



SemLang Summer University

Strategic contexts for the education of language teachers

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Introduction

The development of a multilingual and multicultural society is a fundamental part of the European project. To achieve it, Europeans will need to increase their willingness and capacity to speak each other's languages and understand each other's cultures. This requires a substantial commitment to extend the scope and quality of language teaching, and places a high expectation that language teachers will be trained and supported to fulfil their mission. In this sense, the education of language teachers is of strategic importance to Europe.

The future development of language teacher education must take these aspirations into account. It must take account of the wider social and economic conditions which shape the way in which teacher educators can carry out their role. It must also recognise the evolving role of languages in the contemporary world. This paper outlines the wider value of some key components in the initial training and continuing professional development of language teachers. It also suggests that educators must play a more active role in building cooperation between teachers, and must engage in partnerships with a wider range of stakeholders.

The starting point for this analysis is the *European Profile for Language Teacher Education*, which was developed for the European Commission in 2002-4 by a team of researchers at the University of Southampton, under the direction of the present author.¹ The *Profile* provides a frame of reference. That is, it offers both an outline of key elements in the education of language teachers and a common vocabulary with which these elements can be discussed.

The *Profile* was designed to inform both language teacher educators and education policy makers. It was drawn up in consultation with a wide range of European experts on language teacher education, and drew on the experience of a number of European teacher education institutions. It serves as a checklist for existing teacher education programmes and a guideline for those still being developed. It also suggests guidelines for quality assurance and enhancement.

When the *Profile* was published, it responded very clearly to the economic and social conditions of the time. It is instructive to look back over the five years which have elapsed, to see what has changed and what has remained constant in those contexts.

¹ *European Profile for Language Teacher Education – A Frame of Reference*, Report to the European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture, written by Michael Kelly, Michael Grenfell, Rebecca Allan, Christine Kriza, William McEvoy, September 2004. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/profile_en.pdf (accessed 20 October 2009).

Economic and social contexts

As the *Profile* was being developed, the European Union was undergoing a major expansion, with the accession of ten new countries and an increase in population to over 450 million. In that context it was clearly more important than ever that communication and exchange between Europe's diverse range of citizens should be encouraged and promoted.

Economically, the European Union was pursuing the ambitious goals of the Lisbon strategy, launched by the European Council in March 2000. This set the target of becoming the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. It was clearly understood as a competitive strategy to match the economic power of the United States, and reflected a shared optimism in Europe's ability to achieve sustainable economic growth, with the resulting benefits of creating more jobs and greater social cohesion.

The emphasis of Lisbon was on the 'knowledge society', which combined innovation, especially in the area of information and communications technology, with a well trained and highly skilled workforce. The strategy was considered crucial in strengthening Europe's position in the era of globalisation, when trade and industry was becoming increasingly international, and when the economies and societies of the world were becoming increasingly interconnected. Education played a vital role in the strategy, first in providing the skilled workforce that could build innovative and world-leading businesses, and second in enabling key workers to move around Europe, taking their skills to the places where they could be most effectively used.

To sustain this strategy, Europe's leaders emphasised the importance of a supportive social environment. They argued that it must be multicultural and multilingual, so that it could accommodate the mobile workforce required by the knowledge economy. Mobility was a long standing European value, and one of the traditional 'four freedoms', which aspired to ensure the free movement of goods, capital, services and people. The pluralist society was also important for countries that hosted significant numbers of migrant workers and their families. Pluralism was necessary if these countries were to attract workers from outside the Union, whether to take up highly skilled jobs or to carry out the basic work of building and maintaining the infrastructures of a modern society.

The Lisbon strategy recognised the dangers of social exclusion and fragmentation that were a source of concern in many countries. It saw the need to protect and develop social cohesion within existing communities, and within areas where migration was producing significant changes in the make-up of the local population.

Here again, education was called upon to play a part in social change. It was seen as an essential tool for enabling people from all social and ethnic backgrounds to play a full and productive role within society. It was also viewed as a means of building relationships between different groups within society and thereby forestalling tensions and conflicts between them.

The Lisbon strategy has frequently been reviewed and amended. Its ambitious goal for 2010 has increasingly been overshadowed by the need to create more jobs and the need to ensure economic growth. Progress was mixed until 2008, when the international economic and financial crisis began to hit Europe. Now, in 2009, the economic climate is rather bleak, with most European countries experiencing a serious decline in growth and in employment over the past year. Many national governments have been obliged to intervene on a large scale to support the financial sector in particular, with consequent pressures on other areas of public spending. European governments are therefore caught between the need to invest in supporting an economic recovery and the need to reduce the amount of public debt they have already incurred. Fostering growth and creating jobs has become increasingly important.

Changes in education

The economic importance of education has become even more prominent. In every country, it is an important source of employment and in its own right. It also provides an important reservoir of activity for people who may be unwilling or unable to join the active workforce, but who may continue to develop their knowledge and skills through education. Higher education is becoming particularly important as a source of new ideas and inventions that can contribute to economic development, and as a means of developing the most highly skilled workers in the new knowledge economy. This is now a significant element of the Bologna Process, and was strongly emphasised by the EU's Ministers of Higher Education, meeting in April 2009:

Our societies currently face the consequences of a global financial and economic crisis. In order to bring about sustainable economic recovery and development, a dynamic and flexible European higher education will strive for innovation on the basis of the integration between education and research at all levels. We recognise that higher education has a key role to play if we are to successfully meet the challenges we face and if we are to promote the cultural and social development of our societies. Therefore, we consider public investment in higher education of utmost priority.²

The very welcome commitment to maintain public investment is accompanied by a strong indication that higher education must focus more on innovation and must make a significant impact on the development of the wider society.

At the same time, education has also changed over the last five years. The profile of learners has changed. All educational institutions from schools to universities are working hard to achieve a wider participation of students from less privileged social backgrounds.³ This is a particular priority in the later stages of education, when it is no longer compulsory. Perhaps even more striking is the way in which increased mobility and migration have brought

² The Bologna Process 2020 - The European Higher Education Area in the new decade. Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-29 April 2009. Available at http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/conference/documents/Leuven_Louvain-la-Neuve_Communique%C3%A9_April_2009.pdf (accessed 21 October 2009).

³ Please note that the term 'student' is used to refer to learners in all sectors of education.

noticeable changes to the cultural and ethnic background of students. This is felt at every level of the education system as the children of mobile families undertake education in their host country. In higher education, the changes have been further increased by the growth of mobility in studies. A larger proportion of Europe's students undertake at least some of their studies outside their home country. And Europe's universities actively recruit increasing numbers of students from other countries across the world.

The recent changes in technology have also made a big impact on the nature of education. Teachers have taken advantage of many of the changes to support their classroom pedagogy. However, the widespread experience is that students have been much quicker to take up new technologies. Consciously or not, school and university students are using them to become active independent learners. This often means that their learning is not structured or controlled by their teachers but is shaped by what they can access via their computer or phone on the Web, on social networking sites, by electronic messaging and through other channels.

A significant recent development within education in many countries has been the growing emphasis on the autonomy of schools and universities to make their own choices in matters of education and administration. This has been driven in large measure by the increased complexity and diversity of the educational environment, which makes it difficult and undesirable for national governments to exercise control in fine detail over individual institutions. This brings both new dangers and new opportunities for teachers, whose roles are increasingly negotiated with the senior management of their own institution.

It is noticeable that the different sectors of education are now more closely connected with each other. Traditionally, schools and universities have worked in cooperation on initial teacher education. However, there is a growing concern to ensure that student progression is maintained in the transitions between different sectors: from primary to secondary, and from secondary to higher education. There is also a strong awareness that the future needs of society require individuals to continue to learn and develop, and to undertake continued professional development. The aims of personal and professional development are broadly defined as lifelong learning, and it is emerging in many countries that this can involve different sectors of state education, as well as involving private providers. These are issues which increasingly affect the professional development of teachers.

Hyperdiversity of languages

The work of language teachers is increasingly affected by the changing profile of languages in society. The question of why and how languages should be taught is linked to the experience and needs of the wider society. For many years, educators have attempted to respond to the diversity of languages with which their students may have contact. However, in recent years 'diversity' no longer adequately conveys the scale and variety of languages with which people

must engage, and it may be more accurate to speak of a 'hyperdiversity' of languages in contemporary societies.

As a result of increased migrations, the range of languages encountered in daily life in any country has risen very rapidly. It is a long time since the only languages encountered in the street were those spoken in neighbouring countries. For the past fifty years, most European societies have received inflows of workers and families from a clearly defined number of countries with which they had historical ties, often through colonial relationships. However, in the past ten years, the pattern has changed and most European countries now receive migrants from many parts of the world. In any supermarket queue in England, it is possible to hear a wide variety of languages spoken other than English: Urdu, Pashto, Somali, Polish, Czech, Arabic and many others. A study of London schools in the late 1990s revealed that more than 300 languages were spoken by pupils.⁴ This is likely to have increased significantly in the past decade. Similarly, the Romanian national census of 2002 revealed that in addition to Romanian and Hungarian, 15 other languages had more than 1000 speakers, with many other languages spoken by smaller groups.⁵

The number of languages present in European countries therefore now significantly exceeds the ability of any individual to learn. It is commonplace in multilingual Europe for some individuals to speak two or three languages in addition to their own. Some exceptional individuals may speak ten or more languages. But even the most gifted linguist cannot approach the number of languages that are now present on the streets of any major city. The hyperdiversity of languages in contact is a challenge for society as well as for individuals.

In addition to the sheer quantity of languages that Europe must cope with, the need for competence in further languages is remarkably unpredictable. For example, in England, there is currently a great deal of investment in teaching Pashto and Farsi to adult learners, mainly as a result of migrations from Afghanistan. But ten years ago, only a small number of specialists had even heard of these languages. Similarly, the recent conflict between Russia and Georgia over South Ossetia generated a need in the public services for people who knew these languages. The UK intelligent services were very pleased to locate two British citizens who could speak Georgian. However, they could find no one to speak Ossetian. This highlights the point that individuals and countries do not know which languages will be needed in the future.

Hyperdiversity therefore poses a challenge for language strategies and for educational policies. How should we respond as educators? The European target of all citizens speaking two languages in addition to their mother tongue is a significant commitment, but most

⁴ Baker, Philip, and John Eversley. 2000. *Multi-lingual capital. The languages of London school-children and their relevance to economic, social and educational policies*. London: Battlebridge Publications.

⁵ See the preliminary results of the 18 March 2002 Population and Housing Census <http://www.recensamant.ro/fisiere/preliminary%20results%202002.doc> (accessed 22 October 2009)

countries struggle to achieve it. In the light of hyperdiversity, it appears as a modest aim, but it would be a valuable step forward towards European societies being able to accommodate a great range of languages. The recent Report of the European Commission, chaired by Amin Maalouf makes an innovative suggestion.⁶ It proposes that Europeans should learn one language of international communication and one 'personal adoptive language'. This would enable a diversity of individual choices to generate competence in a broad range of languages across a society. The real challenge would be to create an educational strategy capable of delivering such an aim. But no doubt educators would approach the challenge with characteristic creativity and ingenuity.

Language and identity

As language educators, we are acutely aware that languages serve a dual function of expressing our own sense of identity and communicating with other people. These two dimensions lead in different directions. One of the challenges we face is to accommodate the competing imperatives and to negotiate an effective path between them.

The link between language and identity has become an increasingly important part of the languages landscape over the last few years, and appears almost as a counterweight to hyperdiversity. There are many examples of how different groups have sought to protect their linguistic identity. It has long been seen at national level, where most countries lay great emphasis on educating their citizens to be competent users of the national language or languages. One of the responses to migration is to provide support for migrants to learn the dominant language of the host country, and increasingly to place requirements on them to achieve certain levels of competence. Many national governments have taken measures to preserve and support the main national languages and, in some cases, to restrict the use of other languages.

Similar responses are visible at a regional level across Europe. This often involves promoting a language that is specific to the region, but different from the dominant language of the country. The cases of Catalan in Catalunya or Welsh in Wales are clear examples. Likewise, particular ethnic groups will wish to protect their language as a key part of their culture. This is evident in minority groups who wish to assert a distinct identity within the wider society, and in migrant groups who wish to retain a cultural link with their country of origin.

These attempts at language protection have in some cases contributed to a renaissance of the language and culture and have mobilised a great deal of passion and commitment. At a national level they have generated innovative programmes of teaching a national language as a second or foreign language. They may pose difficulties for language educators in navigating the identities that are attached to a particular language. On the one hand, an excessive

⁶ Maalouf, Amin. 2008. A Rewarding Challenge: How the multiplicity of languages could strengthen Europe. Proposals from the Group of Intellectuals for Intercultural Dialogue. Brussels: European Commission. http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/archive/languages_en.html (accessed 31 January 2009).

partisanship can suggest the superiority of one language over others. On the other hand, teaching and learning a particular language may confer membership of a particular social group, to the exclusion of others. These difficulties are frequently recognised, and require careful management by teachers.

Language protection is paradoxically supported by the developing internet-based services. A vast array of languages is now available on the Web. Wikipedia alone has some 14 million articles in more than 260 languages.⁷ However, the very enormity of the internet has led to a 'smart monolingualism'. That is, the interactions of most people with online materials take place almost exclusively in one language. An internet search will generally provide a list of sites which are predominantly in one language, unless the searcher takes positive steps to access other languages. For example, using an English search engine, I searched for the French President Nicolas Sarkozy. At the first attempt in July 2007, two months after his election, the search yielded only one French-language reference on the first page, and two more on the second page. In October 2009, the same search yielded no French-language references until page 8. The equivalent French search engine yielded only French-language sites for more than 20 pages. After searching, internet users will typically move from one website to another in the same language, so that it is easy to imagine that the whole of the Web is monolingual. While this may reinforce the monolingual inclinations of some users, it also serves to provide a linguistic community for speakers of less widely used languages and languages whose speakers are dispersed over a wide geographical range. In overcoming geographical boundaries, however, the digital age may have constructed linguistic boundaries. While these are not policed by guards as land border are, they may prove even more difficult to cross.

Although the assertion of linguistic identities is a growing tendency in contemporary societies, there are many people who cross the boundaries of language and culture. Broadly, these are either the elite or the excluded. The elite consist of a cosmopolitan middle-class of mobile and well educated people, who often have a family background in several countries. Perhaps their parents are of different national origins, or they have lived, studied or worked in other countries during the course of their life. They include the 'new Europeans', who feel comfortable in a number of cultures and move from one language to another without difficulty. At the other end of the social spectrum, the excluded consist of migrant peoples who have a home culture which is not recognised or valued by the host country. Families feel a pressure to leave behind their multilingual background, which is viewed as a problem in schools and a barrier to social advancement.

Language and communication

Much of the motivation felt by educators and learners is based on the need to be able to communicate effectively. This, rather than identity, is the driving force behind the decision of

⁷ See About Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About> (accessed 22 October 2009)

learners to study a second or foreign language, and is also a leading factor in recognising the social and economic need for language learning, as distinct from the political and cultural needs. At European level, languages were identified at an early stage as 'non-tariff barriers' to trade and mobility. A good deal of European investment has since been devoted to reducing or removing them. A principal method has been to invest in encouraging language learning, with the aim of enabling citizens to communicate in an increasing diversity of languages. However, the removal of language barriers can be pursued by other means, and it is important for teachers to recognise them.

A popular solution is for the population to learn a single language of communication which would facilitate all transactions. Historically, this solution has been pursued by most European states within their own borders. In the most benign cases, this has been accompanied by an acceptance of other languages coexisting in vernacular practice. In less benign cases, varieties other than the standard language have been rejected or eradicated. The generalised use of a widely spoken language has been a common phenomenon throughout history, to facilitate trade or diplomatic relationships between countries. The term *lingua franca* derives from the Romance pidgin language widely used for trading around the Mediterranean basin during the Middle Ages. Historically, a vehicular language of this type has coexisted with the languages of the different countries where it was used. In present-day Europe, the English language has come to be used most widely in this role.

The advantages of a vehicular language in facilitating communication bring concerns about its impact on social and cultural identities. A major concern is that those who speak it fluently may enjoy social advantages, especially where they are native speakers of the vehicular language. There are concerns that the lingua franca may provoke changes in the languages with which it interacts, and that the language may itself be changed by its vehicular use. And from the point of view of language educators, there is a serious concern that the adoption of a lingua franca may discourage the learning of other foreign languages. The current experience in Europe is that the widespread adoption of English has been accompanied by a decline in the learning of other second languages.

A second major alternative for increasing communication without language learning is to find technological solutions. The progress of computer-based translation has been very rapid over the past few years, and although it is not yet perfect, and perhaps never will be, nonetheless it is sufficiently advanced to be able to meet many practical needs of communication.⁸ There

⁸ For example, the preceding sentence was translated into French and German using a free online facility, Babelfish, which instantaneously and produced the following results:

Le progrès de la traduction sur ordinateur a été très rapide au cours de ces dernières années, et bien qu'il ne soit pas encore parfait, et ne sera peut-être jamais, néanmoins il est suffisamment avancé pour pouvoir répondre à beaucoup de besoins pratiques de communication.

Der Fortschritt der computer-gestützten Übersetzung ist während der letzten Jahre und sehr schnell gewesen obgleich er nicht noch vollkommen ist, und möglicherweise nie wird sein, nichtsdestoweniger wird er genug vorangebracht, um in der Lage zu sein, viele praktischen Bedürfnisse der Kommunikation zu erfüllen.

are very many computer-based language tools, whose effectiveness may be expected to improve. In particular, many different tools for language manipulation are being integrated. For example, if speech recognition software converts speech into text, and translation software converts text from one language to another, speech synthesis software can speak the text and thus serve as an automatic interpreter. This could be further assisted by increasingly powerful portable devices. As yet, these tools remain imperfect, but a great deal of investment is being made and there are grounds for thinking that high quality language competence may in due course be supplied by a small portable device.

Technological advance of this kind offers significant communication benefits and may be felt as less threatening in respect of identities, since users would not need to leave their linguistic and cultural 'comfort zone'. It may reduce the need for vehicular languages. It would undoubtedly discourage the learning of other languages, since that competence would be embedded in technology and would not require the long and arduous acquisition of another language.

A third non-linguistic solution to communication needs is the development of intercultural communication skills. This could be combined with the use of a lingua franca or of technical solutions. The value of intercultural communication is increasingly recognised, especially in business, as it becomes more apparent that language is not the only barrier to communication. On the contrary, differences in culture frequently provoke misunderstandings even between people who share a common language. This point was emphasised by a range of activities connected with the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008), which aimed to:

- 'promote intercultural dialogue as an instrument to assist European citizens, and all those living in the European Union, in acquiring the knowledge and aptitudes to enable them to deal with a more open and more complex environment;
- raise the awareness of European citizens, and all those living in the European Union, of the importance of developing active European citizenship which is open to the world, respectful of cultural diversity and based on common values.'⁹

To a large extent the value of intercultural dialogue is a central value of language education. Much of our work as educators is intended to achieve these aims. However, there is a serious risk that intercultural communication may become an alternative to language learning. On the one hand, intercultural dialogue can take place through a lingua franca or through the use of communication technology. But on the other hand, language teachers have not sufficiently emphasised the intercultural value of language learning. This may appear a paradox, but the intercultural dimension does not always sit well with the methodologies of language teaching, many of which are in fact monocultural. That is, teaching focuses exclusively on the target

⁹ See 2008, European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, at http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/action/dialogue/2008_dial_en.htm (accessed 23 October 2009)

language and culture, and does not take explicit account of other languages and cultures, including the language of the learners or other languages present in the target culture. There are difficulties in this area which language educators need to examine more closely.¹⁰

Responding to the challenges

Language teachers and teacher educators therefore face a significant number of challenges arising from changes in the outside world and in education. In the broadest sense, linguists need to address the two distinct functions of language: to facilitate communication and to express identities. In other words, our language learners must be able to communicate and to combine this with recognition of the identities that languages carry. This has clear implications for the abilities that language teachers will need to have, and therefore for the qualities that language teacher education must seek to develop in them. There are two particular qualities which are needed in the new environment, and which traditional language teacher education has tended to omit: an ability to negotiate intercultural spaces and an ability to integrate language and content in their teaching.

Negotiating intercultural spaces has become an urgent necessity. Traditionally, language teachers have been accustomed to developing a working relationship between two cultures. For foreign language teachers, these are the culture (or cultures) of the target language and their own home culture. For teachers of their native language as a foreign language, the two cultures are their home culture and the culture of their learners. In both cases, the dominant ethos has been to enable learners to enter into the target language and culture. The second culture is recognised at best as a stepping stone to making this entry and at worst as an obstacle to entry. The relationship between the two cultures is largely incidental and does not feature as a focus of attention. As a result, the intercultural nature of language learning may provide teachers with some implicit intercultural skills, but does not usually encourage them to reflect on the intercultural nature of their teaching. It is a starting point but only the beginning of intercultural awareness.

A more developed approach to intercultural learning would need to focus more clearly on the comparisons and contrasts between the two cultures in play. It would need to enable teachers to become reflective practitioners of an intercultural approach. And it would need to provide them with strategies for fostering intercultural thinking among learners. This would lead to a further stage in which teachers become more clearly aware of the ways in which the two cultures differ or are similar, and are led to generalise their insights to develop their understanding of a wider range of cultural relationships. In this way, **cultural** understanding can serve as the basis on which **intercultural** understanding can be built.

The ability to integrate language teaching with teaching a subject other than language has become an increasingly desirable quality in teachers. There have been rapid developments in

¹⁰ This issue is discussed in: Kelly, Michael. 2009. A third space for Europe: intercultural communication in European language policy. *European Journal of Language Policy/ Revue européenne de politique linguistique* 1 (1):1-20.

the methodologies of content and language integrated learning, CLIL (enseignement d'une matière intégré à une langue étrangère, EMILE). It is sometimes referred to as bilingual education, and takes many forms in different countries and different phases of education.¹¹ However, what they all have in common is that the focus of learners is on both learning about a subject and learning a language. From the point of view of language learning, it is a key benefit that learners will be better motivated because they need to learn the language in order to gain an understanding of the subject matter. It overcomes the difficulty of finding interesting subjects to discuss that go beyond the everyday life of learners. Most language teachers have little contact with CLIL approaches, and it is an increasingly important aim of teacher education to equip them more effectively to engage with it.

The relatively new approaches of intercultural and bilingual education have the potential to give language teachers a broader range of expertise that can make them more valuable in schools. The value of these approaches may become even greater if teachers of other subjects experience the need to take account of intercultural issues, or to include language learning in their subject teaching. The changes in society and in education that have created these needs are affecting teachers of all subjects, and it may be in due course that language teachers will be called on to pass their expertise in these areas to their colleagues who teach other subjects. This could create opportunities for language teachers to be involved in training others, and taking on specific responsibilities in their own school. It could also involve language teacher educators passing on their expertise in this area to student teachers across a wider range of subjects.

To respond to these challenges, it is likely that language teachers will need to adopt new attitudes and practices in their work. If they are to teach from a more strongly intercultural perspective, they will need to have increased experience of living in an intercultural space. This would be greatly assisted by more mobility, so that language teachers had a wider experience of living and working in another country. At present, there are many personal and professional obstacles to teacher mobility and considerable effort is being made at European level to address these: through the Comenius and Erasmus programmes and through consultative groups and networks.¹² The experience of mobility itself is a valuable learning process, but it would be strengthened by more formal preparation of teachers in issues of intercultural working.

¹¹ See the report of the *LanQua* sub-project on content and language integrated learning: http://www.lanqua.eu/files/Year1Report_CLIL_ForUpload_WithoutAppendices_0.pdf (accessed 25 October 2009).

¹² See for example, the work of the *European Network on Teacher Education Policies* (ENTEP) at <http://entep.bildung.hessen.de/> (accessed 26 October 2009); and the *Teacher Education Policy in Europe* (TEPE) Network at [http://htk.tlu.ee/tepe/tepe-board-and-international-programme-committee/\(accessed](http://htk.tlu.ee/tepe/tepe-board-and-international-programme-committee/(accessed) 26 October 2009). The work is reflected in Hudson, Brian, and Pavel Zgaga, eds. 2008. *Teacher Education Policy in Europe : a Voice of Higher Education Institutions*. Umeå University of Umeå, Faculty of Teacher Education, available at http://www.educ.umu.se/presentation/publikationer/monographs/teacher_education_policy.pdf (accessed 26 October 2009).

It is important for teachers to learn the pedagogy of bilingual education or CLIL. However, for this to be effective, language teachers also need to develop their knowledge of particular subject areas, so that they can teach on the basis of professional expertise, rather than purely on the basis of their general culture. In this sense, a language teacher must also become a geography teacher, or a history teacher, for example. This has considerable implications, not least for the profile of students recruited to be trained as teachers. It would be preferable that they should have formal qualifications in another subject in addition to a language qualification. There are significant challenges in equipping existing language teachers with the knowledge and skills to teach another subject, which requires a considerable investment in professional development. And there are implications for teacher education. Educators would not only need to support students as teachers of both a language and another subject but would also need to equip students to integrate the two subjects.

Paradoxically, one of the major obstacles to these new attitudes and practices arises from the extent to which teachers identify with the language and culture they teach. It is a common experience that teachers of one language feel a strong solidarity with other teachers of that language but may wish to distinguish themselves strongly from teachers of another language. For example, teachers of German may see themselves as very different from teachers of French. To some extent, this stems from the strong bond they feel with the countries whose language they teach, which may shape their lifestyle, their values, their loyalties and their pedagogical approach. To some extent, it also stems from the fact that teachers of one language are often in competition with teachers of another language for students, for resources or for recognition. And yet, teachers of different languages have many common concerns and can benefit from stronger cooperation across the language boundaries.

This common cause is widely recognised by the cultural services of European governments, and there is a growing pattern of close cooperation between, for example, the British, French, German and Spanish cultural agencies. They recognise the need to support language education in general, as well as promoting teaching of the particular language they represent. Their cooperation is generally welcomed by ministries of education and other policy makers, but it is not always apparent to language teachers. No doubt there is further work to be done to reassure teachers of a particular language that they are not abandoning their traditional cultural loyalties by cooperating with teachers of another language.

There are therefore many challenges to which language teacher educators must respond. This was the context for developing the *European Profile for Language Teacher Education*. Its aim is to provide teacher educators with a tool to address the broad and complex agenda which has emerged over the past few years. The *Profile* provides an outline of key elements in the education of language teachers, arranged to address four distinct dimensions of teacher education:

i. Structure

This section contains items describing the different constituent parts of language teacher education and indicates how they could be organised.

ii. Knowledge and Understanding

This section contains items relating to what trainee language teachers should know and understand about teaching and learning languages as a result of their initial and in-service teacher education.

iii. Strategies and Skills

This section contains items relating to what trainee language teachers should know how to do in teaching and learning situations as teaching professionals as a result of their initial and in-service teacher education.

iv. Values

This section contains items relating to the values that trainee language teachers should be taught to promote in and through their language teaching.

The *Semlang* programme is designed to address all of these aspects, and it would not be useful to describe the forty components of the *Profile* in detail here. However, it may be helpful to single out a selection of the components which address the challenges that have been outlined in this paper.

Structures

The *Profile* suggests that a language teacher education programme should be structured to provide **experience of an intercultural and multicultural environment**. This means that trainee teachers should have experience of living, studying, working or teaching in a context characterised by distinctive or different social, cultural, ethnic, national, religious, or linguistic groups. It also means that trainee teachers are taught that intercultural and multicultural approaches to teaching and learning involve teachers promoting dynamic interactions between teacher and learner and between learners themselves.

In this context 'multicultural' is understood as a descriptive term, referring to a range of different cultural perspectives and attitudes existing in parallel. 'Intercultural' refers to a dynamic state of exchange and interaction between these cultural perspectives. These processes may take place both in the trainee teacher's own country and abroad. Even within one national context, learners can have a wide range of cultural perspectives and attitudes, shaped by social, ethnic and political factors, as well as gender, age and sexual orientation. These affect how learners respond to teaching and learning. One way to experience an intercultural environment is by teaching one's native language to non-native speakers (for example, children from immigrant communities). Trainee teacher placements in multicultural classrooms help develop an intercultural mindset.

It is suggested that a teacher education programme should include **participation in links with partners abroad, including visits, exchanges or ICT links**. This means that trainee teachers should be aware of the diverse ways to communicate and exchange information and resources with partners abroad. As well as visits to partner institutions, there are benefits to be drawn from written exchanges; e-twinning of institutions; an interactive forum between institutions; email contact; and video-conferencing, among other activities.

A programme should include **period of work or study in a country or countries where the trainee's foreign language is spoken as native**. In this way trainee teachers will spend a period of time in the country in which the foreign language they teach is spoken as native whenever possible. Whether the extended stay abroad is carried out before or during teacher education, the benefits to the trainee, both personally and professionally, are very real. Besides the obvious improvement in language competence, trainees are given insight into the culture and every day life of another country. Meeting people and participating in events and activities are also beneficial to trainees. It increases their communication skills and cultural awareness, and it is likely that these experiences will be passed on to their learners, making the language more tangible and relevant. During their teacher education, the extended stay abroad should also focus on establishing networks and contacts with the target culture, as well as gathering authentic materials and resources for use during teacher education and future teaching.

A programme should include **close links between trainees who are being educated to teach different languages**. To achieve this, trainee teachers who are being educated to teach different foreign languages should cooperate during lectures, seminars, workshops, and other learning activities, as well as during their school-based teaching practice. They should follow certain teacher education modules in common and be encouraged to explore and compare their methodological approaches. Trainee teachers of different languages can cooperate during school-based practice, if they are placed in the same school, through peer observation, peer review and other collaborative written and practical projects. Joint seminars or workshops could be organised to focus specifically on comparisons and contrasts between different disciplinary approaches and cultural contexts to foreign language teaching and learning. They could also focus on the European dimension and concepts such as plurilingualism and pluriculturalism.

Encouraging close links between trainees is a good means of promoting intercultural exchange and the exchange of good teaching and learning practices. This type of collaboration would be useful for the exchange of materials, especially for teachers of lesser-taught languages for whom the choice of materials is often limited. Although basic foreign language teaching methodology can be taught to future teachers of different languages, part of the foreign language teacher education should still be language specific.

Knowledge and Understanding

Trainee teachers will need to acquire a wide range of knowledge and understanding, and this should include **training in the development of a critical and enquiring approach to teaching and learning**. Trainee teachers need to view teaching and learning as continually evolving processes. Their education as language teachers does not stop once their initial teacher education finishes. They will be keen to experiment with different methodologies and resources after their initial teacher education. And so their attitude to teaching must be open-minded and experimental. Increased autonomy is central to a critical and enquiring approach. Trainee teachers need to learn about teaching and learning in parallel to learning how to enhance their own abilities and competences independently. A critical and enquiring approach is fostered through cooperation and exchange with peers, contact with different methodologies and other national education systems and practices, and an encouragement to undertake action research and maintain reflective practice. Placing increased value on in-service education also integrates this critical attitude into language teaching. The transition between being a trainee teacher and a qualified teacher is important. Developing a critical and enquiring professional approach at an early stage helps to make this transition easier.

Initial teacher education **should include a course in language proficiency and should assess trainees' linguistic competence**. Trainee teachers should study for a course to improve their language proficiency as part of their initial teacher education. This course should aim to improve their language competences in correspondence with the learning scales outlined in the Common European Framework (CEF). The course should aim to improve key skills and fluency in writing, reading, speaking and listening, and in the trainee's productive, receptive, interactive and mediating skills. It will be helpful for this course to be linked, if not integrated, with teaching about the CEF and ways of assessing learners' progress. The course should also refer to the European Language Portfolio and other types of self-evaluation. It would be helpful for the course to begin with an extensive language competence Needs Analysis questionnaire to determine the trainee teacher's existing language levels based on the CEF.

Linked to this is **training in the application of various assessment procedures and ways of recording learners' progress**. Trainee teachers need to be aware of the criteria that affect methods of assessment. They should develop a comparative view of the advantages and disadvantages of various assessment methods such as oral and written tests or exams, summative assessment, written project-based work, continuous assessment, practical projects, group projects and portfolios. They should have the opportunity to experiment with different ways of recording learners' progress, analysing the advantages and disadvantages of a range of methods. It would be useful for their assessment methods to correspond with the CEF scales, or to be compared with them. The CEF is widely employed across Europe. It provides a key point of comparison for national educational systems aiming to ensure similar levels of quality in foreign language teaching and learning. However, it can be difficult to validate assessment and testing materials against the CEF. Trainees need to be able to

record their learners' results accurately and from these they must be able to recognise areas of strengths and the areas where more work is needed. This is useful as it acts like an audit for the standard of teaching in general and highlights individual learner's needs.

Strategies and Skills

Trainee teachers should receive **training in ways of adapting teaching approaches to the educational context and individual needs of learners**. They should be taught to be responsive to the different reasons people have for learning foreign languages. They need to understand the different factors that affect people's abilities to learn, and the different attitudes and cultural perspectives people bring to learning. For example, the trend towards placing learners with special educational needs in mainstream schooling means that trainee teachers must be prepared to adapt their teaching approaches to meet a variety of different special needs. Adapting teaching approaches involves thinking about classroom management issues, sensitive and suitable use of materials and resources and employing a variety of learning activities to achieve learning outcomes.

Many people learn foreign languages for vocational or professional purposes. Trainee teachers should be taught particular strategies for teaching such learners effectively. In particular, trainee teachers ought to aim to integrate vocational and professional issues into the foreign language classroom through relevant use of materials, resources and classroom techniques such as role-play and situation-based language learning. Learners from different regions of a country may have specific learning needs. They may speak regional dialects which differ from the standard form of the language in which they are educated. Trainee teachers need to be made aware how to adapt their teaching of the foreign language to take this specific need into account.

Learners from ethnic minorities or immigrant communities may also bring particular learning needs to the foreign language classroom. As with learners from different regions, the teacher will adopt different approaches to meet their needs. At the same time, learners whose first language is different from that used in the classroom add to the multilingual and multicultural learning environment. Learners with different linguistic abilities and experiences are valuable to the teacher and the class. Learners from different age groups may come to the language classroom with different experiences and expectations. Trainee teachers ought to be aware of the potential social and culture differences between age groups, and be able to adapt to these.

Student teachers should receive **training in methods of learning to learn**. This means that they need to be aware of the specific goals and outcomes of learning. They should be taught how to structure their learning strategies effectively and to reflect on the different ways in which learning occurs. They need to be able to respond to the specific learning contexts they encounter in the classroom. Methods of learning to learn used by a teacher can then be fostered in their learners. Key points in methods of learning to learn are: organising time;

monitoring progress; identifying areas of strength and weakness; and recognising different learning techniques and their contributions to learning. By understanding the implications of learning to learn, trainee teachers will be able to apply methodologies flexibly and creatively, and in a context-sensitive way. They should be encouraged to experiment with different teaching styles in order to develop a critical ability to distinguish which is best for the learning context.

Trainees should receive **training in the development of independent language learning strategies**. They need to develop independent language learning strategies to improve their own language competence and to be able to transfer these skills to their learners. New learning environments such as virtual resources, language centres, multicultural learning environments as well as up to date course books and materials play a major role in this process. Knowledge of independent strategies allows teachers to set tasks for their learners that foster the ability to improve language competence beyond the classroom without the explicit guidance of the teacher. Independent language learning strategies help foster the practice of life-long language learning. As a result, teachers should be able to pass on to learners the methods they have been taught during their initial teacher education. Classroom-based learning and independent learning activities should be integrated. Independent learning strategies are crucial in promoting life-long learning skills, which should be a key focus as early as possible in the learning process.

It is increasingly important for trainee teachers to have **training in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**. This means that they should learn the methodologies and strategies for teaching another subject through the medium of a foreign language. Even if trainee teachers do not intend to specialise in this area, such training improves their language competence, encourages more comprehensive use of the target language in non-CLIL classes, and gives teachers ways of raising social, cultural and value issues in their foreign language teaching. CLIL approaches also encourage cooperation with colleagues from different disciplines. CLIL approaches are recognised as a growing area in language teacher education across Europe and many institutions already use them or are planning to introduce them. However, CLIL approaches depend on the existence of local CLIL schools in which to train trainees.

Values

It is important to recognise that language education carries values. Trainees therefore need **training in social and cultural values**. They need to be taught explicitly that teaching and learning foreign languages help promote social and cultural values such as respect for difference, active communication, a participatory attitude to society, and experience of a range of different cultures and lifestyles. These values are fostered through inclusive and context-sensitive classroom management strategies, a choice of teaching materials that reflects social diversity and cultural plurality, and the development of international networks of communication and exchange between learners from different contexts and countries. Social

and cultural values can obviously be promoted right across the school curriculum. Language teachers benefit from cooperation with colleagues from different disciplines when promoting these values. The emphasis on social and cultural values will differ according to the local and national context of the school. Teachers need to be aware that social and cultural values cannot simply be applied, but are developed through an ongoing and context-sensitive process. When thinking of the social and cultural values of a range of countries, trainees should be reminded that what people have in common is as important as the differences that distinguish them.

Linked to this is **training in the diversity of languages and cultures**. Trainees should be taught that respect for diversity is a key element in their teacher education and subsequent teaching. They need to know about the linguistic profile of countries in which the languages they teach are spoken as native. They need to see the importance of maintaining linguistic diversity in Europe, given the growing trend towards English as a global lingua franca. They need to be able to identify the diverse range of language contexts and backgrounds of their learners, and be aware of the notions of plurilingual competence and pluricultural competence set out in the CEF.

Training in the **importance of teaching and learning about foreign languages and cultures** should be an explicit part of the teacher education programme. Trainee teachers need to be aware that their language teaching contributes to their learners' abilities to understand and respect others. They should recognise that learning foreign languages goes hand in hand with learning about other cultures, and leads to increased mobility in education, commerce, arts, tourism and numerous other spheres. They will know that Learning foreign languages is a way of safeguarding linguistic and cultural identity, a process in which foreign language teachers play a crucial role. They will need to explain to their learners that learning foreign languages gives them important benefits, including:

- increasing their mother-tongue competence;
- promoting their communicational and presentation skills;
- giving them access to other cultures which enrich their own cultural background;
- helping them to develop a critical mindset towards their own social and cultural presuppositions.

And since they need to be aware of the wider social and political contexts, teachers need to receive **training in teaching European citizenship**. It is important that they should know that the concept of European citizenship entails a set of shared values and beliefs in democracy, the rule of law, the free press and a shared cultural heritage. EU citizenship more specifically confers a set of legal and civic rights and duties on citizens, allowing them to work and travel freely between EU member states. They can incorporate this into teaching content through promotion of these shared values, choice of teaching materials and intercultural and

multicultural networks and exchanges. The term 'citizenship' is complex, referring to different things in different contexts. European citizenship is not the same as national citizenship. Citizenship can refer to ideas concerning nationality or to issues of morality and responsibility. And teachers need to be aware that European citizenship is one type of citizenship in a chain linking regional, national, international and global citizenship.

Social implementation and cooperation

These dimensions, and other explored in the *Profile*, need to be supported by being included in programmes of language teacher education. In the first instance, of course, this is a matter of curriculum development on the part of teacher educators. However, the effective implementation of these elements needs to be supported by broader social strategies, and in particular requires a higher level of cooperation between teachers, and increased cooperation between teachers and their principal stakeholders.

Cooperation between teachers is necessary to support the broad remit that language teachers will increasingly want to pursue. We have examined the first level of cooperation, between teachers of different languages, but language teachers will also need to work closely with teachers of other subjects. This is not only a fundamental requirement of CLIL approaches, but will also be needed to foster an environment which sustains the social and cultural values that language teachers represent. For example, the values of diversity will be a lot easier to convey to language learners in schools which have an ethos of recognising diversity. It is much more effective if the language class is able to confirm and reinforce values of social and cultural diversity which are also taught in other subject areas. This offers learners a more coherent experience, and also provides opportunities for teachers across the school to build a sense of community, based on shared values.

A further level of cooperation is needed between teachers in different sectors of education. Pragmatically, this is an important factor in enabling learners to make a successful transition between successive phases of their education. Language learning is a long and cumulative process, and it is necessary for teaching at each stage to build on what has already been achieved. This is not always an easy thing to do, but is much more difficult if the teachers in one phase have no relationships of cooperation with teachers at a previous phases.

Beyond the need to support transition, there are opportunities for teachers in different sectors to learn from one another. There are differences in context and approach between sectors. Teaching strategies are not interchangeable. However, the differences can be a creative opportunity, if teachers are willing to learn from the insights generated by teachers in a different sector. The exchange of ideas must be a two-way process based on mutual respect if cooperation is to be developed. The benefits it can provide lie in building a richer learning community in which all teachers can participate.

Classroom teachers need to develop supportive relationships with those who have managerial responsibilities in their school, whether teachers or administrators. This is a

sensible approach for teachers of any discipline, who need resources and other forms of support to enable their subject to flourish. In the case of languages, the role of school managers is important in supporting the social and cultural values embedded in the subject, and is particularly crucial in promoting mobility, study visits and links with teachers and schools in other countries.

In many instances, the forms of cooperation between teachers are assisted by associations. Trainee teachers need to be aware of the support these can offer, for example, in providing information, in offering a network of contacts and in giving access to resources and opportunities for development. Associations can take many forms, and perhaps the most directly supportive for language teachers will be those organised around aspects of language education. But associations may be motivated by many other kinds of affinity: by type of school, by social or cultural orientation or by regional location, for example. In some countries, important opportunities may be provided by trade unions, political parties, religious groups or voluntary organisations.

Teachers will find many opportunities for cooperation arising from continuing professional development, sometimes called in-service training. There are many providers of different kinds, and teachers can allocate a limited amount of time to these activities. They will therefore need to choose their opportunities carefully. However, this is an important pathway to developing their professional standing, and in due course young teachers may themselves become trainers and be able to pass on their experience and insights within the learning community of teachers.

The task of cooperating with other educators is a substantial commitment, but teachers must also learn to develop partnerships with a range of other stakeholders: people who have an interest in the outcomes of their teaching. From an early point in their career, teachers become aware that their relationship with their learners is a reciprocal one. They can learn from their students at the same time as teaching them. They are likely to have contact with parents, whether on an individual basis or through organised structures. It is helpful to be aware that this is an important partnership both for the wellbeing of students and for the support that the school can receive within the local community.

At a broader social level, teachers encounter a range of advisors, inspectors and other officials with responsibility for the public administration of education. It is helpful for teachers to view this as a form of partnership, in which both partners can assist the other. This may be difficult to see in the case of relations of authority, where the teacher is accountable to the administrator, or being evaluated by them. However, if approached in this positive spirit, the relationship is more likely to be a helpful one. The same is true of the range of policy-makers, with whom teachers are likely to have contact during the course of their career. If teachers can engage constructively with civil servants, politicians and other decision-makers, they can expect to help shape the way in which education policy develops, and thus contribute to the

creation of a more supportive environment within which to pursue their own teaching and professional development.

In recent years, it has been recognised that partnerships need to be developed between teachers and people in businesses or in voluntary bodies. On the one hand, these organisations are dependent on the work of teachers in preparing students to enter the world of work and to play an effective role in their employment. On the other hand, people in business or other enterprises can support teachers in a number of ways. These include offering work placements and careers advice. Employers and business people are also playing an increasing role in making the case publically for the value of language education and providing motivations for people to engage actively in learning languages.

Conclusions

From this discussion, it is clear that the development of language teacher education now takes place within a complex and rapidly changing context. The purposes of language teaching connect with the broader European project of creating a multilingual and multicultural society. In order to achieve it, Europe will need to extend the scope and quality of language teaching, and will need well trained and energetic language teachers to carry it forward. The future development of language teacher education must take these strategic issues into account, and be sensitive to the social and economic conditions which shape the way in which teacher educators can carry out their role. In order to teachers with a sense of the evolving role of languages in the contemporary world, there are several specific elements that need to be incorporated into initial training and continuing professional development. Beyond this, educators need to play an active role in building cooperation between teachers, and engaging in partnerships with a wider range of stakeholders. If we can achieve this, then language teachers will be able to play a pivotal role in developing the kind of Europe in which many voices can be heard, and where mutual understanding can flourish. In this sense, the education of language teachers is of strategic importance to the future of Europe.



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