



Network project for the decentralised and centralised
dissemination of TNP3 results and outcomes

CURRENT AND FUTURE LINGUISTIC NEEDS OF GRADUATES ON THE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MARKETS

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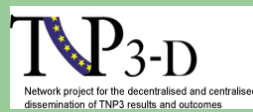
Current and Future Linguistic Needs of Graduates on the European and International Labour Markets

Hogeschool voor Wetenschap
& Kunst

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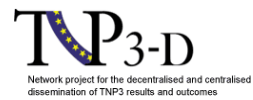
Which languages, skills and competences for language-related industries and professions? Outcomes of TNP3 and of the TNP3-D regional conferences



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Hogeschool voor Wetenschap & Kunst
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1. Current situation
2. Languages, competences and skills for the futur

I. Current situation

- growth of language-related activities in all countries
- Language services market in countries which became recently members of the EU
- There has recently been some emphasis on training and practice in specific domains of translation, such as subtitling, translation revision and edition, ...

- In recent years the changes have been only curricula adaptations to the Bologna process and to the consequent re-organization of the Higher Education (HE) at regional, national and European levels
- One of the reasons is the lack of linguistic competences that students have when arriving at university (both at the level of the students' mother tongue and in the foreign languages).

- Alliances between HE institutions and employers are becoming more and more frequent, with an increasing number of alumni and professional associations working in close collaboration and organising training modules

- Language study programmes are faced with dropping student numbers everywhere in Europe. This also applies in the Nordic countries, but not in the Baltic countries, yet. It is an issue for concern, in some countries it is becoming critical.

- Describing language industries
 - - increase in freelancing and outsourcing
 - - variety of text typology and specialized sublanguages (biomass powerplants, court cases)
 - - new languages
 - - terminology: the challenge of finding equivalents for nonexisting terms in the source language

II. Languages, competences and skills for the futur

- Which languages?
- 1. mother tongue
- 2. English
- 3. less studied european languages
- 4. arabic, chinese, japanese
- 5. Other languages

- Language specialists are faced with increasing demands for competences, also for competences other than language skills and competences, e.g. ICT, knowledge-sharing abilities, expertise in corporate communication, project management and other complementary skills.

- Need of specialists who are able to handle the language in technological formats of different types.
- Professionals who are capable of applying and developing different skills, which go beyond a mere knowledge of the language
- Combined services - languages + marketing, web designer,

- In summary, language graduates should be able to perform a set of varied and multifaceted activities that go beyond the traditional skills related to translation. **They should equally be able to adapt their training and work experience to the developing new needs.** One of the competences worth stressing is the need for graduates to adapt and respond to new challenges, linking their knowledge to the demands of the labour market

- Within the second cycles there has been some innovation and diversity offered in relation to language-related professions
- These programs often include modules from non-linguistic areas but are necessary knowledge related to this domain (computers, public relations and organizational communication, etc.).

- It is expected that the re-structuring of the HE training will generate a systematic change in the teaching methods, so as to incite, amongst other things, self-learning in the realm of more flexible learning methods.

- Dissemination of the results of needs analysis and the promoting of alliances between HE institutions and the labour market are pressing needs:
 - to explain the offer of professional training that will result in different profile outcomes, of professional training in “new” languages such as Chinese and Arabic

- Dissemination of the results of needs analysis and the promoting of alliances between HE institutions and the labour market are pressing needs:
 - to the acquisition/development of competences of various types (linguistic, communicative, social, transferable, computing, organizational, ethical, etc.), required for jobs related to languages or the language industry.

- *Linguistic, textual and communicative skills – i.e. professional competences*
- The group recommends an increased focus on the importance of mother tongue proficiency: grammar, spelling, and cohesion as basic mistakes are often transferred from source language to target language. Increased general awareness is needed in areas such as:
 - Communication
 - Language proficiency
 - Genres and textual analyses
 - Review skills.

- *Personal competences*
- Representatives from the world of work strongly recommended that a specific set of personal competences must be highlighted in training programmes:
 - Extrovert personalities are needed;
 - Ability to work under pressure & meet deadlines;
 - Project management skills;
 - Ability to work in cross-disciplinary teams.

- *Collaboration between H.E. institutions and the labour market*
- Teachers must possess an updated knowledge of market conditions in the language professions.
- Internships would generally benefit students and heighten their understanding of the conditions of working life in the language professions. The following topics are still issues to be discussed among the stakeholders: The length of the internship, the quality of the internship, and the question of whether or not the internship is an integrated part of the HE programme.

- Intercultural skills
- Transferable skills

- There exists a discrepancy between the rhetoric of multilingualism and lifelong learning, i.e. the mother tongue+two recommendation, and the situation on the ground in many countries. Education policies do not live up to the principles expressed in for example the European Commission's *New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism*. Member countries' efforts in this field are not impressive. The increasing advance of English at the expense of other languages is still concerning. In effect, the Bologna-process, with all its positive aspects, at the same time tends to contribute to an 'English is (almost) enough' situation.

- These days, language companies employ fewer in-house translators, preferring to work with freelancers. This situation makes it difficult for young graduates to gather work experience, which poses a fundamental dilemma; work experience is a prerequisite for being able to act as a freelance translator, yet it is difficult to gather the necessary experience outside employment. A possible solution to this could be the expansion of internship programmes.

- The training of language specialists should include the development of “secondary” skills such as project management, (terminology) research skills, technical writing, proof reading, revising, and editing.

- Graduates know little about how to operate a business, about software licensing etc.

- Another criticism aired by the employer representatives was the fact that today's linguists are not specialised; the market, however, required specialised knowledge in areas such as finance and law. At the same time, it was stressed that language specialists needed general knowledge of the world.

- Opinions differed with regard to the question as to which skills and competences higher education institutions can be expected to equip their students with, especially in the field of technology. Whereas the employer representatives expected HEIs to produce graduates who were familiar with pertinent technological tools, the HE representatives explained that the cost of software licensing made it impossible to include training in the use of up-to-date CAT tools in their programmes.

- Many students in South Europe cannot afford study abroad in countries where the cost of living is much higher than in their home countries. This prevents students from experiencing the languages they study in their original context – an indispensable prerequisite for acquiring thorough mastery in a second or third language.

- New curricula should be developed based on clearly defined professional profiles. In first-cycle programmes, the focus should be on the acquisition of complete mastery in the second and third language, while at second-cycle level a range of specialised masters degrees should be offered, aimed at also equipping students with skills, competences and knowledge in such fields as project management, IT, and business administration. The aim should be to enable them to establish a foothold on the diversified labour market, and to work efficiently in their respective domains.

- Skills expertise in translation and interpreting
- - information screening skills (necessary / essential)
- - knowledge of current affairs (to know where you stand on the world)
- Specialized knowledge (professional background and language background should be balanced)
- Information arrangements skills in L2 (contrastive rhetorics for summaries, minutes, etc.,

- Official languages /working languages
- Belongingness to professional groups involve L2 mastering: engineeringt
- Intercultural communication
 - Multiple identities
 - English of Mcworld is not enough

- Requirements of labour market
- - problems with recruiting translators for official languages at the European commission
- -highly specialized texts
- Labour market needs are not clearly spelled out

- And it is still a major challenge to make employers place the necessary emphasis on language skills in the recruitment situation. Languages tend to be pushed back, despite the fact that they are very often asked for in job advertisements.

- Flexible, multilingual, multiskilled and specialized graduates with all the fields awareness and international outlook.

Isn't this an utopia?