



## Glossa- Greek as a vehicle for Promoting Linguistic Diversity

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### **Abstract**

*While there are available e-learning modules and content for the beginner level (A1, A2) in many languages, the availability of methodologies, tools and content for the advanced level (C1, C2) is scarce. The project GLOSSA- Greek as a Vehicle for Promoting Linguistic Diversity, which is currently in its first year of development and is funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme- Key Activity 2: Languages is aiming to fill this gap by developing 2 pedagogic methodologies, one for development of online language learning content for advanced students and one for self-learning in online environments which can be used for any European language. In a 2nd phase, by using these methodologies, it aims at creating a complete e-learning course for the proficiency level in the Greek language (as a foreign/ second language) which will be uploaded in an e-learning platform specially adapted for this purpose and which will include theory, plain text exercises, multimedia features and cultural aspects. The Greek language has been chosen because while it is one of the least spoken languages in Europe, it has a long history, it represents an important culture and it has a significant target group of people that want to learn it perfectly. The target group of the project includes: advanced foreign language students, foreign language teachers, language learning institutions and anyone who is interested to know perfectly Greek for reasons of business, professional development, integration, travel, culture, pleasure etc. including translators and interpreters of Greek language and (future) non native teachers of Greek (or other language). For the latter target group the project will develop a common European professional profile for language teachers and will transfer an accreditation tool from a LdV project in order to facilitate the recognition of informal and non-formal skills and competencies for this category of people. The impact envisaged is the enhancement of the availability of tools and methodologies for advanced language students and the significant increase of the people who will learn perfectly Greek as a second/ foreign language. Nine partners from seven countries (Greece, Italy, Spain, Belgium, UK, Czech Republic and Hungary) are going to cooperate for the development of this project. The partners include a number of different institutions such as language learning institutions, Greek communities abroad, Greek schools abroad, e-learning institutions, ICT R&D Institutions and Universities.*

### **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, the online language learning courses are widely available on the Internet. However, most of these courses have been produced for beginners and for learners of the most spoken languages (English, French, Spanish, Italian). The material developed for advanced learners of the less spoken languages is scarce (and that's why the development of material for the less spoken languages is one of the main objectives of the EU policy in the language learning field). In the specific case of Greek, there is insufficiency in the learning material generally available for the C1 and C2 levels (Common European Framework- CEF). As shown in one major publication [1], the existing materials are to a great extent methodologically outdated, as they are mostly based on the structural-functional method of language learning and less on communicative principles that intend to enable learners to use the appropriate language form depending on the communicational situation. Also, for the advanced level,

there are no online materials at all. As a consequence, each Greek language teacher is obliged to produce his own material and there are no tools that would enable learners to study totally independently - a serious handicap, as classes of advanced Greek are scarce outside Greece, particularly in new EU member states, and groups of socio- economically disadvantaged (who cannot afford language courses in Greece) or disabled students are thus severely hindered.

Considering the gaps mentioned above, the partnership of the project has decided in the year 2009 to submit a project proposal in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union, Key Activity 2- Languages in order to develop materials for the learning of the Greek language. The project was approved (reference number: 505248-2009-LLP-GR-KA2MP) and was entitled GLOSSA (the Greek word for Language)- Greek as a Vehicle for Promoting Linguistic Diversity.

## **2. Objectives of the project**

### **2.1 General Objectives**

As it becomes clear from the title of the project, the general objectives of the project GLOSSA are not limited to the promotion of the advanced learning of the Greek language. On the contrary, the project aims to develop methodologies and tools which will be transferable for the teaching of all the European less spoken languages in advanced level. Therefore, one main general objective of the project is the promotion of language learning and the support to the linguistic diversity as well as the reinforcement of the acquisition of competence in and raising awareness to the less used European languages. Another general objective of the project is the support to the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practices for lifelong learning. This is why the main outcomes of the project will be available online for anyone interested. The reinforcement of the language competencies relevant to workplace in order to improve the integration of individuals in enterprises and enhance European competitiveness is another general objective of the project which is addressed by the development of a European profile for the language teachers and the transfer of an accreditation of competencies tool from a Leonardo da Vinci (LdV) project.

### **2.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the project which correspond to the general objectives mentioned above are the following: (1) development of 2 pedagogic methodologies, one for development of online language learning content for advanced students and one for self-learning in online environments which can be used for any European language; (2) creation of a complete e-learning course for the proficiency level in the Greek language (as a foreign/ second language) which will be uploaded in an e-learning platform specially adapted for this purpose and which will include theory, plain text exercises, multimedia features and cultural aspects; (3) development of a common European professional profile for language teachers and transfer an accreditation tool from a LdV project in order to facilitate the recognition of informal and non-formal skills and competencies for this category of people. These specific objectives of the project will lead to the main outcomes which are analyzed thoroughly in the next section.

### **3. Main Outcomes of the Project**

#### **3.1 Methodologies**

As mentioned in the previous section, the project GLOSSA aims to develop 2 pedagogic methodologies, one for development of online language learning content and one for self-learning in online environments. Extensive research which was realized before the submission of the proposal as well as during the initial study period has shown that the availability of methodologies for online language learning is still scarce, especially when it is related with advanced levels and the less spoken languages. Until now, in the particular case of the Greek language but also in the case of many more less spoken languages, there were no guidelines for the teachers, fact which lead them to produce their own material without the basis of a methodological tool. Considering this fact and, also, moved by the desire to base its own e-learning course, on a specific methodology, the project has decided to dedicate its first year in the development of the methodologies mentioned above.

The methodology for the development of e-learning language contents and courses for advanced level students is intended to be a tool for the teachers and content developers that will help them to develop e-learning language content for advanced level students. It will contain elements such as: pedagogical approaches to be implemented, use of multimedia aspects, use of original literature and newspaper items, type of exercises and tests to be used for assessment, duration of courses etc.

On the other hand, the methodology for online language learning for advanced students is intended to be a methodological tool that will help the advanced online language students to organize their study in the most effective way. The elements that will be present in the methodology will include: methods for studying, revising and exercising in self-learning, use of newspaper items, use of multimedia items etc.

Both methodologies will not be language specific and will be able to be used from content developers and advanced level students of all the European languages. The methodologies will be based on an initial study which has already been realized in all the partner countries and which analyzed extensively the state of the art as far as the online language learning solutions is concerned. Part of the initial study was also the conduction of interviews with teachers, content developers and students as well as the organization of focus groups which brought together representatives of all the above mentioned target groups. This work methodology ensures that the opinion of the experts and the target groups is well represented in the final methodology documents.

#### **3.2 E-Learning Course**

The main outcome of the project will be a full e-learning course in the Greek language as a second/foreign language, at the C1 and C2 levels of the Common European Framework. This course will be available through an e-learning platform which has already been developed and which is intellectual property of the coordinator of the project. The platform will be specially adapted in order to fit the needs of the target groups of the project.

The e-learning course will be based on the methodologies analyzed at the point 3.1 of this paper. It will include: texts, multimedia files (audio, video, flash applications), exercises, tests, glossary, additional sources, links, cultural information etc. Part of the material will also be tests and exercises (in reading, writing, speaking, listening) in order for the advanced students to be prepared for the National Examinations for the Certificate of Attainment in Greek, level D (the highest). The instructions for questions, vocabulary and other explanations will be translated in all partner languages.

The e-learning courses will be piloted in a big number of students during the third year of the project and will be supported with tutoring by Greek language teachers.

### **3.3 Professional Profile of Language Teacher**

The European Union policy in the last years has given a particular attention to promote the employability of the European workers on the basis of the skills based approach and not just on their academic qualifications [2]. A priority of the European Union is to promote the recognition and accreditation of skills and competencies acquired through non formal and informal training. This is why it promotes the analysis of the different professional profiles in skills and competencies according to the European Quality Framework (EQF) model, a European Union initiative to create a translating facility for referencing academic degrees and other learning qualifications among EU member states. The project GLOSSA taking into consideration the importance of these matters for the EU as well as the unavailability of a Common European Professional Profile for the Language Teachers has decided to develop the Professional Profile of the Foreign Language Teachers teaching adults in non formal settings. The professional profile for this category of teachers will include the description of the skills and competencies of the profile which are common in all partners' countries and its detailed analysis in units of competencies, professional realizations and performance criteria according to the EQF model.

### **3.4 Adapted Accreditation Tool**

While the identification of the skills and competencies of a professional profile is one issue, the procedure for the recognition and accreditation of these skills and competencies is another. The project GLOSSA is proposing as a solution to this issue, the transfer and adaptation of a web tool for the accreditation of competencies. The web tool was originally developed for the tourism sector in the framework of the LdV project CAST- Competencies and Skills in Tourism (E/03/B/FF/PP-149018). The tool includes a method for the classification of skills and competencies in professional realizations and performance criteria according to the EQF model, tools and instructions for self evaluation, observation in work place, knowledge test etc. This tool is intended to be used initially by private organizations (language learning centres, language schools etc.) even if effort will be made to promote the use of the tool also to public organizations.

## **4. Target Groups**

As it is clear from the objectives and the outcomes of the project described above, the target groups of the project are divided into two main categories. The first category refers to target groups which are not language specific. This category includes advanced foreign language students, foreign language teachers and language learning institutions. The second category refers particularly to target groups which are interested to learn Greek in an advanced level as a second/ foreign language. This category includes school children that wish to learn Greek as a foreign language, university students that wish to learn Greek for reasons of mobility, studying, researching etc., people who need to learn perfectly Greek for reasons of professional development, people who want to learn Greek for reasons of travel, culture, pleasure etc., foreign immigrants wishing to live and work in Greece or Cyprus, members of the Greek Community Abroad who have forgotten the Greek language or who want to teach it to their children and translators and non native teachers of Greek as a foreign language.

## **5. Impact**

The main impact of the project, after its completion, is expected to be the enhancement of the availability of tools and methodologies for advanced language students which could be used for the development of online courses for any language. Also, it is expected a significant increase of the people who will learn perfectly Greek as a second/foreign language. The e-learning course is



expected to provide the opportunity to a great number of people (members of the target groups mentioned before) to learn Greek in an advanced level not only in Europe but also to other major areas where are people willing to learn Greek (mainly in USA, Canada and Australia). Finally, the project will increase the availability of tools for accreditation of skills and competencies for the foreign language teachers and will promote the use of the European Quality Framework.

## 6. Partnership

The quality of the results and the achievement of the objectives set is guaranteed by the quality of the partnership which includes a great variety of actors from the field of language learning and the field of Greek as a foreign languages. Totally, it represents 7 organizations coming from 9 countries. The promoter and coordinator of the project is Action Synergy S.A., a Greek ICT, education and training organization which has a very large experience in the fields of e-learning and European projects management. The main pedagogical responsible of the project is the Hellenic Culture Centre, a Greek organization which is one of the first non formal education institutions that offered Greek as a foreign/second language courses for adults and is particularly specialized to advanced students of Greek. Other partners include big language learning centres which offer a lot of languages (including Greek) (such as the Escuela Oficial de Idiomas de Madrid, the biggest public language school in Spain and Recherche et Formation Marie Haps from Belgium, an organization that provides language classes to more than 2500 students), the 12classes Greek School of Hungary, the Centro Ellenico di Cultura (stems from the Greek Community in Milan and reflects the Greek contribution to the cultural society of the city) and the Classical Studies Department of Masaryk University in Czech Republic. Responsible for the accreditation of competencies is CBP, a Spanish organization particularly specialized in this subject and responsible for the dissemination is Kindersite Project, an English organization which holds a huge database of educational institutions throughout Europe and is specialized in the dissemination of European language related projects.

## 7. Conclusion

The project GLOSSA- Greek as a Vehicle for promoting linguistic diversity is an ambitious project which combines the development of pedagogic methodologies for online content development and learning, the development of e-learning course for advanced level Greek and the development of a professional profile, combined with the adaptation of an accreditation tool, in order to facilitate the recognition and accreditation of the skills and competencies of the language teachers.

The project is still in its first year of development however already, through its activities, it has mobilized a lot of language teachers and language students throughout Europe. By the end of November 2010 the final version of the methodologies will be ready and the second year of the project will be dedicated to the development of the e-learning course and the professional profile. The third year of the project will be dedicated to a pan-European piloting of the project results and to corrective actions which will be the result of this piloting. All the results of the project will be available through the project's website [www.ellinikiglossa.eu](http://www.ellinikiglossa.eu)

## References

- [1] "Textbooks for the Teaching of Modern Greek as a Foreign Language" Centre for the Greek Language and the Greek Ministry of Education
- [2] The European policies for this issue can be found at the following website:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1134\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1134_en.htm)