

An introduction to the current European context in language teaching

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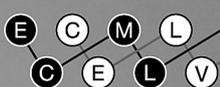
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European Centre for Modern Languages
Centre européen pour les langues vivantes



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Part A

A.1. Language policies, language education policies

Gábor Boldizsár

You and your students, dear colleague, are the most important participants in the implementation of the language policy of a country, a city or any educational institution. You must undoubtedly be aware of the essence of this policy as the syllabus and programme of lessons that your work is based on are most certainly in accordance with it. Nevertheless, we would like to go through a few questions with you and ask you to think together with us about possible answers to them.

1. What are the characteristics of a language policy?

Decisions concerning a language policy are always based on some ideology. This ideology reflects the linguistic relationship between its user-community and another community and, in most cases, contains a value judgment. This ideology will also define actions to be taken, in other words, the community's language policy.

According to Cobarrubias¹, language policies are essentially based on ideologies that are assimilationist, pluralist, vernacular or tending to internationalism. The first two ideologies study the relationship between languages or language variations co-existing in one country in order to decide on the number of languages or language variations to recognise officially. The latter two determine the area from which the standard to be chosen and codified will be taken, in other words, the source of the standard. This can be either the local language (or language variation) or a universal language (or another variation used as a standard elsewhere).

The **policy of assimilation** demands that users of non-dominant languages should be capable of using the dominant language.

The **pluralist policy** ensures the equal right of various language groups to keep and use their own language.

The **vernacular ideology** on the one hand supports the vernacular languages as opposed to the international ones used in the region or, on the other hand, the mother tongue (the first language) against the country's dominant language.

Internationalism means that a universal language is introduced as the official language or the language of education.

Daoust² adds a fifth ideology to the principal types of Cobarrubias, that of **purism**. Purism is a close relative of the ideology of assimilation. The purist ideology is characterised by sentiments and relationships which are, in this particular case, rooted in an idealised language; this ideal language is generally identified as the written language and is very firmly distinguished from everyday language. Moral and aesthetic values are linked to this idealised language, command of it earns society's esteem and, for this reason, it is supported by education and other social institutions. Purism has its roots in Europe, in the period when people were forming nations, and it was linked very closely with this development. This ideology demands that any language variation that is different from the idealised version should be considered deviant and be condemned as such.

1 COBARRUBIAS, Juan "Ethical issues in status planning", in: J. Cobarrubias and Fishman (eds), 1983, pp. 41-85.

2 DAOUST, Denise "Language planning and language reform" in: F. Coulmas (ed.), *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1997, pp. 436-52.

The principal types of language ideology are often found in mixed form in the language policy of a country. Of course, there can be various stages between assimilation and the implementation of “pure” pluralism. Furthermore, policies of pluralism and assimilation have different degrees and they can even appear to run in parallel: a country can follow a pluralist policy with regard to one of its national minorities while following a policy of assimilation towards another minority.

It is not our job to describe these different approaches, but our opinion is that the pluralist language policy should become dominant in Europe and – as will be discussed later – both the Council of Europe and the European Union support this idea.

2. Whose task is it to formulate the language policy of a country, a region or a conurbation?

In a democracy, we believe that the elected bodies are in the best position to define the language policy. They can harmonise the various interests, they know and represent the nation and the national minorities of a country, they are able to understand and identify with the multicultural and language values. In our opinion it is the parliament whose task is the formulation of the language policy of a country as well as the codification of the law, whereas at a local level, based on national policy and taking all possible specific regional features into account, it is the local authorities that should define the language policy of a region or a conurbation.

3. A European language policy, a European language education policy – do they exist?

The main objectives of the Council of Europe are:

- the defence of human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of the law;
- the promotion and enhancement of cultural identity and diversity in Europe;
- the search for solutions to problems in society (discrimination against minorities, xenophobia, intolerance, damage to the environment, cloning, AIDS, drugs, organised crime);
- the development of democratic stability in Europe through support for political, legislative and constitutional reforms.

All this explains why this intergovernmental organisation emphasises language policy.

The position of the Council of Europe is officially set out in several documents.³

3 Legal instruments:

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Recommendations regarding policy matters:

Recommendation No. R (98) 6 of the Committee of Ministers on modern languages
Recommendation 1383 (1998) of the Parliament Assembly on linguistic diversification: and response from the Committee of Ministers (CM (99) 97)
Recommendation 1539 (2001) on the European Year of Languages

Reference documents:

Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe: from linguistic diversity to plurilingual education
Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment

The following is a summary of the main points of the Council of Europe's language policy and language educational policy

The linguistic heritage and cultural diversity is a valuable common resource which should be protected and developed. A major educational effort is needed to transform this multicoloured linguistic variety from a barrier to communication to a source of understanding and progress.

Only a better knowledge of European modern languages can facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in order to promote European mobility, co-operation and mutual understanding and to overcome prejudice and discrimination.

Member states can achieve greater harmony in the definition of their language policy if they make arrangements for ongoing collaboration and the harmonisation of their language policies.

In pursuit of the principles stated above the Committee of Ministers called upon the governments of member states to:

- promote national and international co-operation among governmental and non-governmental organisations engaged in teaching modern languages, in the development of methods of evaluation, in the development and implementation of teaching programmes together with the support of the institutions engaged in the production and use of multimedia materials;
- take the necessary steps towards establishing an effective European system of information exchange covering all aspects of research, language learning and teaching and making full use of information technology.

Consequently, the Steering Committee for Education of the Council of Europe, the Language Policy Division and the European Centre for Modern Languages aim to encourage, support and co-ordinate the work of governmental and non-governmental organisations in order to improve language teaching with regard, in particular, to the measures already taken towards the implementation of the general measures set out in Recommendation No. (82) 18:

1. To ensure, as far as possible, ...access to effective means of acquiring a knowledge of the languages of other member states (or of other communities within their own country), as well as the skills in the use of those languages that will enable them to satisfy their communicative needs and in particular:
 - 1.1. to deal with the business of everyday life in another country, and to help foreigners staying in their own country to do so;
 - 1.2. to exchange information and ideas with young people and adults who speak a different language and to communicate their thoughts and feelings to them;
 - 1.3. to achieve a wider and deeper understanding of the way of life and forms of thought of other peoples and of their cultural heritage.
2. To promote, encourage and support the efforts of teachers and learners at all levels to apply in their own situation the principles of the construction of language-learning systems (as these are progressively developed within the Council of Europe 'Modern languages' programme):
 - 2.1. by basing language teaching and learning on the needs, motivations, characteristics and resources of learners;
 - 2.2. by defining worthwhile and realistic objectives as explicitly as possible;
 - 2.3. by developing appropriate methods and materials;
 - 2.4. by developing suitable forms and instruments for the evaluating of learning programmes.

3. To promote research and development programmes leading to the introduction, at all educational levels, of methods and materials best suited to enabling different classes and types of student to acquire a communicative proficiency appropriate to their specific needs.⁴

In the following chapters we shall describe the language-learning programmes, their main characteristics and elements as elaborated by the Council of Europe.

The European Union's language policy is based on the same principles. Teachers in both member and candidate countries are well acquainted with the community programmes (Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Youth) which contribute to the implementation of the language education policy of the European Union.

As part of their policy to develop a multilingual Europe, the European Commission has recently launched a public survey on language learning and on linguistic diversity in Europe. The problem of teaching and learning languages plays an important part in the **open method of co-ordination** process when treating various education issues in Europe.

4. Does a close connection exist between language policy and language education policy?

A strong affirmative answer would mean that each country (each region and conurbation) possesses a precise, codified language policy or at least a policy that is openly available to the public. However, as far as we know, this is not the case in several countries of Europe. Although it would be desirable that the starting point of any language education policy is the language policy, it is generally known that the basis for language learning and teaching in the educational system is constructed from various types of educational programme. To be familiar with the work of the Council of Europe is even more important because it enables the teacher to become aware of the significant elements of European education policy, to compare these with their own practice and use them to advantage in such a way that students are not only being taught a language but their interest is also being aroused in the discovery of languages and cultures and in becoming a plurilingual European citizen.

5. Where is language education policy defined?

The conclusion arising from the points detailed above is that an education policy can have different forms. In countries where language education is codified, the qualifications which result from the learning and teaching of different languages (mother tongue languages, official languages, minority languages, modern languages) have a legal framework and are certified by the ministry concerned, the regional authorities and school administrations. Where the codified language policy does not exist, the qualifications and the conditions for teaching the mother tongue language, minority languages and modern languages are generally arranged separately. It seems that European practice tends to reflect the latter version so that, as a result, languages appear as traditional "disciplines" in educational programmes. There are few examples of instances where the acquisition and learning of multicultural knowledge and linguistic abilities appear as a unifying factor in the educational process and thus create a plurilingual school environment, if appropriate.

In the real situation, it is the school that must introduce the form of language learning into their programme, and change the school environment in order to offer students, as an almost natural step, a truly diverse and multicoloured cultural and linguistic resource.

After all of these more or less theoretical considerations, you will rightly ask the question: where can you, the teacher, find practical suggestions which suit you, your personality and your capabilities in the best way. Everything we have talked about above will become clearer and more accessible as you read on and find your own answers to our questions. In addition, we hope that you will find the answers to later questions in **Part B** of our work.

4 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEF), Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2002, p. 3.

A.2. Brief information: the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the European Language Portfolio

Joaquín Moreno

Europe is a multilingual, multicultural continent with an increasing mobility of its citizens. That is one of the main features of its identity. In fact, these citizens are creating even more complex links in their work or leisure fields. The introduction of a common single currency in 2002 in some countries shows that the process has accelerated.

In addition, more and more people come from other places outside Europe to study or work. They do it either as visitors or as temporary residents. Some even decide to stay here for good. These people bring their home language as well as their culture and traditions with them.

The fast development of technologies and communication, including the popularisation of the Internet over the last ten years, has introduced new tools such as CD-ROMs, satellite television, email and video-conferencing facilities which are breaking down boundaries and reducing distances. This is resulting in people having access to information from all over the world in different languages as well as people sharing information and interacting with each other even though they are not physically in the same place. Some citizens, usually the ones who are taking advantage of it, cherish this new situation, others are not aware of it yet and there are also those who feel threatened and absolutely overwhelmed by it. The latter risk thinking that everything was better in the past.

Teachers are no exception to this rule. However, in an ever-changing world like the one depicted above, education policies should call for change, adjustment and reconstruction if we are to meet the needs of this type of new European society, which is open, tolerant, inter-linked, interdependent, co-operative and plurilingual.

As regards language learning and language teaching, the Council of Europe's main recommendations to its member states in order to develop a sense of unity have been:

- to recognise the importance of life-long language learning for their citizens as a means of promoting communication, interaction, mobility and mutual understanding and enrichment;
- to develop a common approach to action mainly through the implementation of reforms, encouraging innovation, sharing expertise and pooling ideas and resources;
- to promote a coherent, learner-centred methodology integrating aims, content, teaching, learning and assessment.

At the moment two complementary bodies are involved in the Council of Europe's language programmes:

- *The Language Policy Division*
www.coe.int/T/E/cultural_cooperation/education/Languages/Language_Policy
- *The European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz* <www.ecml.at>

The Council is actively involved in the development of initiatives such as:

▪ **Projects and conferences**

There are periodical projects and/or conferences in order to promote different policies previously recommended by the Committee of Ministers. The links below are examples of some of the most relevant ones:

- Recommendation R (98) 6 concerning modern languages
<<http://cm.coe.int/ta/rec/1998/98r6.htm>>
- The celebration of the European Year of Languages in 2001
<<http://culture.coe.int/AEL2001EYL>>

▪ **Level descriptions**

Throughout the years the Council has promoted the development of different learning objectives or levels. In the early 1970s the first attempt was made with the development of the Threshold level. Then came Waystage and Vantage levels. The Breakthrough level is in preparation at present.

▪ **Reference documents**

- *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment.*
The complete text of the Framework document in English is available on
<<http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio//documents/0521803136txt.pdf>>
- *The European Language Portfolio*
<<http://culture.coe.int/portfolio>>

1. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEF) is a comprehensive document created to encourage reflection and communication about every aspect of language learning, teaching and assessment.

It encourages reflection by posing questions to both language teachers and language learners such as:

- What is it that we do when we speak or write?
- What competences do we have to acquire?
- How do we set our aims when we are learning another language?
- How do we assess our progress?
- How does effective learning take place?
- How can we help ourselves or others learn another language better and more effectively?

It also helps teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, materials designers and educational institutions:

- to communicate
- to co-ordinate their efforts
- to focus their work.

The document is “the result of over ten years’ research by a number of leading applied linguists and pedagogical specialists from the 41 member states of the Council of Europe”. It is a document that has

been drafted several times and each draft has been revised and the changes introduced scientifically researched, especially the descriptors referring to language proficiency. The final document can be consulted in English on the Internet. Some other language versions are available online. Alternatively, other publishers have uploaded only a part of the whole version temporarily (see link below for further information).

<http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/Languages/Language_Policy/Common_Framework_of_Reference/>

These are the editions available at the moment:

The CEF is published *in English* by Cambridge University Press.
ISBN Hardback 0521803136, Paperback: 0521005310
<http://www.cambridge.org/>

The *French version* is published by the Editions Didier: Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues: apprendre, enseigner, évaluer.
ISBN: 227805075-3
<http://www.didierfle.com/>

The *Czech version* is published by Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci: Společný evropský referenční rámec pro jazyky : Jak se učíme jazykům, jak je vyučujeme a jak v jazycích hodnotíme
ISBN: 80-244-0404-4
<http://www.msmt.cz>

The *German version* is published by Langenscheidt: Gemeinsamer europäischer Referenzrahmen für Sprachen: lernen, lehren und beurteilen.
ISBN: 3-468-49469-6
<http://www.goethe.de/referenzrahmen>

The *Hungarian version* is published by: Pedagógus-tavábbképzési Módszertani és Információs Központ: Közös Európai Referenciakeret: Nyelvtanulás, Nyelvtanítás, Értékelés.
ISBN: 963 204200X

The *Italian version* is published by: La Nuova Italia-Oxford: Quadro comune europeo di riferimento per le lingue: apprendimento insegnamento valutazione
ISBN: 88-221-4512-7

The *Portuguese version* is published by: Edições ASA: Quadro europeu comum de referência para as línguas: Aprendizagem, ensino, avaliação
ISBN: 972-41-27 46-X
<http://www.asa.pt>

The *Spanish version* is published by Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte and grupo ANAYA: Marco común europeo de referencia para las lenguas: aprendizaje, enseñanza, evaluación
ISBN: 84-667-1618-1

The document is available on the following website: <http://cvc.cervantes/obref/marco>

The CEF consists of nine chapters:

- Chapter 1. Definition of aims, objectives and functions.
- Chapter 2. Explanation of the approach adopted; an action-oriented approach.
- Chapter 3. Introduction of the common reference levels.
- Chapter 4. Identification of categories needed for the description of language use and the language user (domains, situations, themes, tasks and purposes of communication).
- Chapter 5. Categorisation of the user/learner's general and communicative competences.

- Chapter 6. The processes of language learning and teaching; the relation between acquisition and learning; the nature and development of plurilingual competence; methodological options.
- Chapter 7. The role of tasks in language learning and teaching.
- Chapter 8. The implications of linguistic diversification for curriculum design; plurilingualism and pluriculturalism; curriculum design; life-long language learning; modularity and partial competences.
- Chapter 9. Assessment and assessment types.

In addition to the final document, the 1996 Framework version also included a General User Guide (CC-LANG) and a series of ten specialised guides (CC-LANG (96) 9-18) with very interesting added-value information. During the development of this document there was a change in these guides. The new arrangement is as follows: there is only a Guide for Users with four main sections. This guide comprises the information in the previous eleven guides plus new developments.

For the purposes of the development of this document, Section I (Guidance to all users) and Section II (For those directly engaged in the learning/teaching process) seem to be the most relevant parts of the new document. This new guide can be downloaded by clicking on the following link:

<http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio//documents/Guide-for-Users-April02.doc>

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment is a document that everybody in the profession should read nowadays. It is addressed to teachers, teacher trainers, course designers, materials writers, education authorities, examiners, even students to some extent. It attempts to provide a common framework so that courses and programmes are designed using the same approach; teachers and teacher trainers follow similar curricular and methodological guidelines, promoting learners' autonomy; and evaluation is carried out in a coherent and consistent way in order to develop fair, reliable systems of certification.

This does not mean that it is a dogmatic document. On the contrary, it is open, comprehensive and dynamic. It asks questions rather than provides dogmatic answers.

For further general reading on the CEF:

http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/Languages/Language_Policy/Common_Framework_of_Reference/

2. Development of the European Language Portfolio

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is an instrument drawing on the spirit of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEF). Therefore it is designed to promote key features for effective learning to take place such as self-directed learning as well as self-evaluation.

The ELP was developed and piloted by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg, between 1998 and 2000. It was then launched during the European Year of Languages as a tool to support the development of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism. It proved to be very successful and effective and therefore the following resolution was adopted:

Resolution on the European Language Portfolio

(adopted at the 20th Session of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe, Cracow, Poland, 15-17 October 2000)

<http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural%5FCo%2Doperation/education/Languages/Language%5FPolicy/Key%5FRecommandations/resolutionportfolio.asp>

Some governments of member states as well as international non-governmental organisations who did not participate in the pilot project have already started to develop their own ELPs, for example, Spain which will be submitted for validation.

The development and implementation of ELPs in the different member states is one of the most serious attempts to apply the spirit and principles of the CEF.

The document has two main functions: the reporting function and the pedagogical one. The reporting function is there for the document to become “a valid record of competence regardless of its country, region, sector or institution of origin”. The pedagogical function is based on the promotion of self-evaluation and individualisation of learner’s needs by the learner her/himself.

There are different portfolios for different age groups. Depending on the age of the language user, the reporting and the pedagogical function become more or less important. For adults, it seems that the reporting function is crucial, whereas the pedagogical function is more important for teenagers or children at school.

The ELP is no substitute for a qualification awarded by an institution, it simply helps define what kind of qualification it is. In addition, it helps to specify and define the aims of a course and is by no means restricted uniquely to the language classroom as it allows space for the recording of intercultural experiences that are as effective for language learning as the lessons themselves.

The owner of the portfolio is the language learner. The document is open and should change as the owner records and reflects on the learning progress and the cultural experiences and how that helps her/him achieve objectives.

There must be at least three main parts in an ELP:

- **Language passport:** A record of “Language competences [...] described according to common criteria accepted throughout Europe and which can serve as a complement to customary certificates”.
- **Biography:** A section that contains documents “describing the owner’s experiences in each language and which is designed to guide the learner in planning and assessing progress”.
- **Dossier:** A section “where examples of personal work can be kept to illustrate one’s language competences” or intercultural experiences.

This is a list of validated portfolios:

1. **2000 – Switzerland** – Model for young people and adults.
2. **2000 – France** – Model for children. It is accompanied by a Guide for Users (available in French only).
3. **2000 – Russian Federation** – Model for learners in upper secondary education.
4. **2000 – Germany – North Rhine-Westphalia** – Model for learners in lower secondary education.
5. **2000 – France** – Model for young learners and adults.
6. **2000 – EAQUALS/ALTE** – Model for adult learners.
7. **2001 – Czech Republic** – Model for learners in lower secondary education (11-15 year-old learners).
8. **2001 – United Kingdom** – Model for children.
9. **2001 – United Kingdom** – Model for adults (with a particular, but not exclusive, focus on the learner of languages for vocational purposes).
10. **2001 – Ireland** – Model for learners in post-primary education.
11. **2001 – Ireland** – Model for use in primary education with a specific target group: immigrants learning the language of the host country.
12. **2001 – Ireland** – Model for use in post-primary education with a specific target group: immigrants learning the language of the host country.

13. **2001 a – Ireland** – Model for adult immigrants newly arrived, learning the target language of the host country.
13. **2001 b – Ireland** – Model for adult immigrants who have already spent some time in the country and are learning the target language of the host country.
14. **2001 – Ireland** – Model for adult immigrants preparing for mainstream vocational training and employment.
15. **2001 – Hungary** – Model for learners in secondary education.
16. **2001 – Hungary** – Model for learners in primary education.
17. **2001 – Hungary** – Model for adults.
18. **2001 – The Netherlands** – Model for learners in upper secondary vocational education.
19. **2001 – Sweden** – Model for learners in upper secondary and adult education including vocational education.
20. **2001 – Portugal** – Model for learners aged 10-15 years old.
21. **2001 – Portugal** – Model for learners in upper-secondary education.
22. **2001 – Czech Republic** – Model for learners up to 11 years old.
23. **2001 – Czech Republic** – Model for learners in upper secondary education.
24. **2001 – Austria** – Model for learners in upper secondary education.
25. **2002 – Italy (Umbria)** – Model for learners in lower secondary education.
26. **2002 – Italy (Piedmont)** – Model for learners in primary education.
27. **2002 – Russian Federation** – Model for language teachers, translators and interpreters.
28. **2002 – Russian Federation** – Model for learners in primary education.
29. **2002 – CERCLES (European Association of Language Centres in Higher Education)** – Model for learners in higher education.
30. **2002 – Italy (Lombardia)** – Model for learners in lower secondary education.
31. **2002 – Russian Federation** – Model for learners in lower secondary education.
32. **2002 a – Germany – Thüringen** – Model for learners in primary education.
32. **2002 b – Germany – Thüringen** – Model for learners in grades 5 to 9.
32. **2002 c – Germany – Thüringen** – Model for learners in grades 10 to 12.
33. **2002 – The Netherlands** – Model for learners aged 9 to 12 years old.
34. **2002 a – The Netherlands** – Model for learners aged 12+.
34. **2002 b – The Netherlands** – Model for learners aged 15+.
35. **2002 – European Language Council** – Model for learners in higher education.
36. **2002 – The Netherlands (CINOP)** – Model for adult second language learners.
37. **2002 – Milestone** – Model for learners of the host community language.
38. **2003 – French speaking Community of Belgium** – Model for children in primary education.
39. **2003 – French speaking Community of Belgium** – Model for learners in upper secondary education.
40. **2003 – Italy** – Model for learners in higher education.

3. Language learning – an action-oriented approach

This section outlines the approach that the CEF is based on, the kind of changes and what it implies (see also Part B).

An action-oriented approach:

Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competences, both general and in particular communicative language competences. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various conditions and under various constraints to engage in language activities involving language processes to produce and/or receive texts in relation to themes in specific domains, activating those strategies which seem most appropriate for carrying out the tasks to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences.

The CEF is a document which describes in a comprehensive manner:

- the communicative activities and strategies;
- the competences necessary for communication;
- the related knowledge and skills;
- the situations and domains of communication.

What is new in the CEF?

1. *The four skills are still there, especially for assessment purposes, but they are embedded in a more general heading called “Communicative activities”. And there are also strategies.*

Activities	Skills
Reception	in both speech and writing where the user is acting alone
Production	in both speech and writing where the user is acting alone
Interaction	in both speech and writing where the user is interacting with another/others
Mediation	in both speech and writing where the user is conveying meanings between those who cannot use each other’s languages

Strategies Non-verbal communication

2. *What is it that a language learner must cope with?*

GENERAL COMPETENCES

(See Part B: Our competences, General competences)

Declarative knowledge (savoir)

- General knowledge about the world
- Sociocultural knowledge about how the society in question works
- Intercultural awareness

Development of skills (savoir-faire)

- Practical skills
- Intercultural skills

“Existential” competence (savoir-être)

- Attitudes
- Values
- Motivation
- Beliefs
- Personality types
- Cognitive styles

Ability to learn (savoir-apprendre)

- Learn to hear and then reproduce new sounds
- Gain understanding of the general principles by which languages are organised
- Acquire study skills to enable them to become independent learners
- Heuristic skills

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCES (See Part B: Our competences to help develop our students’ communicative language competence in an action-oriented approach)

Linguistic

- Lexical
- Grammatical
- Semantic
- Phonological
- Orthographic
- Orthoepic

Sociolinguistic

- Linguistic markers
- Politeness conventions
- Expressions
- Register
- Dialect and accent

Pragmatic

- Discourse
- Functional

Part B

Introduction

Following our presentation in Part A of the main points of the Council of Europe's linguistic and language teaching policies, we suggest in Part B that we think together about the influence of these policies on the main participants of the modern languages teaching and learning process. First of all let us analyse the changes that have taken place in the perception of the **responsibility** of the teacher's profession and how these changes affect the **roles** and the **tasks** that all modern languages teachers have to assume in their professional practice. Secondly let us consider what **competences** are necessary for the modern languages teacher and what resources are currently available to help them succeed in a teaching approach targeted at **the student**, bearing in mind the student's motivation, needs and new expectations in the context of today's Europe.

Our responsibility, our roles and our tasks

Magdalena Bedynska and Krystyna Kowalczyk

Let us now give some thought together to the problem of responsibility of the teaching profession generally, that is the responsibility that every teacher shares independently of the subject they teach, and beyond that, on the responsibility of modern languages teachers, their new roles and tasks to be accomplished during the process of teaching and learning languages.

I. Responsibility of the teaching profession

I.1. Responsibility of the teacher

The construction of a united Europe started more than fifty years ago and its progressive enlargement has created a new socio-political, economic and cultural dimension which will soon be without borders, so that we live progressively less within the framework of national societies but rather in a vast European space, in a melting-pot of languages and cultures. In this new reality, expectations from societies with regard to educational institutions and teachers are increasing and becoming ever more complex.

The teaching profession has always enjoyed a significant social image as the responsibility of a teacher consists of training young people, transmitting knowledge to them that will be useful in their adult life and moral values that are indispensable for the fulfilment of their obligations as a citizen of their country. The family assumed a major part of this responsibility and took on the educational role of forging fundamental human values in the home.

The responsibility today is to train young people to become the European citizens of tomorrow, citizens who – without losing their national identity – are capable of integrating into a multilingual and multicultural European society and of learning and succeeding in their professional and personal life there. For many young Europeans it means being prepared for a life in a totally different context to the one they have been living in up till now. Therefore teachers become the main agent of the transformation and are responsible for transmitting to their students not only the knowledge and skills of their subject but also human values and “existential” competences. The responsibility of the teacher becomes even greater as families need, or indeed prefer, to entrust an important part of this task to the school.

Do you feel the increasing weight of this responsibility? Are you not convinced that the teacher cannot act alone when facing these challenges? It seems important that all teachers from local educational

institutions, parents and other teachers in the wider regional and international context, should act in synergy together to share best practice and find the best possible solutions.

I.2. Responsibility of the modern languages teacher

In the inevitable perspective of Europe in which today's students will act and live and which is already a multilingual and multicultural space for many of them and soon will be for others, modern languages teachers have even more responsibility than other teachers, a specific responsibility originating from the nature itself of the discipline that they teach. Among other things, they provide a special communication tool for students which can promote mutual understanding and tolerance.

In the past few years students themselves have become more and more conscious of the importance of learning modern languages and how important the ability to communicate with others could be in their professional and personal life. For this reason it has become urgent to find the answer to the following question: **how can the curriculum be better adapted to meet students' expectations?**

At the beginning of the 1970s, the Council of Europe called together international groups of experts, charging them with the task of defining the global objective of modern languages teaching and suggesting how to put it into practice. The result of this expert think-tank was a complete rethink of didactic conceptions and the birth of the teaching approach focusing on the student, with the student as the "targeted public".

This pedagogy has been known ever since as "**student centred**" pedagogy and has completely overturned the teaching/learning of modern languages and opened up a new era in the construction of a new didactic approach to languages.

Ever since this time it has been the teacher's responsibility to recognise students' needs and expectations, to take into account what they are and what they may be in the future; it is the teacher who is responsible for preparing these students to be the **European citizens of tomorrow**. The modern languages teacher therefore becomes an agent of change, constantly innovative and aware of the evolution of students and their environment.

A teacher's responsibility is, therefore:

- to make sure that students – as users of modern languages – achieve an ability to communicate which goes beyond simple linguistic capacity;
- to raise the awareness of students as to the diversity of languages and cultures, to provide a key for them to discover other cultures and to convey the values of their own culture;
- to demonstrate the necessity to see their opinions and value system as relative in order to go beyond superficial views and stereotypes;
- to educate European citizens in the spirit of understanding and respect for diversity and tolerance in order to combat prejudice and xenophobia.

This new perception of the modern languages teacher's responsibility has consequently involved the redefinition of roles and tasks. We will talk about this in more detail later in the chapter.

II. Roles and tasks of the modern languages teacher

II.1. Establish and manage one's language teaching career

Are you prepared to agree that this is a very important role and one that a lot of teachers are inclined to forget about once their initial training is finished?

Every modern languages teacher should establish his or her own teaching career in the first place, be fully aware of the new objectives of teaching/learning modern languages and the new teacher-student relationship and conscious of the students' new motivations and expectations. Teachers should build up their own autonomy and manage their career throughout their professional life. Teachers themselves need to define their strategies, choose course materials and bring resources and tools to perfection. It is their job to question the efficiency of their own teaching in order to improve what they do as well as students' results.

II.1.1. Definition of teaching strategies

A teacher's first task is the choice and definition of teaching strategies. Have you ever thought what the term **strategy** means? In the field of education this term means to put together a programme of actions and resources, planned by subject, in order to obtain the best possible outcomes in a learning situation.⁵

In most cases at the start of the learning process, students have expectations, wishes, motivations and needs which they hope to achieve. One of the *raison d'être* of the student-centred teaching approach is that it allows the students participate in the learning process so that it becomes the source of their creativity and satisfaction.

It is a teacher's task to note the needs of the students and to help them formulate these needs in such a way that each can find relevant and really useful solutions through the teaching method offered.

The identification of students' needs is the real starting point for teachers towards the definition of the strategy to be adopted, on the condition that they do not confuse students' needs with what they want to teach them.

One must also remember that the analysis of students' needs has to happen more than once, because these needs can change during the learning process or be replaced by new ones. The teacher's task will be to analyse them on a regular basis.

The repeated analysis of students' needs also has other values that we cannot overestimate: it allows teachers to maintain permanent contact with their students, to demonstrate their interest and concern, to make their teaching more dynamic and to adjust it if necessary. On the other hand, a teaching strategy based on students' needs helps the students to participate actively and manage their own studies.

Some of us might ask ourselves the question as to how it is possible to base one's teaching strategies on the needs formulated by students in the very frequent situation when "Teachers are generally called upon to respect any official guidelines, use textbooks and course materials ..., devise and administer tests and prepare pupils and students for qualifying examinations".⁶

Teachers must continue to take the needs of students into account, but must also try to reconcile them with the objective needs outlined in the programmes, the requirements of the various examinations and the general language learning objectives in the reality of current and future Europe. The formulation of strategies will help teachers adapt accordingly.

5 LEGENDRE, R., "Construire un ensemble planifié d'opérations et de ressources pédagogiques par le sujet dans le but de favoriser au mieux l'atteinte d'objectifs dans une situation didactique", *Dictionnaire actuel de l'éducation*, Gérin/Eska, Montreal/Paris, 1993.

6 CEF, op.cit., chapter 6.3.4.

Would you agree that it is the teacher's job to make decisions on the class content and activities?

In the light of these statements the era when the role of teachers was limited to transmitting the linguistic knowledge they had themselves learnt during initial training and evaluating whether the students had acquired this knowledge seems to be definitely over. Conscious of the general objectives of language teaching developed following recent research and recommendations by the European institutions, aware of the needs of students, which have been carefully identified, teachers should be seeking by all means available for the answers to some fundamental questions to help with a clear definition of strategies:

- How do I identify the needs of students?
- What do students need to learn to be able to use the language for their own purposes?
- How do I make the lessons sufficiently diverse to meet the needs of all students?

II.1.2. Improvement of resources, choosing the appropriate teaching materials and tools

In order to manage teaching strategies well in a way that will best meet students' expectations, teachers cannot simply rely on the competences acquired during initial training. These competences can be considered as basic resources, which teachers need to renew, update and enrich throughout their professional life.

More precisely, these are:

- human resources (linguistic and pedagogic competences, one's own experience and that of students and other teachers);
- material resources:
 - selected support material (methods, authenticated documents, educational software, curricula);
 - the tools used (manuals, audio- and video-tapes, television, Internet).

Given that teachers are conscious of the fact that education is never complete, they will be impelled to discover fields other than those which the traditional meaning of the term teaching might include, and so they should:

- regularly redefine continuous education needs and report them to the authorities in charge with a view to ongoing training throughout professional life;
- closely follow the development of language teaching practice, an evolving science which is not a body of answers to predefined questions, but an art of permanent individual and collective questioning⁷ in order to achieve the set objectives in the best way possible and to be creative both for their own satisfaction and to meet the demands and expectations of students in an ever-changing society;
- be aware of and know how to use the information and communication technologies (ICT) and to apply them. In the knowledge society these are not only useful but strictly essential and teachers cannot ignore and avoid them.

For further details please see the chapter "Our resources".

II.1.3. Self-assessment

We hope you would agree that teachers' desire to see the effects of their teaching is completely understandable. Would you also share the opinion that continuing reflection on what we do, analysing how we do it and whether we do it well, in short – having a critical attitude regarding our own teaching

7 GALISSON, R., PUREN, C., "...un corps de réponses constituées à des questions prédéfinies, mais un art de questionnement permanent, à la fois individuel et collectif", *La formation en questions*, Clé International, 1999.

strategies in order to select the best, is an important and indispensable task for teachers' self-management?

Rational self-assessment is one of the necessary basics to build up one's autonomy. The essential thing is to ask ourselves questions, even if answers are not immediate, as every question that teachers ask themselves is a good one for the simple reason that it is there.⁸

To ask ourselves questions means we are evolving, innovating and improving for our own satisfaction as well as that of our students. A teacher at the start of their career can ask more experienced colleagues and they represent an important human resource. Good co-operation between teachers facilitates the work of young teachers as they acquire their own experience.

Teachers who are concerned about the effects of their teaching and who are impassioned by their profession do not risk falling into a routine, the worst "disease" of teachers, for which there is no external cure.

The range of competences expected from teachers is so wide that it is impossible for any one teacher to be perfect at all of them. That is the reason why good management of this profession involves the necessity of collective training, the development and practice of teaching teams. This can be organised through setting up training within one's own school, working in teams with teachers from other schools in the same city or within the framework of European programmes.

II.2. Teaching a modern language

Formerly, language students were – in most cases – passive students of the foreign language programme offered by their establishment. As a result, they were not very motivated or convinced of the need to learn. As we have already seen above, in the new European situation there has been an evolution in the language students' state of mind. Their expectations, objectives and motivations have changed dramatically. The now better-motivated and more self-aware student wants to manage her/his own learning. It is no longer the student who should adapt to the teacher's way of teaching but the teacher who should adapt to the students' different ways of learning.

The teacher's role consists of:

- bearing in mind students' individual abilities;
- encouraging them from the very first lesson;
- making them want to continue because learning languages is a life-long endeavour.

Today teaching means helping, advising and guiding students who are increasingly independent and who manage their own learning, rather than the simple transmission of knowledge.

II.2.1. Transmission of declarative knowledge, linguistic knowledge, "existential" competence and the ability to learn to students

The role of modern languages teachers had, for a long time, been merely the transmission to their students of the knowledge they had acquired themselves during their initial training. They prepared students to meet the exam requirements and completed the programmes in force without asking the question as to whether the students could use their knowledge in the future, and, if so, how.

Today's methods are oriented towards a communicative approach to modern languages aimed at developing a real ability among students to communicate in the studied language, to practise it effectively, and to use the language in real communicative situations. The fundamental question that all teachers have to ask today is: what does the student need to learn to be able to use the language for her/his own purpose?

8 GALISSON, R., PUREN, C., op. cit., p. 7.

It is, therefore, logical and indispensable to base this on an analysis of needs in order to be able to suggest a really useful programme of learning

Nevertheless, this does not mean offering a teaching programme which simply meets the demands of students; it means offering a variety of activities so that each student can find something which suits them. It is the teacher's task to manage this, to individualise what is on offer and make it authentic and useful.⁹

In order to be able to communicate in real situations, apart from linguistic knowledge, students need to acquire certain **skills (aptitudes)** and **“existential” competences (attitudes)** as these will be useful for them in their contacts with competent users of a language – including native speakers – and will allow them to understand others both orally and in written form and also to make themselves understood.

In sections 2.1.1, 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 the Common European Framework of Reference suggests a classification of practical aptitudes and skills that students will need in order to be able to communicate effectively, and also the know-how that students should develop in order to be able to learn, communicate and to develop an intercultural personality.

During the acquisition of these aptitudes and attitudes **the task of the teacher is to help the students to learn by putting them in the best learning situations, and by guiding and advising them.**

Apart from the transmission of skills and knowledge the teacher fulfils the roles of:

- role model
- guide
- mediator
- facilitator of learning.

A teacher cannot learn in the place of a student. A teacher works to make the students work, explains to make them understand, and teaches to facilitate their learning.

Do you not think then that the next task that the teacher's role implies is to train the students how to be autonomous and encourage them to learn independently?

II.2.2. Educating students for self-directed learning

The autonomy of a student is their ability to manage and master their own learning.

Just as each teacher has her/his own manner of teaching, so does each student have her/his own way of learning. According to one of the fundamental principles of education, one only learns really well when one wants to learn something and takes responsibility for it. Teaching is an individualisation of the learning process and one of the tasks that teachers must fulfil is to teach students to be independent, to manage their own learning and take responsibility for it. They should be made aware of their own objectives and the general objectives of teaching, made more responsible and motivated; they should **learn how to learn.**

Educating students for independence is to grant them new “freedoms”.

In student-centred learning, a reality these days and no longer just a fashionable trend, the ability to learn is a skill like any other and the teacher's task is to help the untrained student to acquire and develop this skill.

When guiding students towards self-directed learning teachers should inevitably pass through the stages listed below, although this list is certainly not exhaustive:

- acquire the declarative knowledge and skills which will allow an understanding of the different learning strategies;

9 PORCHER, L. *Le français langue étrangère*, Hachette, 1995.

- observe students in order to learn how to identify the strategies they use (if that is the case) in different class activities;
- note the strategies used by the “smartest” students; analysing them together with the students so as to make them aware of them and to help discover what strategies are the most “profitable” ones for students who have had difficulties in certain activities;
- suggest other activities where the students could also use these strategies;
- think how to create pairs/groups of students in order to enable all of them to acquire these strategies.

As a result of new technologies and teaching aids, and easier and more frequent contact between young people of different countries, it has become possible for all students to have access to some learning opportunities. Teachers therefore find themselves obliged to base their teaching equally on the resources, teaching aids and tools at the disposal of the students. They need to remember that learning that takes place out of school does not compete with their teaching, but on the contrary, should be a complementary and enriching experience which should be encouraged and enjoyed.

The new task of the teacher is, therefore, to make students aware that these possibilities exist, to teach them how to select useful materials, to help them set realistic objectives and to train them how to assess themselves.

In this way, both teachers and students find themselves more like partners in the process of teaching/learning.

II.2.3. Teaching plurilingual and pluricultural competence

Europe is “shrinking” and today’s students cannot foresee in which country they will live and work, nor the languages and cultures they are going to be faced with. Therefore they must consider themselves more as “**citizens of Europe**”, open to linguistic and cultural diversity and able to appreciate its wealth.

It is, therefore, important that every language teacher can escape from the “back yard” of language and culture that they teach in order to awaken the interest of students towards other languages, peoples and cultures and to help them understand that the language and culture that they are learning about are only one part of the common European linguistic and cultural heritage, where it is necessary to understand the relativity of each point of view and system of cultural values.

In the world today, the aims of the language teacher have changed dramatically. It is not enough to master one, two or several languages – each in their own way – but rather to develop plurilingual and pluricultural skills, that is “**the ability to communicate linguistically and to culturally interact as an actor who has – to varying extents – proficiency in several languages and the experience of several cultures**”.¹⁰

With plurilingual competence, all partial, even very minimal and imperfect skills have their place. Just knowing how to say hello, thank you, excuse me or please in some languages can be useful, enriching and satisfying, above all when you first meet someone.

Previously, when starting to learn a new foreign language, it was preferable to forget the skills acquired in another language. In plurilingualism each **partial competence** is worth something and makes possible various combinations. Thus, the learning of more than one foreign language takes on a new significance and importance. In this perspective the acquisition of partial competences in a few languages opens up various cultures to the student and implies the development of an **intercultural personality**, a valuable educational aim in itself for many students.

The awareness that a great range of cultures exist reduces stereotypes and prejudices, leads beyond an ethnocentric relationship to the “mother” language and culture and helps students to establish a good relationship between their home culture and other foreign cultures. The intercultural skill allows the use

¹⁰ CEF, op.cit.

of varied strategies to establish contact with people from other cultures and to overcome superficiality and stereotyping.

Different experience of “otherness” is enriching and allows better comparison and understanding of the world, but most importantly it enables students to build their own linguistic and cultural identity.

II.4. Assessment

In addition to the roles detailed above (point 2.1), there is another role for the teacher – that of evaluator of students’ achievements.

It is not our intention here to analyse the various types of assessment, so we suggest that teachers eager to familiarise themselves with these should study them in detail in Chapter 9 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages which is devoted entirely to this subject.

What seems more important to us is to take a new look at the assessment role of the teacher, as we did with other roles. It also seems worth thinking together about tools of assessment and how to develop self-assessment skills in students.

Currently, assessment means, above all, showing students what they have done well and what remains to be done, rather than pointing out their mistakes.

II.4.1. Assessing students’ achievements

As a general rule, assessment is a way of measuring the degree to which students have learnt what was taught, in relation to the objectives of teaching/learning as defined in the programmes the teacher has to follow.

Based on this principle, assessment is a tool employed by teachers to evaluate their own teaching. Such an evaluation has an important diagnostic function for them providing they draw conclusions that – as a function of the results obtained – will allow them to give some thought to the effectiveness of their teaching.

Nevertheless, specialists in the field of language teaching think that this type of evaluation is aimed at the taught material and does not measure the actual competences of the students.

Do we devote enough time to thinking about what we do? Wouldn’t you agree that in many cases, when marking work the teacher’s attention is focused on the detection of errors in the students’ exercises leading to the calculation of the number of “wrong” (incorrect) responses to be subtracted from the “right” (correct) ones?

It seems to us that this sort of assessment is discouraging for students, that it makes them feel a sense of failure and leads to a drop in motivation. In order to make students feel – irrespective of their abilities – that they have not failed, wouldn’t it be better to add up the correct oral or written answers?

The teachers who want to give students positive feedback on their learning, helping them to understand why they made their mistakes and pointing out how to correct these errors in order to avoid them in the future, becomes less a controller than a guide and adviser on the learning route. This type of assessment has a real educational value for students.

Positive rather than negative feedback will stimulate the student and maintain his motivation, the driving force of education.

II.4.2. Knowing and using various assessment instruments

As you have certainly noticed, those developing new methods of language teaching/learning have followed closely the “revolution” that has happened in the field of modern language education over the past ten years. The majority of these methods provide teachers with tools which facilitate their task as an assessor in a systematic and regular way.

We are aware that teachers and students do not have equal access to modern methods and some are still obliged to work according to earlier methodologies.

In order to guide the students' progress in the acquisition of various competences (Chapter 5 of the CEF) it is essential to seek out new and better adapted instruments for measuring these competences.

In Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the CEF the level grades are presented as reference tools, and it is useful to be familiar with these. How they are used will depend on whether the programme you are following aims to develop all the competences presented in Chapter 5, or merely a few in the language you are teaching.

Table 1 – Common reference levels: global scale (Chapter 3.3) can help to identify the level of students who are not beginners and then to choose the appropriate textbook and syllabus.

II.4.3. Educating students for self-assessment, introducing the available tools and teaching how to use them

“A student's own assessment of what she/he has learned is one of the main ways to transform self-directed learning into responsible learning.”¹¹

Students who are responsible for their own learning need to be assessed in order to see how progress has been made in comparison with their “starting point”, to understand the “point” they have now reached and to better define the “point” they must aim for in order to reach their objectives.

For students who are used to independent learning, assessment done by the teacher can prove to be insufficient and the manifestation of the need for self-assessment will be a logical consequence and self-evident proof of their autonomy.

The communicative approach in language teaching and the development of information and communication technologies have led to the development of new teaching materials and new assessment tools that are better adapted to measure the competences of the students. Most modern teaching methods contain a series of exercises, which allow close and independent feedback for students on their own progress.

The task of the teacher is to provide information for students about the self-assessment tools that are at their disposal in the majority of recent textbooks, and to motivate them to look for other publications and sources containing self-assessment tools, and guide them in their research.

Teachers who set themselves the task of enabling students to learn independently can use Table 2: Common reference levels: self-assessment grid, from the CEF (Chapter 3) as a reference tool. What one notices immediately is that this grid breaks with the traditional system of four competences in order to suggest five.

We'll go no further with this point but it seems to us that this section dealing with the new roles of modern languages teachers would be incomplete if we omitted to draw your attention to one particular instrument relating to self-assessment – the **European Language Portfolio** (see Chapter A.2 of present document).

Designed and developed by the Council of Europe, the European Language Portfolio (ELP) is a recognised document and its essential value is its aim to motivate language learning both in and outside school. It is a personal document and, if kept up-to-date, can record the language abilities and sociocultural competences of its owner, in particular for use in the search for training or employment.

In the case that this document does not yet exist in your country, do not hesitate to contact the website of the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe: <http://culture.coe.int/portfolio>.

As a conclusion to this chapter where we recommended a common look at the roles and tasks of the modern languages teacher from a new angle, we now invite you to visit the website of the European Centre of Modern Languages based in Graz: www.ecml.at.

11 PAGES, M., “L'évaluation par chacun de ce qu'il a appris est un des principaux moyens par lesquels un apprentissage autodéterminé devient un apprentissage responsable”. *L'orientation non-directive en psychothérapie et en psychologie sociale*, Dunot, Paris, 1970.

Do not hesitate to surf through it if you are thirsty for more information. You will find several publications there on most topics that – due to lack of space – we could discuss only in a superficial way here. These highly interesting publications are the end-products of projects designed and developed during the first medium-term programme finishing at the end of 2003, but rather than closing a door on what has been done, we are opening one to other thoughts in the vast domain of teaching and learning modern languages, which other specialists will continue between 2004 and 2007, during the second medium-term programme.

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Our competences

Daina Kazlauskaitė

What are competences? What competences should we, as modern languages teachers possess to assume our responsibility, to fulfil our roles and tasks? What competences do we need in order to meet our students' expectations and our own? What should we know so that we can guide and motivate our students, to help them savour that marvellous feeling one has when one speaks a foreign language, and crosses the border of an unknown culture, and, at last, when one can become part of plurilingual and pluricultural Europe?

The French dictionary, *Le Petit Robert*, provides several meanings for the word “competence” among which there is: *thorough, recognised knowledge, which confers the right to judge or make decisions in certain subjects*.¹²

So, what are “our competences”? It is a complex question that deserves a lot of reflection and discussion. If we leaf through some linguistic and teaching works we can get a clear idea how the sense of the word “competence” has evolved, as many linguists have shown interest in it. We shall mention some of these which seem to be the most interesting. The notion of language competence according to N. Chomsky,¹³ consists of an idealised grammar knowledge, as close as possible to that of a native speaker. The new definition of competence proposed by D. Hymes takes into account firstly the knowledge of the code and secondly that of the usage of this code, in other words communicative competence consists of two types of knowledge: linguistic knowledge and the social and cultural¹⁴ type of knowledge that reflects usage rules.

The competence has some components. In Canale and Swain's version, the communicative competence has four components: linguistic, sociolinguistic, oral and strategic.¹⁵ Others exist according to S. Moirand: linguistic, oral, referential and sociocultural ones.¹⁶ For Stern, the ability to use a foreign language is based on the mastery of language forms; on the intuitive mastery of the sense associated to linguistic, cognitive, affective and sociocultural forms; on the ability to use the language while paying a maximum of attention to communication and a minimum of attention to form; and finally, on creativity in language usage.¹⁷ According to the authors mentioned above, the competent speaker is the person who is able to formulate and interpret messages using the above-mentioned competences.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages suggests a synthesis of communication tendencies. It offers us the action-oriented model, which “views users and learners of a language primarily as ‘social agents’, i.e. members of society who have tasks ... to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action”.¹⁸ This way it distinguishes two types of competences: **general competences** and **communicative language competences**.

12 “Connaissance approfondie, reconnue, qui confère le droit de juger, ou de décider en certaines matières” *Le Nouveau Petit Robert*, electronic version, Paris 1996.

13 Noam Chomsky, born in Philadelphia in 1928, eminent linguist, author and radical political philosopher of international reputation, author of more than 30 books and a series of articles (see more: <http://www.k-films.com/distribution/films/chomsky/bio.html>)

14 See HYMES Dell, “On communicative competence” in J. B. Pride and J. Holmes (eds) *Sociolinguistics*. Penguin Modern Linguistics Reading, 1972.

15 See CANALE M., SWAIN M. “Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing” in *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 1, No. 1.

16 SEE MOIRAND S., *Enseigner à communiquer en langue étrangère*, Hachette, 1982.

17 See STERN, H.H., *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press, 1983.

18 CEF, op.cit., p.9.

I. General competences

We can start by borrowing a quotation from the book *Langage et communication sociale* and say that it is not enough to be familiar with the language and the linguistic system: when communicating one also needs to know how to make use of it in the social context.¹⁹

It is essential to have some type of knowledge in order to communicate. The CEF first defines a **general cultural knowledge** (knowledge of the world) and a **sociocultural** and **intercultural knowledge**.

In fact we do not speak in the same way to different people, in different places or according to the different intentions that we might have. Without knowledge of sociolinguistic rules that direct one's choice of linguistic structure in relation to social structures, language knowledge would remain completely abstract, detached from reality. According to the CEF, sociolinguistic competence concerns the knowledge and skilfulness required to make language function in its social dimension, just as language has to be seen as a social phenomenon, which means that sociocultural competence is indispensable for a teacher. A competent teacher should be able to:

- recognise the markers in social relations;
- know how to be polite;
- understand common sense expressions;
- recognise the various registers;
- recognise dialects and accents as well as the transmission of knowledge to the students (see other chapters: "Our students" and "Our responsibility, our roles and our tasks").

The sociocultural dimension has existed since 1970 but with the appearance of new technologies the sociocultural and intercultural aspects have been gaining more and more importance. The information and communication technologies (ICT) are rapidly infiltrating the process of teaching and learning and this demands new roles and teaching methods from the foreign languages teacher, which means constant updating of competences. The foreign languages teacher has to obtain a minimum training in the essentials of information technology. This new role would allow the teacher to become a protagonist and not just a passive consumer of multimedia. To achieve this they must share their knowledge and put linguistic and cultural research into context. It is also necessary to possess existential knowledge in intercultural relations in order to maintain one's autonomy while always recognising the relativity of one's linguistic and cultural code in relation to the "other" one. Teachers must also develop a greater comprehension of social and educational problems and recognise the resemblance and diversity of the other's values as a condition for facilitating the exchange process.

These new acquisitions will make it easier to make that opening gesture to the "other" by looking at similarities as well as cultural diversities. In the context of ICT usage the methodological knowledge also changes because it does not focus on the linguistic information itself but rather on the competency of the search and the mastery of it for the purpose of practical communication. It is not sufficient anymore to look for linguistic materials for a language class but rather to seek a method of using this very same material for communication purposes.

We cease to share purely linguistic knowledge in order to take on board the linguistic knowledge constructed by the class. We need to promote the construction of language which conveys the culture of the class. As we already pointed out in the previous chapter, we have changed our role; we play the role of an assistant so that students can work independently. In an educational environment enriched by authentic materials and allowing exchanges with native speakers, we orientate the student towards the discovery and acceptance of limits when interpreting the sense of a word in the above-mentioned social context. We shall orientate the students also to be aware of the relativity of their own linguistic and cultural references making them understand that cultural competence acquired by one has to be learnt by

19 BACHMANN, C., LINDEFELD J., SIMONIN J., "Pour communiquer il ne suffit pas de connaître la langue, le système linguistique, il faut également savoir comment s'en servir en fonction du contexte social", *Langage et communication sociale*, Hatier, Paris, 1981, p. 53.

the others. While participating in the linguistic, cultural and authentic experience we should try to show the students how to break down false stereotypes. In order to achieve positive results we must continually update our competences and also acquire new ones (see also paragraph 2.3 in the previous chapter).

In summary we can say that we should possess a wealth of knowledge about general culture if we are to be able to help the students in their intellectual development and in the acquisition of independent learning skills.

I.1. Cultural and intercultural knowledge

To be effective in another culture, people have to be interested in the culture of others, they have to be sensitive enough to observe cultural differences and must be inclined to modify their behaviour as a sign of respect for people from other cultures. An appropriate word which describes these human qualities is intercultural sensitivity.²⁰

The progressive construction of cultural and intercultural competences cannot be limited to the knowledge and transmission of historical, geographical and sociological information about the country in the target language. The rules for communication must be seen within the larger framework of the society. These rules are justified and completed by other rules: these are the rules that govern accepted or rejected behaviour, current values and beliefs in society. We have to learn about these cultural specialities ourselves and make our students be sensitive to them, which means raising their awareness of both the similarities and differences that might exist between their country and the one they are learning the language of in terms of social usages, customs, mentalities, institutions. As the CEF indicates “intercultural awareness includes an awareness of regional and social diversity in both worlds. It is also enriched by awareness of a wider range of cultures than those carried by the learner’s L1 and L2. This wider awareness helps to place both in context”.²¹

Intercultural sensitivity develops through “ethnocentric” and “ethnorelative” stages. Our own culture is our first centre of reality, with other cultures progressing through so-called “ethnocentric” stages:

- denial: the reality of other cultures is not perceived at all or it is denied by the construction of psychological or physical limits;
- defence: the existence of different cultures is recognised, but the other cultures are considered inferior compared with one’s own culture;
- minimisation: one’s own culture is seen to be universal;

and, then through the “ethnorelative” stages based on the intercultural awareness that one’s own culture is only one representation of the world among others. These three last stages are manifested by:

- acceptance: the other cultures are accepted as having the same value;
- adaptation: we adapt ourselves to other cultures and start being at ease in communication;
- integration: we acquire enough experience to include the visions of the world of other cultures.

I.2. Sociocultural competence and the plurilingual and pluricultural dimension

“Without a common culture today’s people cannot be linked and have to be satisfied with being juxtaposed”.

(Claude Tannery).

Michael Byram and Geneviève Zarate have suggested an intermediate cultural model for the Council of Europe in a report entitled “Definition, objective and evaluation of sociocultural competence”. The

20 BHAWUK, D.P.S., and BRISLIN, R. “The Measurement of Cultural Sensitivity Using the Concepts of Individualism and Collectivism” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 16, 1992, p.416.

21. CEF, op.cit. p. 103.

above-mentioned authors introduced the term of “social actor” as one who enters the learning process through a course that could potentially traverse several societies.

The social actor inherits a tradition and transmits values to following generations too. According to G. Zarate it is not exclusively the teacher who transmits to others but everyone who enters the plurilingual and pluricultural course will transmit values to future generations. Europe could be seen as a meeting place characterised by pluralism. The four pillars that are the basis for the education system for the 21st century were drawn up during the presidency of J. Delors and issued in the report by the International Commission of Unesco:

- learning how to learn;
- learning how to act;
- learning how to live together;
- learning how to exist.

The authors take on Delors’ four pillars and interpret them in the following manner:

- “Existential” competence: this is a competence independent of a foreign language given that “existential” competence is transferable to other languages. In this way the student can acquire “existential” competence in one language and use this acquired knowledge for the learning of other languages;
- The development of skills: this is a competence that depends on the learning of a given language. The development of skills emphasises the specific relation between the target language or culture and the language or culture of the student;
- Declarative knowledge: this is the competence most easily identified and the most visible too and it depends on the learning of a given culture;
- The ability to learn constitutes a competence of synthesis, groups the other three, and is independent of a given culture but is the product of the learning of several foreign languages.

As a summary of all that has been mentioned above, we can say that the greatest acceptance of the concept of culture integrates material objects (utilitarian or aesthetic ones), techniques and practices of all kinds (food, language, way of life, social organisation, etc.), mental forms (ways of thinking and feeling) and the way of organising these various elements. So we, as language teachers, as well as having linguistic competences, have to be able to:

- stimulate the abilities of the students starting from their own knowledge to a discovery of other people and cultures;
- suggest confrontation with other judgments and values;
- look for an interest in diversity;
- help students to be aware of the stereotypes that are conveyed and help to demystify these;
- contribute to the development of the personality, social integration, openness to the heritage of the society one lives in.

It is evident that foreign language teaching/learning gives privileged access to another culture. Today’s Europe promotes linguistic and cultural diversity through the recognition of minority and regional languages and also proposes a definition of language and culture and the European cultural heritage.

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Our competences to help develop our learners' communicative language competences in an action-oriented approach

Márta Szálka

Why an action-oriented approach?

In the initial “mission-statement” the Common European Framework gives a basic definition of the approach adopted which is based on a very general view of language use and learning.

“The approach adopted ... is an action-oriented one in so far as it views users and learners of a language primarily as ‘social agents’, i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action. While acts of speech occur within language activities, these activities form part of a wider social context, which alone is able to give them their full meaning... The action-based approach therefore also takes into account the cognitive, emotional and volitional resources and the full range of activities specific to and applied by the individual as a social agent.”²²

Language use is a highly complex mental, physical and social activity. One way to get closer to understanding how complex tasks are carried out is to investigate how more complex knowledge structures are organised in the brain.

There is a lot more to knowledge than the traditional “object concepts” like cat, dog, table. A significant part of our knowledge is in the form of “relational concepts” e.g. “hit” (who? what? with what?). Moreover there are more complex forms of conceptual organisation; the concepts are related to each other in ways that reflect the temporal, spatial and casual structure of the world. For instance, in order to represent the notion of an event (e.g. reading your exam results on the notice board) it is necessary to have a knowledge structure that relates the act of reading to the objects involved (e.g. you and the notice board). The knowledge structures that can represent this type of information have been variously called *schemata*, *frames*, and *script*.

Schemata

Before a sculptor sets out to create a sculpture he has already developed a vision of what the sculpture is going to be like; similarly when a tennis player hits the ball he knows what the course of the ball should be. Both the sculptor and the tennis player start to act on the basis of their vision and the given circumstances i.e. the size and shape of the stone or the given position of the ball. Having perceived the result of their action they adjust their action to the new circumstances and it goes on until the action is successfully completed, the sculpture is finished or the game is won.

Both the sculptor and the tennis player have learnt and practised how to do their jobs.

In every instant their well-practised activity depends on:

- the given circumstances;
- previous events;
- the plans and expectations of the agent.

22 CEF, op.cit. p.9.

The tennis player never performs something entirely new; he relies on a set of movements and skills practised before. Nevertheless he does not repeat exactly the same movements, because the situation is always new. Without practising, however, he would not be able to win the game.

Schemata are a set of experiences which govern our actions and are adjusted to external circumstances.

Schemata play an important role in solving everyday language tasks. When two language users enter into communication, they both have some mental images of the steps and the outcome of their communication. They mentally design at least part of their action and select appropriate language and strategies to meet their ends. From time to time they readjust to the new situation arising, reconsider their strategy and communicative means. Thus, their communication follows a predictable pattern and is unpredictable at the same time.

Scripts

Cognitive scientists have been interested in capturing the knowledge people use to comprehend extended texts, like the following one:

Ruth and Mark had lunch at a restaurant today. They really enjoyed the meal but were worried about its cost. However, when the bill arrived after the ice-cream, they were pleasantly surprised to find that it was reasonable.

In reading this passage, we use our knowledge to infer that the meal was at a restaurant where they had lunch which involved ice-cream, and that the bill did not walk up to them but was probably brought by the waiter. Psychologists have argued that we must have predictive schemata to make these inferences and to fill in aspects of the event that are left implicit. The specific schemata they proposed were scripts. Scripts are knowledge structures that encode the stereotypical sequence of actions in everyday happenings. For example, if you often eat in a restaurant you would have a script for “eating in restaurants”. The restaurant script would encode the typical actions in this scenario along with the sorts of objects and actors you would encounter in this context.

An experiment

There are several famous experiments to show how people use schemata and scripts to interpret perceptions, events and texts. Let us see one of them. Participants of the experiment are asked to try to understand what is going on in the following story where the cohesive devices have been removed:

1. Provo was a picturesque principedom in Candalonia.
2. Cormon was Candalonia’s heir to the throne.
3. He was bored with waiting.
4. He thought arsenic might do the job.

When people are asked to give an account of their story versions, chances are that the majority will have included fight for succession and poisoning, although neither of the assumptions is explicitly stated in the sentences. We seem to have a common heritage of narrative scripts, and if events are left implicit (there are always some which are) we rely on our narrative scripts to fill in the gaps. It is so natural for us to draw inferences in order to facilitate understanding, that we are often unaware that we are doing so. *Activating our schemata and scripts is an essential part of reception and interpretation as well as planning and production.*

We know much about stereotypical situations but we can also deal with the unexpected (e.g. an accident). Furthermore, there are situations where we could not possibly have a script, but where we manage to act in a goal-directed way. This means that we must have a more abstract set of structures that allow us to

overcome the rigid structure of scripts and to understand the action and goals of others in situations we have never experienced personally. Such abstract structures are called plans.

Tasks and their role in language teaching

Earlier language curricula have placed the sentence, later the text into the main focus. However, what we know about schemata, scripts and plans on the one hand and the social nature of language on the other hand, might encourage us to think in a broader context and choose the task as the global category for presenting the learning objective.

According to the definition of the Common European Framework:

“Tasks are features of everyday life in the personal, public, educational or occupational domains. Task accomplishment by an individual involves:

- *the strategic activation of specific competences*
- *in order to carry out a set of purposeful actions*
- *in a particular domain*
- *with a clearly defined goal*
- *and a specific outcome.*

Tasks can be extremely varied in nature, and may involve language activities to a greater or lesser extent, for example:

- *creative (painting, story writing)*
- *skills based (repairing or assembling something)*
- *problem solving (jigsaw, crossword)*
- *routine transactions*
- *taking part in a discussion*
- *giving a presentation*
- *planning a course of action*
- *reading and replying to a message.*

A task may be quite simple or extremely complex. A particular task may involve a number of steps or embedded sub-tasks and consequently the boundaries of any task may be difficult to define.”

Tasks and linguistic competence.

In the following part we are going to demonstrate in the examples of scenarios how a task can be analysed in terms of linguistic needs. Scenarios have a sequence that corresponds to social and cultural conventions. Observance of structures makes for successful communication. Scenarios reveal authentic communication in authentic context and are thus much closer to language reality than isolated language functions. Scenarios can be grouped into categories.

Text	Steps/ Script	Linguistic competences
<p>P: Hi Antonio. A: Hi Pamela...do you think you could do me a favour.</p> <p>P: Sure. A: I need to book a train ticket on the Internet and they need a credit card number...could you give me your credit card number...they only accept payment by credit card over the phone. P: I see. A: I could pay you back in cash. P: Yes, sure... no problem at all. Mm...this is what I have got, a MasterCard. A: I just tell them your number.</p> <p>P: This one here. A: And they tell me how much. P: That's right. A: Yes, and I can settle it.</p> <p>P: Yes, and bring it back when you are done. A: Right, okay.</p> <p>P: Thanks Antonio.</p>	<p>Initiation phase</p> <p>Orientation, justification</p> <p>Elicitation, justification</p> <p>Agreement</p> <p>Follow-up information</p> <p>Closing phase</p>	<p>Grammar: modal verb Communicative purpose: asking favour Discourse marker: new phase Strategy: playing for time</p> <p>Strategy: face saving Discourse marker: new phase</p> <p>Acceptance Noting acceptance Speech act: offering Strategy: softener</p> <p>Statement as question Strategy: downtoner Context oriented language – space reference</p> <p>Phatic communication Speech act: offer Modal</p> <p>Phase marker: end of discourse Speech act: expressing thanks</p>

As we have demonstrated in an oral scenario, a task can be analysed in terms of competences on different levels.

<p>Components of task completion</p> <p>Context: time, place, participants, roles, background information, sociolinguistic competence.</p> <p>Communication scripts or schemata: (either for constructing texts or for interpreting them)</p> <p>Speech acts</p> <p>Discourse features</p> <p>Grammatical features</p> <p>Lexical features</p> <p>Phonological or orthographical features</p>

In Part C we are going to give a checklist of some important points a teacher needs to be familiar with to help learners to develop their communicative language competence in an action-oriented context.

Our Resources

Anthony M. DeGabriele and Zoltán Poór

... [T]he rich heritage of diverse languages and cultures in Europe is a valuable common resource to be protected and developed... a major educational effort is needed to convert that diversity from a barrier to communication into a source of mutual enrichment and understanding".²³ Diversity of languages throughout the world is a rich resource we can draw upon. And this logically leads to the fact that the learners themselves are the best resource teachers can make use of. Learners bring to the classroom a diversity and a wealth of resources and any democratic school or community of learning which is worthy of its name draws wisely from such richness of resources. For such a reason "The action-based approach therefore also takes into account the cognitive, emotional and volitional resources and the full range of abilities specific to and applied by the individual as a social agent."²⁴

In the contemporary educational context language teachers take the requirements of curricula and various levels of syllabuses into consideration and organise their work according to aims and objectives specified in them. When doing this, they can benefit from various resources and tools that help learners set goals, identify and meet their linguistic needs, reflect on their progress and evaluate and assess their achievement.

1. The curricular context

I.1. The curriculum

A curriculum makes general statements about (language) learning, learning purpose and experience, evaluation, and the role relationships of teachers and learners. It specifies learning items and contains suggestions about how these might be used in class (Nunan, 1988).

The curriculum is a tool for decision-making. It

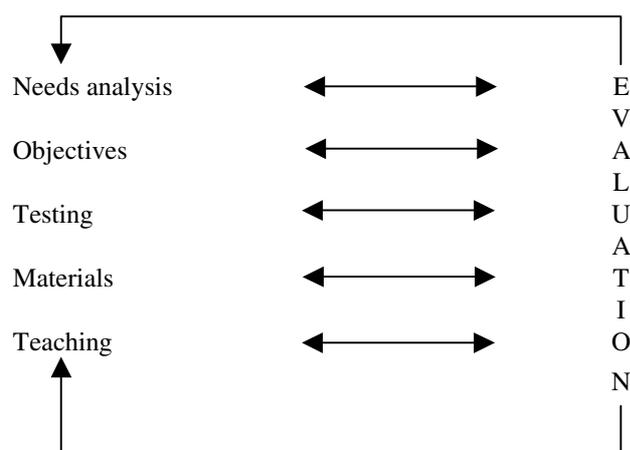
- identifies learners' needs and purposes;
- establishes goals and objectives;
- selects and grades content;
- organises appropriate learning arrangements and learner groupings;
- selects, adapts, or develops appropriate materials, learning tasks, assessment and evaluation tools.

A curriculum has its classroom perspectives, i.e. the way the intentions of curriculum planners have been translated into action in the form of teaching and learning processes. The assessment and evaluation perspectives of the curriculum show what students have learnt and failed to learn in relation to what had been planned and, in addition, one can see what has been learnt but not planned (Nunan, 1988).

23 CEF, op.cit., p.2.

24 Ibid. p.9.

A (language) curriculum includes at least six components as shown in the figure.



(Brown and Hudson, 2002)

When developing a curriculum a regular evaluation of the five components takes place in a formative manner though summative evaluation is also important after a period of time.

Carrying out diagnostic, progressive and achievement testing will help us understand whether our students need to learn the objectives, how they are doing in learning the language material or skills and how much language material or skills the students have actually learnt. So before adopting, adapting or creating materials, such tests are essential to avoid wastage of energy and resources and insure that the objectives set and the materials presented fit the students.

1.2. The syllabus

A syllabus is based on the account and records of what actually happens at the classroom level as teachers and learners apply a given curriculum to their own situation. These accounts can be used to make subsequent modifications to the curriculum, so that the developmental process is ongoing and cyclical (Nunan, 1988).

One can distinguish *product-* and *process-oriented syllabuses*. Product-oriented syllabuses are those in which the focus is on the knowledge and skills which learners should gain as a result of education. Process-oriented syllabuses focus on the learning experience itself (Nunan, 1988).

Product-oriented syllabuses can be classified as synthetic or analytic and grammatical or functional-notional.

A *synthetic syllabus* suggests that different parts of language are taught separately and step by step, so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been set up (Wilkins, 1976).

In *analytic syllabuses* learners are presented with chunks of language consisting of structures of varying degrees of difficulty. The (communicative) purpose of learning the language is in the focus (Nunan, 1988; Wilkins, 1976).

In a *grammatical syllabus* the input is selected and graded according to grammatical notions of simplicity and complexity. It suggests a rigid way of linear progression by introducing and mastering one item at a time before moving to the next (McDonough, 1981).

A *functional-notional syllabus* takes the functional and situational aspects of language use into consideration. Students and their communicative purposes are at the centre of attention. It sets realistic learning tasks, provides real-world language and leads to receptive activities before encouraging students to perform (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983).

Process-oriented syllabuses can be identified as procedural syllabuses, task-based syllabuses, content syllabuses and the natural approach.

Both *procedural and task-based syllabuses* share a concern with the classroom processes which stimulate learning. Both provide the specification of tasks and activities that learners will engage in in class (Nunan, 1988).

In *content syllabuses* the language- and non-language-specific content which provides the point of departure for the syllabus is derived from various subject areas of the school curriculum. There is a non-linguistic rationale for selecting and grading the content (Nunan, 1988).

The goal of the *natural approach* is communication skills. Comprehension precedes production. Subconscious acquisition is in focus. Production is not forced but helped to emerge (Krashen and Teller, 1983).

2. Resources

We can consider resources and materials as anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language.

(Tomlinson, 2001).

From the point of view of learner- or personality-centred pedagogy, one might want to distinguish those resources as “human” and “material”. The most important one seems to be the human resource as pupils themselves are obviously an essential resource.

The stage of development of the learner’s linguistic resource is a primary factor to be considered in establishing the suitability of a particular task or in manipulating task parameters: level of knowledge and control of grammar, vocabulary and phonology or orthography required to carry out the task, i.e. language resources such as range, grammatical and lexical accuracy, and aspects of language use such as fluency, flexibility, coherence, appropriacy, precision.²⁵

Regarding the students’ family background, are parents an important resource for the teacher of a foreign language? How is parents’ knowledge of their offspring being utilised in the classroom? How are parents co-operating with the teacher in motivating their offspring? How is the family tradition and culture utilised in the preparation of language tasks? In the same manner, we could also reflect upon the soundness of using the student’s community traditions and values in the classroom.

Pupils present teachers with different levels of knowledge, linguistic and communicative competences; diverse cognitive and learning styles; varied interests and motivational levels; in an ever-changing global village, the class becomes a hive of different linguistic societies, registries and cultures.

As far as material resources are concerned, Tomlinson (2001) has outlined different criteria for classifying didactic materials in the following categories:

- instructional in that they inform learners about the language;
- experiential in that they provide exposure to the language in use;
- elicitive in that they stimulate language use;
- exploratory in that they seek discoveries about language use.

One can distinguish material resources facilitating language learning and meeting the requirements of syllabuses according to criteria related to perception, too. Thus we have the categories of visuals and techniques of visualisation; audio resources and ways of audio-production; audio-visual means of education and approaches to video-production. The fourth category covers the contemporary tools based on information and communication technologies (ICT) that integrate perceptions and language production (Poór, 2001).

25 Ibid. p. 161.

2.1. Visuals and techniques of visualisation

One can identify techniques based on using visuals and aiming at student-initiated visualisation where the stimulus for utterances and the main source for (language) learning are provided by a visual impact.

It can originate from the most natural source, i.e. the non-verbal aspect of human interaction. Thus the prime source of learning is the non-verbal behaviour of teachers, people native to the target language culture and fellow students.

Further aids to education using visual characteristics can be the various sorts of boards (blackboard, white board, flannel board, flip chart) that can be used in a static and an interactive way at the same time. One can place various forms of texts, tables and images on them in advance and/or use them in such a way that the final amount of information intended to be shared is the result of the co-operation of learners and the teacher at the same time. Large pieces of paper (posters) or any even and smooth surface placed even on the floor in the middle of the classroom can be used the same way.

Another traditional means of visual presentation are the print resources including course-books, activity or workbooks and dictionaries published for language educational purposes. This category can be complemented by books, magazines, newspapers, brochures and other print materials published for members of the particular target language communities or selected extracts from them.

Flashcards with words, phrases, sentences and particular target language culture-specific data (like dates, names of important people, places, events, etc.), charts, tables of grammatical rules, posters with various pictures and maps can provide a visual impact for language learning and linguistic performance at the same time.

The projection of PowerPoint images – texts and pictures – (i.e. slides) is taking over the role of projected images that used to be provided by outdated technologies of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s such as slide-projectors.

The reason why the role and function of overhead transparencies has not been taken over by digital technologies is that an overhead projector (OHP) offers a more flexible opportunity for involving students in placing traces of their linguistic performance on the projecting surface spontaneously and you do not need extremely expensive and sophisticated equipment. A further advantage of the good old OHP is that there is no other technology that would let you exploit the educational potential of the so-called shading technique when the silhouettes of various objects placed on the projecting surface can encourage students to guess, predict, describe the vision, i.e. verbalise their thoughts.

Diorama with models of places (like habitats of animals), events (like a famous historic event) and various situations (like traffic accidents) can provide a resourceful stimulus for students – especially in the primary and vocationally oriented language teaching context – to investigate details, use the information gained and share their findings in a meaningful context when it is worth communicating.

The real pedagogical value of diorama is that they offer a visual stimulus in three dimensions and learners can be involved in producing them. The language teaching procedure itself can incorporate the production stage as well as the stage of exploitation of the complex impression and input they offer.

The same applies to displays set up in and outside language classrooms focusing on any language-learning related topic or event.

Suspended mobiles are the type of visuals that may carry the same educational function as grammatical tables or charts transmitting selected information or data (like names, thematic collections of vocabulary items, etc.), but as they can be hung from the ceiling or any object high up in the classroom (like lamps) they offer a visual impact in three dimensions. Students can be involved in producing them.

Realia can be classified in further categories. We can distinguish objects that are typical for the target language culture such as an English policeman's helmet or packages, boxes, containers of goods; and objects of universal use, like shopping baskets, toy-telephones, etc.

Some of the realia may belong to both categories, for instance puppets, card-games or board-games. The reason why they are special is that some of these can be (re)produced by the students themselves. An activity which is very popular with young teenagers is the development of board-games that can be the end-product of a learning procedure for some students and the source of learning for others.

Thus we have already arrived at the stage when visualisation is not only a technique to enhance visual reception but it can also be an approach to encourage students to visualise the concept they get by having an input

transmitted to them either via the target language or related to the target language culture. Thus, activities where students have to mime stories or react to an input in a non-verbal way, or when a story is illustrated by them in drawings, are the productive aspects of visualisation. Thus, visualisation is a kind of test of students' achievement and it can provide a further input for others.

2.2. Audio resources and ways of audio-production

Natural human demonstration is the prime source for acquiring and developing listening skills. Even the term "mother tongue" indicates that parents and the closest community, i.e. the family, play an important role in providing language patterns that are initially acquired through hearing and listening.

Hearing is a perception that one receives in a passive way, i.e. one is the receptor of sequences of sounds. Listening and listening comprehension, however, is of an active nature. It is a series of activities that is targeted at gaining information depending on identified needs and interests (Byrne, 1976; Poór, 2001; Underwood, 1989).

It is taken for granted that one understands most information transmitted in one's first language (mother tongue) with ease. The message being communicated can be understood due to the fact that the input is made comprehensible by the situation and context (Krashen, 1987). Strategies of listening comprehension are built on the notion of comprehensible inputs. When listening, one follows either the so-called bottom-up approach or the top-down one (White 1998). We talk about a bottom-up approach when one builds up one's listening strategy by understanding the primary constructing elements of language – individual sounds, syllabi and words – first and then gradually one is able to understand the message as a whole. The top-down approach would indicate the opposite of the previously mentioned strategy. It means that one approaches the understanding of the message from a holistic point of view that is very much supported by an awareness of the theme of discourse and the context in which the message is communicated.

When learning and teaching foreign languages the role of real life presentation by teachers, peers (i.e. fellow-learners) and visitors who speak the target language as a native one has always been extremely important. Their contribution to language education can be complemented by supportive audio-technologies.

Radio, record-players, reel-to-reel tape- and cassette-recorders have been used as authentic resources for language learning since the development of the Direct Method and Audio-Lingual Method. Their importance has not changed, though they are being replaced by Internet or web-radio and various kinds of digital recording.

Audio resources can be distinguished depending on the target audience. One can use materials recorded or broadcast for language learning purposes and authentic media that have been targeted at native speakers or people living in the target language country.

The so-called published materials broadcast structured and graded language with students of various levels of linguistic competence in mind. Even the content can be selected and graded regarding the objectives. They often convey target-language culture-related information. Scriptwriters of published materials have all the language educational objectives and principles in mind. Materials of this kind are often recorded in studios equipped with technologies of a high standard so that disturbing noises can be avoided. Published audios are often accompanied by activity books.

The language of authentic recordings or radio broadcasts is not structured or graded. These media are scripted and edited based on the principles of journalism, drama, commercials, etc. rather than on that of didactics. The majority of these resources can be fully comprehended mainly by people sharing an understanding of contemporary reality of the target-language culture.

There are three further categories to be mentioned that range between these two extreme ones.

Some publishers produce teaching materials that are developed from authentic (mainly) radio broadcasts accompanied by teachers' books and workbooks to help teachers and learners downgrade the message conveyed by unstructured and ungraded language. The supplementary (mainly) print materials also open up the cultural perspectives of the authentic resources. These can be labelled as authentic audios republished for language teaching and learning purposes.

When visiting target language countries and/or meeting people representing the target language culture, one can record interviews or other genres of audio-production to use with learners. When making resources of this kind one has particular classroom needs and students in mind. If it has not been possible to find any published or authentic material to cover the topic one needs to present, producing a recording of one's own is a way out.

Worksheets and any supplementary material can also be produced by the teacher. People whose voice is recorded do not necessarily structure and grade their language. They talk the way they normally do. These audios can be specified as authentic resources recorded for language teaching purposes.

National radio and publishers of educational materials often produce recordings for schools in their own countries. Audio-recordings which contribute to teaching in any subject area in schools in the target language country are scripted and recorded bearing the subject-specific didactic principles in mind, but they do not pay much attention to structuring and grading the language. Materials of this kind can also be used in language classes, though one has to adjust the accompanying worksheets to the standards and needs of students. These authentic educational resources can promote cross-curricular language education with much success.

Whatever type of audio-recording one uses there are a great number of techniques to apply in order to make an active use of them. Music has played an important role in language education, too. Using musical recordings to bring students to a relaxed state has been typical for suggestopaedia and relaxopaedia. Further application can be communication inspired by the music played in the background. The story of a drama can be outlined by the visions students get when listening to the music in a relaxed state (Pohl, 1999). Thus music helps to create stories that can be acted out, visualised by pictures drawn by students and then written up (Katchen, 1995; Taylor, 1992).

Language laboratories and their working tapes are typical of the Audio-Lingual Method. Although they are not really widely used in the everyday reality of language education any more, it is worth summing up what techniques can be applied. Tapes produced for language lab application follow the principles of programmed learning.

The lab-oriented tapes offer the chance for drills of the following types:

- Two-rhythm exercise
 1. model and stimulus
 2. student's response
- Three-rhythm exercise
 1. model and stimulus
 2. student's response
 3. sample response
- Four-rhythm exercise
 1. model and stimulus
 2. student's response
 3. sample response
 4. repeated response by student
- Two-in-four-rhythm exercise
 1. model and stimulus 1
 2. student's response 1
 3. sample response 1 and stimulus 2
 4. repeated response 1 by student and student's response to stimulus 2;

(Dániel and Nádasi, 1976; Poór, 2001; Wallner, 1976)

Students' responses can be recorded in any of these exercises where one wants to provide a basis for comparison for the sake of learners' self-evaluation. Thus, language lab application has shown a way of recording students' oral performances for feedback purposes. It has led us to audio-production as a form of audio-related activity in language education.

Another purpose of recording students' performances is to create audio-projects. The activity that leads to the production of audio-projects is project work. Project work is a series of carefully planned and negotiated, multi-

skill activities that are carried out in a co-operative, creative atmosphere with the aim to produce something tangible that has got a real function in real life. The project is the end-product of the previously described series of activities. Being tangible and looking similar to things that have got real functions in real life are very significant criteria of projects. In the context of audio-project work this end-product can resemble the characteristics of various genres of radio programmes such as news, weather forecasts, sports broadcasts, quizzes, advertisements or commercials, traffic information, portraits of people, radio plays and soap operas. Another option is to record “audio-letters” to friends abroad. This latter product is quite frequently used in the so-called “shoe-box” projects, i.e. class-to-class or school-to-school exchange projects.

What are the aims of project work?

- helping students attain communicative competence;
- encouraging spontaneous expression orally and in writing;
- reinforcing the students’ linguistic abilities;
- developing their own learning capacity;
- increasing the students’ ability to read basic literary, technical or daily-use texts;
- helping the students use English by exchanging ideas, feelings and information with speakers of other languages;
- contributing to the integral and social development of the students by means of an active methodology, based mainly on group work;
- contributing to learners’ intellectual development.

(Fernández Carmona, 1991)

The values of project work lie in the fact that it:

- is student-centred, not syllabus-centred;
- focuses on topics or themes rather than on specific language;
- is skill-based, not structure-based;
- doubts the monopoly of verbal skills in the success of learning;
- reforms the traditional student-teacher relationship;
- is based on hierarchy;
- has an effect on student-student relationships because it creates a co-operative atmosphere rather than a competitive one;
- concerns motivation as it is personal;
- encourages learning through doing and develops the sense of achievement, as the end-product is important;
- encourages independent investigation;
- integrates language skills with other skills in a cross-curricular context.

(Poór, 2001)

The evaluation of project work is the trial of the product, i.e. the project, when the audio-recording functions as any radio-programme would function in real life. A weather forecast produced by students can act as a starting point for a role-play aimed at negotiating and planning a weekend, for example.

2.3. Audio-visual means of education and approaches to video-production

In the history of the development of language teaching methods, Direct and Audio-Lingual Methods were followed by the Audio-Visual Method as an outcome of research enquiring into how effective teaching and learning can be depending on the resources used. If the input is given by audio-visual means, i.e. seeing and hearing is involved, 50% of the information gained will be stored in the long-term memory. Efficiency can be

increased up to 70% if the audio-visual input is accompanied by students' oral production. Originally, sound-slides and later, sound-films and educational television were used. The best practice of applying traditional audio-visual means has been implemented by contemporary teachers who use video-tapes and/or DVDs (digital videos) to facilitate language learning.

The classification of videos to be integrated in language education procedures is the same as those of audios, i.e. authentic videos, authentic videos republished for language teaching purposes, private authentic videos recorded for language teaching purposes, educational authentic videos and videos published for language teaching.

The advantage of video technology is that one can also record students' performance. As mentioned before regarding audio-production, recordings can be used for feedback – self-evaluation – purposes and in project work as well

As far as video-project work is concerned, it can aim at the production of television programmes such as news, weather forecasts, sports “transmissions”, quizzes, advertisements and commercials, traffic information, portraits of people, “feature films”, soap operas, TV-sketches, situational comedies, documentary films (introducing places, traditions, past events, nature, etc.), fashion shows, puppet shows, bedtime stories, video-clips or promotional videos (introducing the work and life of an institution or a company). Further genres could be video guides of a town or of an institution like a school; video documentation of family, school and community events; “video letters” to friends abroad.

It is usually role plays and isolated pronunciation exercises that can be recorded for the purposes of peer-, teacher and self-evaluation. Various procedures have been elaborated to support this idea (Lonergan, 1984; Poór, 1997).

2.4. Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Contemporary digital, i.e. computer-operated information and communication technologies offer unlimited chances for self-directed learning. The principles of learner autonomy have to be followed when creating a fruitful learning environment based on ICT.

One can use software targeted at language teaching and learning; resources such as databases, dictionaries and encyclopaedia; tools for productive use like word processing and data processing programmes (Legenhausen, 1996).

The most frequently occurring forms of ICT-based language learning activity use multimedia, electronic dictionaries and web-pages. Various international projects inspire students to communicate with each other by sending email messages. As soon as students are able to express their thoughts on a one-to-one basis by email, there is a realistic chance of encouraging them to enter chat-rooms.

Topical chat-rooms, that are MOOs, offer plenty of opportunity for language educators to initiate a theme for discussion among language learners. As soon as a story is outlined and a problem spotted, a simulation can be initiated, that is students carry on with the story in order to negotiate the solution. This chat-room-specific application leads us to the world of virtual reality. This form of application is called VRML and it offers a visualisation of fictive participants and venues.

Various multimedia programmes offer opportunities for self-correction and self-evaluation. They can be sources of diagnostic or attainment tests. With the help of built-in microphones and web cameras on the computer some multimedia integrate the practising of pronunciation and elementary units for interaction in a comparative way that resembles language lab applications to some extent.

As project work has developed, new technologies give us the opportunity to involve our students in designing and producing multimedia and/or web-pages. Activities of this kind offer language-learning opportunities while creating the programmes that often act as a source of learning for other people. This can be the case in numerous European projects for school-to-school co-operation.

With the development of task-based and humanistic approaches to language education – often supported by traditional and contemporary technologies – we have arrived at a stage where pupils themselves are obviously an essential resource. The stage of development of the learner's linguistic resources is a primary factor to be considered in establishing the suitability of a particular task or in manipulating task parameters: level of knowledge and control of grammar, vocabulary and phonology or orthography required to carry out the task, i.e. language resources such as range, grammatical and lexical accuracy, and aspects of language use such as

fluency, flexibility, coherence, appropriacy, precision (CEF). The learner as a continuously developing personality has become a complex and integrating medium for language education. She or he not only plans, monitors and evaluates her or his own learning but acts as a source of learning for others (including teachers) in terms of language, culture and the nature of learning and development.

3. Our resources for professional development

The level of linguistic and professional (pedagogical, methodological) competences of teachers has a great influence on our students' language education. Thus our professionalism is a token for their success in learning. That is why it is worth devoting a few thoughts to the resources for our professional development.

As far as our ongoing linguistic development is concerned we can use the same kinds of resources and exploit them in same way as we help our students to learn.

From the point of view of professional learning there are further opportunities to benefit from. We can learn from reflecting on our own teaching, analysing our lesson plans and using the video-recordings of our own classes for feedback and analysis. Setting up schemes for mutual observation with colleagues can be a further step towards developing on a comparative basis. It can involve exchanging students' work for inspection, exchanging lesson plans, video-tapes of classes, giving feedback to each other and discussing major professional issues or exchanging and sharing views. Identifying strengths and weaknesses may help define the areas where one can be of some help to peers or where one needs improvement.

Thus a scheme of individual professional development can be elaborated through classroom (or action) research that could include:

- attending professional events, conferences, in-service training workshops and courses;
- targeted readings in professional literature;
- further classroom observation and feedback by peers.

The Internet, as a continuously fast-changing medium can be of much help in all this. There are thematic discussion groups for professionals focusing on various methodological issues and targeting diverse groups of educators.

Teachers and their students indulging in such innovative approaches, however, will have to face the problem of time availability and resources management. What about the competences required in the use of the Internet and limited computer literacy on the part of some teachers? Technophobia is another problem which has to be dealt with in this context. Support personnel are another resource which has become imperative in this day and age. There is a growing need for more regular training programmes rather than the occasional INSET sessions to make teachers understand the relevance and practicality of multimedia technology.

Teachers without resources do not work well but teachers with all available resources, yet unaccountable for them and their use, present a worse plight. Emphasis must rest on the need for a paradigm shift in the meaning of involvement of teachers in adopting, adapting and creating teaching materials themselves.

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Our students

Geneviève Girard

Student-centred pedagogy requires – if we want it to bear all the expected fruits – the complete understanding of our students. Mutual understanding and confidence can establish a favourable atmosphere for the great discovery of learning another language. Let us ask ourselves who our students are and what they wish from student life and from adult life in an enlarged Europe where cultures and languages are becoming more and more intertwined.

I. Who are our students?

I.1. As an individual.

I.1.1. *The environment*

I.1.1.1. *The regional environment*

Our students live in the region where they grew up and this has formed an important part of their personality.

Let us ask questions first about the region they live in: what is its geography, its climate, population, and the inhabitants' way of life, culinary habits, and the types of entertainment?

What they discover while learning another language risks falling far from what they know well. The difference enriches and challenges them at the same time because they need to be open to the diversity that awaits them without rejecting the specific “uninteresting” features of their close environment.

Some regions that are close to borders already offer various features: exchanges happen at work, in leisure activities, and students already have the possibility to notice differences and adapt some of their knowledge if they learn the neighbouring country's language. Why not turn the whole of this to one's advantage? Being well situated in one's own immediate universe helps the understanding of other “universes”.

I.1.1.2. *The cultural environment*

The student has already formed various behaviour patterns in her/his family life, as every group demands. These behaviour patterns can vary from student to student but they all more or less come from the need to know how to establish relations between individuals and how one shares what one is, what one does and does not like.

Let us help our students to express themselves better so that they can get to know each other better and in this way gain that self-confidence which is essential when putting together thoughts in another language.

Culture is a shared custom of “life together”, but also something that ties the individual to the past of her or his country, to its values, to the various arts represented in the most beautiful products developed by one's ancestors. Discovering another language is to discover another history with other ways of expression, with another manner of existence. Nevertheless, to make this discovery a valuable one, the teacher can help the students to develop their curiosity, based on their knowledge of their own country, by asking questions like:

- How is my day organised?
- What does the school teach me?
- What are my hobbies?
- What kind of books do I read? Do I read foreign books?
- What sort of music do I listen to?
- What movies do I like?
- What do I know about other countries?

- What do I imagine the life of the country whose language I am learning is like?

1.1.1.3. The social environment

It seems that a student's willingness to learn another language depends on the social environment. So, we can ask several questions in this respect:

- Do the parents speak foreign languages or not?
- Have they had the opportunity to travel to other countries?
- Do they think that it is useful to speak other languages?

It is necessary here to refer to the Common European Framework so that the student can grasp the various ways of being in contact with other languages: it can happen through a cousin, a neighbour or a friend. Even if the language that he is going to learn is not the one spoken by any person he knows in his neighbourhood, the student can still be sensitised to the sounds in other ways so that the various facets of any language can be perceived.

1.1.2. The psychological and intellectual data

We know that each of our students has their own psychology, their own way of reacting to anything new. But without going so far as to say that each student is different from the next one, thus rendering the slightest theoretical approach completely ineffective, it is still proper to ask which type a student belongs to: is she/he auditory or visual? Does she/he have a synthetic mind or an analytical one?

In order to adapt in the best possible way to all kinds of students, it would seem best for the teacher to vary their approach. If something is not suitable for some, it will work for others. A wide diversity of exercises is the key to success. Certain students are more auditory and have an impressive ability to understand oral messages; others represent the more visual type and will be more at ease when writing. Each student therefore needs to find the type of work suitable for them at the start so that both auditory and visual students can work in parallel later on and in this way increase the chances for good results.

It is also proper to allow students to develop their mind in a synthetic or analytical way by suggesting various tasks for them. Possible progress can be made in the following way:

- discovery of new facts;
- analysing these facts in comparison with already known facts;
- integration of these facts into already well-mastered information (that is synthesis) which allows understanding through the internalisation of data;
- memorisation (using short- and long-term memory).

The age, the type of education received in the family and previous school results are some of the data that a teacher has to try to elicit and evaluate on a regular basis:

- Have my students taken advantage of earlier education?
- Do they like reading?
- Do they like telling their parents about what they do at school?
- Do they work willingly with their friends of the same age?
- Do they have the opportunity to watch programmes or see movies in the foreign language?

I.2. As a group

I.2.1. Regional environment/local

The “class” group works as an entity, with a history and habits of its own. It may have some heterogeneity in respect of the city or the region if some students have just moved into the area. The welcoming of newcomers is a good moment to get to know each other. Many questions can be asked:

- Do the students know each other?
- If they do know each other then all fears and shyness will soon disappear.
- Were they in the same class in the previous school year?
- How long have they been learning this language?
- Are they learning other languages? If so, what are these?
- Do they use other languages in the family, with their parents?
- What are their learning habits like?

The teacher needs to know what has happened previously, what each student did or did not learn, what is well-mastered and what still remains fragile, etc. It is necessary to have a summary of all this so that the teacher can get to know the new class at the beginning of the school year.

Tests could be suggested with the aim simply to help students establish the point they have reached regarding what they have already done and what still remains to be covered. It also offers the teacher an opportunity to do some group work and promote interaction in the form of an exchange of ideas. The portfolio has a role to play during this assessment.

I.2.1.1. Cultural environment

The “class” group serves as a more or less representative sample of the society where the school is situated. The students’ personal characteristics, tastes and main interests offer several starting points. If there are students who are good at drawing or music, etc., this allows a variety of pedagogic activities that a teacher can employ effectively if they know their students’ talents! Thanks to this wealth of source material, activities outside school can also be organised and other teachers can be encouraged to participate as an interdisciplinary exercise.

Let us see what our students’ main interests are?

- in the class:
 - What are their favourite subjects?
 - For which subjects do they like working?
 - What are the subjects that they have difficulties with?
 - What subjects would they like to discover?
- outside the class :
 - What are their hobbies?
 - Do these hobbies take place at home, with friends, or with the family?
 - Do they have contact with the foreign language through their hobbies?
 - Do they have friends who speak this foreign language?

1.2.1.2. Social environment

The social environment also provides data to take advantage of. For instance, we can look at what their parents do:

- Do they have the possibility to obtain some documents concerning various professions?

But we can also use the students' own objectives:

- How do they see themselves integrating into society?
- What do they imagine their future will be like in Europe?

Projects that they do are a strong motivating factor and these can also be used to enrich the "class" group.

Teachers need to understand that their students have changed, in the same way as society has, and they are not the same as they used to be.

1.2.2. The psychological and intellectual data

Attitudes, behaviour and abilities vary from student to student in the "class" group. The teacher needs to be familiar with these in order to push certain students at certain times during the learning process. A group where everyone knows each other and knows how to use each other's skills makes the class more animated; more diversified and makes the most of each student's experience. Through this, the overwhelming "presence" of fast and self-confident students can be avoided and they cannot push shyer ones into the background. This is most essential in language classes where "speaking" is directly linked to the self-image that each student has. A real exchange of ideas seems to be possible only when the "roles" (a bit like in the theatre) are more or less evenly distributed, though flexibility is necessary and role changes are welcomed.

The teacher may wonder:

- Which students will voluntarily begin to speak?
- Who are the silent students?
- Why are they silent?

The particularities of a language class need to be gone into in depth.

A language is not just a mass of information (like in geography or history) – although one cannot speak without lexical and grammatical information – but rather supposes certain behaviour between students in the class. When a student does not know the date of some events it has no effect on their relation with the other students (only the teacher-student relation matters here), but not being able to formulate an adequate response to a question asked by a classmate puts the respondent into an inferior position (creating the feeling of frustration at the same time) and therefore psychology, emotional bonds, etc. are involved.

The teacher has to be very conscious of what is at stake in the class for each of its members and needs to work hard to make sure that the ongoing "drama" is being directed well. Authenticity, something which is generally seen as necessary for texts, will be most noticeable in the real relationships between students, with all the potential risks involved. There again, to make a mistake in a multiplication can be a reason for joking for even the best students and nothing more, while poor speech (wrong vocabulary, syntax errors, etc.) can be humiliating, putting into question the student's very ability to express himself as a thinking being.

To return to the four pillars of the report by Delors for Unesco, the language class has important ambitions when requiring the student:

- to learn how to learn;
- to learn how to act;
- to learn how to live together;
- to learn how to exist.

The language class offers a real challenge as it is a miniaturised society and the more that exchanges of ideas and discussions approach the truth, the more the students will say what they really mean and the risk of conflict will

be even stronger. It is the teacher's job to channel debates that prove to be too virulent. The teacher becomes a sort of referee but remains the prime mover of the game at the same time.

Let us ask how the class functions:

- What activities work well?
- What activities don't seem to produce results?
- In which activities does everyone participate?
- In which activities does the teacher get the impression that they are the only one speaking?

II. Why are they learning?

II.1. What are their motivations?

II.1.1. Their individual motivations

We should ask why they have chosen this language to study:

- Is it a question of real choice or is this the choice of their parents, of the society they live in, of the school where they study?
- Did they choose this language because of an interest in the language itself, as an intellectual curiosity or for the professional advantages it may bring? In other words, we can wonder if the "why" is most important, a question of cause, or the "wherefore", a question of purpose. The answer to this question will have certain implications that the teacher needs to be aware of.

If it is an "intellectual", "emotional" motivation that determined the choice of language, the students will be less anxious about their results: the important thing will be to discover a new society, way of life, culture, way of expression, etc.; the principal aim of the students will be their personal enrichment.

If, on the other hand, the language is a necessity for a future profession, or is the essential condition for being offered interesting opportunities, the students will be anxious about their results because they will see a connection between their school results and their adult life.

It is, therefore, up to the teacher to make the language appreciated for itself, for what it can bring: the differences, the variety, or even the bizarre, so that studying become a pleasure in itself, more important than the practical purpose of this knowledge. Students should also, of course, understand that, as well as being a pleasure to study, the language will additionally help them integrate into our complex evolving society and will enhance career prospects.

Teachers can also ask themselves why they chose to teach modern languages. Were they to go back and begin their career all over again, would their motivations be the same now as when they were studying?

They can discuss with students what the knowledge of a foreign language has meant to them and may still mean in later life, in such a way that mutual understanding will enhance the relationship between teacher and student. It is only possible to teach something that we like; the student may also realise that if he enjoys the chosen language, it will become easier to learn.

II.1.2. Their family motivations

The choice of a modern language is born in the family, but the family itself is subjected to influences from society, the media, etc ...

The situation is different in each family. Some parents had the possibility to learn one or two languages, some of them use it in their work, others didn't have any contact with other cultures and want their children to have this chance that they did not have, etc.

It will depend on the family experience what kind of attitude the student will have towards a foreign language:

- attraction, rejection?
- the desire to learn?
- the fear of not succeeding?

The predominance of English in Europe has set another problem: families want their children to learn English as the first modern language, because they consider that the English language is an essential for finding a job.

- Do students share this point of view?
- Could they choose the language that they wished to learn?
- Are they satisfied or disappointed with their choice?

II.2. What are their expectations?

II.2.1. With regard to their private life

The teacher can find out what the students expect from studying a modern language if they talk over their motivations together.

Their expectations vary: the possibility of making friends abroad, to travel, or even to settle down for a while elsewhere, a different way of life, etc.

Students necessarily plan their future and the teacher can guide them in defining their expectations:

- What do they expect from the learning programme?
- Are they aware of the difficulties?

The teacher should point out what expectations are reasonable, and explain to students that reading books in the new language or watching films in the original language without subtitles are not realistic targets after just a few lessons. All false hopes from students can be harmful to the good management of their learning.

II.2.2. With regard to their family

In the context of developments in Europe and the new requirements felt by everybody, the expectations of families are very strong and parents may impose too heavy a load on their children. The teacher can establish contact with parents in order to define the workload and results in advance. We know that young children have a strong desire to show their parents in the evening what they did in class during the day. This desire exists at all level and it can encourage students if it is correctly evaluated.

Families react differently according to their motivations, the choice that they helped their child make or that they imposed on her or him. Some work concerning the advantages that a modern language can bring, beyond its commercial value, can help students and parents understand better what happens in the class.

So let us ask ourselves some questions:

- Are the parents interested in the work of my students?
- What kind of relation have I established with them?
- Did I set good objectives in order to gain everyone's support for them?
- Did I explain to the parents what I expect from the students?
- Did I talk over with them what a foreign language means?

II.2.3. With regard to their future profession

It is difficult to predict for a student in what way the studied language (languages) will be useful for him/her, but meetings with students who have left the school system represent a good way of linking school and post-school lives. The experience of older people is certainly not insignificant regarding the links between teaching a language (necessarily somewhat theoretical in class because of the artificial environment of the school) and putting it into practice in a real situation. The help provided by multimedia (ICT: information and communication technologies) plays an important role in linking theory and practice.

- How to help students manage their learning in relation to their future?
- How to link the work in class with other ways of approaching the language?
- How to use the portfolio?

III. How do they participate during the learning process?

III.1. Are they active participants?

In class the major part of the work is determined by the teacher who should follow the official instructions of the programme. The published books develop the programme by proposing texts and exercises. There are two possible options:

III.1.1. The teacher and the programme

The teacher follows the programme independently from the needs of any student at any time, and just has the objective to finish the entire programme before the end of the year. This seems to be necessary at the very beginning of a programme as the students have no idea about the difficulties of the language they have started to learn, and rely on the programme which takes this data into consideration. Indeed, because of the characteristics of a language, this is inevitable if only to be able to say some simple sentences.

This approach is therefore necessary in certain teaching conditions and these need to be strictly defined.

Several questions need to be answered:

- How the programme was determined?
- How the programme can be adapted to my students?
- How they react to this programme?
- How much freedom do I have concerning this programme?

III.1.2. The teacher and the needs of the students

The teacher sets the objective to advance as quickly as possible through the programme, but considers the programme as the maximum that can be done during the year and adapts the speed of progress according to students' needs. In one class, the teacher will do one exercise, in another class a different one. This allows the learning programme to be linked with documents studied and current discussions. Grammar can be annoying, but it is absolutely essential for understanding and being understood, and thus becomes a progress factor for expression.

At the beginning of a programme, students are usually very impatient to speak and sometimes it is difficult to direct their interventions. Gradually, difficulties and the fear of making mistakes dampen somewhat the initial enthusiasm. The two major questions that should be asked by every teacher are the following:

- How can the teacher speak less? (even though they are the model, and as such should express themselves for the students so that they can hear somebody speaking the target language)
- How can the students be encouraged to speak more?

III.1.3. The communicative approach

The communicative approach tries to alleviate the major difficulty posed by the “class” environment, but a class remains a class and a discussion always risks remaining artificial as it is not directly linked to reality. The student, in class, has to talk about certain topics even though in real life everybody talks to ask for certain things (when we go shopping, when we need information, etc.), to express their needs (I am hungry, it’s cold, close the window, etc.) and to describe what they have done.

Can we transpose these real situations of exchange into the class? It seems that it is possible during the early years as long as the students like playing roles and inventing short dialogues.

Difficulties appear when the students want to discuss more complex events that are not based on a concrete situation such as: you are at the market and you do your shopping; you are at the station and you buy your ticket etc.

Resorting to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* allows one to find activities according to the level already reached, or to be reached in the future.

Students often need rather complex expressions which require a vocabulary that they haven’t acquired yet. They like to ask: how can I say this or that. In a way they participate in their own education because they can see what they lack and want to compensate for it. But how can the teacher manage such requests? One of the most frequent problems is the very strong difference between what students want to say and what they are able to say. This difference has a tendency to worsen and it might explain the discouragement of some students.

So it is important to help students to participate in their own education as they must do the learning and nobody else can do it for them, but we should also explain the difficulties they will necessarily meet so that they understand better the role of the teacher as well as their own role.

The notion of “active participation” should, therefore, be well clarified:

- How can I help my students to participate?
- How can I provoke reactions, speech?
- How can I make them sensitive to difficulties that they will necessarily meet, and how can I make them understand that they cannot overcome them without constant effort?

Helping the students does not mean making them believe that everything is easy, but guiding them during the learning process.

III.2. Self-directed learning

III.2.1. Choice of documents

Thoughts about the choice of documents is directly linked with the previous point. It is highly desirable that students should themselves choose discussion topics and oral, written and audio-visual support for these discussions so that they can feel involved and do not have the excuse of not being interested in the chosen topic.

The more the learning programme develops, the more the participation of students is required and even encouraged by the teacher:

- How can I help my students to choose discussion topics according to their knowledge?
- How can I adapt some of their wishes, and the vocabulary and grammar points that I consider as being necessary for their progress?

The great variety of documents and their easier access allows everybody to have working tools in the authentic language. Teachers and students can propose general topics and then the research of documents regarding these topics can be started. The choice of a particular topic provides the huge advantage of using similar vocabulary in different sentences and helps the discussion at the beginning, and memorisation later on. Students should be helped by the teacher during this task so that these documents can be accessible from a linguistic point of view: vocabulary which does not create difficulties in understanding; sentences which do not use too complicated structures.

The mutual work of students/teachers – the students with their need and desire to learn, the teachers with their linguistic and cultural knowledge to make an appropriate choice – therefore seems to be possible and forms the basis of success.

- Does interaction between student/teacher exist?
- Is its existence possible?
- If yes, under what conditions?

III.2.2. Documents and objectives

In this framework it is important of course to consider the level reached by the student. There, the portfolio again plays an important part.

Requesting too early a choice of documents can be discouraging for students, as they should have already made some progress in a language before being able to consider what is accessible and what is not. A song can be possible, for example, but the vocabulary of a song, its syntax, is not necessarily easier than what is written in certain newspapers. Indeed, we observe that what a 7/8 year-old native reader can read, a fairytale for example, often demands the knowledge of many subtleties of the language. One possibility is to suggest readings in the mother tongue for studying the main line of the story and then working on the text in the other language.

The teacher can ask himself the following questions:

- What kind of document should I suggest?
- How can these documents be varied?
- To what kind of activities do they lead?
- How do my students react to them?
- Do the documents correspond to the objectives that I set?

Part C

Introduction

This Part C is a toolbox for you to use. We looked for the tools which can help you in your everyday work. As well as the authors of the document, the participants in the regional workshop (which took place in Budapest in April 2003) contributed to the development of these tools. We would also like to thank our Polish colleagues for the precious elements that they provided.

This box stays open! We hope that you, dear colleagues, readers of this document, will also send us your favourite tools to enrich and complete Part C. We are waiting for your suggestions, propositions and your tools ready for use!

Our “mailbox” is the following e-mail address: project214@ecml.at

Ref. A. 1. (Language Education Policy)

Questionnaire – Language Policy

Source: project group

1. Are you familiar with:

- your country's / region's Language Education Policy? Yes / No
- the Council of Europe's Language Education Policy? Yes / No

2. Do you consider the Council of Europe's Language Education Policy important for your job? Why?

3. Do you receive information on these policies from your national/local authorities or do you need to find out about them by yourself?

4. To what extent do you implement these policies in your everyday work? How?

5. How many foreign languages

... must students learn at your school? _____ Which? _____

... can students learn at your school? _____ Which? _____

Curriculum, syllabus and lesson planning

6. Do you consider the present obligatory curriculum in your country/region complies with the Council of Europe's language policies?

Yes / No

7. In your opinion, does the curriculum you must implement help you work in line with the Council of Europe's policies effectively?

Yes / No

8. In your opinion, the language teaching programme at your school is based on:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| a) the motivations of students | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b) the real needs of students | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c) the real needs of the society | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| d) the expectations of students | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| e) the expectations of parents | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| f) the expectations of the society | 1 | 2 | 3 |

9. In your opinion, the language teaching programme at your school is
too ambitious / realistic / too simple

Do you want to contribute to this project? Complete this questionnaire and send it to: cdcc@om.hu

Waystage level

- I've no idea
- I know it exists
- I have read some parts /chapters
- I have used some of the ideas at work

Vantage level

- I've no idea
- I know it exists
- I have read some parts /chapters
- I have used some of the ideas at work

Breakthrough level

- I've no idea
- I know it exists
- I have read some parts /chapters
- I have used some of the ideas at work

6. Is the national/local curriculum compliant with these levels?

Yes / Partially / No

7. What would you add to the Common European Framework of Reference to make it more useful for your local context?

8. Please, explain briefly what you do at work in order to implement at least two of the following:

The learner-centred approach to language learning

Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism

Self-directed learning and self-assessment

If you are short of ideas to complete these questions please go to Part B of the document.

Ref. A.2 (General Information: European Language Portfolio) Questionnaire

(Some of the questions are also related to Part B)

Source: project group

1. I work with ...

- a. pupils / students primary secondary
- b. adult students future language teachers
language teachers
- c. other specify: _____

European Language Portfolio

2. How familiar are you with it?

- I've no idea
- I know it exists
- I have seen one model/read some of the guides
- I use it.

3. Is there a validated Portfolio in your country?

- Yes
- In preparation
- No
- I don't know

4. How did you get to know about it for the first time?

- During my pre-service training
- During my in-service training
- By myself/through my colleagues at work
- Other (specify) _____

5. If you are familiar with the tool, which sections do you find more

- attractive? _____
- useful to complete? _____
- useful for your everyday practice? _____
- useful for the students? _____
- attractive to develop your practice in the future? _____

6. Please, explain briefly what you do at work in order to implement at least two of the following:

The learner-centred approach to language learning

The development of linguistic and intercultural competences

The promotion of self-directed learning and self-assessment

The development and recognition of learners' partial competences

If you are short of ideas to complete these questions please go to Part B of this document.

Ref. B.1. (Our responsibility) Pedagogical tool for language teachers

Source: Regional workshop, Hungary, 2003

Viera Bačová, Demény Anna, Kópisné Gerencsér Krisztina, Ötvösné Vadnay Marianna

Fields of competence needed

- General language proficiency (and classroom language)
- FLT skills
- Personality
- Cross-cultural knowledge
- Content knowledge

Tasks in the classroom

- Lesson planning
- Classroom management
- Establishing good rapport
- Motivating students
- Teaching content
- Developing skills
- Transmitting cross-cultural knowledge
- Using resources
- Error correction
- Assessment

Self-reflection checklist

Read the statements below and tick the boxes that most typically describe the techniques you use in the classroom.

If you need more information on the techniques described, see the examples following the checklist.

Teaching content

Teaching grammar

Stage 1 – Presentation

- I present new grammar in L1
- I present new grammar in L2
- I present new grammar either in L1 or L2 depending on my learners' level of proficiency
- I present new grammar myself (without involving the learners)
- I present new grammar relying on the learners' previous knowledge
- I explain new grammar first and then give examples (deductive approach)
- I present the new structure first then encourage learners to work out the rule (inductive approach)
- I use the communicative way of presenting grammar
- When presenting a new structure, I compare it to the learner's native language (contrastive)
- When presenting a new structure, I compare it to another foreign language (contrastive)
- I present the new structure through listening to a text
- I present the new structure through reading a text
- I use realia to present new grammar

Stage 2 – Practice of the new structure

- I use mechanical drills
- I use substitution drills
- I use gap-filling exercises
- I use transformation exercises
- I make students practise the new structure in short dialogues

Stage 3 – Follow-up

- I use multiple-choice exercises
- I use translation from L1 to L2
- I use error correction
- I ask students to give their own examples
- I use situational role-plays

Examples

Please find the following brief descriptions of the techniques mentioned in the checklist

1. *Deductive approach to teaching grammar*

The teacher states the way of forming the structure: passive voice – to be + past participle

The form is written on the blackboard. Students copy it into their exercise books.

The teacher explains how to use the structure and gives the exact meaning of the structure in the native language.

After the explanation the teacher illustrates the stated rule by giving examples.

Then the new structure is practiced e.g. by transformation exercise (active into passive).

2. *Inductive approach to teaching grammar:*

The teacher gives examples for the use of the new structure in sentences or context

e.g. English is spoken here (notice for tourists in a shop).

There should be a lot of examples demonstrating using passive voice in various tenses with various auxiliaries etc.

The teacher underlines the basic elements of the structure to make it possible for the learners to state the rule of forming the passive voice.

Learners are encouraged to draw conclusions in terms of form, use and meaning and to give further examples.

3. *Communicative approach to teaching grammar:*

The teacher establishes the situation (making sure there is an information gap):

e.g. Customs examination at the airport (one participant knows something that the other does not, so he asks questions to find it out).

Roles are distributed (tourist and customs officer).

The language teaching aim is to teach wh- questions.

If this is at the presentation stage, the teacher is supposed to take the customs officer's role, and a student who is not a complete beginner should take the tourist's role. This way the presentation of the most common wh-questions is possible.

e.g. What's your name?

Where are you from?

Who are you going to stay with?

Which places are you going to visit?

It can be followed by the practice stage when students interact and finally give a presentation.

4. *Contrastive approach to teaching grammar*

This approach can be applied in the classroom where learners learn at least two foreign languages at the same time. When presenting the new structure in one foreign language the teacher relies on the fact that the learners know the structure in the other foreign language. The teacher gives examples in both languages with the aim of highlighting the similarities or differences.

e.g. *I went to the shop to buy some bread.*

Ich bin ins Geschäft gegangen Brot zu kaufen.

Ref. B.2. (Our competences) FLT Checklist

Source: Regional workshop, Hungary 2003

Vera Bitljanová, Barbara Buchholz, Melita Jurković, Barbara Lesničar

Sect. **A** to **E**

MFL
Teachers

Language: _____

*If you think that you agree with this statement, mark the first column with a ✓.
Use the second column to think about this with a peer colleague and finally mark it with a ✓.*

You may use the free space at the end of every section to give a short description of additional steps you have taken.

If you have marked 80% of the steps, you are a "splendid Modern Language Teacher"!!!

		Self-evaluation	Peer-reflection
A	FLT PLANNING	1	2
	I am able to find out my students' interests and learning needs.		
	I know how to incorporate the needs analysis' findings into my planning.		
	I know how to implement the curricular goals and adapt them to my students' needs.		
	I am able to formulate long and short-term objectives.		
	I am familiar with cross-curricular teaching issues and I know how to incorporate them into my planning.		
	I am aware of various assessment strategies including students' peer- and self-evaluation.		
	I am aware of the importance of reflecting on the teaching/learning process for my further FLT performance.		
B	FL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	1	2
	I know how to create positive relationship between me as the teacher and my students.		
	I know how to create positive relationships among my students.		
	I know how to create a positive and supportive learning environment.		
	I am aware of the importance of the use of the FL in the classroom as much as possible.		
	I know how to use ICT facilities in class to the benefit of my students.		
	I know how to use media devices (audio visual) in class to the benefit of my students.		
	I am aware of the importance of using authentic materials and I know how to use them.		
	I know how to encourage my students to use various resources at their disposal.		
C	CULTURAL AWARENESS	1	2
	I know how to make my students aware of their own culture and values.		
	I am able to arise in my students the interest in other cultures and appreciate the differences.		
	I am able to make my students acquainted with the existing stereotypes and to understand them.		
	I know that cultural awareness contributes to the development of a common European identity.		

D	<i>FLT COMPETENCES – METHODOLOGY</i>	1	2
	I can apply various learner-centred methods to encourage my students' learning.		
	I am familiar with the interrelation between language functions and grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.		
	I am familiar with the integration of all language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing).		
	I can apply certain strategies to help my students autonomously learn how to learn.		
	I apply FLAC (Foreign Language across the curriculum).		
	I am familiar with the new ICT present in FL teaching.		
	I am aware of the necessity of my further training in this field.		
	<i>FLT COMPETENCE - LINGUISTICS</i>	1	2
	I am able to reach the ELP equivalent of B2 at least		
E	<i>QUALITY ASSURENCE</i>	1	2
	I am familiar with the latest developments in the FLT area and I regularly follow them in literature and magazines.		
	I know how to use the Internet in order to get information and to exchange experiences.		
	I participate regularly in seminars, courses and conferences, organised for FL teachers.		
	I am aware of the importance of sharing my teaching experiences with my colleagues.		
	I am able to use sharing to improve my teaching.		
	I am able to use the tools of classroom research to improve my teaching.		
	I regularly apply methods of self-evaluation.		

Ref. B.2.2. (Our competences) Checklist of competences to help our students acquire communicative linguistic competences

Source: Márta SZÁLKA (Hungary)

My competence to teach lexis

I am aware of:

- **the relationship between lexis and language**
 - the role of vocabulary in language competence
 - the role of vocabulary in task completion (embedded, context dependent etc.)
 - the relationship between strategic competence and vocabulary
- **how vocabulary acquisition takes place**
 - how information is organised in the memory
 - how the memory works: short-term encoding, storage and recall; long-term encoding, storage and recall; subsumption, forgetting
 - the importance of cognitive schemes and cognitive pegs in vocabulary acquisition and learning
 - components of word knowledge
 - vocabulary learning strategies
 - mnemonic techniques
- **what the nature of vocabulary is like**
 - the grammar of lexis: word formation, complementation etc.
 - from grammar to semantics: word families
 - content words and function words
 - lexical semantics
 - lexical cohesion
 - inter-lexical relations: synonyms / autonyms, hyponyms, collocations, idioms, lexical phrases, sentence builders etc.
- **how we use vocabulary**
 - vocabulary and context
 - inference strategies
 - the choice of vocabulary: style and register
 - gap filling strategies
- **how lexicography is useful in teaching**
 - types of printed and electronic dictionaries and their use
 - how statistical data can be used to select vocabulary
 - how corpus can be used to gain data

I am able to:

- develop the vocabulary range and control of my students
 - make decisions about needs, level, text type, quality and quantity of vocabulary to be taught
 - use efficient presentation and practice techniques in the light of what we know about storing, retaining and recalling vocabulary items in the memory (mind maps, word families, presentation in context etc.)
 - develop lexical competence in a task based framework
 - teach to use mnemonic devices to enhance learning efficiency
 - provide useful audio input to develop comprehensible pronunciation of vocabulary items
 - help students find their own ways of learning to learn vocabulary
 - help students develop a sense of style and register
 - assess vocabulary: a) discretely; b) comprehensively

Workshop activities (ideas to be developed into activities)

- What it means to know a word (see John Read, *Assessing Vocabulary*, CUP 2000. p.26)
- What clues we use to infer vocabulary gaps (see John Read, *Assessing Vocabulary*, CUP 2000. p.55.)
- What strategies we use for bridging vocabulary gaps (see John Read, *Assessing Vocabulary*, CUP 2000. p.65)
- Presentation and practice activities (typology)
- Assessment methods

My competences to teach functions and grammar

I am familiar with

- **the interrelation between functions and grammar**
 - how meaning, form and usage interrelate
 - the so called “double articulation” of language where approaches are complementary ways of dealing with organisation of form (grammar) and organisation of meaning (functions)
 - how language functions constitute basic units of interaction schema
- **appropriate grammar-focusing techniques**
 - how grammatical and functional elements are presented in meaningful, communicative context
 - how grammatical structures should contribute positively to communicative goals
 - how to promote accuracy within fluent, communicative language
 - how to use simple and straightforward linguistic terminology
 - how to find a healthy balance between functional and grammatical aspects
- **when to teach and when not to teach grammar**
 - how young children can only benefit from formal grammar, if it is very simple, stated or illustrated in concrete form
 - how too much grammar can block communicative fluency
 - why working on one’s grammar may be more suitable for improving written language than spoken language

- **how to explain and practice grammar and functions**
 - elicit from genuine discourse, or illustrate with clear examples
 - use charts and visuals
 - keep your explanation short and simple
 - how to take into consideration the different needs of varying cognitive styles of your students
 - how to proceed from more guided to less guided forms of practising form and function in genuine interaction
- **how to treat errors**
 - the fact that the grammar of learners improves with appropriate input, and by using the language just as well as by being corrected
 - that I should not interrupt communication to correct a mistake
 - that I should consider the affective and linguistic place the learner is in
 - that I should encourage self-correction

My competence to develop the pragmatic competence of my students

- **I know how pragmatics fits into the different levels of linguistic description**
 - Syntax – interrelation between the elements of the linguistic code
 - Semantics – relationship of the linguistic code to reality
 - Pragmatics – relationship of the linguistic code and the language user – meaning in interaction

I am familiar with

- **pragmatic theories, methodologies and underlying assumptions**
 - the assignment of meaning in context
 - utterance meaning and pragmatic force
 - negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer
 - the construction of meaning
 - conversational implicature
 - the co-operative principle of Grice
 - inference
 - speech acts
 - pragmatics and indirectness
 - theories of politeness
 - the pragmatic aspects of choices made within phonetics, syntax, semantics and discourse
 - how an activity type based framework can help understand and teach learners to use their linguistic resources and the linguistic means at their disposal to try and achieve their goals in a given situation in which they find themselves
- **how to put pragmatics into practice**
 - how to teach interactional discourse markers
 - how to help students become aware of the interactional norms of the target language
 - how to help students distinguish polite and impolite style

- develop politeness strategies e.g. compliments and compliment responses
- develop strategies to negotiate meaning
- practice assignment of meaning in context (immersion programmes)
- test pragmatic competence

Workshop activities

- Analysing conversational maxims and the violation of conversational maxims (Jenny Thomas, *Meaning in interaction*, Longman 1995)
- Examining the interrelationship between Levinson's notion of activity type and the task-basedness of the Framework ("Levinson's Activity types and language". *Linguistics* 17(5/6):355-99) and *The Common European Framework*, Strasbourg, 2000)
- Analysing interactions and transactions to see how meaning is constructed

My competence to develop the discourse competence of my students

A. Spoken discourse

I am familiar with:

- **features of spoken discourse**
- **types of spoken discourse**
- **functions as building blocks of interaction**
- **some characteristics of long turns and short turns**
- **typical steps of spoken interaction**
 - attention getting
 - opening a conversation
 - topic nomination
 - topic development
 - turn taking
 - interrupting
 - maintenance of conversation
 - clarification
 - avoidance
 - topic shift
 - topic termination
- **how to develop the microskills of oral communication**
 - help students produce chunks of language
 - improve stress, rhythm and intonation
 - produce reduced forms of words
 - produce fluent speech
 - use strategic devices

- develop accuracy
- encourage my pupils to use cohesive devices of spoken discourse
- appropriately accomplish communicative functions
- help students use appropriate register
- help students to add non-verbal clues to oral communication
- **oral activities for classroom use**
 - imitative activity types
 - responsive activity types
 - interpersonal activity types
 - transactional activity types
 - extensive (monologue) activity types
- **error correction policy**
 - affective and cognitive feedback to correct errors
 - assessing and testing spoken discourse
 - adjusting the speaking programme to age, level, needs

B. Interpreting spoken discourse

- **I am familiar with the interactive model of listening comprehension:**
 - how the hearer processes raw speech and holds the image in the short-term memory
 - how the hearer determines the type of speech that is being processed
 - how the hearer infers the objective of the speaker, thus the function of the message is inferred
 - how the hearer recalls background information (schemata) relevant to the particular context
 - how the hearer assigns a literal meaning to the utterance
 - if the literal meaning does not match, the hearer starts looking for an implied meaning
 - how the hearer decides whether the information should be retained in the long-term memory
 - how the hearer deletes the form in which the message was originally coded
- **I know how to make listening easier**
 - Help students to pick up manageable clusters of words
 - Train learners to profit from the extra information of redundancy
 - Help learners to overcome the difficulties caused by reduced forms
 - Expose your learners to colloquial language, idioms, and slang too
 - Learners will need to process speech at different rates of delivery
 - Train learners to recognise grammatical word classes
 - Help them recognise cohesive devices in spoken discourse
 - Recognise communicative functions of utterances
 - Distinguish between literal and implied meaning
 - Use non-verbal clues to interpret meaning

- **I know how to design listening tasks**
 - Use authentic language and authentic situations
 - Do not forget that input is not always converted into intake
 - Choose appropriate listeners' responses: doing, choosing, transferring, answering, duplicating, modelling, conversing, condensing, extending
 - Include both bottom-up and top-down listening techniques
- **I am familiar with different types of classroom listening activities**
 - Reactive
 - Intensive
 - Responsive
 - Selective
 - Extensive
 - Interactive

C. Written discourse

- **I know that different cultures have different patterns of discourse**
- **I am familiar with the special features of written discourse:**
 - Permanence
 - Production time
 - Distance
 - Orthography
 - Complexity
 - Vocabulary
 - Formality
- **I am familiar with different types of written discourse**
- **I am familiar with the microskills for writing:**
 - Orthographic patterns, efficient writing speed
 - Acceptable use of vocabulary and appropriate word order
 - Acceptable grammatical system to express particular meaning
 - Use cohesive devices in written discourse
 - Use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse
 - Appropriately accomplished communicative functions according to form and purpose
 - Links and connections between events
 - Main idea and supporting idea; new information and given information; generalisation and exemplification well conveyed
 - Distinguish between literal and implied meaning
 - Accurately assessing the audience's interpretation
- **I am familiar with the process approach to teaching writing:**
 - how to get students to conduct some research

- how to brainstorm effectively
- how to cluster and organise ideas
- how to get students to prepare a draft
- how to give feedback to students so that they can use it for improving their writing
- how to giving students feedback throughout the final composing process
- **I am familiar with different types of classroom writing tasks:**
 - Imitative or writing down
 - Controlled writing
 - Guided writing
 - Self-writing vs. display writing
 - Real writing: academic, vocational, personal
- **I am familiar with different assessing and testing methods for writing**
- **I know how to design a writing course**

D. Interpreting written discourse

- **Processing written discourse**
 - Schema theory and background knowledge in constructing meanings
 - Using bottom-up processes to decode meaning from the printed text
 - Conceptually driven top-down processing to bring information, knowledge, emotions, experience, and culture to the printed text
 - Types of written discourse
 - Characteristics of written language: permanence, processing time, distance, orthography, complexity and formality.
- **Microskills for reading comprehension**
 - Discriminate graphemes
 - Orthographic patterns
 - Retaining chunks in short term memory
 - Recognising core words
 - Interpreting word order
 - Recognising grammatical classes and meanings
 - Recognising cohesive devices
 - Recognising rhetorical forms
 - Recognising communicative functions
 - Distinguishing between literal and implied meaning
 - Detecting culturally specific references
- **Strategies for reading comprehension**
 - Identify the purpose of reading
 - Use efficient silent reading techniques for comprehension
 - Skimming

- Scanning
- Extensive reading
- Intensive reading
- Semantic mapping or clustering
- Guessing
- Vocabulary analysis
- Distinguishing between literal and implied meaning
- Capitalising on discourse markers
- **The practice of reading**
 - Making reading interesting
 - Choosing materials which are relevant to their goals
 - Integrating reading with other activities
 - Using authentic texts
 - Encouraging the development of reading strategies
 - Including both bottom-up and top-down techniques
 - Using pre-reading, while reading and follow-up tasks to activate schema, to give focus to the task and to get the most out of the reading text
 - Assessing and testing reading
 - Developing concise reading programme

Ref. B.3. (Our resources) Work with authentic documents

Source: Regional workshop, Hungary, 2003.

Ms Tímea Herczeg, Tímea László, Emese Szladek, Teri Uzonyi

Our objective is to propose some scenarios for the language class based on the use of authentic documents. These scenarios are adaptable at all levels and envisage awakening the sense of discovery by encouraging self-directed learning with the help of ICT. We wish also to enrich the multi- and intercultural knowledge of the learners who will become multilingual citizens of a multicultural Europe.

The Press, Actualities

support	http://www.titredujournal.pays
skills to develop	writing comprehension, oral and written expression
linguistic content	vocabulary, grammar, socio-cultural skills, registers, stylistic
Steps	<p>pre-reading activities: where does the article/the image come from? what is it about? (anticipation, motivation for the reading) rely on students' background knowledge</p> <p>global and /or detailed comprehension questions asked by the learners invite learners to formulate questions</p>
Extension	<p>research of articles with the same subject in other languages (learners' mother tongue and other learned or well-known languages)</p> <p>comparison of the articles (what is emphasised in the articles of different cultures? what points, differences?)</p> <p>production of articles (considering the pattern of the analysed article together; relying on linguistic documents): news in brief, school events (for example sports): presentations of the school's "stars"; report on school exchanges; presentation of a reading; weather forecast; socio-cultural actualities (drugs, environment, etc); for the newspaper of the school or for the twin school's paper ;</p> <p>debate (argumentation, group work about the articles) choice of articles: students' propositions: work methods, the means of elaboration</p>

Advertisements, teleshopping

support	television, video
skills to develop	oral comprehension, oral and written expression use of ICT (multimedia, computer)
linguistic content	vocabulary, grammar, socio-cultural competences, registers, stylistic
steps	<p>preparation activities (information gap)</p> <p>divide the group into 3 sub-groups, we watch the advertisement twice: at first: 1st group: sees and hears it at the same time; 2nd group: listens only to the sound (sit with their back to the TV-screen); 3rd group: leaves the room, then watches it without sounds: 1st group: watches the advertisement and starts preparing questions for the 2nd and 3rd groups; 2nd group: leaves the room; 3rd group sees the images only;</p> <p>the 2nd and 3rd groups tell the others what they did understand; the 1st group tells about their own version; we compare the interpretations, and the 2nd and 3rd groups answer the questions of the 1st group.</p> <p>specific features of the advertisement language: specific schemas (humour, play on words)</p>
extension	<p>socio-cultural research: comparison of products in other cultures; in the papers, on the web, in the TV (for inst: beer advertisement: consumed in a café or rather at home in front of the TV); comparison of stereotypes, the characteristic advertisements of various cultures;</p> <p>argumentation: role-play/simulation (for inst. choosing a product, the brand in a familiar discussion)</p> <p>(efficiency: situations captured from everyday life)</p> <p>produce/direct an advertisement: role-play: distribution of roles to present a product that comes from the students' own cultural background</p> <p>realisation: billboard, slogan, multimedia (video recording)</p> <p>evaluation of the productions: advertisement competition between different groups (speaking different languages) or between the two twin schools; evaluation by the jury</p> <p>for the teleshopping: preparation of the manuals' selections;</p> <p>simulation of presentations of the same product</p> <p>recognising the presented products</p>

Films

support	television, downloads from the Internet, media- and video-library
skills to develop	oral comprehension, oral and written expression
linguistic content	vocabulary, grammar, socio-cultural competences, registers, stylistic
steps	<p>choosing a 2-3 minute part from the film</p> <p>preparation activities</p> <p>a. work in 3 groups: divide the group into 3 sub-groups, we watch the advertisement twice: at first: 1st group: sees and hears it at the same time; 2nd group: listens only to the sound (sit with their back to the TV-screen); 3rd group: leaves the room; then watch it without sounds: 1st group: watches the advertisement and starts preparing questions for the 2nd and 3rd groups; 2nd group: leaves the room; 3rd group sees the images only;</p> <p>the 2nd et 3rd groups tell the others what they did understand; the 1st group tells about their own version; we compare the interpretations, and the 2nd et 3rd groups answer the questions of the 1st group.</p> <p>b. identify the communication situations:</p> <p>who speaks to whom?</p> <p>what is it they speak about?</p> <p>when?</p> <p>how are the characters related to each other?</p> <p>imagine what happened before and/or what will happen after the performed segment, relying on the previous knowledge of the students (in case the film is well-known)</p> <p>global and/or detailed comprehension: imagining the scene, playing the screenplay</p>
extension	<p>Production for real using the help of multimedia: film played with the original language, dubbed in the target language by the learners (the same film dubbed in several languages; sending the film to the twin school)</p> <p>Realisation of a film by the learners (topic: school, school / everyday / city- life, etc.)</p>

Reports, television journals

(In our interpretation, the television journal is composed of several reports)

support	Television
skills to develop	oral comprehension, oral and written expression
linguistic content	vocabulary, grammar, socio-cultural competences, registers, stylistic
steps	<p>preparation activities: identification of the topic, the scene, the characters; relying on the previous knowledge of the students, in case of an actual information;</p> <p>global and/or detailed comprehension: questions asked by the teachers/learners</p>
Extension	<p>searching for the same topic in other medias: Internet, daily papers, television, radio;</p> <p>argumentation: debate (audio or video recording for the final evaluation)</p> <p>creating a questionnaire, an interview, a survey (a street survey), a report about the same topic in the neighbourhood, at school;</p> <p>creating a questionnaire, an interview, a survey (a street survey), a report, in the target language, with the foreign residents of the country, about an actual topic that raises problems;</p> <p>written form: in the school paper</p> <p>oral form: using video camera, sending it to the twin school</p> <p>(if possible presenting it on the school TV: the learners can make a television journal themselves, in several languages)</p> <p>working in groups: forming groups, distributing tasks for various activities</p>

Television games

support	television
skills to develop	oral comprehension, oral and written expression
linguistic contents	vocabulary, grammar, socio-cultural competences, registers, stylistic
steps	<p>preparation activities: identification: what are the characteristic features and the rules of the game? comparison with the same game played in the mother tongue;</p> <p>global and/or detailed comprehension: answering questions</p>
extension	<p>Inventing questions:</p> <p>a. linguistic preparation: how to formulate the questions/the replies</p> <p>b. collecting information (working individually or in groups): encyclopaedia, Internet, newspapers, television, radio, etc.</p> <p>c. suggesting topics: European Union; school life; food, gastronomy; comparison of life styles, traditions, historical, geographical knowledge, etc.</p> <p>playing the same game: distributing roles (animator, players/participants, public)</p> <p>evaluation: deciding the prize to win (for inst. good marks, books, posters, etc.)</p>

Recipes

support	restaurants, Internet, television; restaurant menus, recipe-books, gastronomic programmes, advertisements
skills to develop	oral and written comprehension, oral and written expression, complexity, interactivity
linguistic content	vocabulary, grammar, socio-cultural competences, registers, stylistic
objectives	preparation of a simple dish, in class, together with the members of the group (making a salad for instance)
steps	<p>presentation of the dish: using a photograph, a video-recording, etc.</p> <p>stages :</p> <p>finding the way how to prepare it and what ingredients to use</p> <p>giving the dish a name</p> <p>preparation of the dish using the vocabulary</p> <p>composition / rewriting of the recipe</p> <p>tasting / appreciation</p> <p>collecting other recipes, specialities of various countries; in order to make a cultural comparison</p>
extension	<p>comparison of the dishes of various cooking styles and gastronomic traditions</p> <p>the gastronomic programmes in any language can be used to activate the previous knowledge of the students;</p> <p>multicultural gastronomic evening</p> <p>cooking competition at the school level: each language group prepares a speciality talked about in the target language, followed by tasting</p>

Tourist guides

support	tourist agencies, Internet, post cards, brochures, tourist guides
skills to develop	oral and written comprehension, oral and written expression, complexity, interactivity
linguistic content	vocabulary, grammar, socio-cultural competences, registers, stylistic
objectives	presentations of the students' neighbourhood in the target language; preparation of a leaflet; preparation of a guided tour by the learners;
supports	leaflets, brochures, tourist guides, post cards, geographical maps, plans, photos, newspapers
steps	situation: real or imaginative: hosting the twin school's students programming the activity (choice of tasks and documents); working on the texts individually or in groups; deciding the form of the presentation; written production, adaptation (editing the abridged, simplified texts); collecting illustration (if it is a leaflet to send by mail) memorisation of a selected part of the presentation rehearsal in class
extension	realisation of the guided tour (N.B. if you are waiting for a foreign group to come, it advisable to do an on-the spot rehearsal in order to avoid surprising situations)

Song

support	CD (possibly provided with pedagogic cards); audio and video recordings; Internet, media library
skills to develop	Oral and written comprehension, oral and written expression, complexity, interactivity
linguistic content	vocabulary, grammar, socio-cultural competences, registers, stylistic
objectives	enriching the cultural and socio-cultural knowledge; motivation; fun
steps	<p>if working with video clips :</p> <p>we listen to the song without any images (audio version); appreciation of the music, impressions; collecting of ideas regarding the topic;</p> <p>before the 2nd listening: preparation of the comprehension of the text (pedagogic cards according to the level)</p> <p>following the 2nd listening: fill in the pedagogic cards</p> <p>common replay, overall check on detailed comprehension imagining the screenplay of the clip: scene, characters, colours, movements, scenery, etc.</p> <p>2rd listening: together with the images</p> <p>comparison of the screenplays with the imagined versions</p> <p>appreciation</p> <p>possibly: learning of the song</p>
extension	<p>a. autonomous questions: the students can enquire about the author, the composer, the performer or about other songs by the same performer artist;</p> <p>b. musical evening: presentation of the songs with the instrumental accompaniment of the students;</p> <p>realisation of video-clips (with play-back)</p> <p>karaoke contests with the participation of other language groups</p>

We would like to draw your attention to a selection of annotated websites that make part of the ECML website at the following address: <http://www.ecml.at>

You can find several online dossiers in this selection that present the resources that can be used in the teaching of foreign languages.

Ref. B.4. (Our students) Series of four questionnaires

Source: regional workshop, Hungary, 2003
Ms Erzsébet Kocsis, Éva Kováts, Dóra Takács

Target public:

- the parents of the students from the bilingual department

Objectives:

- analysing the preliminary knowledge of parents regarding the education in question
- to know the sociocultural provenance of the learners
- identifying the parents' expectations
- evaluating the level of satisfaction

Steps:

- follow-up in full of the learning process

Calendar:

- in the course of the recruitment campaign: questionnaire N1
- at the moment when the students arrive at the school: questionnaires N2 and N3
- at the end of the first semester, the end of the 11th year, the end of the 14th year: questionnaire N4

Questionnaire N1: Analysis of the preliminary knowledge of parents with regards to the education in question

1. How did you learn about this type of education?

- a.) Information leaflets published by:
 - the scholar institution
 - the pedagogic institutes
 - the diplomatic service
- b.) media (specify)
- c.) other (specify)

2. In what way do you see the particularities of this education?

- a.) in the content
.....
- b.) in the rhythm of learning
.....
- c.) in the opening perspectives
.....

3. Are you already familiar with the requirements that this education demands from your child and family?

- a.) in terms of school timetable
.....
- b.) in terms of homework
.....
- c.) in terms of finance
.....

4. In what area(s) could you contribute to the smooth functioning of the department?

- a.) in terms of running of the pedagogic programme
.....
- b.) in terms of cultural events
.....
- c.) in terms of organisation of study trips
.....

5. Do you think that this education meets the challenges of continuous changes? (economic, political, social)?

- a.) yes
- b.) no
- c.) ?

Questionnaire N2: The sociocultural provenance of the students

1. Where do you live?

- a.) in the capital
- b.) in a big city
- c.) in a small town
- d.) other

2. What educational level do you have?

- a.) primary
- b.) secondary
- c.) high-level

3. Do you speak foreign languages

(language(s) and level)

- a.)
- b.)
- c.)

4. On what occasion(s) do you use this/these foreign language(s)?

- a.) work
- b.) leisure
- c.) other (specify)

5. What kind of technical devices do you have the use of at home?

- a.) computer
- b.) Internet
- c.) tape-recorder
- d.) CD-player
- e.) video-player
- f.) television with international channels

Questionnaire N3: Analysis of expectations

What is it that you expect from this education?

1.) regarding its content in terms of

a.) language knowledge

b.) understanding civilisations

c.) learning about non-linguistic disciplines

2.) regarding the activities out of school: What type(s) of programmes would you prefer?

a.) cultural events

b.) competitions

c.) study trips in the country

d.) study trips abroad

e.) school exchanges in the country

f.) school exchanges with foreign partners

g.) other (specify)

3. regarding the learning objectives

a.) everyday communication

b.) correspondence

c.) trips

d.) high level studies

e.) work

f.) other (specify)

4. regarding the tutorial body in terms of

a.) professional qualification

b.) the composition of the staff (national and native teachers)

c.) the educational competences

5. Do you have special demands regarding the individual treatment of your child?

Questionnaire N4: Analysis in terms of satisfaction

1. To what extent does/did this type of education fulfil your expectations?

Areas	Perfectly satisfied	Satisfied	Disappointed
In terms of language knowledge			
Understanding civilisations			
Learning about non-linguistic disciplines			
Activities out of school			
Tutorial body			
Interest shown to your child			

2. Please justify your appreciation.

3. Do you have any further suggestions?

Ref. B.1. (Our responsibility) and B.4. (Our students) Reference grids

Source: Regional Workshop, Hungary 2003

Tünde Aleva, Éva Oszetzky, Pintérné Katalin Zsigmond, Dan Ion Nasta

Context

Type of activity: linguistic and cultural visit, group experience involving collective mobility accompanied by a pedagogic team.

Objectives

- to arouse the interest of the students in intercultural communication
- to help the students to discover the everyday culture of the country whose language they are studying
- to reinforce the learning of the target language through authentic communicative situations
- to encourage the students to think about the discovered cultural aspects
- to encourage interpersonal contacts and the confrontation of experiences between the young

Expected results

- the students can form contacts that they will be able to develop the next time in a lasting way with the students of
- the pedagogic team will use this occasion to explore the possibilities of a regular partnership between the two schools

Duration: 15 days

Target public: mixed group of young people with two adults.

Working languages:

Institutional support: expertise and financial support offered by the organisation under contract.

17) Did you have the opportunity to meet the local authorities (county, city, municipality, cultural affairs, social affairs, international relations, youth organisation, and civil society) or cultural personalities?

yes

no

18) Did these meetings seem to be useful?

yes

no

Commentary if any:

You can use this box to evoke briefly the most striking moment of your visit at or to describe the best memory you kept of this visit.

19) What benefits do you think you have gained with this visit from the linguistic point of view?

20) Do you think that the language and civilisation elements gained from this visit can be used again during your study period?

yes

no

21) Quote five or six words / expressions that you learned during your visit.

III. Activities and contacts during the visit

22) Did you find that during your visit there were

not enough activities

enough activities

many activities

too many activities

23) What are the activities that you found the most interesting

- the least interesting

24) Describe the sports activities that you participated in:

34) If you were guided around the school called..... , what were your impressions about the place and the school equipment.

35) Did you like the atmosphere in the secondary school? (*justify your reply*)

36) Do you plan to keep contact with the students of this school?

via email

via letter

37) Would you like your school to suggest other potential correspondent addresses in the future?

in the very same city

in other cities of the same country

in other countries where the language is partly used

38) Do you wish to participate in other linguistic and cultural visits in the future?

- if so in which country _____

- through which language _____