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

SYNTHESIS REPORT "SOUTH" (SUB-PROJECT 1)

Skills and competences required in the language industries and in language-related professions

1. Current situation in the language-related industries and professions

The development of ITC and the increasing needs for computer applications in all areas of knowledge have had a deep effect in the growth of language-related activities in all countries. In Spain, the contribution of the language industry to the GNP was 15 %.

In Portugal, recently, the need for proof-readers and editors has been perceived, not only for handling written texts in the traditional format, but above all for specialists who are able to handle the language in technological formats of different types.

As a result, there is a need for professionals who are capable of applying and developing different skills, which go beyond a mere knowledge of the language. The professionals and organizations that offer combined services with different skills related to languages become the most dominant and successful in the market. In most cases what is requested is the offer of a specific service for each client (tailor-made services). In addition to translation and interpreting services (which many companies already supply), those offering combined services also have advertising and marketing, organization of events, computer graphics, language and design consultants, website management, etc.

In Turkey, due to its accession process to the EU and its determination in drawing closer to European institutions, there are new needs in promoting Turkish language and culture abroad and government institutions are funding projects for the translation and publication of Turkish literary works in foreign languages (TEDA Project is such an example). Turkey still has a need for translators and interpreters and seeks European Union (EU) accreditation. In 2006, the first accreditation exams were held for language professionals in the following languages: Turkish, French, English, German, Spanish and Italian.

In all the countries referred to in this report there has recently been some emphasis on training and practice in specific domains of translation, such as subtitling. The available technology is used not only for hands-on training of language professionals with technical skills but also for foreign language teaching and learning. Examples of these cases are the training departments at

University of Pompeu Fabra (Spain), the subtitling laboratories in the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Hacettepe University (Turkey) and the University of the Algarve with the European project Language Learning via Subtitling (LeVis)[1], coordinated by the Hellenic Open University (Greece) with the collaboration of partner institutions such as the University of Pompeu Fabra and the University of the Algarve (as well as other universities in countries not contemplated in this report, such as Hungary, Romania and the UK).

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.

2. Current situation as regards HE programmes

At the level of the first cycle, there were deep initial alterations due to the changeover from the traditional language and literature-related programmes to degrees more closely related to areas of language and professional needs in society. 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. In Portugal, there are first-cycle general domain degrees in the area of applied languages at a few universities and after the initial boom of first cycle degrees in translation, there seems to be a current propensity to contemplate guidelines from other countries and to move the domain-specific training in professions related to languages to the second cycle. 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). This contemplation need not hinder the creation of specific professional training seminars within the first cycle.

Within the second cycles there has been some innovation and diversity offered in relation to language-related professions. The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki recently established an MA in Conference Interpreting and Translation. In Spain (through internet consultation), there seem to be around thirty different programs in the second cycle and six different doctoral programs in this area. In Portugal, there are various second cycle degrees (for example, at the University of Oporto, the MA in Translation and Linguistic Services, at the University of the Algarve, a post graduation in Linguistic Services and, under current preparation, at various universities, are other programs also related to linguistic service provision. These programs often include modules from non-

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[1] http://levis.cti.gr/

linguistic areas but are necessary knowledge related to this domain (computers, public relations and organizational communication, etc.).

The second and third cycle training in this area should be accompanied by research, as many of the topics addressed in the different seminars are an outcome of the research centres. For example, the newly created Observatory for Language Politics at the University of the Algarve and the creation of research centres in various translation and interpreting departments in Turkish universities.

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.

3. Consultation/collaboration between HE institutions and organizations / companies in the language industries/professions

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. There is, however, still some need for redirecting some programmes in order to modernise some traditional language and literature-related courses.

In Greece, collaboration with outside institutions has allowed for an increase in the number of internships and the development of acquired skills during in-house training. In Spain and Portugal, there is an internet site to help establish ties between alumni and potential employers and the rest of the institutions in the labour market. (http://www.universia.es/, http://www.universia.pt).

Apart from some obvious signs of cooperation between universities and other institutions (employers, professional associations, alumni associations), there is still much to be done in this area, in order to guarantee that the knowledge and training provided by the universities (whether at the level of the first cycle or in a lifelong context) and that the skills and competences acquired by the HE graduates meet the market expectations and needs.

Dissemination of the results of needs analyses and the promoting of alliances between HE institutions and the labour market, into which the graduates wish to enter, are pressing needs. This is the only way 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 and training which will actually lead 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.

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This synthesis report on the South region is based on:
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