



# Investing in multilingualism: why minority languages matter



Friday the 30th of January 2015 | Leeuwarden | Admission is free

On Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2015, the Fryske Akademy, the University Campus Fryslân (UCF) and ATHEME, the EU wide research project, organize a meeting on the following topic: do minority languages have added value?

The admission is free. You only have to register by sending a email to [info@ucf.nl](mailto:info@ucf.nl).

Public opinion on multilingualism often has double standards. Initiatives that teach young children English next to standard Dutch are welcomed, but bilingualism becomes a topic of discussion when children learn a local minority language or an immigrant language at home. It is often argued that parents and teachers should only focus on the majority language. The assumption here seems to be that some languages have an added value while others are a burden - especially for the less educated. Linguists who stress the social and cognitive benefits of multilingualism of any kind are often criticized.

The central question will be discussed from different viewpoints. Prof. dr. Antonella Sorace (University of Edinburgh) argues that bilingual children experience advantages that extend beyond language alone, and that minority languages therefore matter.

The Drents author Gerard Stout claims that a dialect as a first language does not contribute to a good start in modern society. He argues that a second language (e.g. English, German, French) next to Dutch is fine, but that the use of a regional language or dialect should not be encouraged in primary and secondary schools.

## Program

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| 14:00-14:30 h | Welcome with tea and coffee  |
| 14:30-15:15 h | 'Investing in multilingualism: why minority languages matter', lecture by prof. dr. Antonella Sorace<br>(Developmental Linguistics, University of Edinburgh) |
| 15:15-15:45 h | 'Dialect is the new Latin', lecture by Gerard Stout (Drents writer)  |
| 15:45-16:15 h | Discussion   |
| 16:15 h       | Drinks and snacks  |

The whole program will be in English.

Location: Leeuwarden, exact location will be announced.