Learning the language of the host country for professional purposes

Outline of issues and educational approaches

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Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France

Contents

Foreword

The Council of Europe has been a pioneer in the field of learning the language of the host country for migrants and defining the corresponding needs: in 1968 its Committee of Ministers issued Resolution (68) 18 on the teaching of languages to migrant workers[1]. In 1973, in the wake of a symposium[2], the Wilkins report pointed[3] out that "one of the recommendations has been that special consideration should be given to the language problems met by immigrant workers and their families". Practical follow-up has been provided in the form of a pilot study programme conducted in a number of countries, several studies and national initiatives, as C. Extramiana[4] observes in her introduction. However, the programme has never been implemented, inter alia for lack of the appropriate instrumental means.

Nevertheless, in the new millennium member states have once again been facing increasing challenges, as described in Language requirements for adult migrants in Council of Europe member states: Report on a survey *(2011), and the Council of Europe has therefore decided to offer its support. The political guidelines and instruments concerning foreign languages (used at global level) which have since been produced by the Language Policy Unit have provided a starting point for an ambitious programme for developing new resources for member States.*

This study of a field which had not been addressed for some forty years was conducted in order to provide food for thought and practical guidance for the relevant decision-makers and practitioners.

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[1] In 1977 the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers (CETS 093) was opened for signature by member States of the Council of Europe.

[2] Symposium on *"Modern languages in adult education: a unit/credit system for modern languages in adult education"* organised at St. Wolfgang (Austria - June 1973); Council of Europe, Committee for Out-of-school Education and Cultural Development.

[3] *The language needs of adult immigrants*, D.A. Wilkins, 1973.

[4] Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France (General Delegation for the French Language and Languages used in France)

Introduction

Learning a language for the purposes of integration in the host society is now a public policy issue in a growing number of countries of immigration, which naturally raises the question of language teaching. The purposes, modalities and contents of such teaching are prompting debate in the practitioner community and also among researchers. The involvement of the public authorities seems to have had the effect of bringing this largely informal adult education sector out into the open, so much so that it has now attracted the attention of university researchers. Taking the example of France, the CREDIF[5] did conduct exemplary work in the 1980s in this field (Leclercq, 2010[6]), resulting in a recommendation on the functional teaching of French to migrants which was based on vocational communication and which had different goals and procedures from those of the general curriculum (Colombier & Poilroux, 1977[7]). Around the same time, in the London suburbs, language training modules were being developed for Indian workers employed in industry, whence the name "Industrial English" (Jupp & Hodling, 1975[8]). However, the professional purpose was largely overlooked until fairly recently. The issue began to attract interest during the first decade of the 21st century. In a European political context where knowledge of the host country's language is a litmus test for a desire for integration on the part of aliens who are non-nationals of European Union States, the Council of Europe Language Policy Unit has for several years been working to provide member states with tools and good practices in terms of assessing and teaching the languages of host countries. This work has highlighted pointers for research, two of them being the definition of language needs for integration purposes and language learning for employment-related purposes. These are the two issues we shall be examining in this study, two interlinked issues, as we shall be seeing. Furthermore, the question of language needs is one of the Council of Europe's longstanding concerns, having been the subject of work and pilot projects since the 1970s[9].

In short, we want to present an overview based on a number of considerations originating in France and incorporating input from such other national environments as the United Kingdom, Germany and Quebec/Canada. It will be noted that all the reference projects are mutually influential. These considerations are clearly neither exhaustive nor definitive, but are intended to give an outline of the situation as it stands as a contribution to the work of the Language Policy Unit and for possible subsequent studies.

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[5] CREDIF – Research and study centre for the dissemination of French: this body was set up in 1959 and disbanded in 1996; it operated under the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* at Saint-Cloud, and its research and publications concerned teaching French as a foreign language.

[6] V. Leclercq (2010): *Histoire et mémoire: la formation linguistique des migrants des années 1960 aux années 1980*. Education permanente, No. 183, pp.173-188.

[7] P. Colombier & J. Poilroux (1977), "*Pour un enseignement fonctionnel du français aux migrants*"*, Le français dans le monde,* No. 133, pp. 21-26.

[8] J.C. Jupp & S. Hodling (1975), "Industrial English, an example of theory and practice in functional language teaching". Heinemann Education Books. London.

[9] Project "Defining language teaching goals for migrants", which included three pilot projects conducted in France, Germany and Sweden. Cf:
  - R. Richterich and J.L. Chancerel (1977), "Identifying the needs of adults learning a foreign language", Council of Europe
  - L. Porcher (1980), "Identifying the language needs of migrant workers in France", Council of Europe/Council for Cultural Co-operation.

1. Outline of the issues

1.1 The link between working and acquiring the language of the host country

Gaining a command of the language of the host country has many purposes which are currently under intense scrutiny, one of which is obtaining employment. In order to pinpoint the needs in terms of language skills required for a given occupation, at least one important factor has to be taken into account, time: at what point in time in their integration procedure do speakers of other languages accede to the labour market? What language competences do they have when they enter employment? According to the OECD classification (2011)[10], such persons may be concerned by labour immigration, which varies greatly from country to country, or family immigration. In the former case, their occupational integration no doubt enables them to acquire the language by immersion, in the course of their day-to-day work. In the latter case, persons who have migrated for the purposes of family reunification will at some stage have to consider the question of their occupational integration, which in turn raises the issue of the requisite language competences (this does not usually apply to migrants over 65 years of age). Or again, such persons may already be working in a sector that requires few language competences and may wish to further their career, in which case they will have to develop language skills. Clearly, what are known as "unskilled jobs" primarily concern economic sectors recruiting foreign labour. A study conducted in France (CLP, 2006[11]) pinpointed the principal sectors facing problems with recruitment which mainly attract foreign employees; they are the cleaning, catering and building sectors.

1.2 Occupational activity as a purpose of language teaching

At first sight, the professional purpose would appear obvious: it corresponds to the occupational field singled out in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)[12]* as one of the major fields for language use. It is a clear, uncontested fact that language competences are required for access to the labour market, although distinctions must be drawn between different types of competence and levels of language command, which vary according to the type of job. Nor can we deny the fact that work is a driving force behind the integration process, as has been shown by immigration historians, since language is identified as a "dual key" to integration in that it enables the migrant to take part in exchanges in the common language and also allows him to work and integrate through work. However, at the crossroads of political discourse and research into (foreign) language teaching, language learning for employment-related purposes is a sensitive and delicate subject. It is sensitive because it is easy to see that language is a precondition for occupational integration, and delicate because language training courses for migrants are still usually general in scope and seldom specifically vocational, even though the public authorities occasionally acknowledge the need to take account of the vocational aspect.

Two examples illustrate the recognition of language as an occupational competence. The French Law of 2004 on lifelong vocational training recognises mastery of the French language as an occupational competence, and finances efforts to learn the language and to combat

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[10] OECD (2011), International Migration Outlook 2011. Paris.
http://www.oecd.org/document/10/0,3746,en_2649_37415_48355658_1_1_1_37415,00.html

[11] CLP (2006), CLP (2006), "*Développer la formation linguistique au titre de la formation professionnelle continue en entreprise*". Study directed by Mariela De Ferrari. Paris.
http://co-alternatives.fr/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/migrationsetudes133.pdf

[12] Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. (CEFR), 2001. Council of Europe / CUP (available in 38 language versions). www.coe.intLlang

illiteracy as part of a vocational training programme. Several occupational sectors have prioritised a command of the language in their industry-wide agreements, and can fund training courses for employees at the request of the relevant enterprises. Such training courses are run either in-house or in an outside training organisation. Employees can also apply for training under the right to training (*droit individuel à la formation* – DIF) or individual training leave (*congé individuel de formation* – CIF).

In the United Kingdom, the Commission for Employment and Skills[13] advocates teaching English as a foreign or second language for employment-related purposes: "increasingly, ESOL is taught in the workplace, or in work-focused classes and these have proved very successful". This trend has also been noted by the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy[14]: "Evaluations of ESOL workplace programmes have shown the following benefits: improved communication (and other specific) skills, some level of economic protection, and reduction in reliance on language brokers and some increase in employment opportunities for workers/learners. For employers the benefits are: cost savings, wider access for employees to training, more team work and more flexibility" (Roberts 2003).

1.3   Training in basic or key competences

This brings us to a field which is similar to our own and which relates not specifically to migrants who do not speak the language of the host country but to all adults, whether employed or not, whose low level of vocational skills necessitates the acquisition of basic competences. The main competences are literacy and numeracy, but there are also key competences, as described in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council of 18 December 2006[15] on key competences for lifelong learning and training. While both fields do overlap, it should not be forgotten that the fact of being allophone does not necessarily entail a low level of skills or cognitive difficulties. Two trends are worth highlighting: firstly, public employability policies prioritise unskilled groups by stressing literacy and numeracy or the key competences; secondly, where administrative responsibility is concerned, these policies are defined separately from migrant reception and integration policies. This does not prevent individuals of foreign origin from ultimately being covered by public employability policies. The first finding is that the level of competence is the main issue here, and the second is that the basic and key competences are completely relevant, though not confined, to the field of language teaching for employment-related purposes, which has definite consequences in terms of training provision for adult migrants. Apart from the training provided under reception policies (for the first two years in France), adult migrants can be offered training in basic or key competences which often prioritises native speakers.

1.4   General and vocational teaching

Coming back to language teaching, we might now look at the difference between the two above-mentioned purposes: what do we mean by general teaching and vocational teaching? Language teaching for employment-related purposes refers back to questions which are *a priori* similar to those of learning the language in order to integrate: what must migrants know in order to work? What must they be able to understand, say and write in order to work? With regard to language for the purposes of integration, these questions in their simplest expression are in fact

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[13] UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2009), "The Employability Challenge", London, p. 11.
http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/EmployabilityChallengeFullReport.pdf

[14] www.nrdc.org.uk

[15] Rec. (2006/962/CE) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:en:PDF

no different. On reflection, the difference concerns the time of learning. Usually, teaching for employment-related purposes is considered as specialist teaching following on from general education providing a general standard of mastery. This is what is meant by the following comment:

> *So in order to prevent such persons from being left to their own devices once this stage has been reached, it would be useful to forge links among the competences which they have acquired in L2, on the one hand, and the additional training and the labour market on the other. This approach would have even more impact if migrants were offered individualised career guidance[16].* (Extramiana, Van Avermaet, 2011).

In Quebec, vocational language courses are provided by the Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities (www.micc.gouv.qc.ca) once the language competences have been acquired for the initial levels 1 to 6 on a scale of 12[17]. The following occupational fields are covered: law, administration and business; healthcare; nursing; and engineering. These courses aim to develop occupation-specific vocabulary, knowledge of the occupational environment in Quebec, knowledge of the features of colloquial and vernacular French, occupational integration, etc. The courses were designed on the basis of linguistic profiles of occupations produced by the Canadian Federal Government.

Alongside this approach based on "language first and occupational matters afterwards or elsewhere", we find approaches linking up the linguistic dimension with the occupational dimension within educational mechanisms designed for the initial levels of language competence. Examples are set out in Part 4 of this study on competences. Moreover, the difference between the general purpose and the professional purpose has to do with the degree of specialisation. If we consider that language learning must concern specific competences rather than just the general skills provided for under general language teaching, we should try to pinpoint the specific core competences required. Beyond this, we should examine the teaching situation, depending on whether the training takes place upstream of employment or in direct relation to a job, or at the workplace itself. A distinction must be drawn here between training courses providing access to employment for job-seekers, training courses for retaining one's job and for changing jobs requiring adaptation, and training courses aimed at career progression.

In short we must answer the following questions:

- what is the basis of the specific mode of teaching the occupational specialisation as compared to the general teaching of the language for the purposes of integration?

- where, in terms of levels of competences and acquired knowledge, does general teaching end and specialised teaching for employment-related purposes begin within any overall training course?

- how can we determine specific core competences?

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[16] *Language requirements for adult migrants in Council of Europe member states: Report on a survey* (2011),. Chapter "Challenges", Language Policy Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg. www.coe.int/lang

[17] Quebec scale of levels of competence in French for adult immigrants. These courses target levels 6 to 9. http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/publications/fr/langue-francaise/Echelle-niveaux-competences.pdf

In order to reply, we shall refer first of all to a series of tasks (which are necessarily limited at this stage) concerning:

- the specific area of communication in the working context;

- the concept of needs, which is central both to language teaching and more broadly to training engineering;

- lists or inventories of competences, known as reference frames of competences required for exercising a given occupation.

Examples of approaches will then illustrate this continuum of language teaching for employment-related purposes, which considers the occupation in a very broad manner or, on the contrary, with regard to specific occupations (the medical profession, the cleaning sector, etc), or even specific workstations within a given occupation.

2. Communication at the workplace

2.1 Language practices at the workplace

Some work sociologists and linguists have analysed communication at various workplaces. This is the case of the French pluridisciplinary network *Langage et Travail*[18], which has studied language activity, noting the constant increase in the "linguistic proportion of work". According to J. Boutet (2006[19]), work is becoming less and less physical and more and more symbolic. With reference to Pierre Bourdieu, a command of the language, which is central to the communication competence, should be linked up to a "symbolic capital":

I feel that this idea of communication competence should be articulated with the concept of "language capital", concluding that what we are seeing today at all corporate skill levels is the need for "communication capital".

For his part, the French sociologist P. Zarifian (1996[20]) has studied changes in communication at work, pinpointing a new right to speak. In the labour organisation model, employees responsible for implementing tasks must now communicate, whereas in the Taylorist corporation the right to speak was reserved for executive and managerial staff. The predominance of writing in labour organisations, in tandem with the rise of the tertiary economy and the use of computing, is an extensively analysed phenomenon. Zarifian also spotlights the rise of the competence concept, which is now competing with the qualification concept. One of the effects of the competence concept is that workers must perform tasks which are not confined to the area for which they are qualified and call on different competences in which oral or written communication play a substantial part.

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[18] http://www.langage.travail.crg.polytechnique.fr

[19] J. Boutet (2006), « *Usages professionnels de la parole : le cas des centres d'appel* » in *Apprendre le français dans un contexte professionnel*, Rencontres 2-3.06.2006. Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France. Paris.

[20] P. Zarifian (1996), *Travail et communication. Essais sociologiques sur le travail dans la grande entreprise industrielle*, PUF, Paris.

Lastly, J.-M. Mangiante (2007[21]) justifies the production of reference frames for language competences in the occupational world:

Job specialisation was long considered as the prerogative of highly skilled workstations. But the fact is that the profile of implementing jobs is now demanding increasing specialisation, making it difficult for companies to recruit in certain sectors. On the other hand, greater diversification is now demanded of executives, who must increasingly work right across the board in performing their duties. This novel situation is creating more specific job reference frames, while actual communication tasks are taking up more and more time and space.

2.2   A communication theory applied to labour organisation

Complementing this work, there have been a number of attempts in adult education to pinpoint rules governing not the use of speech, but all communication in the occupational environment. This is made explicit by the *Odysseus* project[22] conducted by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz (2004), covering second language learning at the workplace. Communication should be explored within a given "community of practice". This refers to the specific aspects of a community, an enterprise regarded as a community with its own rules and customs. Within a given "community of practice", language is apprehended from the angle of its operational, cultural and critical dimensions:

- the operational dimension includes language structures enabling people (eg workers) to function in terms of information exchange: eg explaining, following instructions, etc;

- the cultural dimension describes how the workers interact appropriately at the cultural (in fact ethno-linguistic) and linguistic levels: eg in submitting a complaint, apology or request;

- the critical dimension involves understanding relations between oneself and others in a given "community of practice", the ability to act within this community on the basis of informed choices and a critical analysis: eg being able to assess or solve a problem.

This viewpoint is further discussed in the European TRIM Project ("Training for the Integration of Migrant and Ethnic Workers into the Labour Market and Local Community" – Grünhage-Monetti et al., 2005[23]). Upstream of the mechanism for language learning at or near the workplace it is a case of "mapping" communication in labour organisation and communication needs at work, adopting an holistic approach right from the outset:

"*Understanding workplaces as communities of practice and language as a social practice has implications for any educational intervention around the issue of vocational communication. With regard to language teaching and language learning with migrant/ethnic workers, it calls for a holistic approach throughout the entire process of provision planning, delivering, assessing as well as marketing*" (Grünhage-Monetti et al., 2005, p. 24).

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[21] J.-M. Mangiante (2007), « Une démarche de référentialisation en français des professions : le partenariat universités - Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Paris », in F. Mourlhon Dallies, Langue et travail, Le français dans le monde - Recherches et applications. Clé International. Juillet 2007. Paris.

[22] Second language at the workplace: Language needs of migrant workers: organising language learning for the vocational/workplace context. Council of Europe publishing (ECML: www.ecml.at).

[23] M. Grünhage-Monetti et al., 2005). TRIM – *Training for the Integration of Migrant and Ethnic Workers into the Labour Market and Local Community*. Adult Education Centre of Vardo. Norway. www.die-bonn.de/esprid/dokumente/doc-2005/gruenhage05_01.pdf

This viewpoint as expressed here is rather remote from the teaching approach originally envisaged (see questions in the section on "Outline of the issues", which consists in starting off from language teaching and moving towards occupational activity in order to bring the two together. We realise that alongside this teaching demarche there is a systemic approach which does not permit training until the workplace has been properly "understood and inwardly digested". Yet the issue of communication needs, which we will now address, is important in both approaches.

3. The needs issue

3.1   A look back at the history of teaching French as a foreign language

Where language teaching is concerned, the issue of teaching needs, like that of communication needs in the occupational context, has prompted so many different responses that one does not really know what to think. Looking back over the past fifty years of teaching French as a foreign language, F. Mourlhon-Dallies (2008[24]) identifies the approaches which have prevailed in this field, each one presupposing a specific take on communication needs. These approaches, which we shall list and briefly describe, are based on:

- words with specialised vocabularies such as introductory vocabulary for agronomic studies of the general scientific vocabulary between 1963 and 1973;

- texts used at the time of "Instrumental French", which prioritised comprehension of specialised texts;

- communication needs at the time of "Functional French";

- the fields used in the 1990s, as witness such publications as "French for business"; "French for the hotel and catering industry"; French for the tourist and travel industry"[25] etc;

- transversal occupational competences with the type of French recently used for professional communication.

This shows that from French as a speciality language to French as an occupational language, the conceptual framework has considerably widened, and the odds are that language teaching in an occupational context has also changed considerably in countries other than France with different traditions vis-à-vis language dissemination.

3.2   Language needs and learning goals

René Richterich and Jean-Louis Chancerel (1977) were the main theorists dealing with the concept of language needs from the angle of foreign language learning, as we pointed out in the introduction. This approach involves learning not a given language as such but everything to do with this language which facilitates communication for a specific purpose. This means moving on from general-purpose learning to so-called goal-specific learning, since the teaching mechanism is based on what is known of the communication situations of which learners are expected to acquire a command. The learners no longer constitute an undifferentiated mass but are now apprehended in terms of the specificity of their communication needs; they have become "specific target groups".

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[24] pp. 16-47 in the French version. F. Mourlhon Dallies (2008), *Enseigner une langue à des fins professionnelles.* Didier. Paris.

[25] *Le français de l'entreprise, Le français de l'hôtellerie et de la restauration, Le français du tourisme,*

3.3 Analysis of communication needs

Whether in France (J.-M. Mangiante, 2007) or other European countries (ECML *Odysseus*, 2004, and *TRIM,* 2005), the fact of problematising the issue of language needs by attempting to analyse communication needs has been an innovation in the approach to language teaching at the workplace.

In situ observation of the occupational context is the starting point for devising language reference frames for the world of work, as described by J.-M. Mangiante (2007, p. 134):

- Observing the professional context

- Selecting the personnel concerned:
  - identifying tasks; position inside the structure

- Analysing needs:
  - questionnaire and observation forms; interviews; identifying "speech acts"

- Gathering data:
  - recording oral situations; compendium of written documents

- Analysing data:
  - identifying language content; linking up with communication goals

- Devising the frame of reference

The aforementioned international project *Odysseus* (2004) takes account of individual and organisational communication needs, which have to be fully pinpointed. The main approach here is to hold interviews at different corporate levels in order to:

1. pinpoint organisational and individual needs in terms of oral and written communication

2. determine the communication tasks in the relevant fields, viz:
   - the workplace: tasks associated with the workplace (warning a colleague in the event of danger, describing a technical matter orally, giving a colleague an instruction, asking procedural questions, helping solve a problem, etc);
   - the public sphere: rights and duties of the employee;
   - the private sphere: maintaining social contacts;
   - the educational field: language courses, training, etc.

In order to illustrate this model, we shall now look at a questionnaire geared to analysing needs, which was designed for the personal care sector in the Oxford Area in the United Kingdom by the Oxfordshire Skills Escalator Centre. There are several dimensions here, including the type of workstation and professional tasks, work organisation, communication, the requisite qualifications and the means of achieving them. We have identified the main questions as follows:

Examples of questions about personal information

     Examples of questions about field activities

     Questions about what is done in the job

     Questions about the organisation

     Questions about communication in the job

     Spoken communication, Written communication, Information and communication technology, Numeracy skills,

     Communication in the work area/department

     Question about work organisation

     Questions about morale, engagement, motivation

     Questions about education, training and personal development

Training

     Qualifications for work

     Questions about personal development

     Questions about development of literacy, language and numeracy skills

     Learning for life outside work

Alexander Bradell, *Questions for workplace needs analysis surveys*

3.4 Analysis of in-house communication vs. analysis of traditional training needs

The TRIM Project (2005) contrasts the analysis of in-house communication, or systemic analysis, with the analysis of conventional training needs. It argues that this latter model centres on deficits in the individual's linguistic competence which must be made good through training. The analytical model is well-known:

"In such a model workers are asked about their language competence and individual learning backgrounds. They may be observed interacting with co-workers, and documents may be collected for use in the training programme. A supervisor may be interviewed. A training needs analysis requires a skilled language practitioner who can identify relevant issues, analyse data and define training needs." (TRIM, p.41).

Conversely, the TRIM Project envisages the language training process as an integral part of vocational training or of the health and safety training modules provided for employees:

"The consultant/practitioner will explore a range of interventions which can be integrated with vocational training and health and safety. This may include language training programmes for migrant/ethnic workers, literacy and numeracy training (also for indigenous taskforce), cultural awareness or managing diversity, training for supervisors/managers/workers' representatives." (TRIM, p.41).

An effort to summarise the main debate leads us to differentiate several types of competences, mastery of which would seem to be required in the occupational context: general, specialised,

transversal cutting across several trades, and bound up with situations of occupational communication. There are also competence bases, basic competences and key competences within the meaning of the European Parliament and Council Recommendation of 2006 and the Canadian "essential competences".

In the next section we shall be setting out three examples of frames of reference for language competences devised in France for workstations in the territorial civil service, on the one hand, and for building and civil engineering trades, on the other; these frames of reference were devised upstream of a training mechanism which they are supposed to organise. The two ensuing examples describe training programmes mainly intended for healthcare staff working with the elderly in Germany, and secondly for the personal healthcare sector in the United Kingdom. Finally, we thought it would be useful to outline the essential competences formulated in Canada.

4. Which competences?

4.1 A reference frame of competences for workstations in the territorial civil service in France

In the circular form of a competence chart, this frame of reference shows the transversal competences cutting across all workstations in the territorial civil service (CLP, 2009[26], and General Delegation on the French Language and the Languages of France, 2010, pp. 26 and 27[27]).

The Law of 19 February 2007 on the territorial civil service makes "action against illiteracy and in favour of language learning" an important part of the training provided for local and regional authority staff; the need for this legal provision arose from the fact that staff with a low level of skills in the territorial civil service (78% of overall staff) had language needs potentially hampering the requisite adaptations to their workstations. We should note the high percentage of staff of foreign origin, alongside a fair proportion of staff schooled in France. In some cases, such needs can hamper internal mobility: where a vacancy is announced in writing and applications also have to be submitted in writing, where training courses are turned down by staff because notes have to be taken during classes, and where there are problems as to the availability of computer facilities and an intranet, as well as communication via internet. The approach adopted by the frame of reference cuts across all statutory training courses for civil service workstations. Upstream research-action has facilitated the analysis of staff language needs and understanding of language competences in tandem with professional situations of staff members at the workplace.

The competence chart comprises eleven main lines of work grouped together into three poles, viz reflexive, organisational and communicative (*ibid.* p. 13). The reflexive pole embraces the following main lines: perception of the sector of activity, perception of the workstation, perception of the prescriptive framework, perception of the fields of action of the territorial civil service and information management. The second, organisational, pole comprises the following main liens: activity management, management of working instructions and management of relations within a team. The communication pole comprises the main lines of verbalising the work performed, professional spoken interaction, professional written interaction and management of the new technologies.

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[26] http://co-alternatives.en/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Rapport_DGLFLF-FPT.pdf

[27] www.dglf.culture.gouv.fr/publications/Rencontres10_Competences_cles.pdf

The table below shows the competences corresponding to selected main lines, especially those relating to language (in the communication pole):

REFLEXIVE POLE				
Perception of the workstation	Making one's workstation comprehensible to an expert and also to a person from outside the activity sector	Grasping the relation of one's workstation to the overall functioning of the community, as well as workflow issues	Grasping the relation of one's workstation to workflow within the specific department	Pinpointing the specificities of one's workstation and the relevant practical arrangements
Perception of the prescriptive framework for the civil service				
Perception of civil servant status and professional development				
Perception of the fields of action of the territorial civil service				
Information management				
ORGANISATIONAL POLE				
Managing relations within the team				
Activity management				
Managing working instructions				
COMMUNICATION POLE				
Professional spoken interaction	Adapting to all interlocutors in formal and informal situations	Interacting face-to-face, on the phone, etc.	Interacting face-to-face with an unknown interlocutor concerning recurrent activities at one's workplace	Interacting with one's immediate environment concerning recurrent activities
Verbalising the work performed	Formulating and organising reports on events linked to the work context	Explaining what one is doing	Describing what one is doing	
Professional written interaction	Command of a range of professional written documents, ability to respond appropriately to them	Ability to reformulate the gist of a document and respond to it	Grasping professional documents relevant to one's workstation	Identifying recurrent professional documents in one's working environment
Managing the new technologies				

4.2 A competence chart tailored to professional documents used by staff of the urban public cleansing department

There follows a practical example of the use of this competence chart, as analysed in the research-action project for the urban public cleaning department of the City of Grenoble, and more specifically the supervisors making up middle management in this field (CLP, 2009, pp. 26-45). Noting the discrepancy between such staff members' occupational expertise and their written productions, research was conducted into how to improve their drafting of professional documents: individual assessment or staff grading sheets, reports of accidents and assaults, disciplinary reports, synopses, declaration and extension of periods of absence and sick leave, departmental memoranda, etc. These professional documents involve describing (an event or situation) and arguing (a viewpoint or decision). Transcoding information and messages (mainly from oral to written form) is also important. On the competence chart, the reflexive pole (perception of the sector of activity, perception of the workstation, perception of the prescriptive framework, perception of the fields of action of the territorial civil service and information management) determines whether professional documents are being used appropriately or not. For written competences, the main focus is on high-level operations (to whom am I writing? why? what is the main aim here? what are the issues at stake? how can I reflect these issues in writing?)[28].

4.3 A reference frame of language competences for construction and civil engineering workers in France

This frame of reference stems from a survey initiated by the University of Artois in 2007, geared to collecting and analysing language practices at the workplace in the construction and civil engineering trades (Mangiante, 2011[29]). It will be available for consultation on the University of Artois website in the near future[30]. Five trades are covered, corresponding to the priorities of this occupational field: labourer, form-setter, road construction worker, structural works team leader and pipe systems operative. The transversal competences identified in the survey concern worker integration into the enterprise and co-ordination of the various trades on the worksite, administrative constraints (working hours, mobility, breaks, etc), health and safety regulations and occupational medicine. Moreover, specific language competences are associated with various occupational situations. Analysis of the types of discourse recorded at the workplace highlight predominantly oral exchanges, eg:

Working instructions, active and dynamic descriptions of actions to be undertaken, announcements of tasks to be performed during the day or the next day, detailed statements (conditioned by time, space, material resources, worksite incidents, etc), and frequent explanations in news on training programmes or the integration of new recruits (ibid., p. 15).

4.4 Vocational qualification modules for healthcare staff in Germany

The project MigA (*Migrantinnen und Migranten in der Altenpflege)* is implemented in the *Land* of North Rhine Westphalia by the "Adult Training Institute" (*Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung)[31],* devising new vocational qualification modules for healthcare staff

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[28] http://co-alternatives.fr/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Rapport_DGLFLF-FPT.pdf, p.37.

[29] J.-M. Mangiante (2011), « *Un référentiel de compétences langagières pour les métiers du bâtiment et travaux publics* », p. 107-121 in J.-M. Mangiante (Etudes réunies par) *L'intégration linguistique des migrants, état des lieux et perspectives.* Artois Presse Université. Arras.

[30] www.univ-artois.fr

[31] http://www.die-bonn.de

dealing with elderly persons (Friebe, 2006[32]). The approach combines care for the elderly and language training. The healthcare section covers gerontology, the Law on healthcare insurance and the quality standards for healthcare bodies (over one hundred) which took part in the project. The language section is based on the "German at the workplace" (*Deutsch am Arbeitsplatz*) programme devised by the Adult Training Institute (Grünhage-Monetti, 2006[33]). The vocational qualification modules are geared to facilitating communication with patients, planning and administering treatment, writing reports on the care provided and conducting case-studies of patients. For further information, see the *Deutsch am Arbeitsplatz* website: http://www.deutsch-am-arbeitsplatz.de/praxisbeispiele.html.

4.5   Training for an occupational sector: the care sector in the United Kingdom

Over the past few years, the personal care sector[34] has launched a programme to improve staff competences. Employees of foreign origin account for about half of all low-skill employees, who are primarily concerned by these professionalisation measures, the other half being persons with low standards of education.   The approach has involved clarifying the requisite competences for all employees in the sector:

- in order to work in the care sector, which covers all ages (infants, children, elderly persons, and also dependent and ill persons)

- in order to exercise one of the many jobs in this sector.

There are four levels of responsibility: Administrator/Office Worker, Ancillary Worker, Care Worker, Senior Care Worker.

The website http://www.scie-careskillsbase.org.uk presents competence assessments in the type of communication peculiar to the professional sector: *All social care staff use information and communicate in their jobs. To do this they need: speaking and listening skills, reading and writing skills, number skills.* Similarly, the site also provides tools for managing competences and implementing standards. We shall reproduce the 13 oral communication skills listed for care workers.

Skills Check 01: Talking about the principles of care

   Principles of care, quality, Common Induction Standards 2005

   Skills Check 03: The Organisation and the Role of the Worker

   Care partnership, General Social Care Council (GSCC) Codes of Practice

Skills Check 05: Effective Communication

Skills Check 07: Develop as a Worker

   Learning to improve services, value of qualifications, ways to learn, help from supervisors to learn and develop

Skills Check 10: Different Ways People Communicate Feelings

   Reading facial expressions, body language, challenging behaviour, how to promote good communication

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[32] J. Friebe (2006), *Migrantinnen und Migranten in der Altenpflege*. Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung. Bonn.

[33] M. Grünhage-Montti (2006), *Interkulturelle Kompetenz in der Zuwanderungsgesellschaft.* Bertelsmann. Bielefeld.

[34] www.scie-careskillsbase.org.uk

Skills Check 12: How to Deal with Complaints

General use: understanding complaints, responding to complaints from people who use services and from colleagues

Domiciliary use: understanding complaints, responding to complaints from people who use services and from relatives/carers

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Skills Check 24: Interacting with People from Other Cultures

Influence of culture on behaviour, problems in direct care related to cultural differences

Skills Check 25: Speaking Politely

Politeness and respect, using politeness to avoid misunderstandings, giving instructions politely to people who use services, making requests politely to supervisors, politeness in different cultures

Skills Check 27: Following Travel Directions

Giving directions, receiving directions, plotting route on street map

Skills Check 31: Role of the health & social care worker

Language and concepts associated with the role of the social care worker (Standard 1 of the CIS 2010), including following proper procedures and record   keeping

Skills Check 33: Communicate effectively

Language and concepts associated with effective communication (Standard 3 of the 2010 CIS), including behaviour as communication, barriers to communication   and confidentiality

Skills Check 36: Principles of safeguarding

Language and concepts associated with safeguarding (Standard 6 of the CIS 2010), including abuse and neglect and communication skills

Skills Check 38: Health and safety in adult social care

Language and concepts associated with health and safety (Standard 8 of CIS 2010), including infection control and moving and positioning

Source: http://www.scie-careskillsbase.org.uk/index.php?id=327&newcat=21&refined=9

4.6 Transversal competences

The professional field comprises frames of reference for general competences targeting the main tasks conducted in specific occupations, although they do not include specific language or technical skills. This applies to the primary competences at the workplace inventoried by the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (2005)[35]. Matching up with the twelve Canadian Language Benchmarks, these skills are defined as "enabling competences". This means that they empower individuals to discharge professional duties at work and to execute other tasks in everyday life. They are not technical or specialised competences required for workers to execute their work properly, but rather general skills enabling workers to learn, adapt and implement their technical know-how in their everyday lives and at work[36].

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[35] Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (2005), *Relating Canadian Language Benchmarks to Essential Skills: a Comparative Framework.* Ottawa. http://www.language.ca/

[36] www.hrsdc.gc.ca/fra/competence/ACE/profils/profils.shtml

The essential skills are:

- Reading
- Document use
- Numeracy
- Writing
- Oral communication
- Working with others
- Reasoning ability
- Computer use
- Continuous learning

In the Essential Skills Framework, a field of competence is expressed in accordance with levels of complexity. Most of these competences comprise five levels of complexity, whereby the nature of the essential skills (competences) is apprehended in accordance with the degree of complexity. The challenge for vocational training courses is that they must have language benchmarks which relate to the techniques used in each occupation. The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks is currently using the essential skills profiles to devise the language profiles for occupations in the tourism sector, which will provide the starting point for other occupations and sectors.

Similarly, with reference to the above observations, the British portal *Excellence Gateway* has a rubric *Skills for Life* and a sub-rubric *Skills for Life Core Curriculum,* with a chapter on employability, which concerns learning skills linked to employment. They are defined as follows:

The purpose of this employability skills section is to show how language, literacy and numeracy skills (LLN) underpin familiar work tasks, for those in employment or seeking work. The content has been developed to enable teachers and trainers involved in employability skills development to identify how workplace skills are linked to the underpinning LLN skills.[37]

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[37] www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=sfl-cc-employability

Conclusion

Drawing on the need to take account of the occupational field in training programmes provided for the purposes of integration, and having successively addressed the language aspect of work, the communication needs and the definition of such needs, we have noted a number of approaches to pinpointing the language skills required for any given occupation. Several observations are needed in the wake of this overview. First of all, the training framework necessarily differs depending on whether training is envisaged upstream of employment (during the job-seeking process), in direct relation to the job or at the actual workplace. Subsequently, the competences input, which is currently used in a wide variety of training arrangements, leads us to devise skills benchmarks linking up language and occupational aspects on the basis of communication situations. The Canadian Essential Skills and the European key competences constitute the other vocational training pole in which language occupies a vital place because it conditions all the other learning processes.

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Site location

Canada

www.language.ca : Centre des niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens / Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks

http://www.rhdcc.gc.ca : Ressources humaines et développement des compétences Canada / Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Quebec

www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/langue-francaise/index.html

Ministère de l'immigration et des communautés culturelles (Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities)

France

http://www.langage.travail.crg.polytechnique.fr : Language and employment network

http://co-alternatives.fr/

Germany

www.deutsch-am-arbeitsplatz.de/ : German in the company

United-Kingdom

www.ukces.org.uk : UK Commission for Employment and Skills

www.nrdc.org.uk : National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy

www.excellencegateway.org.uk : Excellence Gateway

www.scie-careskillsbase.org.uk : Care Skillsbase / Practical resources for all social care workers