

As part of the further education programme available for bilingual teachers, different events are organized at various schools throughout the bilingual territory. These normally take the form of afternoon seminars and cover a wide range of topics. Titles of seminars in this series for the 2003/2004 academic year included: history as motivation in language class; creative language workshops; music in bilingual class, or teaching material for pupils with little knowledge of Slovene. Teachers often work together at such seminars to produce useful didactic materials for class. Further seminars are also organized in Slovenia and other Austrian provinces. These are often held on a cross-border basis, with teachers from neighbouring Slovenia participating in the seminars. In the academic year 2003/2004 the spectrum of activities on offer from the Pedagogical Institute were organized in line with the aims of the European Year of the Languages 2003

and the priorities set by the Action Plan 2004-2006 of the European Commission.

2

Pre-school education

target group

Nursery school (kindergarten) is the traditional form of pre-primary education for children aged 3 to 6 in Austria. Nursery school is optional, parents generally pay for it and children attend at their parents' discretion. It is not a part of the educational system as such.

structure

The majority of nursery schools have been established and are maintained by the municipalities (some 75%). Therefore, there are often striking regional differences in terms of the degree of nursery school provision. There are public kindergartens (run by the Federation, the provinces or the municipalities) and private kindergartens. Contributions from the Länder to the cost of the establishment and operation of a kindergarten vary considerably. Private kindergartens run by associations, churches or religious orders receive grants towards meeting operating costs, while other private kindergartens generally do not. This is in accordance with the applicable Nursery School Act.

In some cases kindergartens do not charge any fees, while the majority of municipalities charge an attendance fee based on a graded scheme according to net family income. Private kindergartens charge varying fees. Kindergartens are either run on a full-day (7.00 – 19.00) or on a half-day (7.00 – 12.00) basis, but parents can pick up their children whenever they want. Kindergartens are very often open throughout the year.

legislation

Anyone wishing to open a nursery school can do so provided that they comply with the educational mandate of the Nursery School Act. Generally, kindergarten teachers are

either trained in special schools at upper secondary level or in special training colleges at post-secondary level. The latter involves a two-year training course. These special training colleges at post-secondary level constitute a major reform in the kindergarten sector. On October 1, 2001, the Carinthian Nursery Funds Act (State Law Gazette No. 74/2001) entered into force. The aim of this Act is to promote private bilingual or multilingual nurseries of the Slovene Minority in Carinthia. Despite the availability of increased funds for nurseries, there is still a lack of nursery provision in the bilingual area.

language use

Over recent years it has become obvious that Slovene organisations in Carinthia have been paying more attention to the field of pre-school education. The first kindergartens with bilingual or Slovene-speaking groups were private. Two such Kindergartens have been established in Klagenfurt/Celovec by Slovene organisations, and there are others in the bilingual area. Some of the municipal kindergartens are also bilingual. There are nine municipal kindergartens that have bilingual sections; and eight private bi- and multilingual kindergartens, partly co-financed by the state. These kindergartens are subsidized from Federal resources specifically designated for minorities.

As the capacity of bilingual municipal kindergartens and of those run by Slovene organisations is very often considered insufficient, groups of parents and educators have founded autonomous groups. One example of an initiative of this kind is the private, originally bilingual but now multilingual kindergarten (offering English as a third language), *Ti in Jaz, dvojezicni Vrtec Borovlje/ Ich und Du, Zweisprachiger Kindergarten Ferlach*.¹⁶ The decision to set up this kindergarten followed the refusal of local authorities to offer bilingual education to children aged three to six years. The kindergarten has some 25 children and three kindergarten teachers: one full-time hand who speaks only Slovene with the children; another full-time hand speaking all three languages with the children, and a part-time employee speaking only in English to the children. The initial concept was devised and developed by a professor at the university

of Klagenfurt/Celovec and was also the basis of a research project on multilingual teaching.¹⁷

The children's language backgrounds in kindergartens are very heterogeneous: some speak Slovene dialects at home, others a Slovene standard; while others do not speak Slovene at home at all. Generally at the age of three, when children enter kindergarten, they have to some extent become acquainted with the German language through the media and German-speaking surroundings.

teaching material

The primary aim of nursery education is to develop the child's personality as a whole, and as such does not focus on preparing children for school. Kindergartens are generally run in small co-educational groups and take into consideration individual styles and approaches to learning. Different games and materials are provided systematically by the kindergartens and individual kindergarten teachers, and teaching methods are left to the staff. Material produced in Slovenia is also useful at this level of education.

3

Primary education

target group

Primary education covers four years (grades 1 to 4) and is provided at primary schools (*Volksschule/ljudska šola*). Primary schools also offer an optional pre-primary year (*Vorschulstufe*) to those six-year-olds, who are not yet ready for the 1st grade and will then have to spend five years in primary school. The upper level of primary education (grades 5 to 8) has been more or less abolished and replaced by general secondary school. Amongst the very few primary schools in Austria that still run an upper primary level is one bilingual school in the mountain regions of Carinthia.

structure

The objective of *Volksschule* (*Grundschule* or primary school) is to provide all pupils with a basic, balanced education for their social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.¹⁸ The general primary school curriculum also applies to bilingual schools and comprises the classical subject canon: mathematics, music, drawing,

handicraft, physical education, local history, geography, biology, religious instruction and German. From the first grade onwards, a modern foreign language (mostly English) is taught. Children who are of compulsory school age but not yet mature enough to attend primary school can attend the pre-primary school, designed specifically to suit the needs of such children. This year is not part of the school system. The lower level (*Grundstufe I*) includes years 1 and 2 and also the pre-primary level, if necessary. The upper level (*Grundstufe II*) consists of years 3 and 4. From the 1998/99 school year onwards, the primary school curriculum has stipulated that from year 1, learning a modern language (English, French, Italian, Croatian, Slovakian, Slovene, Czech or Hungarian) is compulsory (i.e. no grades are given) and that from the school year 2003/04 all primary schools must include this in their teaching plan from year 1.¹⁹

The maximum number of pupils per class is 30 (20 for a pre-primary class).²⁰ If the number of pupils in each year is too small, several years may be combined in one class. Teachers are class teachers and usually spend the four years with the same class of children. From the 2003/04 school year, the timetable for primary school (years 1 to 4) will leave the school with the option of deciding on the number of hours taught per week. The total number of hours for years 1 to 4 is 90.

legislation

In 1988, after long discussions, an amendment to the Minority Education Act for Carinthia was passed (*Minderheitenschulgesetz-Novelle*). This new legislation provided for separate bilingual and monolingual classes at primary level, if the number of children seeking bilingual education is sufficient. It stipulated that in primary classes with both German and bilingual sections, in so far as possible, pupils are to be taught the German part of bilingual teaching together. If the number of pupils enrolled for bilingual classes is below 9 no parallel classes are offered, but an integrated mixed class is to be established. A team teacher comes into the class for 10 to 14 hours and teaches in German while the other teacher teaches in Slovene. There

should be no less than 7 or more than 20 pupils in a class in the pre-primary year or in the first to third years (now first to fourth years). Pupils registered for bilingual classes whose Slovene is insufficient should be offered additional remedial teaching in Slovene, if there are three or more such children. New curricula were also issued for primary schools with German and Slovene as languages of instruction. These curricula emphasize the didactics of bilingual teaching and the importance of intercultural learning, taking into account the pupils' environment.

Another positive development was the decision by the Constitutional Court in 1989 to make bilingual primary education possible outside the territory covered by the Minority Education Act for Carinthia when there is a "sustained need". This resulted in the establishment of a public bilingual primary school and a private confessional primary school run by the Hermagoras Brotherhood in Klagenfurt/Celovec. In the 2003/2004 school year 79 primary schools within the bilingual area, including two in Klagenfurt/Celovec provided this service.²¹ One consequence has been an increased demand for teachers at this level and with this specialist training. On March 9, 2000, a further decision by the constitutional court meant that bilingual teaching was extended to year four. Then an amendment was passed guaranteeing that from the school year 2001/02 pupils registered for bilingual teaching are to be taught all subjects in both languages to more or less the same extent.²²

language use

In bilingual schools, Slovene is part of the core curriculum. In monolingual German classes, Slovene can also be taught as an additional practical exercise for two hours a week without any assessment. From 1988 till 2001 in the pre-primary year and the first three years of instruction, pupils in bilingual classes and sections who have been registered for bilingual teaching were taught all subjects in both languages. In 2000, the Austrian Constitutional Court extended this to the 4th grade, where previously Slovene was only taught as a subject with four lessons per week. This was generally considered a positive development. From the 2001/02 school year, the German and Slovene languages

were to be used to the same extent as a medium of instruction in all subjects.

Theoretically, using both languages to the same extent as a medium of instruction is well-founded, but in reality the quality of bilingual education depends very much on the individual teacher. Also, because Slovene is increasingly becoming a foreign language for some children and has to be taught as such. Parents are often afraid that their children may not learn enough basic knowledge if they place too much emphasis on studying Slovene. Therefore teachers tend to use more German than Slovene. The teacher's use of German and Slovene and the context in which they use both languages is also important in terms of maintaining and improving the status of the Slovene language. The teacher's attitude towards the language can have an effect on the pupil's attitude towards that same language. If bilingual teachers use German more frequently than Slovene as their daily and official language, this may also influence their tendency to use more German in the classroom. In practice there are great differences in the amount of Slovene instruction actually provided. This does not depend solely on the parents and the teachers; the pupils also play an important role here. Very often the status of Slovene is dependent not just on the students' attitude towards the language but also on their command of the language when they enter school. There are different teaching models in use in various schools: The private school in Klagenfurt started with a one-day-one-language scheme, which has brought good results so far, and the public school in Klagenfurt has now adopted a similar model, in which German and Slovene alternate on a weekly basis as a medium of instruction. In the majority of the schools bilingual education is still provided in a more unsystematic manner; units in one language or the other alternate without regularity.

teaching material

Teachers decide on the teaching methods and the materials they use. Form and contents of the teaching material must of course comply with the curriculum for the particular year and be suited to children of that age. As there is generally a lack of funding for either experimental classes or evaluative

research, teachers are to a large extent left to their own devices. Many teachers make use of resources on the Internet and prepare materials at workshops or seminars. Therefore, on a didactic and methodological level, teaching may vary.

Until the beginning of the nineties, textbooks in Slovene were only available for Slovene literacy training and language instruction. These textbooks were based on the assumption of a homogenous language background, meant for pupils having a thorough knowledge of Slovene. But reality in the classroom was much more heterogeneous. To cope with these problems, individual bilingual teachers and groups of teachers took the initiative to develop new textbooks and teaching materials. The Slovene publishing houses in Carinthia print these books. The school authorities have provided translations from standard German-language primary school textbooks. This can, however, be problematic as some pupils may simply use the version of the textbook in their stronger language. Today, much software for computers and other learning materials can be bought in Slovenia. Now that the Republic of Slovenia is a member of the EU, imports are unlimited and without taxes.

statistics

In 77 public primary schools in the bilingual area and in two primary schools (one public and one private) in the town of Klagenfurt/Celovec/Celovec, bilingual education is established. In the school year 2003/04, 1,720 pupils (a further 143 pupils attended the two schools in Klagenfurt/Celovec) pupils out of 5471 attended bilingual teaching in 65 of these schools. This figure corresponds to 32.28 % of the pupils in this area. In 1987/88 this figure was only 19.46% and from then on steadily grew. In 2003/04 at the two Klagenfurt/Celovec primary schools 143 pupils were registered for bilingual education. A further 45 pupils in Carinthia were registered for learning Slovene as a subject without formal assessment.²³

Number of pupils attending bilingual primary schools within the area covered by the Minority Education Act, including Klagenfurt/Celovec

2003/04	1.	2.	3.	4.	Pre-primary year	Total
Monolingual classes	900	866	899	917	26	3608
Bilingual classes	522	464	426	448	3	1863
Total	1422	1330	1325	1365	29	5471

Primary schools in Carinthia and primary schools with registration for bilingual teaching.

	Number	Percentage	Schools housed in other buildings	Percentage
Schools in Carinthia	308	100%	34	12.41%
Schools in area covered by Minority Education Act	77	24,68%	6	7.79%
Schools outside area covered by Minority Education Act	2	0.65%		
Schools with bilingual teaching	67	21.75%	6	8.69%

Source of tables: Ogris, Thomas, Dr. Domej, Theodor, (2004) Jahresbericht über das Schuljahr 2003/04, p.85/6

4 Secondary education

target group

Children aged 10 - 19 years attend secondary education. In order to attend general secondary school, pupils must have successfully completed the fourth year of primary school. Those pupils who want to attend academic secondary school must have been rated either 'good' or 'very good' in a number of subjects, including German, reading, and mathematics. Pupils who do not meet these standards also have the possibility of passing an admission test.

structure

The lower level of secondary education is organized in the

following way: General secondary school (*Hauptschule*); Academic secondary school – lower level; (*Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule, AHS-Unterstufe*); and upper level of primary school (*Volksschuloberstufe*). The latter is relatively insignificant in terms of the numbers of students attending this type of secondary school. About 30% of all primary school leavers in Austria attend academic secondary school, while about 70% go to general secondary school.²⁴

General secondary school covers years 5 to 8 (10- to 14-year-olds) and provides general education. The aim of the *Hauptschule* is to prepare pupils for employment and for the transition to intermediate and upper secondary schools. Having successfully completed general secondary school, pupils may be admitted to a pre-vocational school, or intermediate or upper secondary school, or to an academic secondary school. Pupils who achieve good results in a general secondary school have the possibility of transferring directly to an academic secondary school. At the end of general secondary school, pupils receive a school-leaving certificate (*Hauptschulabschlusszeugnis*). A municipality or municipal association maintains general secondary schools. Academic secondary schools (*AHS*) consist of four years at the lower level (10 - 14 year-olds) and four years at the upper level (14 - 18 year-olds). The lower level of the AHS provides a comprehensive and in-depth general education and prepares pupils for the AHS upper level, which in turn prepares pupils for university studies. In the first two years, the curriculum corresponds to that of a general secondary school. There are an approved number of hours per subject but it is possible for schools, following a set of prescribed guidelines, to organize their timetables autonomously and develop a profile for the school. It is in the third year that a division into the following three types takes place: *Gymnasium* (including Latin); *Realgymnasium* (with geometry and an emphasis on chemistry and handicrafts); and *Wirtschaftliches Realgymnasium* (with an emphasis on chemistry and handicrafts).

It is at the next stage of schooling that the differentiation in the schooling system becomes more obvious. The upper

level of secondary school education is provided by the following school types: pre-vocational school; upper level of academic secondary school comprising the same three school types as years three and four at the lower level (years 9 - 12); part-time compulsory vocational school (years 10 - 13); intermediate secondary and vocational schools (years 9 - 12); upper secondary technical and vocational colleges (years 9 - 13); kindergarten teacher training college (years 9 - 13); and training college for non-teaching supervisory staff (years 9 - 13).²⁵ Around 41% of general secondary school graduates choose a pre-vocational school or apprenticeship and part-time vocational school. Approximately 6% of general secondary school graduates and 57% of lower academic school graduates move to the upper level of AHS. 53% of general secondary school graduates and 42% of lower level AHS graduates attend an intermediate or upper secondary vocational school. Approximately 20% of the pupils in Austria attend pre-vocational school in the last year of compulsory education, primarily used as a compulsory ninth school year.²⁶

legislation

A fundamental school reform, affecting all schools and started in 1995, was that providing for the autonomy of schools. This is considered to have had most impact as it allows schools to develop their own school profiles and establish areas of emphasis relating to the specific location of the school. In 1999 a new curriculum was introduced for the lower level of academic secondary school and general secondary school, which consists of core and extension areas. On the basis of this, a new curriculum for the upper level of secondary school was developed as well, which came into force in the 2004/2005 school year. This policy aims to give schools a wider degree of autonomy. These reforms have paved the way for the introduction of initiatives such as the 'Kugy Class', which is described in the next section.

language use

There are three different ways to register for Slovene lessons: demanding lessons in Slovene language under the

Minority Schools Law, choosing Slovene as a foreign language (alternatively to English), and taking Slovene as an optional additional subject. Although Austrian school laws grant this possibility for bilingual general secondary schools or schools where Slovene is used as a medium of instruction, there are no general secondary schools in which Slovene is used as a medium of instruction. Slovene is only taught as a subject. As the number of pupils enrolled for Slovene in general secondary schools is relatively low, in most schools the necessary number for creating a separate group is not reached and pupils are taught in one single group. This often means that even pupils from different ages have to be taught within one group. The pupils' language background in these classes is very heterogeneous and teaching is very demanding. Outside the area for which minority school education applies, Slovene is only taught as an optional subject in special language lessons. There is also generally a pronounced decrease in the number of pupils from the bilingual area who have been registered for bilingual classes at primary school level and who subsequently register for bilingual classes at secondary school level.

In terms of academic secondary schooling, there is only one school (in Klagenfurt/Celovec), where Slovene is used as a medium of instruction. This is the *Bundesgymnasium für Slowenen (Zvezna gimnazija za Slovence)*, founded in 1957. More than 3,000 pupils have gone through this school since its foundation; approximately half have left it with a secondary leaving certificate. In the 2003/04 school-year, 515 pupils were being taught (at lower and upper secondary levels together) by some 50 teachers of various subjects in this school.²⁷

At the upper secondary level, pupils in this school can choose between two basic orientations: one including Latin (Gymnasium) and the other emphasizing geometry and mathematics (Realgymnasium) or they can attend the so-called "Kugy class" where pupils are taught in Slovene, German and Italian and pupils come from Slovenia, Austria and Italy. The 'Kugy class' began as a pilot programme combining research and in-service teacher training in

secondary school in the Slovene Grammar School in Klagenfurt/Celovec. It was established in 2000 after a year of preparatory activities for the teaching staff. The pupils are taught the regular subjects but the language of instruction varies from subject to subject. Each of the three languages is also taught as a subject. All teachers are bilingual, speaking German and Slovene at first language level. In their preparatory year, they began to prepare for trilingual instruction by taking Italian classes and paying visits to Italian and Slovene schools. They also took part in seminars and collective planning and were involved in creating and developing contacts for partnerships with teachers and students in schools in both Slovenia and Italy. The 'Kugy class' is systematically evaluated and teachers receive support and scientific supervision, as well as further training in the fields of quality development and intercultural learning. The teachers invest a lot of time and effort in the programme, above and beyond their normal teaching commitments. The payment of teachers from the neighbouring countries of Slovenia and Italy is financed through private funds. It is not yet certain whether this innovative multilingual teaching project will survive beyond the initial pilot phase, unless some state funding is made available. This is a problem faced by all the experimental teaching projects in this field.

teaching material

Teachers are free to decide on the teaching methods and materials they use. However, the form and contents of the teaching materials must comply with the curriculum for the particular year and also be suitable for children of that age group. Head teachers and school inspectors have the right to issue directives to teachers on this matter. As all schoolbooks in Austria are state subsidized, authorities argue that schoolbooks in Slovene for the different levels of secondary education are very expensive due to their small circulation. Another problem is that schoolbooks have to be renewed regularly and reprinted according to progress in science. Existing books for some further subjects (for example, Slovene and history) have already become rather outdated.

Cooperation with Slovenia concerning schoolbooks only began in 1990, when an Austrian schoolbook on economics was translated into Slovene. This is now also being used in vocational training in Slovenia. As school curricula in Slovenia and Austria are generally not identical, school books from Slovenia cannot be used in Austrian schools.

statistics

In 2003/04, less than 5% of the pupils in the bilingual area attended Slovene language classes in general secondary education (i.e. 299 pupils). If we compare the number of pupils registered for bilingual classes in primary schools with those registered at general secondary school, there is an alarming decrease. Of the 299 pupils registered for Slovene language classes at general secondary school in 2003/2004, 123 were registered for Slovene as a core subject in accordance with the Minority Schools Law, 46 were learning Slovene as an alternative to English as a living foreign language, and 130 chose Slovene as an optional additional subject.²⁸

Number of pupils registered for Slovene teaching at the secondary lower level at general secondary school (*Hauptschule -HS*), the Slovene Grammar School (*BG/BRG für Slowenen*) and other academic secondary schools (*AHS*) – school year 2003/04

	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
HS	100	72	56	71	299
BG/BRG	84	99	92	85	360
AHS	24	49	23	18	114
Total	208	220	171	174	773

Source of information: Ogris, Thomas, Dr. Domej, Theodor, (2004) Jahresbericht über das Schuljahr 2003/04, p.110

Pupils of compulsory school age attending bilingual or Slovene classes in the school year 2003/04

Year	Primary school	General secondary	BG/BRG f. Sl.*	Other academic and vocational schools	Total
1+pre-primary					

	525	0	0	0	525
2	464	0	0	0	464
3	426	0	0	0	426
4	448	0	0	0	426
5	0	100	84	24	208
6	0	72	99	49	220
7	0	56	92	23	171
8	0	71	87	18	176
9	0	11	50	173	233
Total	1863	310	412	286	2871

*BG/BRG für Slowenen is the Slovene Grammar School

Source of information: Ogris, Thomas, Dr. Domej, Theodor, (2004) *Jahresbericht über das Schuljahr 2003/04*, p.110.

5 Vocational education

target group

In order to be admitted to apprenticeship training, young people must have completed the compulsory nine years of schooling. Apprentices are therefore at least fifteen years of age when they begin their apprenticeship training. In Austria, approximately 40% of all young people aged 15 to 19 are prepared for their future occupation within the dual apprenticeship-training scheme. At present, around 250 occupations and trades are covered by the apprenticeship scheme.²⁹

structure

Non-academic vocational training in Austria is organized in a dual system of training in businesses or industries combined with a theoretical course at a compulsory vocational school. All apprentices must attend compulsory vocational school (*Berufsschule*), either part-time or in blocks of time. This type of schooling begins when the pupils enter into an apprenticeship or training relationship and lasts until the successful completion of a final apprenticeship examination. Apprenticeship training and part-time compulsory schooling can last between two and four years, but most last three years. This type of schooling provides basic and specialized education. Their general aim is to promote and complement the apprenticeship training

provided in business and industry and to broaden general education. This system is also financed in a dual manner with the firm financing the practical training part in the firm and public funds finance the vocational school.

legislation

New legislation has meant that since 1997 it has also been possible to sit a vocational matriculation examination specifically designed for newly qualified apprentices after taking the final examination, leading to a matriculation certificate for general higher education.

language use

At compulsory vocational school pupils can learn Slovene as an additional optional subject. Except for agriculture and home economics, there are no such schools in which Slovene is a medium of instruction and there are no bilingual schools of this type. Some enterprises where Slovene is currently used as a working language (e.g. trading companies, print-shops, bookshops, tourism) do take part in the apprenticeship-training scheme. In 1990 a higher bilingual secondary college for commerce was founded in Klagenfurt/Celovec. Pupils enter this college at the age of 14 and receive five years of education. The matriculation examination at the end of this period grants access to higher education. Pupils successfully completing this secondary vocational college are entitled to practise their own trade independently after three years of professional experience. The curriculum at this college for commerce includes general education, vocational theory and vocational practice (in a school-run mock enterprise). German and Slovene are used to more or less the same extent as a medium of instruction for all subjects. English and Italian are taught as foreign languages. The other bilingual academic vocational school is a private school in St. Peter/ Šentpeter, run by the Church. Here both languages are again used to a more or less an equal extent. This higher secondary college provides vocational training for tourism and similar branches. A considerable number of pupils from Slovenia attend both these schools.

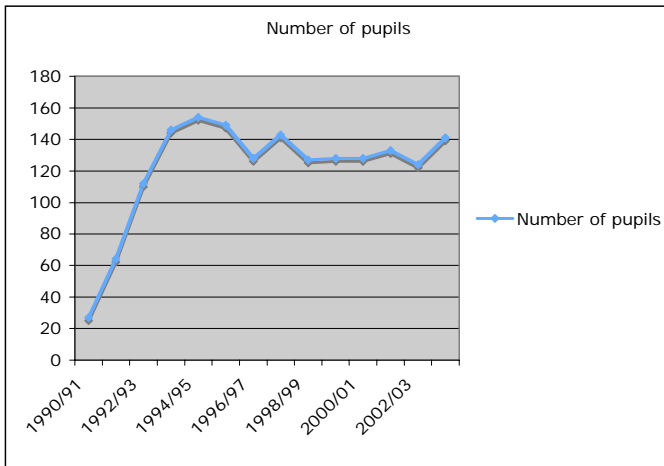
teaching material

The curriculum in all part-time compulsory vocational schools includes general subjects such as politics, German and communication, an occupation-related foreign language and other business studies subjects. Theoretical and practical subjects relating to the individual apprenticeships are the other subjects to be studied at vocational schools. Additional elective subjects are also offered. Teachers decide on the teaching method and materials, but face the same problems as teachers in other forms of secondary education. Books quickly become outdated, material from Slovenia is not always suitable and is often considered expensive. The Internet also provides valuable teaching resources for vocational education.

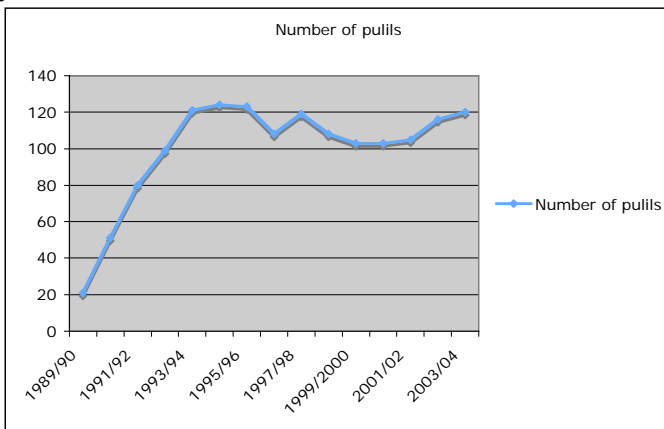
statistics

At the higher bilingual secondary college for commerce in Klagenfurt/Celovec in 1990/91, when the school was first set up, there were 27 registrations for the first year. In 2003/04 this figure was 44. In the school year 2003/04 the school had a total enrolment of 141 pupils. The higher secondary college for vocational training in tourism and similar branches in St. Peter/ Šentpeter had an enrolment of 120 pupils in 2003/04.³⁰

Development of pupil numbers at the higher bilingual secondary college for commerce in Klagenfurt/Celovec from the school year 1990/91



Development of pupil numbers at the higher secondary college for vocational training in tourism and similar branches in St. Peter/ Šentpeter from the school year 1990/91



Source of information: Ogris, Thomas, Dr. Domej, Theodor, (2004) *Jahresbericht über das Schuljahr 2003/04*, p.176/77

6 Higher education

structure

Slovene can be studied as a subject at three universities in Austria: Klagenfurt/Celovec, Graz, and Vienna. Students can specialize at university in a degree in Slovene philology, in teacher training for academic secondary schools or in interpretation and translation. At some of the recently established *Fachhochschulen* (specialist subject universities of applied science), Slovene can also be chosen as an optional foreign language. At Klagenfurt University, a series of Slovene language courses starting at beginners' level are also offered for students studying at other departments (*Slovenisch für Studierende aller Studienrichtungen*), and can be accredited as obligatory optional subjects. These courses are most popular at the first or beginners' level, but subsequent courses tend to be less well subscribed to.

language use

In Austrian universities and art colleges, as well as in the *Fachhochschulen* the medium of instruction generally is German, with the exception of particular courses and programmes in different languages. Within the Slovene language programmes offered at university level – philology, teaching certificate and interpretation and translation programmes – the vast majority of courses are taught using Slovene as the language of instruction, although general courses offered to students other than exclusively students of Slovene are held in German.

teacher training

Pre-primary teachers are trained for kindergarten pedagogies at upper secondary schools or in special training colleges at post-secondary level. The latter provide a two- year teacher training course and are also open to individuals who may not have passed a school-leaving examination but have worked in related occupational fields and have passed a special entrance examination (or vocational matriculation

examination). Teachers for the pre-primary year and primary school are trained at tertiary level teacher training colleges (*Pädagogische Akademien*). Candidates for teacher training colleges must have passed their matriculation examination, or must have passed a special entrance examination (or vocational matriculation examination). The training course lasts at least six semesters (three years) and ends with the successful completion of a teaching qualification examination (*Lehramtsprüfung*) at the end of their studies. Teachers for lower secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*), like primary school teachers, receive training at Teacher Training Colleges. They qualify in two subjects, which they later teach according to the subject teacher system in school. The Training College in Klagenfurt/Celovec runs courses for future teachers teaching Slovene as a subject.

All teachers at bilingual primary schools in Carinthia are qualified Austrian pedagogues with standard qualifications, but they have also gained additional qualifications for bilingual teaching and Slovene language teaching. Teachers receive continuing training either through autonomous study or by attending training establishments. However, only 15 hours of such training per year are compulsory. In-service training activities can be attended either during the holidays, in the teacher's free time or during working hours. Teachers who want to teach Slovene in bilingual classes have to study two additional semesters at the Training College. They have to prove their knowledge of Slovene language, literature and culture as well as didactics and methodology of Slovene language and bilingual teaching. Teachers who are already employed can take a supplementary course of studies at the Federal Pedagogical Institute in Klagenfurt/Celovec.³¹ This course is the equivalent of 24 hours a week for a semester and covers the Slovene language, literature and culture, as well as subject-specific didactics and additional teaching practice. In order to be allowed to participate in this course, teachers must be able to speak standard Slovene at matriculation examination level. All subjects are taught in Slovene, as the aim is to improve linguistic competence and provide the appropriate professional training.

As part of the June 8, 1988 amendment to the Minority Education Act, team-teaching was introduced in bilingual schools. This cooperative teaching involving two teachers was at one time considered unique in this particular form within the Austrian school system. This provided for separate bilingual and monolingual classes at the primary level, while retaining access to bilingual education for non-Slovene speakers if the parents opt for it. Monolingual second teachers working in the bilingual classes are also required to attend additional courses during their professional training. They have to take a language course in Slovene and undertake teaching practice in bilingual classes, and they are taught the didactics of mono- and bilingual teaching, the theory and practice of team work, social and intercultural learning and Slovene cultural heritage.

Secondary-school teachers, except for *Hauptschulen*, are trained at university. The minimum duration of studies for the award of a teaching qualification is nine semesters, including a practical training period. Students must sit for the second *Diplomprüfung* (*final examination*) in their major subject once they have completed this practical training and are then conferred the degree of *Magister/ Magistra*. Students are also required to complete one year's work experience as a probationary teacher (*Unterrichtspraktikum*). Teachers at academic secondary schools are also trained at universities. They graduate with an academic degree, and prior to permanent employment they have to complete a year of probationary teaching in school and additional courses. At three Austrian universities (Klagenfurt/Celovec, Graz, Vienna) Slovene can be studied as a subject. The probationary training year must be completed in one of the schools in Carinthia.

*in-service training of
teaching staff*

In-service training for teachers is completed on a voluntary basis. The Federal Pedagogical Institute organizes in-service training for all teachers at all types of schools (primary and secondary). The Pedagogical Institute in Klagenfurt/Celovec offers special courses for teachers working in Slovene. About 70 courses a year are offered to approximately 350 Slovene teachers in Carinthia. Several

“Educational Workshops” have been established in various regions of Carinthia to promote exchanges between teachers throughout the province. Cross-border exchange with teachers from Slovenia is also encouraged through a series of seminars and workshops organized in Slovenia and other provinces in Austria. Teachers who did not study Slovene language at the Teacher Training College can later on do this at the Pedagogical Institute. By organizing special seminars and lectures in language acquisition, bilingual education and intercultural learning, Klagenfurt University is also involved in in-service teachers’ training. Teachers can enrol for these courses without registering for regular university studies.

7

Adult education

Adult education in Austria is not governed by the State, but is instead the responsibility of the individual *Länder* and municipalities. The national Adult Education Promotion Act (EB-FG; *Erwachsenenbildungs-Förderungsgesetz*), a voluntary commitment on the part of the national government, does not affect the right of the *Länder* to take decisions. Under the EB-FG, financial support must be provided, but the law does not specify the level of support.³² Financial resources are available in almost all *Länder* to support individuals taking part in adult education, and these are provided in the form of subsidies for course fees. The national government’s responsibilities for adult education are split between a number of ministries, depending on the form of adult education in question. General adult education, schools for working people, and adult education at universities or *Fachhochschulen* are, however, the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (bm:bwk). Interest groups and religious denominations show firm commitment to adult education and are very active at this level. On the whole, there is a general lack of effective coordination in this field of education, both on an organisational and a financial level.

Adult education in Slovene is very much left to the voluntary sector. There is a wide range of organisations and institutions (predominantly church institutions) offering courses in adult education at different levels, which are not aimed at formal qualification. Activities in this field organized by Slovene organisations and by the Church have a long tradition. As secondary education in Slovene was only introduced in the second half of the last century, for a long time these courses were the only possibility of further education in Slovene. According to the needs and interests of their members, Slovene cultural associations organize lectures, courses, seminars and workshops on different topics (e.g. culture, agriculture, literature, health, foreign language courses), where Slovene is frequently a medium of instruction. Some of these cultural organisations have also built their own infrastructures to house such courses and cultural activities. The two central Slovene cultural organisations, *Slovenska prosvetna zveza* (SPZ) and *Krcšanska kulturna zveza* (KKZ), organize adult education courses on a regional level, especially seminars for managers of local cultural organisations. Both organisations also run Slovene language classes.

The Catholic Church runs a special Slovene adult education centre, *Bildungshaus Sodalitas* which offers a wide range of courses, from topics related to church life, arts and handicrafts to scientific lectures on topics such as contemporary history and literature, as well as Slovene and other language courses. The educational activities on offer are organised either internally by the centre itself or externally by other organisations. One of the main guiding principles behind this particular centre, is to contribute to the preservation of Slovene language and identity in Carinthia through educational activities in the Slovene language. However, on average only about one third of the educational activities organised in the centre are held in the Slovene language. One explanation for this could be the fact that if adult participants have not had Slovene as the medium of instruction throughout their schooling, they may not be as familiar in Slovene with the specialist vocabulary needed for specific topics such as health or science, as they

would be in German. In the period from September 2001 until the end of August 2002 181 of the activities of the centre were held in German, 89 in Slovene, 7 were bilingual and 21 were language courses.³³

Although the social structure within the Slovene community in Carinthia has undergone fundamental changes in the last fifteen years, there is still a comparatively high percentage of the Slovene population working in agriculture. The adult education organisation *kmecka izobraževalna skupnost* (KIS) has specialized in courses related to this field.

As economic relations between the Republic of Slovenia and Carinthia have become closer, there is a growing demand for Slovene language courses for the German-speaking population. These courses are mainly organized by the above-mentioned organisations. In addition to the voluntary sector, other Austrian adult education centres offer evening classes at different levels. While most of these courses lead to a fairly advanced level, there is regrettably a considerable lack of courses at the highest level. Learners wishing to deepen their knowledge of Slovene tend also to frequent Slovene language courses at Klagenfurt University, initially organized for students. This trend was more popular in the past when it was possible to attend lectures and courses without registering as a student, before student fees were introduced at Austrian universities.

Until very recently, hardly any teaching materials for the Slovene language in adult education were available, and teachers had to rely on their own initiative. In recent years, books and manuals for teachers in adult classes using modern communicative methods of language learning have been produced in Slovenia. Nevertheless, teachers are forced to adapt these materials for the specific situation in Carinthia, as the original target group was not people living in the bilingual region.

8

Educational research

The Federal Ministry has established school development centres in the different provinces in Austria. The centre in

Carinthia is involved in some activities in the field of bilingual education, principally the development of curricula and teaching materials. Experimental classes are held from time to time in different schools. As the Ministry has only accepted experimental classes in this field that do not involve additional costs, teachers conducting such classes have to rely on their own initiative and resources. The amount of research carried out in the field of Slovene language and Slovene language education increased in the 1980s, particularly at Klagenfurt/Celovec University, when some departments started to specialize in intercultural education. In 1989 the standing conference of Austrian universities launched a broad study on the status of minority languages in the country, including education. Several Masters' and PhD theses have been written on topics related to minority schools and the language situation in the bilingual area in Carinthia. Currently research and project work continues to focus on the question of bilingual or multilingual education. One such project is 'Bilingual teaching – a new language pedagogical approach', co-ordinated and run by a professor at the university of Klagenfurt/Celovec. This project is based on a new concept of language pedagogy, which has been implemented experimentally from the school year 2003/2004 in the bilingual public primary school in *Klagenfurt/Celovec (Javna Dvojezična šola v Celovcu)*. This project involves the two languages of instruction, German and Slovene, being used alternately on a weekly basis (classes in Slovene one week, and in German the following week). The aim of this method is to make the learning of the socially 'weaker' language easier, in this case Slovene, through longer phases of exposure to the language. Another project currently running, within the framework of a wider international project, is 'The meaning of learning a foreign language' (also project title). This project is being carried out among 14 and 15-year-old pupils in the border regions of Slovenia and its neighbouring countries, using questionnaires, and aims to examine how particular languages are received by these young people.

Over recent years there has been some improvement in the coordination of more in depth research in this field.

9

Prospects

The greatest challenge for the future still remains the heterogeneous composition of bilingual and Slovene classes at all levels of schooling. Estimates of language competence among school beginners have shown that approximately half of them start with elementary language acquisition in Slovene on entering school. Another 20% of this age group has passive knowledge of Slovene, and only about 30% are Slovene native speakers. Whereas language acquisition in German progresses rapidly, due to out-of-school factors, Slovene language acquisition has to be specially fostered. It is as a result of the heterogeneous composition of classes that Slovene is increasingly being taught as a foreign language.

Intercultural learning was established as a general principle in Austrian curricula at both primary and secondary level as early as 1991/92, and has accordingly been developed over the past decade. Although a number of educational research projects in this field have been carried out over recent years, in practice a lot still remains to be done. More funds are needed to further develop research projects and provide more teacher training in both intercultural learning and bilingual and multilingual education. Without financial backing, many of the new bilingual and multilingual initiatives emerging in schools throughout the region may not be able to survive on a long-term basis. Language awareness training, the fostering of metalinguistic competences, such as transfer and translation between the two languages, developing strategies for understanding, are all areas of learning that require more emphasis, if the educational aims of intercultural learning are to be achieved. Another area that requires attention is that of the numbers of pupils enrolling for Slovene or bilingual education at

secondary level. Here measures need to be taken to bridge the gap between primary and secondary education, as there is a dramatic decrease in enrolment for Slovene and bilingual education at the secondary level. Generally, in the past more attention was paid to Slovene and bilingual education at primary level than at other levels. This is only slowly beginning to change, with the development of new initiatives at secondary level such as the 'Kugy classes'. In non-academic vocational training the situation is still unsatisfactory.

The very concept of the 'Kugy class' is important on another level as it highlights the possibilities and benefits not just of bilingual education but also of multilingual education. Multilingualism is being hailed as increasingly attractive for European citizens. The Action Plan 2004 – 2006 of the European Commission promotes language learning and linguistic diversity. Language competencies are seen more and more as the core of skills that every citizen needs for training, employment, cultural exchange and personal fulfilment; and as such, language learning should be viewed as a lifelong activity. The European Council in Barcelona has called for "further action (...) to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age".³⁴ As the 'mother tongue plus two other languages' concept becomes firmly rooted in the educational system, so too should it become more rooted in people's minds. In Carinthia, this new perspective on multilingualism needs to be accompanied by a drowning out the negative political undertones surrounding the learning or by public use of the provinces second official language. As three languages rather than two becomes more attractive, the 'either or' stigma often attached to the learning of either German or Slovene should become redundant, paving the way for the flourishing of not just bilingual education but also of multilingual education.

Total number of pupils registered for bilingual or Slovene education in the school year 2003/2004

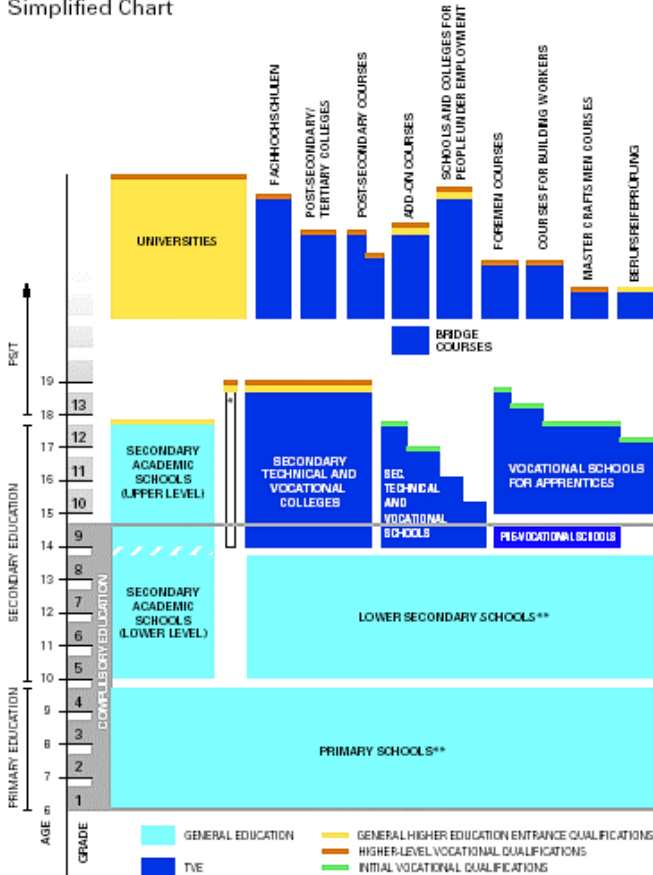
Type of schooling	Total number of pupils
Primary school (including pre-primary year)	1908
Secondary school – lower level	299
Secondary school – higher level and vocational school.	1200
TOTAL	3407

Endnotes

1. Lage und Perspektiven der Volksgruppen in Österreich, Bericht der Arbeitsgruppe der Österreichischen Rektorenkonferenz: p. 89.
2. Ogris, Dr. Domej, (2004) Jahresbericht über das Schuljahr 2003/04, p. 183.
3. Ibid no. 2, p. 183.
4. Reiterer (1996), p. 150.
5. Busch, Brigitta, (2001), p. 118.
6. Vertretung der Slowenischen Volksgruppe in Kärnten, 1990.
7. Ibid no. 5, p. 124.
8. Lausegger (1993).
9. Ibid no. 2, p. 19.
10. Busch, Brigitta (2002) Changing borders - changing identities.
11. Ibid no. 2, p. 106.
12. Tajalli, Elfriede, Polzer, Stefan, (2004) General information on the Austrian school system, p. 25.
13. The St. Hermagoras Brotherhood has also played an important role in Slovene language publishing since the middle of the nineteenth century.
14. Ogris Thomas, (2000), 1 + 1=2, p. 19.
15. Ibid no. 12, p. 10.
16. Busch, Brigitta, (2001), p. 129.

17. Ibid no. 16.
18. Ibid no. 12, p. 20.
19. Ibid no. 12, p. 21.
20. Ibid no. 12, p. 10.
21. Ibid no. 2, p. 74.
22. Ibid no. 14, p. 16-19.
23. Ibid no. 2, p. 74.
24. Ibid no. 12, p. 25.
25. Ibid no. 12, p. 34-35.
26. Ibid no. 12, p. 34-35.
27. Ibid no. 2, p. 75.
28. Ibid no. 2, p. 74-75.
29. Ibid no. 12, p. 42.
30. Ibid no. 2, p. 176-177.
31. Ibid no. 14, p. 20.
32. Ibid no. 12, p. 55.
33. Source of information: MMag. Daniel Sturm, Izobraževalni referent/Bildungsreferent, Bildungshaus Sodalitas.
34. Communication from the commission to the council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004 – 2006, Brussels, 24.07.2003, p. 7.

The Austrian Education System Simplified Chart



* Colleges for the Training of Nursery School Teachers, Colleges for Social Education
 ** including Special Needs Schools

Source: http://htl.noeschule.at/technical_vocational_school_syst.htm

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www.ksssd.org

Other websites on minority languages

- Mercator* **www.mercator-central.org**
General site of the Mercator-project. It will lead you to the three specialized centres:
- Mercator-Education* **www.mercator-education.org**
Homepage of Mercator-Education: European Network for regional or minority languages and education. The site contains the series of regional dossiers, a database with organisations and bibliography and many rated links to minority languages.
- Mercator-Media* **www.aber.ac.uk/~merc/**
Homepage of Mercator-Media. It provides information on media and minority languages in the EU.
- Mercator-Legislation* **www.ciemen.org/mercator**
Homepage of Mercator-Legislation. It provides information on minority languages and legislation in the EU.
- European Union* **<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/langmin.html>**
At the website of the European Union an explanation is given of its support for regional or minority languages.
- Council of Europe* **<http://conventions.coe.int/>**
European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. (1992) and *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995) European Treaty Series/Série des traités européens ETS 148 and 157, Strasbourg.
- Eurydice* **www.eurydice.org**
Eurydice is the information network on education in Europe. The site provides information on all European education systems and education policies.
- EBLUL* **www.eblul.org/**
Homepage of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages. This site provides general information on lesser used languages as well as on projects, publications and events.
- Eurolang* **www.eurolang.net**
Eurolang provides coverage of the concerns felt in the minority language regions in the European Union. Eurolang is EBLUL's news service.