

LINEE News

9th Issue – November 2010

Goodbye LINEE, Welcome LINEE+

By the end of November this year, LINEE comes to an end as EC funded project. During the last months, however, LINEE has set up a core group that is going to make sure that the valuable contacts and knowledge of LINEE is not lost. LINEE will continue to exist as LINEE+. At the very least, LINEE+ will be a network of researchers who set up research groups depending on what funding opportunities arise. Currently, a COST proposal is in the process of reviewing. Moreover, as they proved to be valuable for junior researchers, the Training Institutes will be continued, organized by the Charles University Prague. The date for the next Training In-

stitute is already fixed: 20–24 June 2011.

This issue of our newsletter looks back at the LINEE policy brief held in Brussels in September and gives a short overview of the results of the three research projects conducted in the last months of LINEE. Furthermore, it contains a selection of recent publications that resulted from LINEE research.

The final report on the work of LINEE is going to be finished by the end of this year and will be published on the LINEE website. The website will continue to exist and contains descriptions of research projects, results, reports, links to other project and, last but not least, contacts to researchers.

High Impact of Projects Like LINEE

The Directorate-General for Research has published an evaluation of the impact of the Framework Programmes on the European Research. It says that the large instruments (Networks of Excellence and Integrated Projects) have “improved the state-of-the-art in SSH [Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities] research”.

Projects good for careers

Regarding the impact of the Framework Programme on researchers’ careers, the evaluation states that it has “improved the learning and training environments of researchers with a new, more participatory research culture and learning environment. This has had an impact upon early career researchers and their career opportunities in particular.” Projects such as LINEE are said to be particularly valuable for early career researchers, while mid-career and senior researchers have less benefits. Unfortunately, early career researchers can become too dependent upon EU funding: “The lack of national funding for comparative, inter-disciplinary and policy-relevant social science and humanities research in the Member States makes it hard for these

highly trained early career researchers to secure positions.”

The evaluation also identifies a major problem regarding the sustainability of projects funded under the Framework Programme. Once the funding from the EC ends, it is difficult to continue the consortia, and funding for multinational research “was generally seen difficult to obtain”.

Investment in people

Networks of Excellence, such as LINEE, “were typically perceived as resulting in benefits that are fluid and transferred through individuals as they move around. Their lasting impact therefore lies in building lasting cooperation and thematic impact in the future.” Integrated projects were “seen as more likely to create long lasting institutional structures between organisations and countries than Networks of Excellence.”

LINEE can especially affirm the point that the lasting impact of Networks of Excellence lies in building lasting cooperation between individuals.

► http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/reports_en.html

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Languages In a Network of European Excellence

Bringing Research Results to Where They Are Needed

On 23 September, LINEE held a meeting in Brussels to present its core findings to stakeholders. The subsequent discussion revealed that the results were interesting, but that LINEE was mostly preaching to the converted.

Over 60 participants from various organisations attended the meeting. The main messages of the presentations were:

- Language policies concentrate on standard languages and – at best – on minority-language groups considered to have “always” been part of a particular territory.
- English does not necessarily threaten linguistic diversity but can be a facilitator for further language learning and for intercultural understanding and contact.
- Multilingualism is a neglected resource in language classrooms.
- Multilingualism is a term that is interpreted differently, not only by lay people but by (European) policy-makers as well.

Surprisingly mild criticism

Especially regarding the role of English and the simultaneous use of several languages in the classroom, the members of LINEE expected to meet opposition. However, the questions and statements during the subsequent discussion were either supportive or only mildly critical.

A member of the European Commission said, among other things, that he appreciated the points made by the speakers, but that if LINEE critically as-



Research brief in Brussels: LINEE presented key research results to stakeholders.

sessed EU language policy, it “barked up the wrong tree”, as the Commission had no power to change things at national level.

Reaching the right people is difficult

Another discussant said that instructors who evaluate language teaching and learning in the member states should be invited to such events, as they are the ones who need convincing and who also have the power to bring about change in language learning and teaching. At the same time he conceded that it was usually difficult to reach them and get them to attend events such as

the LINEE meeting in Brussels.

After the presentation of LINEE’s results and the discussion, members of LINEE and guests engaged in lively discussions in smaller groups. These informal discussions and the event as a whole certainly raised LINEE’s visibility and were a networking opportunity. In hindsight, such events should probably be organized at an earlier stage of research projects. Moreover, the audience’s reaction showed how important, but difficult it is to reach people with implementation power who might be convinced by the research results to improve current practices.

Migration, the Workplace and the Role of English

Language is not as essential for integration and social cohesion as policies suggest, found one of three LINEE pilot projects running during LINEE's last phase. Findings of other projects: at the workplace, many different forms of multilingualism exist, and economic considerations seemed to always stand behind issues of language policy in LINEE.

The last three LINEE projects covered topics that emerged in all four of LINEE's thematic areas: language and the workplace, language and migration, the role of English in Europe. To differing extents, they used data collected during the last four years of LINEE or otherwise made use of the work previously done.

Migration policies overly concerned with language

In the contexts investigated by LINEE, language is not crucial to good "informal" citizenship, i.e. observing the law, paying taxes and not behaving in an anti-social manner. However, governments manage the incorporation of outsiders (and demonstrate that to the electorate) through language learning and testing. In this way, the social challenge of migration is redefined primarily as a language problem and meeting the challenge of migration becomes the responsibility of the individual or family rather than the state.

The lack of skills in the dominant language of the host community is in some cases not a problem for migrants as they live and work in areas where many of their compatriots live. However, the longer migrants plan to stay in a country, the more important language competence becomes to them.

The researchers investigating language use at the workplace discovered different types of multilingual

workplaces. In some cases, although many languages were used at the workplace, the majority of workers was monolingual. In direct trading situations, knowledge of as many languages as possible seemed to be valuable, but could be limited to a few basic phrases (such as "hello" or "thank you"). Other workplaces function with very few languages (such as the language of the mother company, the language of the state and/or local administration and English). And yet other workplaces function mainly by the use of English, with workers speaking all sorts of languages as mother tongue. Finally, at some workplaces the workers know a lot of languages, but their language knowledge is not exploited (e.g. migrant workers).

Speak the customer's language

In multinational companies, employees adjust to the local language by learning basic expressions, by learning the language in order to do easy small talk, or by acquiring passive knowledge on a working level. Learning languages *at work* requires some basic knowledge but it appears to be more efficient for most employees than learning languages *besides work*.

Companies adjust their language use and policy to the customers' (presupposed) needs and wishes. Internally, very

few languages are used, English often being the language to be used when, for example, a document has to be understandable to all management members.

English use in LINEE: influenced by economic considerations

Another project investigated the role of English as a lingua franca in a knowledge-based society, using LINEE as a case study. In LINEE, economic considerations seemed to always stand behind issues of language policy. "If we are translating reports to other languages: who is doing it? Who pays? What does it cost? What are the benefits?"

As a language survey showed, English was the only language that all members of LINEE understood and could use. So for reasons of practicality, English became the dominant language within LINEE. For many members of LINEE, English was an effective tool for communication that established a level playing field. Others opposed the dominance of English and saw it as an advantage for native speakers. Despite the negative views some respondents expressed, for practical reasons, most of them would do things in much the same way if they were to participate in a similar project.

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LINEE Publications

The following list is a selection of publications that resulted from research conducted for LINEE.

- Jenkins J. (forthcoming). Accommodating (to) ELF in the international university. *Journal of Pragmatics*. Elsevier.
- Rindler Schjerve R. (forthcoming). Europäische Mehrsprachigkeit – auf der Suche nach einer Definition. In: de Cillia et al.(eds.) *Diskurs – Politik – Identität*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg-Narr. 333-341.
- Rindler Schjerve R., Vetter E. (forthcoming). Europäische Mehrsprachigkeit zwischen politischer Gestaltung und wissenschaftlicher Erforschung. In: Hinrichs, Uwe/Büttner, Uwe (eds.), *Handbuch der Eurolinguistik*. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz. 805-819.
- Jenkins J. (2009). (Un)pleasant? (in)correct? (un)intelligible? ELF speakers' perceptions of their accents. In: Mauranen A. & Ranta E. (eds.): *English as a Lingua Franca: Studies and Findings*.
- Nekvapil J., Sherman T. (2009). Pre-interaction management in multinational companies in Central Europe. *Current Issues in Language Planning* 10 (2), 181–198.
- Jenkins J. (2008). English as a Lingua Franca: interpretations and attitudes. *World Englishes* 28/2.
- Böhringer H., Hülmbauer C., Vetter E. (eds.) (2010). *Mehrsprachigkeit aus der Sicht zweier EU-Projekte. DYLAN meets LINEE*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang (Reihe: Sprache im Kontext, ed. by Stegu/Wodak).
- Franceschini R. (forthcoming). Multilingualism and Multicompetence: a conceptual view. in: *The Modern Language Journal*. Wiley. spec. Issue ed. by Jasone Cenoz/Durk Gorter.
- Sujoldžic A. (2009). Multiple Ways of Belonging in a Multicultural

City, Collegium Antropologicum 33 (2009) 4: 1335–1348

Current Issues in Language Planning, Volume 11:2. Routledge. London, New York:

- Sloboda M., Szabó-Gilinger E., Vigers D., Šimičić L. (2010). Carrying out a language policy change: advocacy coalitions and the management of linguistic landscape. 95-113 .
- Tunger V., Mar-Molinero C., Paffey D., Vigers D., Barlóg C. (2010). Language policies and 'new' migration in officially bilingual areas. 190-205

To appear in: European Journal of Language Policy 2.2. Liverpool University Press (forthcoming):

- Sherman T., Carl J., Balogh E., Tápainé Balla Á., Engelhardt O. (2010). The interaction of language schools and multinational companies in the management of multilingual practices.
- Mitchell R. (2010). Policy and practice in foreign language education: case studies in three European settings.
- Cogo A., Jenkins J. (2010). English as a Lingua Franca in Europe: a mismatch between policy and practice.
- Tunger V., Vigers D. (2010). Migration in contested linguistic spaces: the challenge for language policies in Switzerland and Wales.
- Studer P., Kreiselmaier F., Flubacher M. (2010). Language planning of the European Union: a micro-level perspective.
- Hilmarsson-Dunn A., Beswick J., Sloboda M., Vasiljev I., Jernej M., Ille K. (2010). Language use and opportunities for economic migrants in Europe: Policy and practice.

Training Institute in Prague

After the success of the LINEE Training Institutes, the Charles University Prague has decided to continue organizing the Training Institutes in Prague. The next one will take place from 20 to 24 June 2011.

A report on the Training Institute in June 2010 is available on

► www.linee.info/ti_2010.htm

Links to other projects

LINEE has collected a list of links to other projects, organizations, associations, journals and other resources on language, language diversity and research.

► www.linee.info/links.htm

LINEE in the Délmagyarország

The Hungarian daily newspaper "Délmagyarország" has portrayed LINEE and particularly the work of the Hungarian LINEE partner, the Institute of English and American Studies of the University of Szeged.

► <http://krz.ch/vtex>

LINEE on SCOOP

A summary of LINEE's results have been included in the news alert of the project SCOOP, which "seeks to support the efforts of the research community to reach policy makers and facilitate the flow of information from the research community to other interested audiences, thereby supporting evidence-based policy making".

► <http://krz.ch/vtey>