PROJECT PROPOSAL

Title: FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR PLURILINGUAL & INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ACADEMIC CONTEXTS

Subtitle: PROFILING AND DEVELOPING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER COMPETENCES IN TEACHING LANGUAGES IN HEIs
European Language Council

Working Group 2 'Language and Education'
Chair: Piet Van de Craen & Co-chair Esli Strys, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
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Part I

Project details
Part I: PROJECT DETAILS

1. Coordinating & project management institution: University of Warsaw;

2. Proposal composition:
   Anna Murkowska & Jacek Romaniuk, University of Warsaw;
   Bessie Dendrinos, Bessie Mitsikopoulou & Kia Karavas, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.
Part I: PROJECT DETAILS

3. **Scope:**
To develop a modular programme aimed at the (re)education and (re)training of both future and current FL teachers who teach foreign language courses for general purposes in varied higher education contexts with a view to
(a) the raising of awareness as regards plurilingual competence and ways to facilitate its development, and
(b) the acquisition of the necessary skills for the development of student intercultural and social competences
Part I: PROJECT DETAILS

4. Beneficiaries:
This professional development programme is intended to benefit directly current or future FL teachers teaching general language courses in an academic context.
Ultimately, of course, it will benefit those being taught by these language teachers - students learning foreign languages in European institutions of higher education.
Part I: PROJECT DETAILS

5. The placement of the programme within HEIs structure:
The programme can be implemented in all foreign language teacher training institutions either as a result of
a) pre-service training through the broadening and development of the curriculum or
b) when offered as a post-diploma course/courses for in-service teachers.[1]

[1] In both cases, the choice of the modules and their composition will depend on the educational needs and institutional educational context in a given European country.
6. Proposed institutional members of the project team:

The project team will consist of a minimum two members from each of the five institutions suggested for possible cooperation:

University of Warsaw, Poland, the coordinating institution and project management;
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece;
University of Westminster, London, England (to be confirmed);
Technische Universität Darmstadt, Germany (to be confirmed);
Universitat de Deusto, Spain (to be confirmed).
Part I: PROJECT DETAILS

7. **Time frame**: 36 months.
8. **Budget**: To be estimated.
9. **Background**:

A) The project under proposal is a response to the decisions made at the 49th ELC Board Meeting in Brussels (10-11 March, 2016), which resulted in the establishment of working groups assigned with the responsibility of reconsidering ELC practices and paving the way for future research\[1\] projects to be carried out by the ELC with partner institutions and related organisations.

\[1\] The projects are not necessarily to take the form of research projects in the traditional sense of the word but should rather be projects supported by DG EAC programmes.
B) The second working group (WG02) that undertook the task of reflecting on and exploring multifaceted aspects of LANGUAGE and EDUCATION specified six themes, regarded by the High Level Group as highly relevant nowadays [1], for the basis of any future project work.

The current proposal focuses upon one of those themes: i.e. 'Strategies to promote the learning of languages: raising awareness and enhancing motivation'.

PART II

Project Description
Project description: Contents

- Purpose and aims
- Novelty and importance
- Relevance to the EU educational policy
1. Purpose and aims

1) The scope of the project is to develop a modular programme aimed at the (re)education and (re)training of both future and current FL teachers in a higher education context for the development of student plurilingual, social and intercultural competences.

2) The FL courses on offer are intended to be for general use rather than for 'special' purposes.
3) In particular, the goal of the programme is to help FL teachers that work with students that attend general language courses as a required component in their programmes of study. As regards the student, the programme aims to advance language proficiency to the required level, while developing plurilingual social and intercultural competences.
2. Novelty and importance
A) FL teacher education and professional development courses are most commonly designed to prepare the large number of professionals who will be or who are already teaching languages at primary, middle and secondary schools.
B) However, programmes for teachers of FL general courses in academic contexts are few and far between, despite the fact that universities and polytechnics across Europe are increasingly making FL proficiency a requirement for graduation and/or admittance to postgraduate studies. This is precisely why there is a perceived need for the development of a programme such as ours.
C) Teaching a foreign language in an academic context should not only be a means of developing the student’s proficiency; it should also be a channel for the further intellectual and social development of adult language learners.

However, in order to be able to achieve these goals, the FL language teachers dealing with FL general courses must themselves be (re)educated/(re)trained.
D) This (re)training requires explicit profiling and development of competences not only in the area of key teaching competences such as adult teaching methodologies, course planning, interaction, management, monitoring and assessment, but also in enabling competences such as language awareness, intercultural competence and an ability to work with digital resources[1].

Acquisition of these competences will hopefully result in broadening the student language learning experience and in encouraging motivation to learn several languages and be more active in a multilingual society.

3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework currently being developed for the project is based on:

a) **pedagogic principles and approaches** to teaching adults by motivating them to grow into lifelong, autonomous language learners;

b) **the notion of plurilingualism** as defined by CEFR (Council of Europe, 2016);

c) **the notion of intercultural competence**.
4. Relevance to the EU educational policy  
A) The proposal is in line with EU educational policy and will implement and develop several of its policy recommendations, as formulated in EU documents [1]. It addresses the conclusions and recommendations put forward by the High Level Group in their Final Report on Multilingualism (2007) as well as the publication (2011) of the Civil Society Platform on Multilingualism that say that motivation to learn a language should be encouraged to a greater extent throughout Europe, not only among children and young people [2] but also among students and adults.

[2] In most EU Member States it is considered the exclusive task of the school, of examining bodies and teachers in school education.
B) The proposal is also in line with the 4th Recommendation of the EU High Level Group Report on the Modernisation of Higher Education, (2013) [1], which focuses on the development of teaching competences among teachers in HEIs.

[1] See RECOMMENDATION 4: 'All staff teaching in higher education institutions in 2020 should have received certified pedagogical training. Continuous professional education as teachers should become a requirement for teachers in the higher education sector'.
PART III

Project structure
Project structure: Contents

- Programme organisation
- Section I: Introductory module
- Section II: Key teaching competences and enabling competences modules
- Section III: The design and development of a syllabus
- Section IV: Production of didactic materials
PROGRAMME ORGANISATION

The programme is composed of modules which can be used flexibly to suit the needs of different programmes within various HEIs across Europe. The proposition is that they be designed for 10 hours of study, including aided and self-directed study, with the possibility of extending or reducing their content and length.
Each of the **8 modules** designed for the programme is an autonomous entity, enabling it to be used either on its own or in combination with one or more modules. Each module constitutes a work-package with three components: (1) ppt presentations for in-class meetings (2); self-study material for programme participants; (3) self-assessment tools.
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTORY MODULE

A) The module provides a brief overview of the following ELC projects (1997-2015): LANQUA, MAGICC, ENLU, MOLAN AND INTLUNI and shows their relevance to the project currently in preparation;
B) The module further identifies an apparent need for the (re)education and (re)training of FL teachers, who are teaching general language courses in HEIs, based upon an analysis of responses to the questionnaires:

**Questionnaire 1**: attempts to define the necessary teaching competences to be acquired, as well as the necessary institutional requirements.

**Questionnaire 2**: defines the aims and goals to be achieved in relation to the learner target group. This includes not only language proficiency at a particular level but also the further intellectual and social development of the student language learners, as well as their (inter)linguistic and intercultural awareness.
Profiling and updating current and future FL teachers’ competences with regard to teaching students in HEIs.
MODULE 2: DEFINING KEY TEACHING COMPETENCES

This component deals with the didactics of teaching FL to students in HEIs. Consequently, it should profile the key teaching competences in adult education with specific language teaching methodologies. It should clearly illustrate how these may be realised in practice: in course preparation and planning, use of materials, classroom management and assessment. The module could be implemented in one of several ways: using blended learning or distance learning approaches, monitored or automatically generated self-assessed materials.
ENABLING COMPETENCES MODULES: Modules from 3 to 5 introduce & focus upon enabling competences: raising language awareness, intercultural competence, and digital resources competence in order to encourage students to learn more than one foreign language.

MODULE 3  **Plurilingualism**: leads to the understanding of plurilingual performance descriptors in the revised CEFR and how they can be developed.
Part III: PROJECT STRUCTURE.
MODULES/WORK PACKAGES. SECTION 2: ENABLING COMPETENCES MODULES CONTINUED

MODULE 4 **Interculturalism**: brings about the understanding of intercultural performance descriptors and how they can be developed.

MODULE 5 **Digital resource competence**: develops digital and social literacies via a foreign language.
SECTION 3 designs and develops a syllabus for current and future FL teachers[1], MODULE 6.

[1] It is suggested that the syllabus development module covers the development of the FL teacher’s necessary competences in their entirety. However, greater focus should be devoted to the development of plurilingual and intercultural competence. It is also possible that the syllabus offered will be designed solely for the development of plurilingual and intercultural competences.
Part III: PROJECT STRUCTURE
MODULES/WORK PACKAGES. SECTION 3: THE DESIGN
AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SYLLABUS CONTINUED

MODULE 6: A project of a syllabus

Component 1: The didactics of teaching FL to students in HEIs (accompanied by an on-line module for individual work & 'a training pack', Module 8)

Component 2: Foreign language pedagogy in an academic setting. The pedagogic principles and approaches that apply to teaching general language courses in HEIs (accompanied by an on-line module for individual work)

Component 3: Plurilingual and intercultural competence module (accompanied by an on-line module for individual work & 'a training pack', Module 7)
Component 4: Digital education module: the raising of digital and social literacies via a foreign language (accompanied by an on-line module for individual work).

Component 5: Teaching Practice module: The acquisition of teaching experience in FL teaching in academic settings. Building up a framework for language teaching practice in HEIs.

Component 6: Assessment module: Developing a variety of tasks for the assessment of adult language learners in HEIs. The training of tutors in the use of currently available tools and also constructing and developing valid and reliable tests.
SECTION 4: Production of didactic materials

MODULE 7 (and optionally MODULE 8)

MODULE 7: ‘DIDACTIC MATERIALS 1’ for future and current FL teachers teaching general language courses in HEIs. [1]

‘A training pack’. Elaborating a set of didactic materials, enabling FL teachers to introduce plurilingualism and interculturalism into their general language courses at HEIs.

[1] Here we suggest only the materials development/production for the development of students’ plurilingual and intercultural awareness (as they are in fact non-existent for adult learners) but we can also think about materials development for the receptive and productive skills adjusted to the needs of adults/students (see optional module 8).
MODULE 8 (optional): 'DIDACTIC MATERIALS 2' for current and future FL teachers teaching general language courses in HEIs.

'A training pack'. A set of didactic materials for the practice of receptive and productive skills that have been adjusted to the needs of students/adults in HEIs.
PART IV

Anticipated impact of the proposed project
Teaching languages in HEIs is a neglected area of study. National surveys carried out in the UK (Footitt 2005) and Australia (White and Baldaut 2006) highlighted the widespread belief that languages at universities are undervalued and under-resourced.
Part IV: ANTICIPATED IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT CONTINUED

The surveys went on to stress the need for urgent action in order to avoid the serious educational, national and economic consequences of remaining monolingual.\[1\] **If the goal is to prepare students effectively for the current international workplace, the role of language education during studies must not be ignored; the question is how to best prepare students to meet the multilingual challenge.**

\[1\] There are several studies calling for better quality of language education in HEIs. See for example: Language Learning in Higher Education, *Journal of the European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education* (CercleS), Editor-in-Chief: Little, David / Szczuka-Dorna, Liliana, De Gruyter Mouton; Angela Gallagher-Brett & Elspeth Broady (eds.) *Teaching languages in higher education*, *The Language Learning Journal*, Volume 40/3, 2012.
Part IV: ANTICIPATED IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT CONTINUED

To conclude, this project aims at bridging the gap in a practical way by equipping both current and future FL teachers with competences leading to the fulfillment of two important parallel aims: to advance students’ language proficiency to the required level, and to develop their plurilingual, social and intercultural competence.
PART V

Brief References & Webliography
PART IV: BRIEF REFERENCES AND WEBLIOGRAPHY

BRIEF REFERENCES


2007: Commission of the European Communities: *High Level Group on Multilingualism FINAL REPORT*;

2010: Council of Europe. *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*, Strasbourg;


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2014: Brian North PPt ‘Profiling teacher competences: the multilingual validation of the European profiling grid’ 15/04/2014;
PART IV: BRIEF REFERENCES AND WEBLIOGRAPHY

BRIEF REFERENCES CONTINUED


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- Autobiography of intercultural encounters (AIE) Developing online teaching skills (AIE) [www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography; 10 January 2015].
- European Language Portfolio (ELP) [http://www.coe.int/portfolio; 10 January 2015].
- Framework of reference for pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures (FREPA/CARAP) [http://carap.ecml.at; 10 January 2015].
- The level estimation grid for teachers [http://cefestim.ecml.at; 10 January 2015].
Thank you for your attention