

**Multilingual, Transcultural
Communication in the Digital Age –
A new UNESCO Chair
Promoting Global Understanding**

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Multilingual, Transcultural Communication in the Digital Age

- A new UNESCO Chair at the University of Vienna
- Located at the Center for Translation Studies at the Chair for Terminology Studies and Translation Technologies
 - Due to its wide, trans-disciplinary orientation
 - Long history of many international projects (research, development, networking, etc.)
 - Engagement in UNESCO and other UN organizations
- Overall goal: help promote global understanding and cultural diversity – through linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural methods

Multilingual Communication and Multilingualism

- Multilingual Communication refers to the **use of multiple languages in diverse social situations** such as professions, science and research, industry, cultural activities, social work, diplomacy and international cooperation and many other fields of human activity
- Multilingualism : to **strategies and policies** of organizations, governments, and other social configurations of **promoting the use of multiple languages** aiming at overcoming monolingual and mono-cultural communication situations
- The reflection on success indicators of language development processes and language policies is an example of research activities in linguistics

Transcultural Communication

- The concept of Transcultural Communication focuses on communication processes that aim at global interaction **beyond cultural boundaries**
- Sociological theory on the pragmatics of global interaction where transcultural communication is the **tool to develop a global society**

Translation and Terminology

- Translation is one form of multilingual communication focusing on the transfer of knowledge as expressed in one language to another language
- -> **inter**-lingual communication
- Diverse forms ranging from technical translation, literary translation to interpreting, multi-media forms and localization
- **Terminology**
 - Structured set of terms and concepts in a specific domain in a given language
 - **Cognitive tools** for technical communication
 - Pre-requisite for translation and other forms of multilingual and transcultural communication in domains and different spheres of life
 - Professional and technical communication at a global scale needs multilingual terminologies and multilingual information systems

Ubiquitous Information and Communication Technologies

- Today, multilingual and transcultural communication are essentially computer-assisted and web-based
- -> new forms of communication have emerged
- Strong factor in language development (lexical, grammatical, pragmatic, semantic, etc.)
- Language technologies and computational linguistics have become engines of industrial, economic, cultural and societal development, key areas:
 - Distributed communication networks, web 2.0
 - Language resources -> eScience, language industry
 - Language eLearning
 - Web technologies -> web 3.0, media convergence, and beyond

Goals of this new UNESCO Chair

- to **strengthen research** in the field of ICT-enhanced multilingual and transcultural communication including
 - localization and globalization technologies
 - language resource management
 - multilingual computing methods
 - multilingual eLearning
 - multilingual web content management, and related methods
- to directly apply and disseminate these research results in the form of directly **applicable and practice-oriented methodical knowledge** in interactive education programmes and courses to specified target groups,
- to **promote the development of a truly multilingual social web** (Web 2.0), harnessing semantic web technologies (Web 3.0) and **strengthening transcultural communication patterns** using a wide range of **language resources and language technologies (LRT), multilingual computing methods, multilingual eLearning, and cultural diversity management procedures,**
- to create an international **UNESCO UNITWIN network** for this topic in the development phase, as well as to actively **contribute to and engage in UNESCO programmes such as IFAP** and new initiatives, in particular the newly proposed **Cyber Network for Learning Languages**, as to combine different perspectives and to reach strong synergy effects over time.

Activities

- concrete educational activities
 - an annual **international summer school** on the topic of multilingual and transcultural communication in a digital society starting in July 2011
 - **local courses** in different languages and in different locations
- organize **meetings, workshops and conferences**
 - in co-operation with the UNESCO chair partner organizations (see slide below)
 - with UNESCO itself and its programmes such as IFAP
 - the newly proposed Cyber Network for Language Learning (CNLL)
 - with several national UNESCO Commissions
 - other UN organizations such as FAO, WHO and other international organizations
 - with UNSA, ACUNS, UNU
 - other global academic networks for promoting UN Studies and global development
- provide PhD mobility grants to **promote research in partner universities** in developing countries in the context of global research projects organized by the UNESCO chair holder and its partnering organizations
- organize **dissemination, awareness raising, networking, and interactive communication** on these topics by a UNESCO chair web portal, a wiki platform and related PR methods.

Network

- Initial network partner organisations
 - University of Vienna, Center for Translation Studies (as coordinator)
 - UNESCO Chair for Translation Studies and Intercultural Communication, Faculty of Philology, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland
 - University of Pune, Faculty for Humanities, Institute for German Studies, India
 - Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, Germany/The Netherlands
 - Computer Science Department, University of Bangor, Wales, UK
 - Universidad Antioquia, Medellin, Colombia
 - Centro de Estudios Lingüísticos y Literarios, El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico
 - China National Committee for Technical and Scientific Terms (CNCTST, Beijing, China)
 - University of Maiduguri, Department of Languages and Linguistics, Borno State, Nigeria
 - United Nations Studies Association (UNSA), Berlin, Germany
 - International Information Centre for Terminology (Infoterm)
 - International Network for Terminology (TermNet)
 - More partner organisations will join over time

Work packages

- WP 1 **Management**, Internal Communication, and Quality Monitoring -> resulting in smooth operations and quality control for the whole project
- WP 2 **Needs Analysis and Surveys**, Scoping, Detailed Activity Planning -> resulting in a detailed activity plan together with cooperating institutions
- WP 3 Development and Implementation of **Competence Model for all Learning Activities** -> Preparing the technical, organizational and didactic aspects of WP 4
- WP 4 **Teaching and Training Activities**: includes the organization of meetings, workshops, conferences, summer schools, seminars by enabling participants to use mobility grants and including visiting professorships
- WP 5 **Collaborative Research Projects**: organizing collaborative projects in the topics listed such as transcultural communication, computer-assisted translation, eLearning for language learning, etc.
- WP 6 Collaborative Development of a future **UNITWIN Network** on the topic
- WP 7 **Dissemination**, PR, Networking, External Communication strategies

Capacity Building

- Capacity building activities will be modeled along the lines of the competence model developed in this context
- While we differentiate between the following capacity building areas for focused enabling activities, it is also foreseen to facilitate comprehensive education programmes that encompass several or all of the following topics:
 - Cyber Network for Language Learning (CNLL project proposed by China)
 - new methods of ICT-enhanced language learning (using mobile technologies, speech technologies, language resources, interactive learning)
 - CLIL (content and language integrated learning, cross-cultural learning, etc.)
 - MALL (mobile assisted language learning)
 - UNSA/ACUNS/UNU in cooperation with global development studies, diversity management, gender studies, law, political science, etc.
 - PhD studies, M.A. studies, international summer schools, mobility grants, etc. in the fields of localization and translation studies, translation technologies, multilingual content management, terminology studies, language policies, language planning, sociolinguistics, minority languages/endangered languages, and other related fields

Supporting UNESCO's priorities

- The project mainly contributes to the following 3 priorities:
- Educating for Sustainable Development (ESD)
- Media and ICTs
- Africa

Medium-term Strategy until 2013

- A.II Priority Africa: Language Plan for Africa
- A III Global Challenges for UNESCO in an era of globalization
- B.II Strategic Programme Objective 2 Quality Education for all, lifelong learning, education for sustainable development
 - Overarching Objective 4 Fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace
 - Strategic Programme Objective 9 strengthening the contribution of culture to sustainable development
 - Strategic Programme Objective 10 exchange and dialogue among cultures to social cohesion
 - Language and multilingualism
 - Overarching Objective 5 Building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication

Supporting UNESCO's Millennium Development Goals

The project supports in particular the following goals of UNESCO's priorities in the Millennium Development Goals:

- “Goal 3: Promote **Gender Equality and Empower Women**” – language is the key instrument to promote gender equality in society – diversity management includes linguistic strategies to make women visible in society and to empower them to express themselves – seminars, summer schools as well as language resource and language technology projects focus on this goal.
- “Goal 8: Develop a **Global Partnership for Development**” – language resources and language technologies for the world's languages are important elements of global networking of teams from different countries – the project actively promotes the creation of multilingual resources, including for web-based language learning

Current situation

- The application has been approved, contract in preparation for signature
- Project duration: 3-year period starting this summer 2010
- Web-site in preparation
- Wiki in preparation
- Ongoing planning of events
- Start of work in work packages

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Thank you for your attention

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