



*MOTIVATING EUROPEANS
TO LEARN LANGUAGES*

METHODOLOGY



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1. Research

The work involved in this study involved both field work and desk-based research that covered:

- local, regional and national initiatives identified during fieldwork and fact-finding visits to language resource centres, language providers (formal and non-formal), chambers of commerce, governmental and public institutions related to language learning/teaching, media companies, the business sector, cultural institutions, etc.
- examples of European co-operation and EU-funded initiatives including projects funded under the Socrates/Lingua Action¹, projects awarded the European Label for Innovative Initiatives in Language Teaching and Learning², projects funded during the European Year of Languages³ or other Actions within the Socrates and Leonardo Programmes.

The study was based on a detailed workplan broken down into seven phases to cover three main areas of activities (research, analysis/selection and production). It involved research and data collection, literature review of primary and secondary sources, a survey based on questionnaires and phone/e-mail contacts, interviews with actors involved in language promotion, visits to promoters and policy makers, case study selection and quality analysis of the results.

1.1 Methods and tools

1.1.1 Data collection

The experts employed on the study researched existing materials for language promotion and language awareness strategies across Europe, with a view to establishing a bibliography and a list of organisations that needed to be contacted for the study. Primary sources included: websites of language resource centres, websites of language promoting institutions, media and cultural centres, a general Internet search on language promotion, European Commission databases (Socrates Catalogues and the Lingua Community newsletter), Socrates, Leonardo and Youth Technical Assistance Office archives and Socrates and Leonardo National Agencies' databases.

¹http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/lingua/index_en.html

²<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/language/label/index.cfm>

³http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/year/index_en.html



1.1.2 Questionnaire survey

The expert team conducted a survey based on a questionnaire which was sent to over 600 institutions throughout Europe and which included formal and non-formal educational organisations (from kindergarten level to higher education and adult centres including the vocational training sector), Ministries, National Agencies, language and cultural centres, associations, networks, NGOs and foundations.

Over 400 questionnaires were sent by e-mail and more than 200 contacts were made by phone. As far as possible, the survey was carried out in the national language of the country concerned, given that the experts mastered 15 languages between them. A subsequent, more comprehensive questionnaire was sent to those who replied to the first round of questions.

1.1.3 Interviews and visits

Following the on-line contacts made through the survey, the experts selected those institutions that seemed most relevant to language promotion and organised visits to them. Some 220 interviews were carried out in 20 European countries, including Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom. Extensive contacts were also made by phone with Germany. The list of countries to be visited/contacted was discussed and agreed with the European Commission prior to these visits or contacts. However, efforts were made to be as comprehensive as possible, and examples of good practice were also identified in countries not visited by the experts.

The interviewees included language promoters, policy makers at local, regional, national and European level, networks and associations, language educators active in the field of language learning promotion, media and press experts as well as language experts and consultants.

2. Analysis/Selection

2.1 Criteria for «good practice» selection

To qualify for consideration, the examples of good practice had to fulfil a basic condition in relation to the terms of reference for the call for tender to which the study responds: namely, to belong to non-formal/informal language learning environments or to promote language learning activities outside the classroom in the case of formal educational institutions. The research also took into consideration only examples of intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation. Therefore, examples that aim to stimulate people to learn languages for vocational purposes are not treated by the study.



What constitutes a «good practice» (GP) was a matter of long debate, and the experts finally agreed upon the following quality criteria to which a good practice should correspond:

- **Transferability** (*to what extent can the GP be adapted/transferred to other target groups, languages, countries, thematic environments; if the example is not easily transferable, the reasons for this should be clear - linguistic, ethical, political, etc.*);
- **Effectiveness** (*ways in which the GP has been tested and proven to work in an efficient way*);
- **Impact** (*evidence of any follow-up of a completed GP; for on-going practices, there should be some indication of their potential impact at local level or within a wider context*);
- **Sustainability** (*to what extent does the GP foresee any means to ensure its sustainability beyond the present funding period, taking into account short-term vs. long-term sustainability and financial autonomy*);
- **Originality** (*to what extent does the GP present innovative/original approaches, methods or techniques to motivate people to learn a language*).

2.1 Selection strategy

The selection of good practices was performed in two stages, based on an evaluation against the quality criteria and evaluation guidelines discussed and agreed with the European Commission. 100 good practices were pre-selected, along with a further 27 that were gathered from primary sources (official databases of the Commission related to European educational programmes and language policy).

The qualitative analysis considered the extent to which the pre-selected good practices met the 5 basic quality criteria and the promoters' replies to the second questionnaire or interview:

1. *To what extent can your GP be adapted/transferred to other target groups, languages, countries, thematic language environments?*
2. *In what context was the GP developed (pilot project, duration, funding)? How has the GP been tested and/or proven to work in an efficient way?*
3. *What kind of follow-up can be demonstrated? Have you any measure of the impact produced at local or regional level or more widely? Comment briefly on the influence your GP had at local, regional, national or European level or changes it produced at a professional level.*



4. *Have you envisaged any means to ensure sustainability of the practice beyond its current lifetime? How can your example be continued or repeated, taking into account the question of financial autonomy?*
5. *In your opinion, what makes your example attractive? Is there any innovative or original element that may stimulate learners' interest or motivation for language learning?*
6. *What factors have contributed to the development or success of the GP?*
7. *Please give at least three reasons why you consider that your example should be regarded as a good practice for motivating language learners.*

In the final selection, the experts analysed the selected practices in detail by comparing different examples within the same thematic area and drawing a balance between the strong and weak aspects identified for each practice. During this exercise, attention was given to achieving as wide a diversity as possible in respect of geographical distribution and thematic areas. An effort was made to avoid overlapping cases caused by similar methodological approaches.

Each case identified as a potential good practice during the research phase was read and evaluated by two experts, who ranked them on a preliminary list based on a qualitative (Weak, Fair, Good, Very Good) and quantitative (a score ranging from 1 to 5 for each of the 7 items, giving an overall result of x/35) analysis. This process was carried out in two phases, permitting a reduction from 127 to 70 practices.

A panel of 8 experts made the final selection of 50 good practices, taking into consideration the final scores and comments from the evaluation, as well as the strong versus weak points for each listed example.



The study «LINGO: Motivating Europeans to learn languages» was carried out on behalf of the European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture by **European Cultural Interactions**.



An on-line version of the study is available from:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/key/studies_en.html

<http://www.eurointeractions.com/projectlingo.htm>



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