

# LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND

Seán Devitt, University of Dublin, Trinity College, School of Education,

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. The National Linguistic Situation

National languages. Irish, An Ghaeilge, is the first official language of Ireland, and English is recognised as the second official language. However, English is the mother tongue and language of daily use of the vast majority of the population. Irish is spoken as an everyday language by approximately 55,000.

#### 1.1.1. Languages in school

During the compulsory period of education (6-16 years of age) pupils must study two languages, Irish and English. Outside the Gaeltacht the language of instruction is mostly English, except in all-Irish schools, *Gaelscoileanna*, in which all subjects are taught through the medium of Irish.

The fact that all pupils must study Irish and English from entry into Primary school until the end of compulsory schooling has profound effects on the issue of the teaching of other languages. For primary pupils European languages do not form part of the curriculum, and can only be taught outside normal school hours. In second-level the number and range of languages that schools can offer is limited by the fact that Irish is a compulsory subject. For the vast majority of pupils, Irish is not spoken at home and is not to be found much in the immediate environment. The learning of Irish for most pupils is, therefore, in some respects much the same as the learning of a foreign language. However, other factors, historical, cultural and psychological, mean that the Irish language maintains a special place in the Irish psyche, which in turn affects attitudes towards learning it.

Only four modern languages apart from Irish and English are available in Irish second-level schools. The figures in brackets indicate the rough percentages of the school-going population that study that language: French (60%), German (30%), Spanish (3%) and Italian (0.5%). The fact that all students study Irish means that foreign languages begin as third language studied.

#### 1.1.2: Irish-medium schools (*Gaelscoileanna*).

There has been a rapid growth in the number of *Gaelscoileanna* in the primary sector in the recent past; since 1992 there has been an average annual increase of 10%, from 72 in 1992 to 112 in 1996. In the second-level sector the growth has been slower; there are now 24 all-Irish schools, representing about 3% of all second-level schools. In these schools, all subjects are taught through Irish, but English-language course-books have sometimes to be used because of the lack of availability of suitable texts in Irish. Prior to the 1970's all-Irish schools were termed A-schools, and schools in which Irish was the medium of instruction for a number of subjects were termed B-schools, but in the 1970's nearly all the A- and B-schools became English-medium. The recent renaissance began in the 1980's. University

education is also delivered through English. University College, Galway offers a substantial number of courses through Irish, other universities offer one or two only.

#### 1.1.2: Other-medium schools.

Minorities in Ireland as a result of immigration represent a very small proportion of the population. Some 4,000 children of non-English speaking parents attend school in Ireland. The largest single group is German-speaking. There are primary schools for speakers of French, German, and Spanish, all of which follow the curriculum of the country of origin. They vary in the role played by the non-English language. In the French school, everything is taught through French. In the Spanish school, the language of instruction is English for all subjects except Spanish and Mathematics. In the German school the native Germans and native Irish are taught separately except for sport and choir. The German curriculum is followed by German children, and the language of instruction is German, but for classes of Irish pupils the Irish curriculum is followed and the language of instruction is English. There is also a Japanese school, for Japanese nationals only.

There are also a Jewish and a Muslim school, both of which follow the Irish curriculum in its entirety (including Irish), but include special provision for the teaching of classical Hebrew and classical Arabic respectively, linked with religious education in each case.

#### 1.2. Description of Area Specific Understanding of Bilingual Education.

In Ireland bilingual education is usually understood as relating to all-Irish schools in the non-Irish-speaking part of the country (see above). This is quite a restricted view of bilingual education. Such schools would be more accurately described as immersion, since all subjects are taught through Irish. However, they are bilingual in the sense that many of the textbooks are in English, and the language of the playground is generally a mix of Irish and English. (See Oudin 1996: 87-89).

#### 1.3. Legislation and Language Teacher Training

The legislation for primary school teachers dictates that they follow a concurrent programme, leading to a B.Ed., with Education and academic subjects being taught over a period of three years. There have been some occasions in which consecutive programmes for primary school teachers were set up in order to meet a shortage.

Qualification for secondary teachers is regulated by the Teachers' Registration Council, which requires (a) a University degree, which includes three years' study of at least one of the approved subjects taught in Irish second-level schools, (b) a Higher Diploma in Education awarded by a university. A number of concurrent undergraduate B.Ed. programmes for secondary teachers are available, two of which offer Irish as an elective subject, - the B.Ed. in Physical Education (University of Limerick) and the Bachelor of Education in Home Economics (St. Catherine's College, Dublin). Teachers in some second-level schools require only a University degree. New teachers, including language teachers, must have a degree in the subject which they teach, at least at upper secondary level.

## 2. LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING IN RELATION TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION

### 2.1. Initial Teacher Training

2.1.1. University level                      Higher Diploma in Education.

Most teachers in second-level schools follow a consecutive model of training, a University degree, followed by a one-year University post-graduate course leading to the Higher Diploma in Education. This programme includes the history, philosophy, psychology and sociology of education, curriculum theory and development, as well as courses in the teaching of the different subjects taught in Irish secondary schools. Student-teachers also spend a minimum of 100 hours in classroom teaching practice. Future language teachers are not absolutely obliged to take a course in the methodology of teaching that language, nor to do teaching practice in it, but in practice the vast majority do.

### **2.1 1.1. The curriculum (types of courses, available range of languages, length, assessment)**

The courses in the methodology of teaching languages vary somewhat in structure from university to university, but the range of languages available is the similar for all: Irish, French, German and Spanish are the main languages catered for, with Italian as requested. English as a foreign language is available as a course in University College, Dublin, and Cork, and in Trinity College, Dublin. Courses are delivered by full- or part-time members of staff. Part-time members of staff are frequently practising teachers.

University College, Dublin. All student-teachers of modern languages other than Irish receive a common programme consisting of a lecture of one hour per week on general principles of language teaching, followed by a one-hour workshop in language groups. They also meet their supervisor of teaching practice for one hour each week. The general lecture is delivered in English, the workshops are conducted in either the target language or English. Student-teachers of Irish are dealt with as an entirely separate group and receive a similar programme, but delivered entirely through Irish. Student-teachers of English as a foreign language are also dealt with as a separate group. Assessment is by examination (half a paper) and by one assignment.

University College, Cork. Language groups are divided and each group receives a programme of lectures, one hour per week, on methodology, delivered in English, except for Irish. Students are further sub-divided into tutorial groups and meet the tutor responsible for supervising their teaching practice for one hour each week. These tutorial groups meet with their tutor for micro-teaching for an hour and half every two weeks. Assessment is by examination only.

University College, Galway. All student-teachers of modern languages other than Irish receive a common programme consisting of a lecture/workshop of two hours per week on general principles of language teaching. For ten weeks of the year, there are workshops for each language group. Student-teachers of Irish are dealt with as an entirely separate group and receive a similar programme, but delivered entirely through Irish. Assessment is by examination (one third of the examination paper) and by a practical project.

Maynooth College: Language groups are divided and each group receives a programme of lectures, one hour per week, on methodology, generally delivered in the target language. Students also meet with their tutor for micro-teaching for two and a half hours every week. Assessment is by two assignments/essays.

In Trinity College student-teachers of French, German, Spanish and Italian receive a common programme of two hours per week, but are divided up for practical work into their language groups; student-teachers of English as a foreign language receive a parallel programme. Both groups are combined for a programme in language acquisition for a further two hours every week. Assessment is by assignment, one per language. Students also generally do a special project in the area of language acquisition.

There is a built-in difficulty in organizing initial teacher training programmes for language teachers, since some may have a degree in two languages, others a degree in a language and

any one of several other subjects. Courses in the methodology of teaching are provided in a range of subjects and must cater for this diversity.

#### **2.1.1.2. The structure of the programmes (organization, special prerequisites)**

The structure of the programmes has been given in the previous section. There are no special prerequisites such as a stay abroad, though it is becoming increasingly the case that student-teachers will have spent an extended stay abroad during their undergraduate programme.

#### **2.1.1.3. Practical training (nature of the training, length, assessment....)**

All student-teachers on Higher Diploma programmes have to do at least 100 hours of teaching practice in a recognized second-level school. However, the norm is for students to teach for substantially more than this.

Teaching practice is generally sequential, carried out throughout the school year. All five Universities have sequential teaching practice. In U.C. Cork and U.C. Dublin, students teach every morning and come to the University every afternoon. In U.C. Galway students teach any time during the school day, and have lectures in the late afternoon. There is an option for block-release teaching practice in U.C. Galway as an alternative. In Maynooth College students teach on Mondays and Fridays, and come to the University on the other three days. They also have a block of three weeks teaching practice in January. In Trinity College students teach on Monday mornings, all day Thursday and Friday, and come to the University on the other two and a half days.

Students are supervised in their teaching practice by full-time and part-time members of staff. The number of visits varies between four and five per student according to the University. U.C. Cork has external moderation of teaching practice for 45% of its students, U.C. Galway and Trinity College have external moderation for about 6% of their students.

#### **2.1.1.4. Impact of community programmes**

Students on the Higher Diploma in Education intending to teach a language are now more and more likely to have spent part of their undergraduate programme in a country where the language is spoken through ERASMUS or LINGUA networks. However, the nature of the Higher Diploma in Education programme (one academic year leading to a professional qualification) makes it extremely difficult for departments to be involved in community programmes involving student exchange. The only education department to have had a serious involvement in Erasmus or Lingua programmes is the Department of Teacher Education of Trinity College was a member of one Erasmus and two Lingua programmes from 1991 to 1995 through which it arranged student exchanges of three months duration. In this period the average number of Irish students going out was 12, while about thirty came in. The department has just withdrawn from these programmes because of the difficulty of finding an arrangement that would fit in with the professional requirements of its students. The Department of Education of University College, Galway, regularly hosts ERASMUS and TEMPUS students, but has never sent out students.

#### **2.1.2. University level: B.Ed. in Teacher-training Colleges**

In the concurrent programme followed by students preparing to be teachers in primary schools academic subjects and Education are taught together.

### **2.1.2.1. The curriculum (types of courses, available range of languages, length, assessment....**

All future primary school teachers are obliged in each of their three years to take courses in “Professional Irish”, as well as courses in the methodology of teaching Irish. St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, provides courses in academic French and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick provides courses in academic French and German. Since other European languages are not taught in primary schools, there are no programmes in the methodology of teaching these languages. The one slight exception is St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, which provides a short programme in the teaching of the European component in primary schools.

### **2.1.2.2. The structure of the programmes (organization, special prerequisites)**

Irish courses in all Colleges are delivered entirely through the medium of Irish, and involve from six to seven hours per week, between lectures and workshops. They do not involve any special prerequisites. St. Mary’s College, Marino, delivers the programmes in all the other subjects on the curriculum, except English, bilingually. Lectures and workshops are conducted through the medium of Irish, most of the reading is done in English, since the text books are generally in English. Terminology for all subjects is given in both Irish and English. All courses, except English, are assessed through Irish.

The French course in St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, is delivered entirely through French. It involves up to 6 hours per week of lectures and seminars. There are no special prerequisites such as a stay abroad, though students are encouraged to take advantage of the College’s involvement in the Socrates and Comenius programmes to spend three months in France. The French and German courses in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, are delivered entirely through French or German in second and third years. They involve up to 6 hours per week of lectures and seminars. Students taking a general primary degree (B.A.) which includes French or German follow exactly the same courses as those taking the B.Ed.; however, for the B.A. students taking a language a minimum stay abroad of 6 months is an integral component; this is not the case for B.Ed. students. In both Colleges, the language programmes are strictly academic, similar to University language programmes, and do not involve any courses in the methodology of teaching the languages.

### **2.1.2.3. Practical training (nature of the training, length, assessment,...)**

In the course of their B.Ed. programme student-teachers have a number of periods of teaching practice. The general pattern is for six periods of from three to four weeks duration each, one in March and one in September in each of the three years. In Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, teaching practice follows a different pattern: one morning a week during the first year; two weeks block in the second year; a full semester in the third year. In all cases teaching practice must include the teaching of Irish. Students are assessed by supervisors from the College staff, and this supervision is externally monitored by University staff. An Inspector from the Ministry of Education assesses all students in their final year’s teaching practice. One College, St. Mary’s, Marino, insists that students are supervised twice in each year in the teaching of Irish. The other Colleges try to arrange supervision for Irish teaching at least once in each year. St. Mary’s College, Marino, arranges for at least one of the six teaching practice blocks for each student to be in an all-Irish school. In other Colleges this is arranged only at the request of individual students. St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, arranges for extra teaching practice (outside the main teaching practice blocks) for students taking academic French. The students take between six and ten lessons on the topic of Europe.

#### **2.1.2.4. Impact of community programmes**

Participation in ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes is becoming an important element in some of the Colleges of Education. Under the Socrates programme St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, receives some 45 students per year from teacher-training institutions in a range of countries; it sends out about 15. Under the Comenius programme a further 14 students come in and four or five go out for the so-called *stages longs*, which involve substantial amount of teaching practice. St. Mary's, Marino, Froebel College, and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, have all recently joined Socrates programmes for student exchange. Because languages other than English and Irish are not taught in primary schools, participation in these exchanges does not have a direct bearing on the language teaching of primary teachers. The main function at present is to heighten awareness of the cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe. The impact of European programmes also tends to be felt through other European projects, such as the network of teacher training institutions known as the Réseau d'Institutions de Formation, and projects involving the teaching of Irish co-ordinated by the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, which is based in Dublin (Chambers 1996).

#### **2.1.3 Non-University**

The Dublin Institute of Technology provides a course leading to a certificate in early childhood care and education, which contains a language teaching component. This programme is designed to train students for pre-school work, mainly in English.

##### **2.1.3.1. The curriculum (types of courses, available range of languages, length, assessment....)**

Currently this is a two-year programme leading to a certificate. The programme stems from the social care field. A diploma may be taken after the candidate has had one year's experience. This is to be changed to a three-year programme leading to a diploma, bringing it into line with other European countries. The possibility of students continuing on for a fourth year leading to a degree is under discussion. This could contain a 100 hour programme in language education, one third of which would involve learning the L2, Irish or French or German; one third would deal with second language acquisition theory; one third would involve classroom practice for L2 pre-schools.

##### **2.1.3.2. The structure of the programmes (organization, special prerequisites)**

The language component consists of two parts: 15 hours dealing with first language acquisition; 15 hours dealing with bilingual language development in the pre-school. Two hours of the latter course deal with strategies for L2 pre-schools. This is normally for Irish language medium pre-schools, but can be by request for French or German. There are no special requisites.

##### **2.1.3.3. Practical training (nature of the training, length, assessment,...)**

Visits are arranged to pre-schools of the language of choice of the students. (There is one French and one German pre-school in the Dublin area). The assessment consists of a four-page report on an activity in the L2 of the student's choice carried out during the three weeks of work placement.

#### 2.1.3.4. Impact of community programmes

None to date.

### 2.2. In-service teacher training (INSET)

#### 2.2.1. At university level

Universities do not normally provide in-service training for language teachers, except when requested in specific circumstances.

##### 2.2.1.1. The curriculum (types of courses, available range of languages, length, assessment,...)

Postgraduate programmes in the teaching of languages or in the subject in which the teacher specialised at undergraduate level may be considered as a form of in-service training. So also may the programmes in Applied Linguistics. These programmes may contain electives in teaching methodology (M.A. in Linguistics and German as a Foreign Language in University College, Dublin) or may take a more theoretical approach, dealing with the applied linguistics (Didaktik) of language teaching, and covering such topics as syllabus design and implementation. Postgraduate programmes are entirely at the cost of the individual teacher. None of them includes a practical training component.

##### 2.2.1.2. The structure of the programmes (organization, special prerequisites)

Not applicable.

##### 2.2.1.3. Practical training (nature of the training, length, assessment,...)

Not applicable.

##### 2.2.1.4. Impact of community programmes

The community programmes have had an impact on post-graduate courses in the sense that they have facilitated the attendance at such courses of students from other member countries.

#### 2.2.2. At non-university level

##### 2.2.2.1. The curriculum (types of courses, available range of languages, length, assessment)

In-service provision is of three types: (i) courses which aim to improve the teacher's own language skills and which may be held in a country where the language is spoken or in the Gaeltacht for the Irish language; (ii) training courses which enable teachers to follow a new syllabus and prepare pupils for a new type of examination; (iii) courses which aim to familiarise teachers with developments in language teaching methodology.

In-service training for language teachers, as for all teachers, is the responsibility of the Department of Education. It is funded by the Department, coordinated by the In-Career Development Unit and monitored by the inspectorate. There are two types of in-service programmes: those organized at national level which are compulsory for all teachers, and those organized as a result of local initiatives, for which attendance is voluntary.

Programmes are provided for teachers of all the languages taught in Irish schools: Irish, French, German, Spanish and Italian. The length of the programmes varies from two days for those organized at national level to three weeks for those organized through local initiatives.

The content of the programmes covers the whole spectrum of the concerns of language teachers and the latest developments in language teaching approaches.

#### **2.2.2.2. The structure of the programmes (organization, special prerequisites)**

The Department of Education takes direct responsibility for the provision of training programmes when there is a change of syllabus and a resulting change in the form and content of examinations. The national training programme that took place in 1995 related to major changes in the Leaving Certificate language syllabus. The programme was designed and delivered by practising teachers, chosen for their proven language and pedagogical skills, who had received an intensive induction programme organized by the inspectorate. There were two components: two-day courses for all teachers in local centres, and half- to full-day visits by the trainers to each school to help the programme take root.

Local initiatives in in-service training are organized by a large number of associations and institutions. Subject Associations play a major role in the area of languages, as well as organisations committed to the development of specific languages, such as the Bureau de Coopération Linguistique et Educative of the French Embassy and the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst. Colleges of Education and universities are also voluntary providers of in-service courses. These courses are also funded by the Department of Education.

The network of Education Centres throughout the country plays a major role in facilitating in-service programmes for teachers of all subjects, including languages.

There are no special prerequisites.

#### **2.2.2.3. Practical training (nature of the training, length, assessment....)**

There is no practical training.

#### **2.2.2.4. Impact of community programmes**

The major impact of Community programmes has been in the area of courses which aim to improve the teacher's own language skills and which may be held in a country where the language is spoken. The provision of LINGUA funding has been especially important here, allowing teachers to follow courses in other EU countries where the language which they teach is spoken.

There has been a huge increase in the number of schools and teachers involved in exchanges with their counterparts in Europe, organized through the Léargas agency. One hundred and seventy schools were participating in the Comenius programme in 1995-6. On average some 30 teachers take part in teacher exchanges each year. A seminar on cultural heritage held recently in Dublin had 60 teachers from Spain, Italy, Finland, Scotland and Ireland.

Other projects have encouraged links between those involved in teacher training in Ireland and other European countries. Examples include a Summer University on Lesser Used Languages, held in Limerick in 1994, and a project involving the development of a course in the teaching of Languages for Special Purposes. (Chambers 1996)

### **3. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING IN RELATION TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION**



### **3.1. With respect to the nature of the schools (bi- multilingual schools, content based language teaching (CBLT))**

A recent development in Ireland has been the establishment of the first bilingual school for French and English. Within a normal second-level school, Newpark Comprehensive School, a "French track" has been set up which provides intensive work in French language (5\_ hours per week), and a further 2 hours each of History and Geography taught through French, making a total of 9-10 hours per week out of a programme of 28 hours. The bilingual section is being supported by the French Government through the cultural agreement between Ireland and France. It has one full-time teacher seconded from a post in France, plus an assistant. The school is in its second year only. It is hoped that next year a second teaching post will be created.

It is expected that certain problems will arise at senior cycle, due to the pressures of the final examination, the Leaving Certificate. The programme may have to become less bilingual. However, pupils will be able to take a French proficiency test, for *mention européenne*, allowing access to French third level institutions.

There are no plans for other such schools in the near future.

### **3.2. With respect to new technologies and autonomous learning**

Trinity College is a partner in the International E-Mail Tandem Network coordinated by the Ruhr-Universität Bochum and funded by the European Commission since July 1994. Using the World Wide Web on the Internet university language learners team up with their counterparts in the countries whose language they are learning and support one another through correction and the provision of both linguistic and cultural information. This initiative will be dealt with in much more detail by the subgroup dealing with technology and language teaching.

### **3.3. With respect to initial and INSET training**

Initial training: The Department of Teacher Education, Trinity College, is considering the re-introduction of a programme of language learning as part of the initial training of language teachers. From 1979 to 1989 all student-teachers of languages other than Irish took a twelve-week course in Russian, two hours per week, during which they kept a weekly journal in which they reflected on their experience, from a learner's perspective as well as from a language teacher's perspective. At the end of the course they came together in groups to prepare a report on the course. From 1992 to 1996 the department was involved in a Lingua programme, entitled NEFI, in which language learning modules in Dutch, French, Greek, and Irish were developed which incorporated the idea of a learner's journal. The members of this programme published a report in each of the four languages in 1996. Based on the findings of this group and on its own experience with Russian in the 1980's, the department is considering re-introducing the language learning component, but with one or two lesser used Community languages (e.g. Finnish, or Greek) rather than Russian.

*INSET*: A teachers' centre attached to Trinity College, Dublin, is being set up for the support of education through Irish. This will function as a national centre for Irish-medium education at first and second levels, and will provide for Irish-medium schools those in-service facilities and services already available for English-medium schools in the existing network of teacher centres. It will also be involved in the development of learning materials.

### **3.4. With respect to the mobility of language teacher trainees and trainers**

The Dublin Colleges of Education have formed a consortium to support one another in the application for and implementation of Socrates programmes. It is expected that the meetings of this consortium will help to increase the number of exchanges of students and staff.

The Department of Teacher Education, Trinity College, is seeking a mechanism which will allow it to take part again in programmes involving mobility of language teacher trainees and trainers. A formula must be found to cope with the professional requirements of the Higher Diploma in Education programme. One that is being considered will allow teaching practice to be continued abroad, perhaps in the countries whose language is being taught on the language learning programme mentioned above.

### **3.5. With respect or methodology (didactics) and innovations (open and distance learning)**

The M.A. course in Linguistics and German as a Foreign Language in U.C.D. can be taken by practising teachers from all over Ireland because it is run over a two-year period on one weekend per month.

## **4. NEW NEEDS IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING IN RELATION TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

Given the specific linguistic situation that exists in Ireland, bilingual education would generally be associated with the teaching of content subjects through Irish. Other types of bilingual education are not an issue in Irish education at this time. There is, therefore, a general need to raise the awareness of those involved in language education at all levels to the nature and potential of bilingual education as it is understood in other European countries. A major programme of information will be required before any consideration can be given to the possibility of introducing such an approach to language teaching on a wide scale.

### **4.1. In initial language teacher training programmes**

For language teachers in general, there is a need for the provision of some type of initial qualifying examination for language teachers before they begin their initial programmes. One cannot assume from the results of degree examinations that the applicant will have a sufficient competence in a language to teach it, or sufficient awareness of language as a system. A high level of linguistic competence will naturally have to be a *sine qua non* for any future programme of bilingual education.

#### **4.1.1. At university level**

In Ireland, language departments who provide the content component of a language teacher's professional qualification (the basic degree in language and literature) need to have much more contact with teacher trainers involved both in initial and in-service education. Much of the programme provided in language departments is irrelevant to teachers' needs. More seriously, many of the courses in language departments are provided in English. It would be ironic if bilingual education became widespread in secondary schools, and students coming from such a background had to revert to using the mother tongue at University level!

Programmes need to be developed for language teachers who also have a content subject in their degree, to enable them to explore the ways in which methodologies from both subject areas can be combined for bilingual education. Student-teachers will need to be taught how

to source material in their content subject area in the target language, how to use pedagogical and other texts as sources of linguistic input, as well as for creating meaning, how to adjust their classroom discourse in the target language to match that of the classroom in the target language country.

#### **4.1.2. At non-university level**

Does not apply.

### **4.2. In INSET language teacher training programmes**

#### **4.2.1. At university level**

Since initial teacher training is already heavily overburdened with courses of a theoretical and practical nature related to education, INSET language teacher training programmes may be the more appropriate place for training for bilingual education.

#### **4.2.2. At non-university level**

Courses designed to improve the proficiency in the target language are very important here. It has been suggested that content-based courses in the target language could be particularly useful, such as, for example, a course on cultural aspects of the country.

### **4.3. In relation to new technologies and autonomous learning**

There is a need for language teachers to be familiar with the new technologies, especially as sources of material in content areas in the target language. They need to have training in how to exploit such resources, and especially to link up with colleagues in the target language country. Learner autonomy is a concept that is only slowly developing in the Irish education system. Language teachers need to be brought into contact with colleagues in other countries where learner autonomy is more widely practised.

### **4.4. In relation to methodology**

Language teachers need to be kept aware of the different methodologies of language teaching. This awareness must be a critical one, allowing them to judge in a principled manner between the different claims advanced for different methodologies. They need also to be kept up to date on findings from classroom language acquisition research, and from research in related areas. In order to be reflective practitioners such a body of knowledge is essential.

#### **4.5. In relation to the mobility of language teacher trainees and trainers**

Language teachers are participating more and more in mobility programmes. In many cases whole classes participate. Unfortunately language teacher trainees are rarely in a position to participate in exchange programmes. This has to do essentially with the fact that the professional requirements of initial teacher training programmes vary from one member state to another, and it is extremely difficult to introduce components that are outside the control of the home authorities. This situation needs to be remedied urgently, and special arrangements for exchange programmes be put in place.

#### **4.6. In relation to accreditation and ECTS**

Accreditation for elements of professional qualifications provided by other member states is always a difficult problem. There is need for a joint research project involving professionals from different countries to study this problem.

#### **4.7. In relation to educational policy**

One of the cornerstones of the European Community is the mutual respect for the different languages and cultures of those that make it up. This will only happen when all the languages of the Community are treated in the same manner. If the provision of language programmes and especially of programmes of bilingual education is confined to one or two major languages, only those languages will be respected. The case of a speaker of a minority language who receives bilingual education in a major language is very different to that of a speaker of a majority language who is given the opportunity to learn a minority language. If bilingual education is to mean simply the further promotion of a number of *linguae francae*, we should seriously reconsider whether it is of real value. There is a need for a well thought out policy in relation to language provision in general.

### **5. NEW MEASURES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN RELATION TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

In relation to research: It is generally accepted without question that bilingual education promotes second language acquisition, as well as enhancing awareness of a new culture. Serious research needs to be carried out in order to probe the claims that are made for bilingual education. Particular attention needs to be paid to its effect on weaker or less motivated pupils.

In relation to bilingual education in schools: Given that bilingual education as a concept has not been seriously considered in Ireland to date, an approach of a different nature might be sought. This approach could involve allowing an alternative option to the current language syllabuses, one which has as its core the different aspects of the culture of the target language country. Students would have to study aspects of the geography, history, music, art, way of life, etc of the target language community as integral components of their language programme, rather than as separate subjects. One would teach only those elements of the programmes of other content subjects that relate to the culture of the target language. Students would be examined both in the content and in the language, and would be required to reach the same linguistic standard as others taking a "pure language" course.

In relation to initial teacher training: In the broader European context, it should be possible to design modules for initial teacher training that deal with bilingual education and whose currency as components of the different national programmes will be recognized by all, especially by Government ministries involved. These modules would ideally consist of a language learning component and an extended visit to another member state during which teaching practice could be carried out and monitored. Such a module might take the form of an added element to the basic training programme, leading to a qualification on the lines of the *mention européenne*. It is essential that such a module be applicable to all member states and to all languages of the Community. If it is not feasible to have widespread teaching of minority languages in schools, it should be a feature of all teacher training programmes that at least one minority language is learned by future language teachers. In order to operate properly, agreed criteria for the evaluation of teaching practice will be essential. This will be especially difficult, since different types of professionals are involved in the assessment,

inspectors from the Ministries of Education, university professors or lecturers, part-time members of staff of institutions.

In relation to INSET education: If initial teacher training programmes are found to be unsuitable for the introduction of bilingual education components, master's programmes may be more appropriate contexts. Such programmes should be directly focused on language teaching and contain a teaching practice component, as well as containing a major component of bilingual education, covering the areas already referred to.

In relation to new technologies: Language teacher training institutions could form a network on the World Wide Web through which trainees (and trainers!) could work in multi-national teams for language and multi-cultural development. Such a network could also be used for the exchange of materials and ideas for language teaching. This would be especially useful for the use of the media as sources of language learning. The World Wide Web could also be used for the diffusion of information about new approaches in methodology of language teaching.

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