

Multilingual education
– presentation of two ongoing projects

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Re-thinking bilingualism

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- Today, it is difficult to find monolinguals in Sweden - why?
 - a) the membership in the European Union
 - b) migration across language boundaries
 - c) the rise of English as an international language
 - d) as a result of a, b, and c, the aspiration to protect the local languages.
- This new situation has spurred a lot of research on bilingualism - I will give an overview of recent research on bilingualism/multilingualism in Sweden, including a short historical background.

Disposition of talk

- History: languages in the Swedish educational system, 1600 - 2000
 - The Home Language/Mother Tongue Reform
- Language use in European schools 2000
- A changing situation
 - From local to global networks.
 - Language use in the Swedish schools (Extra & Yagmur 2004)
- Project 1: Language teaching in early years (EU-project)
- Project 2: Language and identity in Swedish adolescents

Languages in the Swedish educational system, historical background

- 1600-1700
 - Latin as language of instruction in schools - bilingual pupils
 - University level: Latin and Greek taught by professors, modern languages taught by "Language Masters"
- 1800
 - Latin still language of instruction at universities
 - German and French obligatory in secondary school
 - 1807 English introduced as optional subject
- 1900
 - 1900-1950 German first FL
 - after 1950, English first FL
 - other languages, e.g. French, German, Italian, Spanish, from 2001: also Arabic, Finnish, Persian, Polish and Tigrinja
 - mother tongues: 150 - 200 languages

Organization of language teaching in the Swedish schools

- Traditional subjects:
 - Swedish as mother tongue
 - Foreign/Modern languages
 - Obligatory: English (from 1950)
 - Optional: French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Latin, Arabic, Finnish, Persian, Polish and Tigrinja etc
- Subjects introduced in the 1970-1980s
 - Mother tongue teaching of languages other than Swedish
 - Teaching of Swedish as a second language (SSL)
 - Teacher training from 1984
 - From 1995 the same value (gradewise) as mother tongue Swedish

The Home Language/Mother Tongue Reform

- 1975: new policy for immigrants
 - equality, freedom of choice, cooperation
- 1977: the Home Language Reform: aiming at promoting active bilingualism, i.e. bilingual identity and skills
 - Implementations in the school :
 - Swedish class with extra mother tongue lessons
 - mother tongue class or compound class (50-50)
 - from 1990, new independent schools established, some with another language of instruction or bilingual/multilingual profile
 - from 2001 some languages may be chosen as Modern languages
 - Implementations in preschool:
 - mother tongue support

EU language policy

- "The EU's language policy promotes multilingualism and aims for a situation in which every EU citizen can speak at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue"
- "The EU's guiding principle is that every person should be able to speak two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue"

which languages?

- 1995: Three languages - the national language plus two neighbour languages from within the EU
 - encourage knowledge of the neighbour languages for mutual understanding.
- 2003: Three languages - increase multilingualism overall.
 - awareness of Europe's linguistic heritage
 - new educational initiatives, for example the 'Teach a Friend a Language' program, illustrate this new view on multilingualism.

”Untapped linguistic resources”

- different mother tongues and other languages spoken at home and in local and neighbouring environments should be valued more highly.
- children with different mother tongues — whether from the EU or a third country — present schools with the challenge of teaching the language of instruction as a second language, but they can also motivate their classmates to learn different language
- http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/news/news2853_en.htm

Who is the "multilingual European"

- Young
- Well-educated
- With a multilingual background in terms of being born in another EU country or having parents from other EU countries than the country of residence

Project 1: ELIAS

- ‘Early Language and Intercultural Acquisition Studies’ ELIAS
- EU Comenius Project
- Goal: enhancement of **second language learning, intercultural competence, and bilingual environmental education** for preschoolers
- Started 2009
- Cooperation between Belgium, England, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden
- 7 bilingual preschools

The Swedish participant school: BMSL



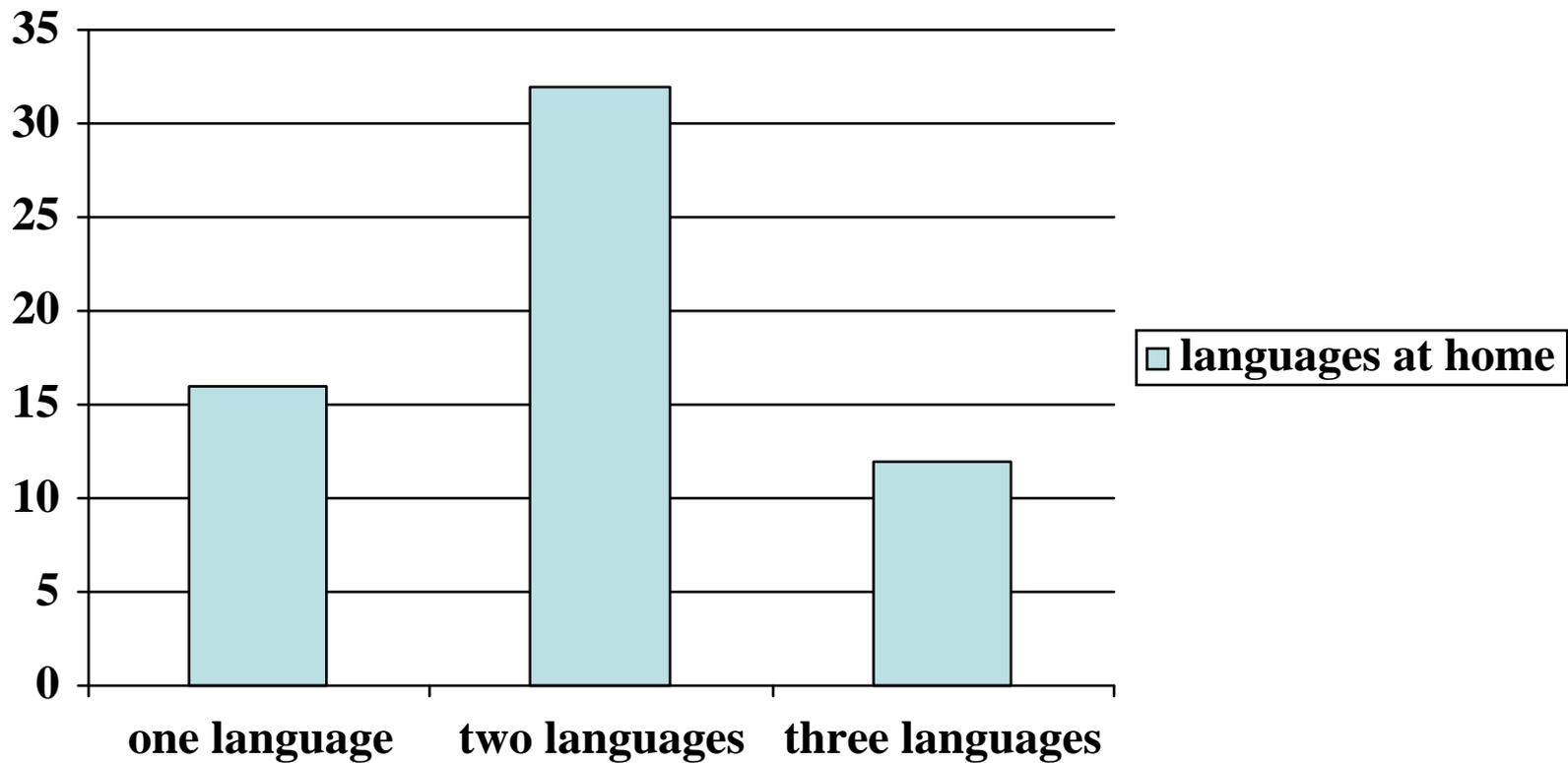
Bilingual Montessori School of Lund
Ecole Montessori Bilingue de Lund



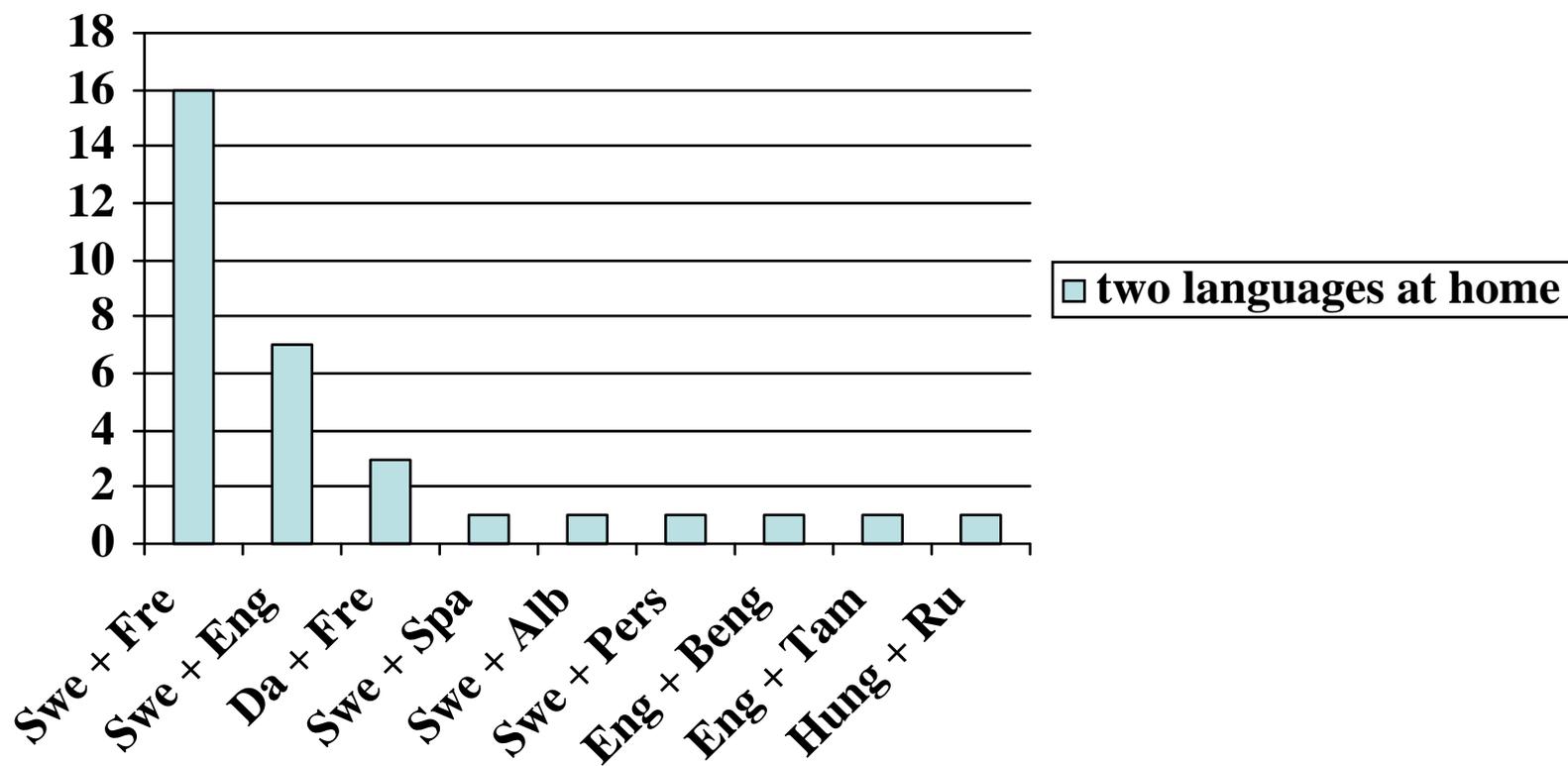
Bilingual Montessori School of Lund
Ecole Montessori Bilingue de Lund

- Started 2003
- 2008 won European Label - first prize
- Three languages: Swedish (50%), English and French
- From preschool to grade 8 (F-8), appr. 240 pupils
- The children are exposed to all three languages daily, by native speakers (the teachers)
- The goal for English and French is the same as in mother tongue teaching

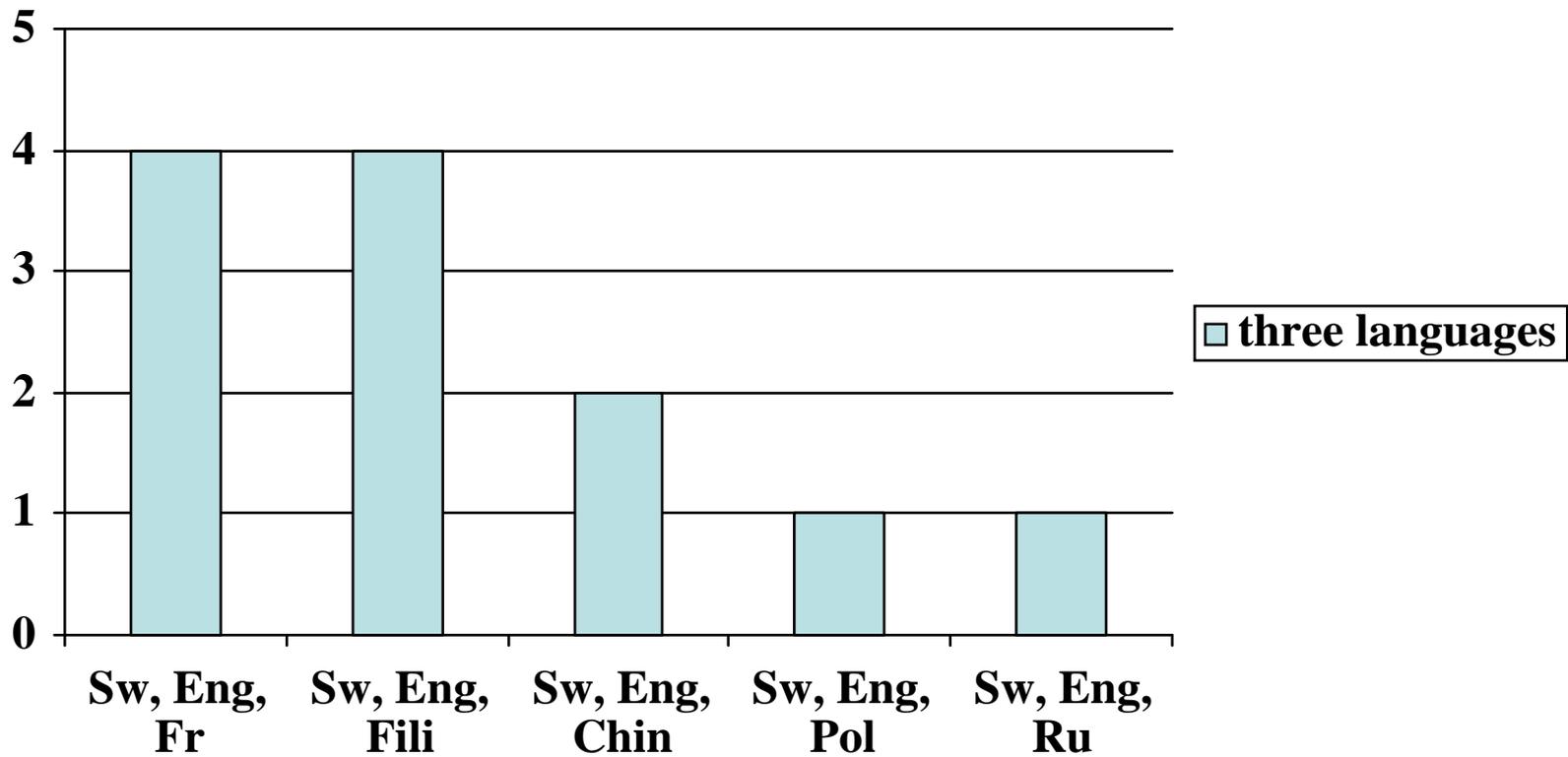
Language background BMSL 60 children



Language combinations



Language combinations



ELIAS: "The early bird gets the worm!"

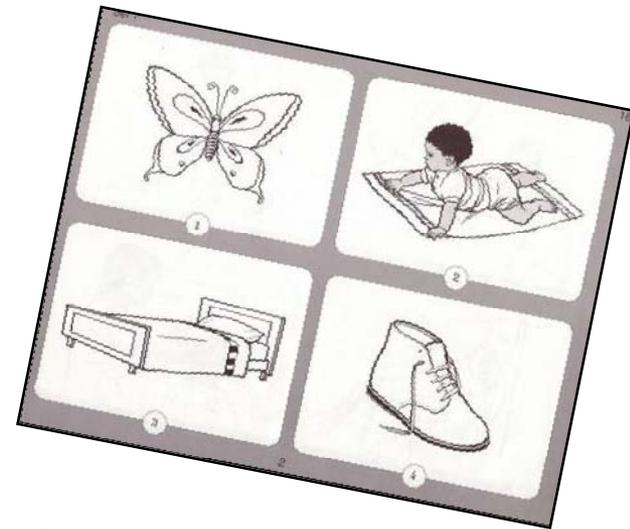


ELIAS - The Study

Participant Observation

(Spradley 1980)

- qualitative research methods
- observers take part in daily preschool routines
- ⇒ integrated in the preschool system
- avoiding "test situations"
- ⇒ emotional stability for the children
- **intercultural communication:**
field notes and questionnaires
- **second language acquisition:**
language assessment (lexicon & grammar)

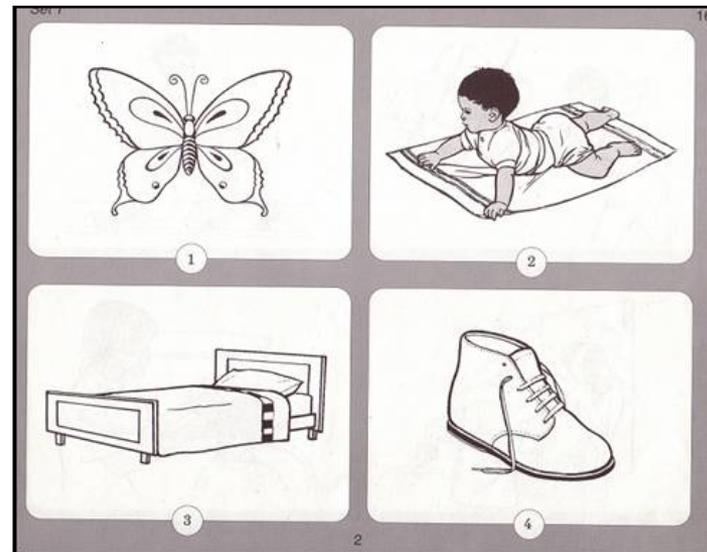


the lexicon test

BPVS (British Picture Vocabulary Scale)

- standardized picture pointing test
- tests word comprehension

Prompt: e.g. "Show me:
Baby."



Project 2: Language and identity in Swedish adolescents

- Pilote study of four groups of "high school students" (gymnasister)
 - Expatriate Swedes living in Spain
 - Guest students in Spain
 - Students taking Swedish as L2 in Sweden
 - Students taking Swedish as L1 in Sweden

Preliminary results

- All value multilingualism
 - Reading : Swedish and English
 - Film: English
 - Music: English
 - Everyday talk: Swedish and other languages known by the participants

Identity - who are you?

- 1. Expat Swede, European
- 2. Expat Swede, European, Global citizen
- 3. Expat Swede
- 4. Expatr Swede
- 5. Swede
- 6. Swede
- 7. Swede
- 8. Swede, European
- 9. Swede, European
- 10. Swede
- 11 Swede
- 12. Croatian
- 13. Global citizen
- 14. European
- 15. Swede and Romani
- 16. Global citizen

Summary and outlook

- We have
 - a long history of language teaching in Sweden
 - a lot of research on how pupils learn foreign languages, and Swedish as a first or second language
- But ... the situation is changing
 - English used to be learned mainly in classroom teaching- today there is a lot of English input from outside the classroom. Many children have some knowledge of English even when they start school
 - English used to be the first foreign language - today many children already speak several languages when they start school. They are used to second language learning
 - Swedish used to be everybody's first language and could be contrasted to the L2 - today many other languages are spoken



www.elias.bilikita.org



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