Chapter 3

Teacher training in the area of foreign languages and cultures in the European Union

A historical perspective and review

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1 Introduction

Policy and ideology in language teaching and learning, through its actors and discourses, can at the outset be reflected by the form that institutionalized teacher training takes on; and at the output phase, by the results that the educational process produces in the generations of learners concerned. Anything ranging from minor adjustments to radical changes in a given educational system, starting with teacher training and later in-service training, aims to produce new outcomes in the long term. In the European context, since the inception of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, and largely under the auspices of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, the European Union (EU) has over the course of its history much emphasized the importance of education and training (professionalization, skills and competence development in the work place); and has argued on the necessity to implement educational policy in each member state —the ultimate goal being economic development for greater and sustainable competitiveness of the continent as a whole, at the global scale.

Initiatives have been taken by the European Union to promote exchange, indeed, geographic mobility amongst its citizens, for the purposes of studies, work, culture and language. As the European Union seeks to maintain its political status and economic standing, its multilingual and multicultural nature has led us to examine the educational and professionalization issues through the teaching and learning entry point

of foreign languages and cultures (English especially), and more particularly through the very foundation of that process, *i.e.* language teacher training (or teacher education [TE]), its evolution and ideological influences in recent years. To provide a frame of reference, the implementation of European Union educational policy is viewed more concretely at the secondary level of French public education: through issues that beginning teachers are often faced with in a constantly evolving and increasingly complex profession; and the possible solutions that are explored through research and innovative training programs. As such, the present chapter seeks: to explore the implementation of language and culture education policy in the European Union (EU) at the teacher training level (we resort to this term for its focus on the training component); to explore other related initiatives in this area; to discern the possible ideology behind this policy; and, finally, to project what the recent educational orientations —especially as manifested in teacher training (TT)— mean in the long term for education, the economy and society.

1.1 Policy and ideology: Initial definitions

This chapter aims to deal with EU education policy with regard to TT programmes in the member states. *Policy*, as can be judged from the following definitions, is a semantically complex word. In the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (Procter, 1995, p. 1091) it is defined as "a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed officially by a group of people, [...] a government". The definition given by *Merriam-Webster Online* (n.d.) dictionary sheds light on the pragmatic, managerial, but also principled aspects of the word: (1a) prudence or wisdom on the management of affairs; (1b) "management or procedure based primarily on material interest"; (2a) a definite course or method of action selected among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions; (2b) a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body. Finally, according to the *Oxford Online Dictionaries* (n.d.), it is "a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual". Etymologically, "policy" comes from late Middle English, *i.e.* from Old French *policie* (*i.e.* 'civil administration'), *via* Latin from Greek *politeia* ('citizenship'), from *polités* ('citizen'), from *polis* ('city'). Policy, as such, by definition concerns the lives of citizens in the present and possibly long-term.

Ideology, on the other hand is defined in the Cambridge International Dictionary of English (Procter, 1995, p. 701) as "a theory, or set of beliefs or principles, especially one on which a political system, party or organization is based". The notion of ideology in a political system often also carries an economic connotation or one of social resistance. One could thus act or govern according to an ideology, defending it, possibly even trying to impose it by force or through conditioning or indoctrination. In language teaching and learning, ideology may be conveyed through teaching materials that present ideas through bias (condemning, obscuring or justifying them). According to *Merriam-Webster Learners' Dictionary*, it is "a set of ideas and beliefs of a group or political party", while *Oxford Online Dictionaries* states that it is "a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory

and policy". Etymologically, it comes from the Greek *idea* ('form, pattern') + *-logos* (denoting discourse or compilation). To come full circle, in the latter definition we wish to more particularly underline the "political policy" lemma. It is also noteworthy that, while policy is by definition explicit, ideology is often implicit and may be harder to prove.

In language teaching and learning, as in other disciplines, both policy and ideology typically begin at the input phase with political initiatives based on certain ideas, if not ideals, aiming for specific outcomes.

1.2 EU policies aiming in the long term to federate and to shape future citizens

One central question that arises for any group of states aspiring to achieve unity would be what policy to adopt so that the result is a constructive relationship of countries, with a real sense of cohesion, at least in key areas. It is a delicate balancing act when a number of countries, as is the case of the EU (currently at twenty-eight members), seek to advance in unison, while at the same time taking into account the sovereignty of the respective states, which may appear to be at stake.

From the time the EU first started out as the European Common Market, the leaders very quickly understood that it could not be just a question of economic exchanges, promoted within the framework of membership, but that a long-term vision was fundamental to the viability of this constellation of countries, and the evolution of the continent's economy, on a world scale. Immediate examples of manifestations of the "common" initiative within Europe include the use of English as a *lingua franca*; and the harmonization of studies programs and diplomas. The ramifications of a TT policy, however, would be deeper in that the philosophy that is adopted would be expected to shape the generations of learners to come, and therefore society itself. This is because "education" automatically means the formative experience of individuals according to the principles that are laid out. The EU, for example, talks about transmitting knowledge and know-how; but also about instilling work ethic-related attitudes and values. It is these values that underpin the Lifelong Learning Program, a concept whereby professionally active citizens (and beyond, as "Lifelong" suggests) participate in Continuing Education programs. This may be imposed by the jobs, but it may also take place on a voluntary basis, (as workers are held to conscientiously update their competences according to the pace of industry, and remain efficient, skilled, qualified members of the work force). Professional readiness to contribute has indeed become a value in itself.

2 Defining EU Teacher Training or Teacher Education

It should be noted at the outset that Teacher Training (TT) is the more technical and familiar term, as opposed to the more recently coined "Teacher Education" (TE) (introduced to imply a *reflecting practitioner* as well). The Website of the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE, n.d.) defines EU Teacher Education as follows:

Education and Training is one of the policy priorities of the European Union. And as the quality of the teacher is considered as the most crucial factor in the learning process of pupils and students, a considerable amount of policy documents and recommendations at the level of the Council of the European Union and the Council of Europe is issued on the topic of teachers and teacher education.

2.1 EU – A competence-based history of education

In our attempt to understand what has driven the subject of education in the EU, and what underpins the policies that the Council of Europe and the European Commission have adopted in this area, we shall engage in a historical overview of the educational theme in the European context.

Europe started focusing on educational policy in the 1960s: it has historically always considered it to be important, albeit in a pragmatic way, through focus on professional training. Initially, a professional view of education was promoted, although not systematized as yet across the (then) small number of member states. Rather, it was only encouraged and left to individual state initiative. The increase in size of the EU through the introduction of new members only intensified the need to pronounce and enforce an educational policy with a vision, through tools, resources and exchange programmes, and teacher training initiatives in more recent years. In the 80s, this question began to receive more deliberate attention. This led to educational reforms for more systematized professionalization, revolving more especially around the concept of *competence*. Indeed, in 1989, this term is first attested as being pronounced in the circles of the European Round Table (ERT), a powerful and influential lobby of European industries defending that competence and education are vital factors for success. In an economic reality which did not always appear stable, the ERT perceived certain trends: (1) a widening gap between the European educational system (*i.e.* its curriculum, systems, teacher training programmes), on the one hand; and the demands of the labour market, on the other; (2) an increased dependency on technology, (a rapidly evolving area in the last thirty years); and (3) the ever-growing importance of plurilingual[1] and cultural competences, in a continent characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity.

The ERT deplored a number of things. For instance, industry, for all its financial power and economic importance, barely seemed to exert any influence on the programmes taught; and teachers seemed to display inadequate understanding of the economic environment and "of the needs of industry" (Hirtt, 2009, p. 13). As such, beyond any revamping of the educational systems *per se*, one major European aim was for enterprises to be able to participate in educational policy as interlocutors with the related political decision makers, (*e.g.* of the education, economy ministries), acting as partners in such matters. This pragmatic, economy-driven approach brought about an ideological clash with the defenders of a knowledge driven education, (research, reflection, questioning), as inherited from the tradition of Enlightenment period phi-

[1] Speaking more than one language (as opposed to "multilingual", which denotes the presence of several languages on the territory or continent).

losophy. The former were charged by the latter as essentially marring what aspires to be pure knowledge, for its own sake, with capitalist ideology. The following ten years would nonetheless be marked by a series of initiatives aiming to solidify this project. It would be shaped by three major events which, through the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the action-oriented teaching-learning approach, would become pivotal in teacher training programmes. These were:

- The "New Industry" in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), announcing in 1991 that online distance learning (e-learning) would be an operative mode of learning in the future; the question of university objectives, employability, flexibility and mobility in the labour force was raised in the *White Book* later on that year as well.

- The Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, the initial step towards common economic and monetary union, so that future generations could be better prepared to face a fiercely competitive global economic world (this is where the term *competence* was proposed for the first time to the European Commission as an educational concept).

- The Bologna Process in 1999, which officially marked the launching of a project to harmonize member-state educational systems in terms of study certificates, diplomas and university degrees issued. Harmonization could in turn facilitate linguistic and cultural exchanges between the member states for study purposes (*e.g.* the Erasmus+ programme, among others). The long-term goal was for this to allow greater mobility and exchange between peoples on the continent (through tourism, sport, studies, professional activities, and so on), thus promoting greater economic growth. The Bologna Process aims were backed up a year later by the Lisbon Strategy, which would become an economic development agenda for the next ten years. It should be noted however that while the actual educational programmes and their updates were left to the sovereignty of the member-states, harmonization was implicit as language curricula, case in point, have been shaped by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This would mean better alignment between programmes and degrees or other titles (in terms of content, quantity of hours, etc.) throughout the EU. Of course, the advent of Teacher Training tools implicitly addresses this question at the source:

- As plurilingualism and intercultural education came to the fore within the EU, the teaching of the mother tongue plus two foreign languages was accepted by the Barcelona European Council in 2002, and promoted in the educational systems of the EU member states (Perroto, 2012, p. 7).

- "Living Together as Equals in Dignity" was announced in the 2008 *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*, stressing the role of formal, informal and non-formal [2]

[2] *Formal*: training typically provided by an education or training institution, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. *Informal* education hap-

education in developing intercultural competences; and emphasizing the crucial role of language education (Komorowska, 2012, p. 31).

- Aligning itself with the language policy of the Council of Europe and the EU, the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz first proposed the idea of a project that would contribute to the harmonising of teacher education in 2004 (*ibid.*, p. 32).

A quarter of a century after the ERT Round Table expressed its views regarding the role of industry in education, Perotto, in her "Strategy implementation" section, refers to "structured dialogue with stakeholders" as being one of the three main pillars on which strategy implementation is based —the other two being "institutional cooperation with governments" and "funding programmes" (Perroto, 2012, p. 10). Perotto goes on to specify that this dialogue —for which two platforms were set up in 2009— is intended to complement the inter-governmental cooperation process by encouraging networking and exchanges of knowledge and good practice among citizens' associations and interest groups (*ibid.*, p. 11).

Along with the CEFR and the task-based action-oriented approach, this decade also marked the advent of other related notions such as: cognitive society; Information and Communication Technologies (ITC) and Educational ITC, for potentially independent learners working on the computer through CD-ROMs or online work; competences in terms of knowledge (cognition), know-how (execution), and self-management skills (attentiveness, meticulousness, initiative...); "from cradle-to-grave" Lifelong Learning; educational system flexibility (Reiffers & The European Commission Study Group on Education and Training, 1997); autonomous, multi-skilled workers, whose training practically begins at the primary school level. Indeed, these future workers are groomed to become workers of the future: able, versatile and adaptive to the evolving demands of the workplace.

The sum of these notions reflects a new philosophy regarding future European society with the implicit message that only education can fundamentally vehicle such changes. Whether these policies are injunctions or strong recommendations, they are slowly being implemented. New demands for modern teaching skills have been placed on educators for so complex a framework. New challenges have arisen for teacher trainers to aptly prepare teachers, so that from the very first day they can rise to the demands of the language classroom, and keep at bay any discipline problems that may arise in this context. Teachers are called upon to juggle numerous factors pertaining to language teaching and learning in a synthetic manner.

2.2 Who do the policies (mainly) address?

On a broader scale, teacher education policies and programmes (1) would generally be addressing researchers, companies, future teachers, tenured teachers, mentors,

pens outside the classroom, in after-school programs, community-based organizations, museums, libraries, or at home. *Non-formal* learning includes various structured learning situations, such as swimming sessions for toddlers, community-based sports programs and conference style seminars, which do not either have the level of curriculum, syllabus, accreditation and certification associated with '*formal* learning'.

school boards, and curriculum programmes designers; and (2) would concern training courses, methodology and pedagogy (notably through the task-based Action Oriented approach), teacher (self-)evaluation, development of new competences for teachers through in-service training programmes, etc.

More specifically, communication for business negotiation as facilitated through English, a *lingua franca*, is indispensable for economic growth, promoting greater competitiveness at the regional, and ultimately, the global level. Given, however, the cultural and linguistic wealth of some 90 languages on the European continent, policy has also sought to promote plurilingualism and pluriculturalism, to honour this diversity. This would warrant specific linguistic curricula. Whether implicitly or explicitly, efficient language teacher training should promote awareness of this reality, and ensure the acquisition of pertinent functional linguistic and cultural competences of the languages studied (*e.g.* communication skills that are required in argumentation and negotiation).

3 Teacher training tools proposed by the EU

3.1 The CEFR factor

The Council of Europe defines the CEFR as a tool designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency. It is used in Europe but also in other continents and is now available in 39 languages.

The CEFR was created by the Council of Europe between 1989 and 1996 as the main component of the project entitled "Language learning for European citizenship". Its main objective was to provide a template for learning, teaching and assessing which could apply to all languages in Europe, whether this be for native or second / foreign language learning. In November 2001, a European Union Council Resolution recommended using the CEFR to set up language competence validation systems. The resulting six Common reference levels (A1-C2) have become accepted even beyond EU confines as the European standard for grading a learner's language proficiency.

In 1991, the Swiss Federal Authorities held an intergovernmental conference in Rüschlikon, with the topic "Transparency and coherence in language learning in Europe: Objectives, evaluation, certification". This symposium found that a common European framework for languages was needed to improve the recognition of language qualifications and help teachers co-operate, eventually leading to improvement of communication and cooperation among language teachers in Europe. The CEFR is also intended to make it easier for educational institutions and employers to evaluate the language qualifications of candidates to education admission or employment.

As a result of the conference, the Swiss National Science Foundation (a science research support organization which was established in 1952 and is authorized by the Swiss Federal Government) set up a project to develop levels of proficiency, which would lead to the creation of a "European Language Portfolio" —*i.e.* certification in language ability which can be used across Europe. A preliminary version of the

manual on Relating Language Examinations to the CEFR was published in 2003 and was piloted in a number of projects, which included linking a single test to the CEFR, linking suites of exams at different levels, as well as national studies by exam boards and research institutes[3]. Practitioners and academics shared their experiences at a colloquium in Cambridge 2007 and the pilot case studies and findings were published by Cambridge University Press in *Studies in Language Testing* (SiLT), a compilation of academic papers in the fields of education and applied linguistics as related to language testing and assessment. The findings from the pilot projects then informed the Manual revision project during 2008–2009.

3.2 Theoretical background

The CEFR adopts an action-oriented approach that is not altogether new. Indeed, theoretical proposals made by language philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein back in the 1950s, and in the subsequent decades, by sociolinguists such as Dell Hymes, applied linguists Birgit Harley, Patrick Allen, Jim Cummins and Merrill Swain, bear a relationship. The approach considers language users as social agents who develop general and particular communicative competence while trying to achieve their everyday goals.

The CEFR distinguishes general competence in (descriptive) knowledge, skills (know-how), and existential competence, with the further breakdown of communicative competence into linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and pragmatic competence. While this distinction does not exactly match previously well-known definitions of communicative competence[4], correspondences between them can nevertheless be made.

The Framework has three main dimensions: language activities, the domains in which the language activities occur, and the competences on which we draw when we engage in these. The CEFR distinguishes between four kinds of language activities: reception (listening and reading), production (spoken and written), interaction (spoken and written), and mediation (translating and interpreting).

3.3 The domains that CEFR represents

General and specific communicative competences are developed by producing or receiving texts in various contexts under various conditions and constraints. These contexts correspond to various sectors of social life that the CEFR calls domains. Four broad domains are distinguished: educational, occupational, public and personal.

Second and foreign-language competence development according to the generally acknowledged capacities at each of the six designated levels has been laid out and sup-

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_European_Framework_of_Reference_for_Languages

[4] *Communicative competence* is a term coined by Dell Hymes in 1966 in reaction to Noam Chomsky's (1965) notion of "linguistic competence". In fact, the latter is one of the four components of *communicative competence*: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences. The term was coined in 1966, as a reaction against the perceived inadequacy of Noam Chomsky's (1965) distinction between "linguistic competence" and "performance". The notion of *communicative competence* constitutes one of the theories that underlies more recent approaches to foreign language teaching.

ported by the CEFR, which has become the standard blue-print for language teacher education and educational programmes alike.

4 Oral communicative competence: A major language teacher education objective

Since its emergence in the mid-twentieth century, Applied Linguistics has evolved along with its related terminology. As such, in language didactics, Chomsky's linguistic *competence* vs performance went on to become *communicative competence*, denoting in the communicative approach that the learner possesses the knowledge and skills to communicate in a variety of situations. The more pragmatic, task-oriented, CEFR has promoted a more social definition of *communicative competence* where, according to their level, learners are expected to develop the competence to carry out (or perform) tasks in plausible, meaningful, social scenarios. Special emphasis is placed on oral communication skills. Language proficiency is indeed the longer-term goal, as learners work their way from an A1 to a (at best) C2, level. The process of evolving is based on the Vygotskian constructivist model of building up competence (scaffolding), through knowledge and skills. The challenge of teacher education is, as such, to exploit a maximum of the available resources (European or otherwise) in order to train student teachers to guide their own students through progressive construction of communicative competence, and more particularly, oral communicative competence (or proficiency).

4.1 The action-oriented approach factor

The task-based, action-oriented approach is the pedagogy that in recent years has been promoted as the best possible purveyor of the Council of Europe language learning objectives, notably, oral communication skills.

Beyond vocabulary and grammar, with the action-oriented approach, the focus is mainly on communicative language competence. The teacher aims to present the subject matter so that students can see that it is action (communication) as opposed to knowledge (a system of rules). It is important to note, however, that the teacher needs to plan a sequence of several lessons on a theme, building up to a final task. Such a sequence consists of various types of objectives, such as linguistic (grammatical, phonological), lexical, and/or cultural. Grammatical objectives involve structures going from the simple, for a given level, to the more complex; lexical objectives entail vocabulary progressing from the most common to the less common items. The entire responsibility of the application of knowledge belongs to the learner, who at the outset must feel adequately equipped to handle the tasks asked of him/her (be they micro or macro- [final] tasks). The issues of testing and evaluating this knowledge have proven to be a considerable challenge to teacher trainers and trainees alike (as much for pre as for in-service teacher trainees).

The constructivist paradigm (scaffolding) underpinning the action-oriented approach means activating prior knowledge in the learner, and developing background knowledge. Language and literacy development is encouraged and is expected to bring about further language and literacy advancement and language extension.

For the purposes of (self-)assessment, an evaluation of a teacher's competences is proposed: it is based more on personal / professional development, and is less explicitly related to performance. Teacher competency standards include: professional practice; competences facilitating student learning; assessing and reporting student learning outcomes; engaging in professional learning; participating in curriculum policy and other programme initiatives in an outcomes-focused environment; forming partnerships within the school community.

The action-oriented approach is considered to be quite representative of the CEFR. It is task-based, and it is oral communication-dominated. While oral communication is largely carried out through collaborative work and oral presentations before audiences, independent work is nevertheless possible through micro-tasks (*e.g.* written activities, through traditional methods or through ICT[E]). Use of ICT is covered during TT through a course at the pre-exam phase (the *Certificat Informatique et Internet niveau 2 enseignant* (c2i2e) or (in English) "Computer and Internet Teaching Certificate")[5] leading to an IT skills certificate. This action-oriented approach requires projecting and planning over the course of a series of sessions, as the teacher builds up knowledge in the students in order to prepare them for a final task. Language, lexical, phonological and cultural objectives are set. It is worth noting that this more synthetic type of approach may leave teachers who are initially unaccustomed to it quite disconcerted in applying it. Adopting this approach entirely may thus prove to be a challenge. This leads us to consider that teacher training in this area needs more time to mature. The action-oriented approach has in recent years been quite favoured, and has been presented as perhaps the only task-based pedagogy that promotes the more authentically communicative aspects of language. In this sense, we can expect that it will continue to dominate as a pedagogy of choice.

Hancock (2010) quotes John Trim's definition of the action-oriented approach by beginning with the tentative word "attempts": it "attempts 'to define the minimum that a language learner should know and be able to do in order to move as an independent agent in the foreign language environment'". Similarly, the authors of the CEFR emphasize:

> We have NOT set out to tell practitioners what to do or how to do it. We are raising questions not answering them. It is not the function of the CEFR to lay down the objectives that users should pursue or the methods they should employ. [Council of Europe, 2001: xi.]

In other words, these tools are not proposed as axioms, but rather as attempts at situating axioms, or simply questions. Similarly, EU does not promote its language learning tools across the member states through decrees: the member states are thus expected to implement them one way or another, but there have not been any direct injunctions regarding teacher training strategies with this teaching approach. This could be interpreted as either shedding or transferring the responsibility to the teacher trainers (including the mentors in the schools) in the respective countries, or even

[5] Created in France in 2004, it is a certification validating IT and internet skills for professional –teaching and learning– purposes.

to the student-teacher, ultimately, if TT proves insufficient. This only reflects the difficulty of mastering these tools.

As teachers ease into their roles with respect to the content, the grade level and the specific profiles of the groups of students they teach, during teacher training the CEFR is very much about aptly applying the descriptors, (while in reality the heterogeneity that may characterize classes means that the theoretical level does not match with the actual level of certain students or groups of students). Due to its scope and composite character, the action-oriented approach, on the other hand, appears to be a more challenging matter even for the more experienced, as they have to switch from methods they may feel more comfortable with, but are considered outdated. However, the greater dependency of this approach on classroom management makes it even more of a challenge for the newly-graduated teachers (among which, apparently only 5% in France are able to properly handle their class). This constitutes one hypothesis to explain why this approach seems to be more apprehended in training. Throughout the different stages of the training process, namely the exam-preparatory, the post-exam probationary phase, and the tenure in-service training, the action-oriented approach may thus not be adequately exploited although this may evolve with time in terms of training techniques and trainee receptivity, (as trainees become former students of the action-oriented approach themselves).

4.2 Other teacher training tools proposed by the Council of Europe

In Europe and even beyond, one can speak of progressive harmonization of education, and of teacher training, by extension. Exchange of practical tools and research findings has become global. The CEFR and the action-oriented approach have greatly contributed to the setting up of language programmes the world over. This seems to announce a new era of teacher training. Our aim presently is to review a number of EU-inspired TT policies.

The European "Profile" for language teacher education

Kelly (2012) defines the so-called *Profile* policy, elaborated between 2002 and 2004, as providing "a framework for developing the initial and in-service education of foreign language teachers in primary, secondary, and adult learning contexts" (p. 15); and as offering "a frame of reference for language education policy makers and language teacher educators in Europe teacher education" (*Id.*) It outlines "the key elements in European language teacher education" and serves "as a check-list for existing teacher education programmes and a toolbox for those still being developed" (*id.*) (p. 15). It is the "Profile" that is concerned with mobility of citizens in the EU. The European "Profile" was developed from *The Training of Teachers of a Foreign Language: Developments in Europe*, a study that analysed the situation of initial teacher education and continuing professional development (in-service training) across thirty-three European countries.

European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL)

EPOSTL was created to facilitate the implementation of plurilingual policies in teacher education. It is described as "a tool for reflection and self-assessment designed

essentially for use in the pre-service education of modern language teachers" (Diadori, 2012, p. 2), and the evolution of in-service teachers.

The student teacher in this initial phase becomes aware of fundamental aspects of the complex language teaching profession. Such aspects include: curriculum, the aims and needs of a teacher as based on those of the learners; the notion of a teacher's professional identity development; awareness of institutional resources and possible constraints (*e.g.* what is materially available and technically possible in the language classroom). The language (student) teacher is expected to cultivate awareness of methodology as pertains to the various language activities: oral and written comprehension; oral and written expression; and continuous speech. Comprehension and expression imply the dynamics of speaking / spoken interaction; writing / written interaction. Listening, reading, grammar, vocabulary and culture also constitute key aspects of the teaching / learning process, necessitating professional knowledge and know-how.

Lesson planning is examined with respect to learning objectives and lesson content, while the act of conducting a lesson is addressed based on lesson plans and anticipated interaction with learners. Classroom management and pedagogy are key in this area, as the language teacher aims to vary activities and promote even classroom participation. Beyond in-class, face-to-face, sessions, learner autonomy is also addressed, through homework, projects, portfolios, virtual learning environments and extra-curricular activities. Finally, learning assessment tools are examined: their design in terms of objectives and pedagogy (*e.g.* the action-oriented approach is not coherent with structural types of questions regarding language and culture, but rather with prompts eliciting production-type answers for performance assessment and error analysis).

The *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages* is a component of a larger 2005 project entitled *A Framework for Teacher Education* in which key competences of the teaching and didactic profession (*e.g.* context, methodology, resources, lesson planning, conducting a lesson, independent learning, assessment of learning, methodological errors, classroom management...) are identified, for the purposes of the Portfolio but also as tools for self-assessment and reflection in teacher trainees (Komorowska, 2012, p. 32). The concept of the *Portfolio* for (student) teachers was inspired from that for modern language learners, which was established in 2001.

Retallick and Groundwater-Smith (1996, p.13), as quoted by Pace and Navarro (2012, p. 176), aptly recapitulate this concept:

> A compilation of evidence, which demonstrates the acquisition, development and exercise of knowledge and skills in relation to [...] work practices. It offers information and interpretation about a practitioner's philosophy, plans, methods and the student learning outcomes they produce.

Portfolios basically allow present and future teachers to become reflective on action and in action. They also provide teachers with the opportunity to document the practices they would like to preserve and pass on to others and to disregard those

practices which prove to be less effective. Fundamentally a teaching portfolio should demonstrate one's own vision of teaching and learning.

Beyond the adapting to new educational policies, it is more generally the proper of modern language teachers to be in a continuous quest for better pedagogical approaches. This is especially the case during the first eight to ten, on average, years of a career, if not throughout an entire career. Given this duration, and given the increasingly complex character of the teaching profession, the portfolio concept may allow a gain in efficiency, as (student) teachers gain greater perspective on their teaching experience. Thus, what has for years been an unofficial practice has been formalised by the Council of Europe in the form of this portfolio.

QualiTraining: A training guide for quality assurance in language education

The guide entitled *QualiTraining* "aims to encourage an integrative approach to quality assurance and professional development in language education, with examples of concepts, systems and practice in action" (Diadori, 2012, p. 3). The aims are a culture of quality: indeed quality principles, criteria, indicators and standards; then systems, processes and instruments for quality measurement; finally, assessment and evaluation of quality; and benchmarking in validation.

Indeed, "Quali" stands for high quality in teaching, in courses, and in the study environment more generally. Language policies and comprehensive documentation were developed by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, in order to ensure a consistent, standardised approach to quality in language teaching, learning and assessment (Muresan, 2012, p. 64).

Tools, concepts and instruments created within *QualiTraining* include: the CEFRL; English Language Proficiency (ELP); Core Inventory (a collaborative project between the British council and EAQUALS (Evaluation and Accreditation for Quality Language Services) for the design of curriculum content for the different CEFR levels, developed through corpora, and destined for the Profile projects of German, French, Spanish and English; the Council of Europe's European Conference Portal on Machine Learning and Principles and Practice of Knowledge Discovery in databases (data mining): Temporal Difference (TD) learning (a prediction-based machine learning method), projects and related materials; EU Lifelong learning programmes; Quality Assurance (QA)-bodies: accreditation requirements, support, evaluation; *e.g.* EAQUALS' contribution to developing the CEFR.

External pressures: learners' and corporate clients' expectations; university entry requirements; international examinations; growing competition among providers of language education.

The TrainEd Kit

The *TrainEd Kit* (Matei, Bernaus & Heyworth, 2007) is a document developed to help facilitate the transition from language teacher to language teacher trainer. The issues that are raised: that of professional identity, in this case from the Teacher Trainer's vantage point; the roles and tasks of the trainer; planning and preparing for training

sessions, (including training needs analysis); running training courses (with emphasis on promoting, or facilitating, and managing discussions); assessment and evaluation of training. Possible past or present teaching experience is raised. Future trainers are invited to reflect on the Teacher Trainer's role and on the process of creating meaning; as well as on that of planning for action; or that of creating new experience. Bernaus (2012, p. 81) raises the question as to whether teacher education is very different from teaching.

The good trainer: The facilitator

The development of teaching skills could be conceived of as a virtuous circle wherein experience that is subjected to the process of reflection becomes more meaningful, and a tool for yet new action planning, leading to yet new experiences.

Bernaus (2012, p. 84) believes that "to be a good trainer you must be a good facilitator". He agrees with C. F. Hogan's definition (Hogan, 2002), that a facilitator is one who brings out and focuses on "the wisdom of the group, often as the group creates something new or solves a problem". This "collaborative approach" results in "new knowledge". A facilitator is thus someone "who has the role of helping participants to learn in an experiential group" (Heron, 1989, p. 290). The concept of facilitation is considered important "because new ideas surface, groups may come up with more creative responses, and it enables people to hear other people's viewpoints" (Bernaus, 2012, pp. 84–85).

Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality in Language Services (EAQUALS)

North (2009, p. 1) defines The EAQUALS Profiling Grid for Language Teachers as seeking "to summarise the key features of qualifications and competences at different stages of a language teacher's development. [...] Of the two grid axes, one represents three broad stages of development", the "Basic", the "Independent", and the "Proficient", deliberately echoing the three broad levels (A, B and C) of the CEFR. (The CEFR is at the outset the template according to which curricula are described and referenced, while "learning", "teaching" and "assessment" are evaluated at the input phase) (Rossner, 2012, p. 218). The second axis represents four broad categories intended to reflect the main aspects of a language teachers' profile: namely, "Language" (proficiency, awareness), "Qualifications" (credentials, teaching practice, experience), "Core competences" (methodology knowledge and skills), "Complementary skills" (teacher development / digital literacy)" (North, 2012, p. 190). Levels may vary from one category to another depending on the individual.

5 A brief history of (English) language teacher training in France

How do EU policies reconcile with, or even supersede, those of the sovereign member states? Regarding the realities of actual teacher training programmes in the field, we shall take a look at that of the French secondary system. It can be restated here that teacher education policy, and whether to adopt European recommendations, is

theoretically left to the individual member-states, although there is moral pressure to adhere.

Recent changes in secondary-level TT policies can be noted in France —a country which has experienced policy fluctuations over the years, as it tests different didactic approaches, or may be subject to budgetary constraints. Since the 1st of September 2013, for the vocational teaching diploma, a new University Postgraduate Teaching College (*École supérieure du professorat et de l'éducation*, or ESPE) is in charge of teacher education, replacing the —once autonomous, later university-integrated, now defunct— *Instituts universitaires de formation de maîtres* (IUFM). In seeking the vocational teaching diploma (specifically the *Certificat d'aptitude au professorat au second degré* or CAPES), a new, more demanding teacher qualification process has been introduced.

For some historical perspective, during the 1879–1883 period, the Jules Ferry Law was issued, which included the Loi Paul Bert of 9 August 1879, introducing the obligation for every department to create a teacher's college.

The CAPES was created in 1950, to replace the *Certificat d'aptitude à enseignement dans les collèges* (CAEC), which was created in 1941 and which in turn replaced the EPS (*Enseignement primaire supérieur*), a teaching order in France that existed from 1833 to 1959. In parallel, during the last twenty years, the EU factor has been introduced as well. Over the ten last years, the probationary year of in-service training has fluctuated from six hours to fifteen hours and back down to nine hours of in-class teaching, accompanied by a mentor (or *tuteur*), and complemented by further training —previously at the IUFM, presently at the ESPE.

Overall, feedback from student teachers from 2012 conveys that while the much studied CEFR is referred to frequently, the action-oriented approach is promoted, but still poses more of a challenge in its application in the classroom. Given the complex character of the teaching profession more generally, class sessions at the ESPE need to address many other issues revolving around (language) teaching as well. While this more hands-on guidance may be left to the mentor, ultimately the experiences of trainees may be quite individual and varied in terms of effectiveness. What constitutes effective harmonization of teacher trainers is perhaps what needs to be further explored. To what extent does the *QualiTraining* guide cover this need? The portfolio concept, on the other hand, is finding its way into training as a digital competence file.

6 Conclusion

Overall, it can be said that a competence-based European educational policy is slowly confirmed, as national education systems adopt European policies and tools. Meanwhile, as in the case of France, on a sovereign level the debate is on-going as to whether the desired educational basis should be knowledge or economy-driven. The answer to this seems to be dictated by times of economic crisis, where employability appears to be a more urgent issue. At the very least, a balance needs to be struck,

wherein the learner can feel as if he is being enriched both on a personal level as well as on one with a more pragmatic edge.

In the EU, and increasingly around the world, the advent of the competence-based CEFR in combination with the task-based, action-oriented approach, as well as the idea of validating competence and not simply knowledge, has generally added complexity and challenge to language teacher education (TT), and subsequently to the job of the newly graduated teacher while other types of objectives, (*e.g.* cultural, digital) are added to the equation as well. Hence the vast domain requiring know-how in both linguistic and oral communication, that need to be conveyed to the learner in a level-adapted, synthetic way, based on the allotted course time. A greater degree of adapting may be required regarding the task-based, action-oriented approach, given that textbooks, beyond the thematic units, do not provide already prepared "sequences" for the (new) teacher (in this, textbooks will hopefully evolve); and given that preparing such sequences implies a multi-step process, presupposing an understanding of the capacities of a given (age)-group. Furthermore, beyond the methodological question, novice teachers, in trying to promote oral communication, must also tackle multiple intelligences, classroom heterogeneity, multi-level instruction, learner motivation, adapted content, discipline problems and the management of increasingly larger classes. It would also be interesting to examine the training tools that Diadori (2012) evokes more systematically in the teacher-training classroom; and indeed, even discuss the European factor, and its possibilities during this phase.

For example, a Council of Europe survey of the Member States in 2005 (Council of Europe, 2006) found that although use of the CEFR in teacher training is widespread, the focus tends to be on the reference levels and the descriptors, with little mention of the CEFR's descriptive scheme as a way of conceptualizing language learning and use. At the 2007 Council of Europe Forum there was much discussion of the need to provide practical guidance to curriculum developers —preferably with case studies showing the development of CEFR-based curricula and of related teaching materials. The need was formulated to develop training kits for teachers and materials illustrating the implications of the proficiency levels in different contexts; documents would be proposed, making the CEFR more accessible to teachers. Brian North reports (North, 2008, p. 55) the considerable difficulty many have had grasping what the CEFR implies for planning and teaching.

It will be interesting to observe future generations of citizens and to see how the effects of the current educational / teacher training policies, and the economic brand of ideological underpinning, play out, in the respective member states, and in Europe as a whole.

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