

was devoted to quality certification. Views on this topic were shared by Anje van Dijk, and Johann Fischer, who talked on quality assurance in testing and assessment.

Another major objective of the meeting was to compile a second Wulkow memorandum that would serve as a basis for discussing quality standards in individual institutions. Issues were discussed in work groups and then in the plenary. Many thanks for transferring the conclusions into the actual memorandum go to Nick Byrne from the Language Centre at the London School of Economics. The memorandum bears the title *The Wulkow Memorandum on Quality*

Assurance and Quality Management at Language Centres in Institutions of Higher Education in Europe and has 40 signatories in total.

As important as the discussions in the meeting room were, the time that we spent talking informally and networking during our visits to Friedersdorf and Neuhardenberg Palace, at meals, and in the evenings while sharing national songs and dances was also extremely productive.

Our great thanks go to Thomas Vogel and David Furmanek from Viadrina Sprachen gmbh for organizing this great event. We are all looking forward to the third Wulkow meeting. ■

CercleS Seminar: The role of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in higher education

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Résumé :

Un séminaire de 2 jours dédié au Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues (CECR) et au Portfolio Européen des Langues (PEL) a eu lieu à Padoue du 17 au 19 Septembre 2009. Lors des conférences plénières et des différents ateliers, les participants ont pu discuter de l'évaluation et de l'auto-évaluation, de la mise au point de programmes d'études, de l'autonomie des étudiants et de l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie, des portefeuilles électroniques, de la formation des enseignants et des aspects interculturels. Les communications de ce séminaire seront publiées avec celles du séminaire à Dublin en 2007 dans un avenir proche.

Zusammenfassung:

Vom 17. bis 19. September 2009 fand in Padua ein zweitägiges Seminar zum Gemeinsamen Europäischen Referenzrahmen für Sprachen (CEFR) und zum Europäischen Sprachportfolio (ESP) statt. In verschiedenen Vorträgen und Workshops konnten die Teilnehmer über Evaluierung und Selbst-Evaluierung, Lehrplanentwicklung, autonomes lebenslanges Lernen, elektronische Portfolios, Lehrerbildung und interkulturelle Sensibilität diskutieren. Die Ergebnisse dieses Seminars sollen gemeinsam mit den Ergebnissen des Seminars in Dublin 2007 in naher Zukunft als Buch veröffentlicht werden.

Ten years after the launch of the Bologna process encouraging the internationalisation of European higher education and two years after the first international seminar in 2007 at University College Dublin on the role of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in higher education, discussion of the role of the ELP and its companion, the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR), returned to Italy. The Padua University Language Centre and CercleS hosted two thought-provoking full days for about 125 researchers and higher education practitioners from all across Europe, as well as the United States, China and Japan. The warm welcome and the treasures of Padua were enjoyed by all. Many thanks to the Organising Committee —Fiona Dalziel, Maria Teresa Musacchio, Johann Fischer and Mary Ruane.

Since its publication in 2001, the CEFR has had a significant impact on language education across Europe. But in many higher education contexts, its implementation, along with that of the ELP promoting autonomy, learner reflection and self-assessment, is still very much work in progress. The aim of the Padua Seminar was thus to help participants consolidate and further develop their work with these tools in their own institutions, and to reflect on possible future strategies to promote plurilingualism and intercultural awareness in Europe and beyond.

Food for thought...

Four keynote speakers, old friends and new to CercleS, from Portugal, Italy, Austria (via Poland) and Ireland, set the tone. Fifty-three speakers from nine European countries (Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom) and the United States targeted the six strands of the Seminar: assessment and self-assessment, curriculum development learner autonomy and lifelong learning, electronic portfolios, teacher education and intercultural awareness

Keynote addresses

Manuela Guilherme (Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal), in the opening keynote address, spoke about “living in languages” — plurilingual competence and intercultural responsibility in language education. Among people using different languages in plurilingual contexts, “linguistic ideologies” determine power relations, giving rise to the concept of “intercultural responsibility”. This is defined as “a conscious and reciprocally respectful social and professional relationship - which may also be personal - between the members of a team/group, assuming that they have different ethno-linguistic backgrounds, whether national or sub-national”. It also implies that “every member is responsible not only for identifying and recognising the cultural idiosyncrasies of every other member-in-interaction, but also for developing full and reciprocally demanding social and/or professional relationships with them.”

The second keynote address was given by Professor Maria G. Lo Duca, from the University of Padua. She raised the question of terminology in the development of grammatical competence as described in the CEFR, and its application in creating a Syllabus for Italian L2 for exchange students. The presentation gave a concrete example of how the “theoretical” CEFR guidelines, along with reference grammars of a specific language, can be translated into practice. Among the key issues addressed were the terminology itself used by Italian grammarians and the selection and sequencing of linguistic elements: interjections, forms and textual structures (discourse markers...), sentence complexity, the verb system, syntax, etc. Professor Lo Duca stressed the importance of an eclectic, non-traditional approach to the question of grammatical terminology for teaching programmes, and therefore for the teachers responsible for mediating language learning.

Waldemar Martyniuk, Director of the European Centre for Modern

Languages in Graz (Austria), raised four key concerns pertaining to the CEFR: approach, status, function, and implementation. If the reference value of the CEFR and the legitimacy of the founding principles are readily recognised, there are also cases where the spirit of the document is being misconstrued. It has been seen to be used for “advertising” purposes in international education and, incredibly ironically, in a prescriptive sense to impose a uniform, curriculum in language education. In answer to such inappropriate use, Waldemar Martyniuk brought to the attention of Seminar participants the options presented in the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (July 2008) on the use of the CEFR and the promotion of plurilingualism (CM/Rec(2008)7): www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/Source/SourceForum07/Rec%20CM%202008-7_EN.doc.

The final keynote speech was made by founding member and former President of CercleS, David Little, Fellow Emeritus of Trinity College Dublin and Chair of the Council of Europe’s European Language Portfolio Validation Committee. David Little’s theoretical and practical work on learner autonomy, and his role in developing the CercleS version of the ELP need no introduction. His talk addressed the need for a new assessment culture in relation to the CEFR and the ELP to close the circle of curriculum, teaching/learning and assessment. He argued that, taken together, these two tools imply the need to accommodate self- and peer-assessment alongside formal examinations. His message focussed, in particular, on the use of the can-do checklists by university-level language learners and the implications of the CEFR’s action-oriented approach for university language exams. In conclusion, David Little set a task for CercleS: to develop a toolkit with three components — a language curriculum framework for the European university sector, a generic version of the CercleS ELP, and a communicative language test development kit.

Workshops

One of the richest strands was that of assessment and self-assessment, with ten papers presented. Both Ana Beaven and Lucia Livatino (Università di Bologna) and Marilyn Kies (Università degli Studi, Siena) underlined positive points of the CEFR as regards assessment — providing standard descriptors and facilitating communication on recognised levels. But both also drew attention to specific problems and illustrated solutions: in the first case, through benchmarking instances of spoken language via on-line collaboration (WebCEF); in the second case, by proposing and testing criteria rendering more transparent the comparison of high-stakes certification exams linked to the CEF. On a similar theme, Claudia D’Este (Università Ca’ Foscari, Venezia) spoke of the benefits of using the Dutch CEFR Construct GRID to create and develop an English B1 level qualification test in reading and listening. Three papers dealt with e-testing based on the CEFR: Andrea Kobližkova (Univerzita Pardubice, Czech Republic) on the introduction of e-placement tests; Sara Radighieri (Università degli Studi, Modena e Reggio Emilia) on several significant issues ranging from the creation, development and piloting of language tests to questions of test scoring and setting common standards for computerised language testing; Manuel Silva and Célia Tavares (Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração, Porto) on assessment criteria and parameters used to assess students’ work with e-portfolios as a translation training tool.

Looking specifically at assessment of advanced writing performance, Sián Morgan (Università degli Studi, Modena e Reggio Emilia), explained how students in the Faculty of Letters need to reach C1 and C2 level in English or another European language in order to

graduate, but that teachers are generally less familiar with the higher CEFR higher levels. To measure students’ performance more accurately, the author examined samples of advanced writing in terms of the CEFR descriptors with particular regard to the degree of complexity of language. Maria del Carmen Arau Ribeiro and Samuel Best (Instituto Politécnico da Guarda, Portugal) approached the question through self-assessment and the ELP, presenting data to corroborate conclusions on the impact of encouraging the individual creation of original, regular, and relevant writing assignments. More generally considering C1 competences for academic study, Margaret Fowler (British Council, Milan) looked at how English is currently being used at university level around the world, offering an overview of English language exams for academic purposes. Finally, Mathilde Anquetil (Università degli Studi, Macerata) raised the pertinent issue of the ELP reporting function, presenting an action-research project which tied oral interaction based on the CercleS ELP into a B2-level French certification (DELF).

Just as much interest was shown for the theme of curriculum development (ten papers). Similar approaches were adopted cross-Channel by Mary Ruane (University College Dublin) and Céline Davesne (Rouen Business School, France), focussing on a whole-school approach to using the CEFR and the ELP. Both researchers stressed the fact that these tools must be, in the words of Mary Ruane “allowed to have a central and defining role in language curricula in terms of theory and practice”. In a large-scale programme for non-specialist language students in Dublin, the two European tools provided structured support and scaffolding not just for learners but also for teachers, language advisors, administrative staff and others involved in the language learning process. In the French context, they were implemented in an innovative manner in the form of workshops on objectives, common core courses and linguistic tutoring. Here again, positive impact carried over to relations within the teaching team and between teachers and the institution.

The particular challenge of change management in curriculum development was addressed by five authors, all from Portugal and Spain. While Southwestern Europe obviously does not have a “monopoly” on this question, this concentration nonetheless reflects the historical diversity across Europe of teaching/learning styles in general and, in particular, of approaches to foreign language learning. Thus, Pedro Ruiz (Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração, Porto) and Dulce Sarroeira (Escola Superior de Hotelaria e Turismo, Estoril) both evoke issues of learners’ needs in Portugal and ways to meet them through adaptations of syllabi, teaching and assessment. From Spain, Veronica Colwell O’Callaghan (Universidad de León) speaks of “the parallel development of language syllabi and the dependence on available human and material resources”, including issues of teacher education, CEFR and the ELP interpretation and assessment, in terms of “cutting the ties that bind”. Doing so must be an “ongoing, step-by-step, negotiated approach”. Mercedes del Fresno Fernández and Mária Vega, both from Universidad Complutense in Madrid, echo similar challenges in a context of limited means, strong regional languages competing for the language “market” and incoherent language policy.

Finally, three further “Southern” papers from Padua addressed different aspects of curriculum development: Isabelle Montfort on special needs of future Erasmus students with low levels of language competency; Mirjam Mansen and Susanne Vitz-Manetti on questions of the ELP and learning awareness, learning targets and learning strategies for students of German; Dagmar Winkler on bilingual knowledge transfer as a strategy for internationalising curricula, particularly in the context of CLIL.

A third very popular strand was learner autonomy and lifelong learning, with eight variations on the theme from speakers covering Europe from North to South, and with an added insight from Taiwan. Liisa Wallenius (Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Finland) led participants to consider students' approach to professional life, presenting a project to enhance ELP use in different groups of learners. Perhaps reassuring to many of the Southern European participants, Liisa Wallenius explained that even in Finland, "not all teachers (not to mention students) know the ELP and the CEF well enough to implement them." Véronique Hébrard (Groupe Ecole Supérieure d'Agriculture, Angers, France) discussed the role of the CEFR in continuing education through platform-based e-learning tools and "emailangues". Bernadette Maguire, from the British Council in Madrid, addressed the thorny question of the transition from B1 to B2 in speaking, and how teachers and students can address the disparity in levels between speaking skills and reading, writing and listening. From Portugal, Cristina Pinto da Silva (Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração, Porto) drew participants' attention to the foreign language classroom as a social event, underlining how "learners' espoused theories and beliefs about teaching and learning are intricate, dynamic and, most importantly, idiosyncratic, albeit culturally determined". Thus, the teacher must keep in mind the reality of learner individuality and heterogeneity.

Travelling East to Italy, Loredana Cavaliere (Università degli Studi, Napoli Federico II) discussed the concept of learner autonomy, synchronic and asynchronous communication, and the diversity of learning styles. A teacher at the host university of Padua, Gillian Davies explored how the ELP provides structure to students' difficult passage from teacher centred schooling to more student-centred type language learning at university. Considerable use is made of collaborative conferencing software, and particular attention paid to the roles of both teacher and learner during the process. Finally, Padua teachers Fiona Dalziel, Gillian Davies and Amy Han teamed up to explain how, in a context where the CercleS ELP has been used since 2002-2003 in blended learning, the online learner diary reflects use of descriptors and offers insight into learners' reflection. Finally, via Dublin, Elisabeth Yin-Ling Lin (Trinity College Dublin) presented doctoral work examining implementation of the "English Language Portfolio", modelled on the CercleS ELP, in the exam-oriented approach to curriculum planning which characterises Taiwanese higher education.

Six papers dealt with e-portfolios, representing work done in four countries. Inma Alvarez, Tita Beaven and Maria Luisa Perez Cavagna (Open University, UK) presented the development of an electronic ELP and its use by adult distance learning students. The authors looked at the suitability of the original ELP template's structures and navigation in a digital environment, as well as piloting an additional section on learning styles within the Biography and providing a link to the newly developed Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (AIE). Their conclusions suggest that the potential of the ELP can be significantly enhanced using a virtual environment instead of a paper format. The only participant from the United States, Patricia Cummins (Virginia Commonwealth University) presented a three-part e-portfolio which allows students to reference American or European rating scales, and uses technology in university learning, teaching, and assessment. Global Language Portfolio (GLP) —www.globallanguageportfolio.com— can be downloaded into either a learning management system (Blackboard, etc.) or into open source portfolios, and can be modified according to the learner's needs —employment, study abroad, internships. Fionnuala Kennedy, Juliette Péchenart and

Jennifer Bruen (Waterford Institute of Technology, Dublin City University) gave an end-of-project report on the LOLIPOP ELP, first presented at the CercleS Seminar in Dublin in 2007, describing its integration into undergraduate modules and the favourable feedback. Bärbel Kühn (Universität Bremen, Germany) and Rosanna Pedretti and Adriano Murelli (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany) both spoke of e-ELP use within the web-based language learning platform EPOS. The former put out a call for partners for cooperation and networking, sharing more validated models of ELPs, sharing good praxis, technical and pedagogical development; the latter developed questions of blended learning, the role of tutors, the capacity for self assessment and greater awareness of learning pathways. Last but not least, Luisa Panichi (aka Jole Zhong, Università degli Studi, Pisa) and Christel Schneider (aka Letty Pienaar, ICC International Language Network, Germany) presented the new Portfolio for Avatars, still in its conceptual stage. The main focus of this EU-funded project is to develop language learning scenarios in Second Life® and to provide examples of best practice. While based on the European ELP model, Avatars is more focused on technical skills required to actively participate in 3D learning environments.

Three presentations addressed questions of teacher education in different national contexts. Marie Hanzlíková (Charles University, Prague) dealt with a major problem in ELP implementation: how to fit course prerequisites into the descriptors? Can both be taught? Ivana Fratter (Università degli Studi, Padova) related how she uses two key references as self-assessment tools in training future teachers of Italian L2, stressing digital literacy: Grenfell, M. & Kelly, M. (2004). *European Profile for Language Teacher Education. A Frame of Reference* and Newby D. et al. (2007), *Portfolio européen pour les enseignants en langues en formation initiale*. Dorothy Ní Uigín (National University of Ireland, Galway, Eire) raised the challenge of training teachers in using the ELP with students of Irish (C1 Level) as well as the reported benefits.

Last but not least, the theme of intercultural awareness brought together three authors from different countries. Sonia Cunico (University of Leicester, U.K.) responded to the challenge of raising intercultural awareness through the use of drama "to develop an awareness of the interpersonal dimension embedded in the language we use". Veronika Bayer (Telecom ParisTech, France) explained how she coordinates videoconferences between her German courses in France and comparable French courses at a German university on B1 and C1 levels. Francesca Helm and Sarah Guth (Università degli Studi, Padova) presented a framework bringing together, through telecollaboration, the development of multiliteracies to promote foreign language learning (in CEFR terms), the development of intercultural communicative competence and online literacies.

The last words of the Seminar were shared by participants in a round table, chaired by Johann Fischer, including Manuela Guilherme, Maria del Carmen Arau Ribeiro, Chris Taylor, David Little, Mary Ruane, Waldemar Martyniuk. Many doors were opened for future reflection, touching on the political role and impact of language teaching, its survival in higher education, inter-university collaboration, teacher training opportunities, critical pedagogy and interculturality, "back to the basics" of the CEFR and the ELP, the challenge of pedagogical change... The scope of the exchanges over these two full days clearly whetted appetites for the next workshop in two years' time. In the interim, CercleS will see to the publication of a joint volume of proceedings from both the Dublin and the Padua Seminars. ■

Bulletin 27



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