



PROSPER ASE
language centre

EUROED 

2012, European Survey on Language Competences, Analysis of its results and plans for future actions in the framework of the European Language Label

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Overview

- Introduction to the ESLC
- Language test results within national educational systems
- Policy issues – recommendations
- Key findings of the ESLC
- State-of-the-art: how policies, findings and indicators are integrated in ELL winning projects
- Conclusions

What is ESLC

- European Survey on Language Competences: collect information about the foreign language proficiency of students in the last year of lower secondary education (ISCED2) or the second year of upper secondary education (ISCED3)

Goals of the ESLC

- Provide information about language learning, **teaching methods and curricula**
- Undertake a survey of language competences
- Allow member states to **contextualize the data**
- Facilitate a **more productive** comparison of language policies and language teaching methods between Member States (for identifying and sharing good practice)

Methodology and structure of the survey

- **Sample size:** 54,000 students in 16 participating educational systems
- **Tested education level:** last year of lower secondary education (ISCED2) or the second year of upper secondary education (ISCED3)
- **Covered language skills:** Listening, Reading and Writing (A1 to B2, each student was tested at 2 of the 3 skills, in one language)
- **Test languages:** English, French, German, Italian and Spanish

ESLC outcomes

- A profile of the **language proficiency** of sampled students.
- **Contextual indicators** to a broad range of information on the **context of foreign language teaching policies** and **foreign language learning** at student, teacher and school level
- Information on the relationship between **language proficiency** and the **contextual indicators**
- A **resource and knowledge base** for policy analysis and research.

ESLC test structure

- the **validity of the ESLC** language tests relates to the **CEFR** => an example of **good practice** at the level of ELL: projects have been awarded the label which have worked on creating language learning instruments correlated with the CEFR

Results of the language tests

- **global results** => the proportion of students achieving each CEFR level in the skills of Reading, Listening and Writing
- **language test outcomes** by educational system and by skill => results in first and second target languages are compared
- comparison of **performance in the five tested languages**

Language test outcomes by educational system and by skill; compared results in first and second target languages

- **First target language:** levels achieved vary widely across educational systems. In the highest-performing educational systems the majority of students demonstrate **B2** competence in **Reading** and **Listening**, while in the lowest-performing educational systems the majority of students do not exceed **A1** in these skills. The first target language is **English** in all but two cases – the Flemish and German Communities of Belgium, where it is **French**.
- **Second target language:** in most educational systems the majority of students are achieving **A1** in second target language **Reading**. In about half the educational systems 20% or more of students are not achieving **A1**. More positively, in more than half the educational systems 20% or more of students are achieving **B1**. The two most highly performing entities – the **Flemish and German Communities** of Belgium – have English as second target language.

The context of foreign language teaching – policy issues

- Policy issues identified as relevant for improving foreign language learning:
 - Early language learning;
 - Diversity and order of foreign language offered;
 - Informal language learning opportunities;
 - School's foreign language specialisation;
 - ICT to enhance foreign language learning and teaching;
 - Intercultural exchanges;
 - Staff from other language communities;
 - Language learning for all;
 - Foreign language teaching approach;
 - Teachers' access to high quality initial and continuous training;
 - A period of work or study in another country for teachers;
 - Use of existing European language assessment tools;
 - Practical experience

Relation of context factors with foreign language proficiency

Context factors:

The effect of a basis for lifelong learning of foreign languages:

Early language learning

Diversity and order of foreign languages offered

The effect of a language friendly living environment:

Informal language learning opportunities

The effect of language friendly schools:

School's foreign language specialization

ICT to enhance foreign language learning and teaching

Intercultural exchanges

Staff from other language communities

Language learning for all

Foreign language teaching approach

The effect of teacher initial and in-service training:

Teachers' access to high quality initial and continuous training

A period of work or study in another country for teachers

Use of existing European language assessment tools

Practical experience

Early language learning

Positive effect on test results: an earlier onset => higher score on the language tests (this appears more evident in **writing** than in **reading** and **listening**)

Particularly important as proficiency in writing usually appears to be situated at lower levels than the other skills

Diversity and order of foreign language offered

Positive effect:

- in the majority of the national educational systems
- also influenced (positively) by the learning of an **ancient language**
- **writing** appears to be the skill most influenced

Informal language learning opportunities

Several indexes have been researched in this category:

- **number** of first languages learned: no significant effects
- **parents' target language knowledge** & use of target language in the home: positive
- **target language exposure** through **the living environment**: no effects recorded in reading and listening, negative effects recorded in writing
- target language exposure and use through **visits abroad**: slightly positive
- target language exposure and use through **traditional and new media**: significantly positive, for all skills

School's foreign language specialisation

- usage of **CLIL**: no clear effect
- **school's specialist language profile**: positive effects (i.e. more language specialization is related to higher average test scores)
- participation in **remedial or enrichment (extra) lessons**: slightly positive

ICT to enhance foreign language learning and teaching

- access to a **multimedia** (language) **lab**: no clear effects
- availability of a **VLE**: slightly positive
- availability of **software for language assessment**: slightly positive (for listening and the language aspect of writing)
- **teachers using ICT**: no clear effects
- **use of ICT at home** for foreign language learning: negative effects (strong)

Intercultural exchanges

- **school trips to and visiting schools from foreign countries:** slightly negative
- **created** opportunities for school language projects: no clear effect
- **received** opportunities for school language projects: mixed effect in different educational systems

Staff from other language communities

No clear effects on test results:

- If one or more Ts from abroad have come to work in the school
- If the TL is the Teacher's first language
- If Ts have received training to teach the target language as a foreign language

Language learning for all
No clear effect on the immigrant students' scores on
the language tests:

- *If they received extra help in mastering the host language*
- *If formal education is provided in language of origin*

Foreign language teaching approach

Positive impact on test results

- emphasis on the four communicative skills
- emphasis on Grammar and on Culture and literature
- Ts' use of the target language in class
- Positive attitude of Ss of their lessons, teacher and textbooks – good effect on Writing
- Target language is not compulsory

Foreign language teaching approach

No clear effects on scores:

- T's emphasis on Pronunciation and Vocabulary
- Ss' positive perception of language lessons, teacher and textbooks – no effect on Listening and Reading

Negative effect:

- Pointing out similarities of target language with other known languages goes with lower results

Teachers' access to high quality initial and continuous training

Positive effects on test results

- If Ts have a full certificate for teaching the foreign language
- The no. of different financial incentives for in-service training from school as reported by principals
- The no. of times Ts participate in in-service training (partially positive – for some of the skills). In almost all educational systems the focus is on language, rather than on teaching-related issues.

Teachers' access to high quality initial and continuous training

No clear effect

- The highest educational level of teachers (because the majority have the same level in most educational systems)
- Ts' language specialisation
- The no. of different financial incentives for in-service training and the organisation of the training as *reported by teachers*

A period of work or study in another country for teachers

No clear effect on average school scores for any language skill:

- If one or more Ts participated in exchange visits or not
- If the Ts received funding for such visits

Slightly positive effect:

- The no. of teachers' stays in a target language culture for more than a month

Use of existing European language assessment tools

No clear effects:

- If Ts had received training about the CEFR. Hardly any positive effects are significant
- How frequently Ts use the CEFR for different reasons – limited positive effects in two thirds of the cases.

Practical experience

No clear effects on average school scores for any of the skills:

- duration of in-school teaching placement
- no. of languages that Ts taught in the past 5 years

Positive effects (but hardly significant):

- The teachers' experience in teaching the target language

Key findings: language proficiency (overall performance)

- Language competences provided by educational systems still need to be significantly improved:
 - Level of independent user (B1+B2) reached by only 42% of the tested students (first foreign language) and 25% (second foreign language)
 - A large number of pupils have not achieved the basic user level (14% and respectively 20%)

Key findings: language proficiency (performance by educational system)

- There is a wide range of ability across countries in Europe
- **first foreign language** 82% in Malta and Sweden (English – independent user) - 14% in France (English) and 9% in England (French)
- **second foreign language** (not English): 4% in Sweden (Spanish) and 6% in Poland (German) to 48% in the Netherlands (German)

Key findings: language proficiency (performance by language)

- English is the language pupils are most likely to master
 - it is perceived as useful;
 - high degree of exposure to it
 - usage through new and traditional media

Key findings from the contextual questionnaires

Positive effects on proficiency:

- An **early onset** and lower perceived difficulty
- Number of **ancient and foreign languages** learned
- **Parental target language** knowledge
- Target language **exposure** and use through traditional and new **media**
- Teachers' and students' **use of target language** during target language lessons
- **Perception of usefulness** of target language and target language learning
- **Compulsory language learning**

Key findings from the contextual questionnaires

Negative effects on proficiency

- Perception of the target language as being difficult

State-of-the-art: how policies, findings and indicators are integrated in ELL winning projects

Selection criteria

Winners – Cyprus 2012

1. **European dimension** – reflected in:

- Linguistic diversity
- How language learning contributes to improving understanding of other cultures

2. **Impact**

- Innovative character
- Enhancement of foreign language skills
- Size of target group
- Increasing number of users

EuroCatering Language Training – Belgium

- Interactive free web-based tool to improve oral language competences
- Self-assessment and progress monitoring using a personal portfolio
- Pertinent area – perceived usefulness
- Impressive no. of languages (incl. LWULT ones)
- Highly sustainable – the project continues to expand (more languages, more areas in catering)
- Growing number of users

ESLC key finding: *Target language exposure and use through **traditional and new media**: significantly positive, for all skills*

CMC_E Communicating in Multilingual Contexts meets the Enterprise- Italy

- Online, original learning tool aiming to develop professional language competences (5 units dedicated to the labour market) in 6 languages.
- Multicultural aspect and authenticity – respecting the culture of each country
- Visitors from 73 countries
- Real-life material to improve professional language skills and intercultural social competences
- **ESLC key finding:** 1) *Target language exposure and use through **traditional and new media**: significantly positive, for all skills*
- **2) High number of foreign languages learned and of **ancient languages****

Learning by moving – Lithuania

- Language teaching campaign on public transport to reach the general public in 6 countries and raise their curiosity about languages
- Interactive and innovative out-of-classroom teaching methods
- It inspired another successful project – “Languages on the Move” – aiming to encourage the learning of Nordic and Baltic languages in public international transport

ESLC key finding: Perception of usefulness of target language and target language learning

My language – your language Norway

- Aimed at families and especially children from minority groups in Norway, to help them develop their reading skills in other languages
- Early language learning for integration in society
- Innovative activities organised by various types of libraries (county, school, public, prison, etc.) to encourage language learning – e.g. exhibitions
- Brochures and online materials in 14 languages of the minorities in Norway about Norwegian language and society
- Bilingual books, multilingual bags of fairy tales

ESLC key finding: 1) **Perception of usefulness** of target language and target language learning

2) **Early onset** of foreign language learning

3) **Parental target language** knowledge

4) Target language **exposure** and use through traditional and new **media**

5) Teachers' and students' **use of target language** during target language lessons

EuroIntegrELP – Romania

Equal Chances to European Integration through the Use of the European Language Portfolio

- Implementing the ELP as a quality instrument for effective language learning among students, teachers, workers and unemployed people
- Comprehensive collection of materials produced for different target groups (authorities, employers, teachers, teacher trainers, students) in 11 languages
- Publication of a multilingual version of the EAQUALS-ALTE ELP in 15 languages and 15.000 copies distributed in project countries and not only
- Strong, wider European and international impact

ESLC key finding: 1) High number of foreign languages learned and of ancient languages

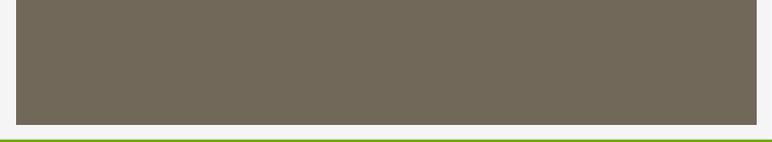
2) Perception of usefulness of target language and target language learning

ELL – label of labels winners: examples of best practice

These 5 projects:

- Address a wide range of target groups/ incl. young children – early onset
- Address real needs of language learners – perceived usefulness (employment, social integration, mobility, communication in different contexts)
- Are transferable and inspirational for others – long lasting and wide impact
- Are imaginative, innovative and sustainable – attract by their novelty and fresh approach
- Their products are free to use by everyone (online)

- 1) **Perception of usefulness** of target language and target language learning
- 2) **Early onset** of foreign language learning
- 3) **Parental target language** knowledge
- 4) Target language **exposure** and use through traditional and new **media**
- 5) Teachers' and students' **use of target language** during target language lessons
- 6) **High number of foreign languages** learned and of **ancient languages**



**Best practice examples
identified in the NELLIP
database
(starting from the ESLC)**

eJournal: Deutsch macht Spass - Jugendliche in Europa - Belgium

- assist students of German to learn the language by using the eJournal method

*ESLC key finding: Target language **exposure** and use through traditional and new **media***

Authentik Language Interactive - Ireland

- practical language learning with a high degree of facilitated access to media in different European countries.
- high quality materials in French, German, Spanish, English and Italian:
- magazines, cassettes, CDs, photocopied exam practice books, teacher development books and digital products

ESLC key findings:

1) **Perception of usefulness** of target language and target language learning

2) Target language **exposure** and use through traditional and new **media**

Learn English through Songs - Belgium

- creation of a networking site consisting of truncated songs illustrating English grammar topics

*ESLC key finding: Target language **exposure** and use through traditional and new **media***

Professor Dr. ABC - Denmark

- The project aims to introduce children living close to the Danish –German border to the neighboring language and culture from kindergarten up until the time when they get their first foreign language classes in school. (early onset of foreign language learning)

ESLC key finding: **Early onset** of foreign language learning

LALERA: Language Learning by Radio - Italy

- The LALERA project aims to produce new teaching material and educative approaches through the use of a traditional mass media, the radio, in order to improve the linguistic skills of the target groups (home health care nurses)

ESLC key findings:

1) Target language **exposure** and use through traditional and new **media**

2) **Perception of usefulness** of target language and target language learning

Reflection on indicators on national priorities for the ELL

- Language learning based on the new technologies (European, 2011- 2012) => *Target language **exposure** and use through traditional and new **media***
- Knowledge of languages in preparation for working life (Austria 2011) => **Perception of usefulness** of target language and target language learning
- Language Learning / Education in the Community – Using resources and developing competences (Austria 2010) => *Teachers' and students' **use of target language** during target language lessons*
- Raising awareness about language learning (Belgium, Flemish community, 2006 – 2012) => **Perception of usefulness** of target language and target language learning

Challenges ahead for language learning in Europe

- Language competences still need to be significantly improved
- Language policies should facilitate the creation of language-friendly living & learning environments
- There is a great potential still to be exploited

Future ELL selections - recommendations

- encourage **early onset of foreign language learning** (especially in countries where at the moment the onset is set later on)
- increase of the **number** of foreign languages learned
- increase the potential of **parents' target language knowledge**
- build on **target language usage in the home**
- develop projects that use **new and traditional media** (e.g. computer games in the target language)
- raise **awareness** on the usefulness of foreign language learning (e.g. for specific languages)

Conclusions

- Starting from the results of the ESLC study, recommendations for measures at European and national levels were made for future possible strategic priorities of the ELL initiatives
- Best practice examples have been identified among the projects that have been awarded the ELL / among the best practices identified by the NELLIP network