

# PROGRESS REPORT AFTER YEAR 1

## “MULTIHUN” – 11007-cp-1-2003-1-LINGUA-L2

### 1. Overall Description of the Project

*Objectives:* While applying for the LINGUA support, we considered the teaching of Hungarian as a foreign language a pertinent issue at the time of the enlargement of the EU. As we observed, in the pre-accession state the demand for up-to-date coursebooks of Hungarian with authentic texts and exercises was growing rapidly. As a proof of this, between 2002 and 2004 we sold our pilot Hungarian coursebook (a venture from which our present project evolved) in over 1500 copies. Consequently our LINGUA program was developed in order to replace existing out-of-date materials, which were designed according to traditional methods of grammar-translation. Instead, the MULTIHUN takes a communicative and multimedial approach to language teaching.

*Targets:* Our project provides learners with a complex, graded multimedial language learning package (MULTIHUN). It is designed to be flexible enough to satisfy the needs of organized groups as well as adult, autonomous learners. The latter group will especially be helped by the CD-ROM, video and other toolkits.

*Activities* center around the creation, testing, evaluating and production of the package, which will consist of two sets (Beginner- and Intermediate levels), each offering a coursebook, a grammar reference book, a video, an audio CD, and a CD-ROM with exercises developing integrated skills.

*Outputs:* by advancing the teaching of a less known/used European language that has become one of the official languages of the EU, the project promotes language learning/teaching in the enlarged Union. Some features of MULTIHUN are designed to promote lifelong learning and equal opportunities for disabled persons.

### 2. Organizational Aspects

In developing our project we have chosen three partner universities. Two of them (HAMBURG, Germany and TURKU, Finland) runs high quality and well organized Hungarian departments where teaching Hungarian as a foreign language has been practised over a long period of time. Their staff offers expertise in assisting our developmental work as well as in reviewing the various elements of the learning toolkit. Furthermore, the foreign student population of our partners will provide a suitable testing environment for the new products. Our third partner (VERONA) is important because through Erasmus partnership a relatively great number of their students come to various departments of the University of Szeged to accomplish their study abroad programs. These students are inexperienced in learning Hungarian so they constitute a *tabula rasa* population to test the efficiency of our learning tools.

One of the first actions in the project was to establish efficient, networked links among the partners. The outlines of the project were corroborated and finalized at an opening coordinators' meeting in November 2003, ever since we have been in daily contact through our computer network, however in the meantime we have had opportunities for several personal meetings, too. (The Project Manager, Ágnes Bata visited in Verona, project member Péter Durst visited in Turku and the representatives of Hamburg and Turku visited us in Hungary.) Because of these personal contacts we did not consider indispensable to have an interim coordinators' meeting in August 2004 (as outlined in our original application), on the other hand we hosted students from our partners in our Hungarian Studies Summer Course in Szeged (August, 2004).

All in all, it can be stated that the institutional partnerships have proved to be meaningful and very useful contacts, communication has been smooth, and cooperation enthusiastic. It may be mentioned here, that through VERONA we have developed stronger contacts with the University of

UDINE where we have found a well qualified translator for the Italian Grammar Book. Since Udine also offers a degree program in Hungarian, we are likely to extend our cooperation toward their students, too.

### **3. Methodology, tools and technology used / to be used**

The project intends to replace existing out-of-date materials, which are in large measure closer to the traditional methods of grammar-translation, with a communicative approach to language teaching, which focuses on language in use, while still allowing for a focus on form. An important aspect of our project is multimodality (book, video, CD-ROM; group work, language lab, individual exercises, on-screen practice; etc.) which allows not only a multi-focal presentation but also fosters individual and distant learning. As a further development of our project, we plan to place exercises and various learning tools on our homepage, thus allowing upgrades to the users of our toolkit and encourage the dissemination of our results.

Even the most traditional element of the toolkit, the grammar reference book will have innovative features. It takes into account the particularities of the native languages of the students and will anticipate language-specific problems or difficulties in the target languages (English, Finnish, German, Italian).

The overall goal of the multimedial materials is to encourage and allow self-study and distance learning, furthermore, to produce materials, which will be accessible by people with a variety of learning styles and abilities.

### **4. Products and Results, Their Dissemination**

The project has been designed to carry out the following activities and produce the following elements of the Hungarian language teaching/learning toolkit:

#### *Year 1 (October 2003- October 2004)*

- meeting with colleagues from partner universities
- writing the student support grammar reference book for the first course book
- revising the first book
- writing the pilot version of the second course book
- summer course for testing the pilot versions

#### *Year 2*

- meeting of partners to monitor progress and results
- revising the second course book with the help of second readers
- recording CD for the coursebooks
- recreating the student support grammar reference book for the first course book in English, Finnish, German, and Italian
- writing the student support grammar reference book for the second course book in English
- preparing pilot version of the CD-ROM
- preliminary recordings for the video
- summer course for testing the pilot versions

#### *Year 3*

- meeting of partners to monitor progress and results
- recreating the student support grammar reference book for the second course book in English, German, Finnish, and Italian
- final version of the CD-ROM
- final version of the video

- summer course implementing the finalised materials
- workshop to discuss and disseminate the materials to institutions teaching Hungarian in Hungary and abroad
- evaluation meeting

After year one (as can be seen from the attached table of activities) we can confidently claim that the execution of the project has been progressing according to plan and in percentage we have accomplished proportionate, perhaps even more amount of the work than originally designed. It has also become clear, however, that certain phases of the work and elements of the toolkit should be reasonable to redesign. Most notably we have realized that because of the structure of the two coursebooks, it will be impossible to divide the grammar reference book into two volumes. Instead, we have opted for a unified, heavily cross-referenced single volume the production of which to some extent upsets the original schedule. Although we have not physically produced Volume 1 of the Grammar Reference Book, the proportionate work is by now ready and it looks that with the publication of the unified volume we shall be ahead of the deadline of the projected second volume.

On the other hand we have progressed well with the production of *Coursebook 1* and 2 as well as with *Video 1* ?? which has been shot and its editing is just about to be finished. The *CD-based exercises* have also been prepared and they are ready for technical production. *Coursebook 1* will appear by Christmas and will be on the market before the second semester starts in European Universities.

As mentioned above, the marketing of the preliminary version of *Coursebook 1* has been very successful and we hope that the final product will attract the same popularity. We have already advertized the first products among Hungarian wholesale booksellers and we have standing orders.

In order to facilitate dissemination, we have updated our website with a special folder on the LINGUA project. Here we offer a full description of the project as well as marketing information about our products. We also plan to include self-study tools related to our toolkit. **The site will be opened in late December.** [Mikorra dátumozzuk ezt a jelentést?] We have also produced attractive printed materials (brochures and flyers) which advertize our toolkit as well as our programs (see attached materials).

## 5. Evaluation and Feedback

In order to properly manage and coordinate the project, coordinators have ensured constant email contact between the participating institutions, and regular monitoring and evaluation has been established across our network.

The equipment purchased from the project budget has greatly helped producing the toolkit as well as maintaining communication and facilitating evaluation.

Each element of the toolkit has been thoroughly reviewed by the cooperating partners and the Summer Course has provided excellent opportunity to try out and test the teaching materials.

The financial management of the project was overseen by the Accounting Center of our University, in this respect we have enjoyed the support of highly qualified professionals. The Project Manager has **twice** visited Brussels in order to participate in **?? and ??**.

To sum up: the execution of the project has been progressing mainly according to plan. Some minor alterations have resulted 1/ from the realization that certain phases of the work are reasonable to carry out according to a modified schedule; 2/ from the fact that certain technical difficulties (in finding appropriate experts to produce our video- and CD-recordings) slightly delayed our plans. Apart from these, we are confident about being able to complete our project on time.

Szeged, 2004 ??

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