



Sub-project One

Languages for language-related industries, activities and professions

Synthesis Report

Preamble

Five years into the 21st century, and only four years after the European Year of Languages, the issues of language use and language expertise appear to be in a state of flux in most European countries.

In the space of a few years indeed, since the onset of the present TNP, a number of major changes have brought about fundamental and often contradictory reappraisals of the role and value of foreign language skills. On the political level, EU enlargement has increased the need for experts in the new member state languages, while strengthening the calls for a reduction in the cost of multilingualism. On the economic level, accelerating globalisation has brought about a tremendous increase in multilingual communication while at the same time reinforcing the role of English as a lingua franca in international exchanges. Simultaneously, technological changes (the impact of communications technologies, the Internet and ever more powerful language applications) have opened up new opportunities and increased productivity in the language industries, while at the same time appearing to make advanced language skills more commonplace and, therefore, less valuable.

All these changes are having a major impact on the use of languages in society and in professional contexts, and particularly on the language industries and language-related activities and professions themselves. Although as yet difficult to ascertain, the impact is therefore likely to be felt very rapidly in the employment market for young Europeans graduating with advanced modern language skills. In particular, the weakening or breakdown of traditional professional ring-fences in a more flexible and more competitive labour market means that graduates trained as linguists, translators or interpreters may now be expected to take on a whole range of multifaceted tasks that include, but do not exclusively involve, language expertise, while conversely, non-language graduates (engineers, economists, lawyers, etc.) may be called upon to take on tasks involving highly specialised language skills.

Sub-project one is concerned with the ways in which European HE, and language specialists in particular, are facing up to the challenges of a rapidly evolving language environment, and how they are taking on board the new requirements of society at large, the economic environment and the language industries and language-related activities or professions, to enhance the relevance of the curricula and the qualifications they offer.

I. Aims and definitions

I.1. Aims

The present report, which draws on the work conducted at the national level during the first year of the Thematic Network Project (2003-2004), aims:

1° to present an overview of the complex and diverse nature of the changes taking place in the language-related industries, activities and professions across present EU Member States, accession countries, and Switzerland;

2° to assess the extent and the impact of these changes on HE languages curricula and the ways in which HE language courses and programmes are presently meeting the new needs in terms of curriculum innovation and increased co-operation with stakeholders in the language industries, activities and professions;

3° to recommend action that can be taken at institutional level (the universities), national level (governments as well as the stakeholders on the labour market), and at the European level (European Union, major labour market stakeholders) to ensure that European HE systems are producing graduates with the language skills profiles which will enable them to best take advantage of the new opportunities identified.

I.2 Definition of the concept of Languages for language-related industries, activities, and professions

This synthesis report covers the education and training of *European graduates holding a HE qualification in the area of foreign languages¹, or having graduated from a course including languages as a major component*, in the light of their employment prospects in the language-related industries, activities and professions.

Language-related industries, activities and professions are often difficult to define. While areas such as the so-called 'language industries' may be relatively clear-cut in some countries, they may not be so clearly defined in others. Other areas of employment, particularly in the rapidly developing communications industry, may cut across traditional boundaries and not fit into any neatly defined categories.

The language industries, in their most common acceptance² cover the areas of translation & interpretation, multilingual communication, language technologies and some elements of language training.

Translation & interpretation: Translation now includes a range of activities, including traditional human translation, software and website localisation, revision & editing, précis writing, translating for dubbing, subtitling, or terminology management. Interpretation includes conference interpreting, liaison interpreting (often in business contexts) and community (public service) interpreting.

¹ A HE qualification in the area of languages should be taken here to mean a Bachelor's degree in which one or several foreign languages are studied as the main subject or subjects, alone or in combination with other subjects, or a Master's degree where advanced knowledge of one or several foreign languages is a pre-requisite of the study programme.

² cf. in particular the definition given by the Canadian Language Industry Association (www.ailia.ca).

Technologies comprise machine translation & translation assistance tools, multilingual text processing, speech processing, text information management including knowledge management and content management and various training tools.

Training includes language training, language e-learning and language technologies training. Language teaching (teacher training) will not be considered here. It has been dealt with in other European projects and falls outside our remit.

In addition to the language industries proper, a whole range of language-related activities can be identified within the areas of (business) communication, PR, marketing communication in foreign languages as well as technical writing and other foreign language text production activities both in the private and in the public sector. These are activities where the main criterion of employment is the possession of advanced language expertise, whether in the national language or foreign languages, whether or not this activity is recognised at present as a language 'profession' per se.

Our remit therefore extends well beyond the traditionally defined language professions (i.e. translators, interpreters, technical writers), and includes all those who define themselves as language *professionals* working either as salaried employees or on a freelance basis.

II. Trends and needs

Introduction

The employment prospects for graduates with advanced language skills are determined by a number of factors, any combination of which may be found in any one place at any given time.

These include:

1° The state of the local, national and international economy and labour market in general (and demand for language services in particular), as defined by:

- the size of the service sector;
- the number of internationally-oriented businesses;
- going market rates (the impact of globalisation)
- technology (e.g. the impact of machine translation and translation software);
- general access to language resources (the availability of 'free' language services available via the internet).

2° The status of language skills and foreign language skills, as determined by:

- the national or regional language situation (monolingual, bi- or multilingual);
- the number of foreign language speakers and users (determined by educational policy and/or pragmatic considerations, e.g. usefulness and desirability);
- economic viability (the 'added value' provided by specific language skills and competences).

3° The status of language-related activities, professions and industries:

- protected or open (i.e. regulated professions and positions open only to those who comply with certain requirements and procedures vs. unregulated professions open to all);
- organised or unorganised (i.e. specific institutional or business entities vs. independent operators and freelancers);
- industrialised or craft-based (i.e. large- or very large-scale businesses or independent operators);
- traditional or advanced (i.e. mainly identified with translation and interpreting or diversified and involving all kinds of advanced information technology).

4° The state and status of HE and HE institutions and programmes

- elitist vs. open (restricted by numerus clausus or open to all who have successfully completed their secondary education);
- traditional vs. modern (i.e. academic, disciplinary and essentially knowledge-based, or learner-centred, multidisciplinary and focusing on the acquisition of skills and competences as well as on the fundamentals of the disciplines involved).

Given the present diversity of national and regional situations to be found within the context of Europe, it is impossible to provide a comprehensive overview of all the possible combinations of factors outlined above. The present synthesis will therefore attempt to identify major trends and significant examples, on the basis of the detailed country by country analyses which can be found in the sub-project national reports.

II.1 Trends

II.1.1. Language-related industries, activities and professions

The picture of the language-related industries, activities and professions which emerges from the national reports and from the European and international language services³, is itself multifaceted.

A major distinction has first of all to be made between the publicly-funded language services serving international institutions or national governments on the one hand, and the commercial sector on the other. While trends in the former are generally determined by geo-political or policy-driven factors, the latter is directly subjected to the pressures of the global market and the impact of communication technology. However, over the past few years, stricter financial considerations have narrowed the gap between the two sectors, as institutional language services have become more cost conscious and have increasingly resorted to language technologies in the search for increased productivity and to outsourcing to the private sector in order to meet rising demand in certain language combinations or specialist domains (20-50% of the work in the institutional translation services is outsourced according to recent estimates⁴).

Institutional language services

³ Information provided by Noël Muylle, Honorary Director, SCIC, and Fermin Alcoba, ETI (formerly WTO), project partners, and via the IAMLADP working group on training.

⁴ IAMLADP Standing Committee of the Working Group on Training, Brussels March 3 2005.

Several major events and trends have affected the international language services during the past five years:

1° EU enlargement: the pre-accession process, then the accession of 10 new member states from Central and Eastern Europe had a major impact on the EU translation and interpretation services. It is estimated that xx new positions were necessary in the various new language combinations.

2° The increased role given to organisations such as the European Central Bank and the European Court of Justice has led to an increase in the need for specialist translators and interpreters with expertise in the areas of finance and international law.

3° Major geo-political events and trends over the past five years (September 11th, economic development in China and India, European policy towards the Arab world...) have increased the need for specialists in Arabic and in Asian languages and cultures.

4° The impact of information technology: the extension and interconnection of online terminology data banks, and the widespread use of translation memory systems have led to significant productivity increases in the translation services. Machine translation is being used for certain types of repetitive and heavily stereotyped texts.

5° Changing skills and competences: the tremendous expansion in official online information has led to increased demand for writing and précis-writing skills (e.g. most official reports and white papers are now usually published in several versions: full text, summary and abstracts, in one or several languages). The growing use of outsourcing has increased the need for experienced project managers, revisers and quality controllers. Finally, the use of MT for certain types of documents is increasing the need for pre-MT text processors and post-MT editors.

At the national level, the needs are essentially policy-driven. Outside the largest monolingual countries (France, Germany, Italy...) bi- or multi-lingual language policies tend to be the norm rather than the exception, thus providing the impetus for public service translation and interpreting and official terminology projects in national, regional or minority languages. Among examples of recent developments in this area, it is worth mentioning the case of Ireland, where the Official Languages Act (2003), requiring official bodies to provide documentation in both English and Irish, is likely to create opportunities for translators and interpreters in these languages over the coming years. Among the new member states or accession states, many are, or will be confronted with 'minority' language issues (ex: Hungarian or Rom in Romania, Turkish in Bulgaria, Russian in the Baltic States) which will require some kind of official response in terms of public service translation and interpreting.

The Commercial Sector

In a globalised business, where companies and clients operate via the internet, it is increasingly difficult to talk of national language industries, although the specific national or regional language policies mentioned above have a knock-on effect on the private sector via translation and interpreting outsourcing and new language training needs.

Few accurate figures are available regarding the size and nature of the European language industries. The most 'globalised' of the language industries, i.e. the software localisation industry, is also the most concentrated. It is dominated by a handful of major international companies (such as Bowne Global Solutions or Lionbridge), with headquarters in one of the EU countries (often in Ireland) and a network of affiliated companies and sub-contractors throughout Europe. Conversely, the language engineering market (data mining, knowledge bases, voice synthesis, etc.) is often the realm of start-ups and small businesses, with generally no more than a few dozen firms at the most in each country.

In the area of translation and interpreting, the last Europe-wide survey was conducted over 8 years ago⁵, before the full impact of the technological revolution was felt and well before EU enlargement. Some countries have detailed figures relating to the number of companies or self-employed persons registered for VAT under 'translation and interpreting' (ex: Belgium, which had 3179 such entities in 2002, Italy, with 4049 companies in 2001, or Iceland, with 108 in 2003). In other countries, national economic statistics do not clearly identify language industries or language-related activities. In this case, estimates can be based on the number of persons registering to pay mandatory social security contributions (ex: France, where 8,000 translators pay such contributions), by telephone directory entries (ex: Poland, with 1014 telephone entries under 'Translation and interpreting services' and 2392 under 'sworn translators and interpreters'), or by the membership of professional organisations (ex: Sweden, with some 600 and 20 translation companies registered as members of the Swedish Association of Professional Translators). However, none of these indicators reflects the full extent of the activities involved, given that many part-time translators are unregistered and therefore not liable for contributions, that telephone directories give only a partial view of the overall situation, and that membership of professional organisations is not mandatory in what are still essentially unregulated professions. The same discrepancies apply to other language-related professions: INTECOM, the international umbrella organisation for technical writers, has around 4,700 members in Europe. The German branch of Intecom (tekomp e.V.) in a 2002 nationwide survey, identified some 140,000 employees engaged in technical writing to varying degrees, 48,000 of whom are officially classified as 'Technical editors' by the Federal Statistics Office.⁶

Other language-related activities are even more difficult to map with any degree of accuracy. In some cases, this may be because the activity itself is not clearly identified or monitored. Community interpreting, for instance, may be organised and funded on an official basis, and employ specially trained community interpreters paid by local government authorities, health authorities or by the courts (as is the case in countries with a long-standing tradition in this area), or it may be left to charitable associations or to individual initiatives (with untrained native speakers acting as paid or unpaid 'freelance' interpreters as the case may be). In other cases, language-related activities and professions may be concealed under a variety of denominations and statistical headings (just as translation, for instance, was for many years classified under 'secretarial work' in official French statistics). No statistics are

⁵ The Bureau Van Dijk Report, commissioned by the European Commission in 1997.

⁶ All the previously mentioned data are taken from the respective TNP3-SP1 national reports for Belgium, Iceland, France, Poland, Sweden and Germany. See authorship and references in Appendix

available as regards the number of persons employed in export departments or legal departments who make use of their foreign language expertise on a daily basis as an integral part of their duties.

Despite the grey areas and the need for further research, the data already available therefore clearly point to a significant number of graduate level language-related jobs at the European level. How many of these positions are held by graduates leaving university with language qualifications or with advanced language expertise?

II.1.2. Graduate employment in the language industries and language-related activities and professions

Employment opportunities for language graduates and those with advanced language skills and competences are equally difficult to ascertain. While some countries can produce a detailed breakdown of graduate employment, others only have incomplete or impressionistic data. Moreover, most of the available data refer to students graduating between 1997 and 2002 and do not cover the more specialised post-graduate qualifications introduced since that date as a result of the Bologna process or otherwise.

Denmark and the UK stand out among the countries surveyed as regards the national scope and the detail of the data available. The Danish figures for 2003-2004⁷ show that while an overwhelming majority (75%) of university language graduates still entered the teaching profession or government institutions, language graduates from business schools worked in a variety of positions involving business communication (from secretarial positions and export-assistants to P.A.'s, managers and consultants). Only a small percentage (less than 10%) of the latter were actually identified as translators and interpreters, or worked as documentation specialists, foreign language editors or in other specifically language-related jobs. The UK figures, compiled from the annual HESA survey of graduate employment⁸, showed that of over 8,000 graduates having studied languages to degree level in 2001-2002, 21% were working in education one year after graduation, while 5.3% were in sales and retailing, and only 1.6% in translation and interpreting. Figures for the following year⁹, broken down somewhat differently, showed almost equal proportions (17.9/17.4%) in business services and education, with between 9 and 11% in banking, manufacturing and retail sales (no figure supplied for jobs in translation and interpreting).

Detailed surveys of much smaller segments of the HE graduate population with advanced language skills are available for Spain and Belgium. These surveys concern graduates in translation and interpreting (who represent a major proportion of students from those two countries graduating in non philological language degrees). The Spanish results¹⁰, based on students who graduated from a cross-section of institutions delivering T&I degrees between 1995 and 1999 showed that up to 86% of the respondents had had some professional experience of translation since

⁷ Norlyk, B., National report for Denmark, TNP3-SP1, unpublished.

⁸ Crawshaw, R., National Report for the UK, TNP3-SP1, unpublished.

⁹ Marshall, K., University of Wales, Bangor, 2004

¹⁰ Zabalbeascoa, P., National report for Spain, TNP3-SP1, unpublished.

graduating, although over 60%, in all the surveys, actually worked in a wide range of jobs in business and education. The Belgian results, based on surveys of graduate employment conducted in distinguished universities in the Flemish Community and in the French community. They showed that between a third and a half of all language and literature graduates in the former were employed in teaching, according to the language concerned, with the rest finding work in commercial services, banking, journalism or local government (no figures available for the French community). As for the 800 or so students who graduated with degrees in translation and interpreting in 2001-2002 (484 in the Flemish Community and 325 in the French), between 10 and 15% worked in education, while no more than 15-30% worked regularly as translators and/or multilingual communicators.

Data from other countries corroborate the findings outlined above, i.e. that a) at the time of the surveys, language and literature graduates rarely found employment in specialised language-related industries, and b) graduates with *general bachelor level (1st cycle) degrees* in translation and interpreting seldom found permanent employment in the fields for which they have supposedly trained.

The figures show that further research is urgently needed, a) to provide a far more comprehensive picture of employment prospects for first cycle language graduates and graduates with advanced language skills on a European scale and b) to supply information on the employability of students with *post-graduate* qualifications in translation, interpreting and other advanced professional skills.

Where they do exist, follow-up surveys of students with 2nd cycle qualifications (Masters) do generally show a much closer link between the qualification and subsequent employment. At this level, employability is far more closely related to the relevance of the curriculum to specific professional needs, which may change very rapidly as the market itself evolves: only five years ago, holders of postgraduate qualifications in specialised translation in France, for example, would automatically find well-paid employment as salaried in-house translators in one of the rapidly expanding translation companies. Today, the number of new salaried positions as *translators* has dwindled, while the demand for efficient project managers, IT experts, creative web designers and skilled writers, editors and revisers has grown. At the same time, new job profiles are emerging outside the language industries proper, as the need for highly skilled multilingual communicators with expertise both in European and non-European languages and in European and international affairs becomes apparent in local government, in Higher Education and in the private sector.

II.2. Identifying needs: summary

II.2.1. Curriculum development and learning outcomes

A first distinction needs to be made between those countries where professionally-oriented language courses have been a fact of life, in some cases, for two decades or more, and those where the emergence of such courses is more recent. In the former, needs are often expressed in terms of enhanced language proficiency or greater specialisation (non-European languages, specialist domains, more sophisticated technological skills) or more realistic learning experiences (through the simulation of professional situations or the extension of work placements), while in the latter (some of the new Member States, Greece...), the need for the *introduction* of more

professionally-oriented courses, particularly in the area of translating and interpreting, is felt to be a need *per se*.

A second distinction must be made between needs which may arise from specific national, regional or even institutional situations, and those which arise from the structural changes taking place at the global and European level.

The former are often policy-driven needs, determined by specific language policies. This is the case for instance in the Flemish community in Belgium, where the issue of whether French should become a mandatory subject as a third language is of course directly related to the Belgian language situation. They may also be driven by specific economic conditions: countries (or regions) with a tight network of small and medium-sized companies (such as Denmark or Brittany in France) tend to see an increase in the need for versatile, multifaceted language experts with the ability to communicate, interpret or translate in a number of specialist areas, and proficient at information gathering and with IT applications.

Socially-driven needs may also be determined by a particular national or European sub-regional cultural context. The issue of community interpreting, for instance, though present in a number of cases, figures prominently in the Swedish and Danish reports, reflecting a long-standing tradition of ethnic awareness and openness to political and economic asylum seekers. The issue is also stressed in the Irish report, where it is described as a more recent need arising from the influx of economic immigrants in the late 90s. Life-long learning is another socially sensitive issue which is given more prominence in northern European reports (including the UK's) than in those of southern or central and eastern Europe, where the practice of distance learning, often linked to life-long learning, is more recent and less widespread.

Other needs are driven by changing global market trends. In the translation industry, the rapid globalisation of the market means, as in other fields, that work flows to countries where it can be carried out most efficiently at the lowest cost. Hence the growing demand for translation into and out of German in France (where rates are generally lower than in Germany) and the declining market for Spanish or Italian translations in France (where rates are higher than in Spain or Italy). Hence also the growing tendency in translation agencies, for translations into and out of English to be outsourced to low cost countries with highly qualified language graduates willing and able to translate between two foreign languages. If such trends are confirmed, this will necessarily affect both the demand for certain language combinations and, in the longer term, the overall demand for professional translators in certain countries.

The latter trend has further accelerated the need for project management skills on the one hand (because of the number of translators from different countries involved in large-scale projects), and proof-reading and editing skills on the other (because of the need for greater quality control due to the use of non native language translators).

The rapid expansion of the written medium (which is one unanticipated effect of the internet revolution) has also resulted in a growing need for proficient native-language and, whenever possible, bilingual foreign language writers, both in the technical field, and in general corporate or institutional communication (web site presentations, product descriptions, press releases, white papers, etc.).

The needs expressed above are closely related to the technologically-driven needs highlighted in many reports. These needs go far beyond the computer literacy and basic office software skills that were expected of language graduates only a few years ago. Those entering a language profession are increasingly expected to be familiar with the specific applications used in their professional area, be it translation memory systems, terminology management systems, language engineering technology, subtitling applications or web page design software. Particular competence in specific formats or languages such as XML, SQL, Javascript, etc. is often a recognised additional asset among job applicants with a HE language qualification in some countries, though this is less often the case in the new Member States, where access to advanced IT resources is not necessarily widespread.

II.2.2. Consultation and cooperation

All the national reports stress the need for enhanced consultation and cooperation within the HE system on the one hand, and with stakeholders and employers on the other. The need ranges from the introduction of optional or mandatory work placements where they are not traditionally an integral part of university language degree programmes (e.g. Portugal, Italy or Germany) to the implementation of permanent consultation structures at the local, regional or national level, on the lines of existing UK consultative processes.

III. Meeting the needs – status quo and recommendations

Given the many combinations of factors and scenarios that may be found in different member states (and sometimes within the same member state...) it is well-nigh impossible to describe in general terms how European HE institutions are meeting the needs we have identified above in order to increase the employability of their language graduates and graduates with advanced language skills.

The response varies considerably according to the local and national context. For instance, in countries where advanced foreign language skills are still relatively uncommon, and/or where access to higher education was, until recently, relatively restricted, language graduates, whatever the contents and nature of their course, may feel equipped (and be seen by employers to be equipped) for positions in a wide variety of areas, simply by virtue of their university background (e.g. the national reports for Ireland, Estonia or Poland). In other countries, where language skills have become more widespread and where access to higher education has traditionally been more open (e.g. France), the language graduate's employment prospects (other than in language teaching) may rest heavily on her/his knowledge, skills, competences and/or qualifications in other areas. In yet another situation, language-related activities may essentially be conducted by non-language specialists (i.e. salespersons, engineers, lawyers, doctors, etc.) with advanced language skills, thus making access to the more specialised language activities and professions, outside the area of teaching, more difficult for specialist language graduates.

III.1. Meeting the needs: the status quo

Member states can broadly be divided according to the type and degree of diversification and non language specialisation which has been introduced in HE modern language degree programmes (as defined above):

1° Countries with a long tradition of combined degrees (UK, Ireland, Denmark, Finland) or specific languages and business studies programmes (France), alongside traditional language and literature degrees.

2° Countries where diversification has until now mainly taken place in HE institutions outside the university sector (e.g. Germany).

3° Countries where diversification has mainly or exclusively been conducted via T&I programmes (Spain and Belgium).

4° Countries where traditional language and literature programmes are still the norm, but where some degree of diversification has taken place over the past 10 years (Italy, CEE countries).

Of course, this broad classification is in no way intended to mean that highly innovative and ground-breaking programmes and curricula may not exist in individual institutions within each country.

III.2. HE language programmes: recommendations

Note: none of the following recommendations should be taken to imply that university language departments should concentrate on foreign language competence *per se* and neglect or abandon their role as centres of research dedicated to producing knowledge, new ideas and in some cases, ground-breaking applications. Communicative competence in a foreign language can never be an end in itself, but is always a means of achieving a goal, whether it be disseminating knowledge or performing a specific professional task such as helping others to learn, convincing a potential partner or client or mediating between two languages. The recommendations are based on existing good practise throughout Europe

III.2.1. General recommendations

1° That all students graduating with 1st cycle qualifications in languages or language-related areas should be equipped with the basic **interpersonal, communicative and technological skills** required to access employment. This means that all such students should know how to:

- gather, assess and organise data from a wide range of written and multimedia sources in two or more languages, using the latest technologies where appropriate,
- present findings in the appropriate form and format to a variety of end-users;
- interact in their working languages in situations requiring team work and group discussion;
- use common office software applications (and, where relevant to their course, any standard task-specific applications).

This implies that universities should, whenever possible, ensure that:

- a) the necessary **human, material and technological resources** are provided in relation to the student intake (whether this be done by optimising the use of existing resources, increasing the resources available by various means, or adapting student intake);
- b) learner-centred methodology is applied alongside knowledge-based teaching;
- c) the organisation of schedules provides the opportunity for more flexible learning methods (e.g. intensive project-based work over a given period of time, instead of taught classes).

2° That new **professionally-oriented programmes in the area of languages, particularly at 2nd cycle level**, only be introduced on the basis of **thorough needs analysis**, taking into account:

- a) current demographic, economic and technological trends in the professional fields identified, on the basis of research findings and expert advice supplied by practising professionals and professional bodies;
- b) the graduate employment record in similar areas, on the basis of surveys conducted by the appropriate professional bodies and university careers offices and agencies;
- c) existing programmes in other universities and HE institutions at the appropriate regional, national or international level.

3° That such courses **be designed**:

- a) on the basis of best practise and recognised quality standards in terms of learning outcomes, curriculum content, methodology and resources;
- b) in such a way as to ensure that graduates acquire the ability to adapt to a rapidly changing economic and professional environment.

4° That life-long language learning be recognised as a permanent and essential feature of higher education, providing access to new or enhanced language skills and to advanced professional skills in language-related activities and professions.

III.2.2. Enhancing the social relevance of HE languages curricula

Enhancing the social relevance of modern languages curricula in European HE institutions means:

- a) ensuring that students who chose to study one or several languages, receive adequate tuition adapted to their level of competence and their personal and professional objectives;
- b) adapting the range of languages on offer so as to reflect the long-term economic, social and cultural changes now underway both at the European and at the global level (in particular by enabling students to begin and to continue the study of a second, non European foreign language over a full three year cycle);
- c) wherever relevant, offering specialisations in specific language skills, such as community interpreting or sign language interpreting, which can make a major contribution towards better social integration and the fight against discrimination.

III.2.3. Enhancing the professional relevance of HE languages curricula

Enhancing the professional relevance of HE languages curricula implies:

- a) applying theory to practice in the world of work and reflecting the work environment outside the universities by enabling the students to develop their

transversal skills (team work, IT literacy, independent work, oral and written communication skills, etc.);

b) developing regular consultation with professional bodies and employers so as to update the skills and competences included in course learning outcomes;

c) introducing and developing internships wherever they do not exist, and including them as a mandatory or voluntary part of degree and master programmes;

d) monitoring employment trends for recent graduates and establishing feedback channels for alumni.

III.2.4. Enhancing the academic relevance of issues relating to language use in a professional context

Although many of the issues raised in SP1 are not usually included in the more traditional fields of academic research in the area of languages, links can definitely be established between such issues and existing research fields, in particular:

- language didactics (how foreign languages can be apprehended and learned in various social or work environments ; interference and cross-fertilisation between different foreign languages; life-long language learning...);
- intercultural studies (languages and cultural mediation ; minority languages or language varieties...);
- sociolinguistics (formal/informal language varieties; languages for professional purposes; globalisation and its impact on specific languages...);
- linguistics (the definition of communicative competence)
- sociology (the image and use of foreign languages at work or in various social groups)
- economics (the cost of multilingualism or monolingualism).

Much of the research conducted in the areas concerned has up to now been policy-driven, applied research, drawing on data collection surveys such as those funded under various Leonardo projects in the 1990s (e.g. ELUCIDATE, ELISE or REFLECT, on language use in European businesses).

The challenge for linguists involved in the area of languages for professional purposes is to clearly define the objects and prolegomena of a rapidly developing interdisciplinary research field and to create the necessary synergies between fundamental, applied and policy-driven research in this field on a Europe-wide basis.



Note : This report was compiled by Daniel Toudic on the basis of the national reports produced under TNP3 sub-project 1 and draws on the sub-sections contributed by Fatima Ferreira, Laurent Gajo, Karen Lauridsen and Birgitte Norlyk.