

# DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT "MULTIHUN"

## 2 OBJECTIVES

### 2.1 Background

The teaching of Hungarian to foreigners is a timely issue considering the enlargement of the EU in the near future. As Hungarian is a less widely used and taught language, and now that Hungary is in a pre-accession state, the demand for up-to-date coursebooks providing students of Hungarian with a source of authentic texts and exercises is growing rapidly.

Although there are several coursebooks of Hungarian available on the market, there are few complex, multimedial, graded packages that would satisfy the needs of adult and autonomous learners as well as organised, intensive groups working in higher education or secondary schools. Our projected package aims at satisfying these needs. The Szeged Hungarian Studies program has wide expertise in both teaching Hungarian as a foreign language and training teachers of Hungarian as a foreign language. A part of our curriculum of teacher training focuses on the analysis of the existing teaching materials. In this way, we are in a qualified position to assess the shortcomings of the currently available resources and identify the needs for further development.

### 2.2 Needs

At this time of the imminent extension of the EU, there is a growing need for teaching the less widely known and used languages of the new pre-accession state countries. This need includes not only the field of official EU contacts but also the resulting increased communication on wider civilian and cultural levels, one of them being the SOCRATES/ERASMUS network of student exchange.

### 2.3 Aims and objectives

Our project aims at providing learners of Hungarian with a complex, graded and multi-medial language learning package (MULTIHUN). The package is designed to be flexible enough to satisfy the needs of organized groups in secondary and higher levels of education as well as adult and autonomous learners. The latter group will especially be helped by the CD-ROM, video materials and other toolkits.

### 2.4 Pedagogical and didactic approaches

The project intends to replace existing out-of-date materials, which were designed in accordance with the traditional methods of grammar-translation. Instead, the MULTIHUN takes a communicative approach to language teaching, which focuses on authentic language, along with a focus on form. The grammar reference book will take into account the particularities of the native languages of the students and will anticipate language-specific problems or difficulties in the target language. The materials including the CD-ROM, video, reference grammar and course books are designed to encourage and allow self-study and distance learning. Furthermore, our goal is to produce multi-modal materials which will be accessible to people with a variety of learning styles and abilities.

## 2.5 Innovative features

The target group of the language learning tools to be developed in the framework of the project is much wider than that of the currently used, more traditional materials. The planned learning toolkits, which offer a systematic development of integrated skills, will thus enable independent study as well as open and distance learning.

The project aims at developing language-learning tools bringing together integrated skills in both the coursebooks and the CD-ROM version. The target language is Hungarian, a less widely used and taught language; thus it is important that the material is suitable for self study as well as open and distance learning. The coursebooks and the CD-ROM are also supplemented by user-friendly student support reference resource materials.

## 3 ENVISAGED OUTPUTS

### 3.1 Products

The pilot copy of the first part of the coursebooks series to be produced in the framework of this project (Durst Péter: *Jó napot kívánok! Magyar nyelvkönyv kezdőknek*. Szeged: JATEPress, 2002) has been tested in classes efficiently. Below, we will project the production of the following components of the MULTIHUN package: *Lépcsénként Magyarul* [Step By Step In Hungarian].

#### I. Beginners' Package:

1. Coursebook: *Első lépés: Jó napot kívánok!* [First Step: Good Morning!]
2. Grammar Reference Book 1 in Hungarian.
3. Grammar Reference Book 1 in English, German, Finnish and Italian.
4. Video 1.
5. Audio CD 1.
6. CD-ROM 1.

#### II. Intermediate Package:

1. Coursebook: *Második lépés...* [Second Step...]
2. Grammar Reference Book 2 in Hungarian.
3. Grammar Reference Book 2 in English, German, Finnish and Italian.
4. Video 2.
5. Audio CD 2.
6. CD-ROM 2.

As mentioned, the first coursebook has already been published in a pilot version, so within this project we plan to carry out the necessary revisions and to upgrade the outlook (colour drawings and some photos), so that it forms an integral part of the whole package.

As for the rest of the components mentioned above, we would like to emphasize the following points:

– The coursebook itself does not contain grammatical explanations; grammar is presented through concise tables, charts and examples. This feature necessitates the writing of a user-friendly student support grammar reference book, which is also essential in order to facilitate independent and distance learning. We plan to write the reference book in Hungarian, which will be useful for more advanced learners as well as the Hungarian instructors. We will then translate

it into four languages (English, German, Finnish and Italian) so that it can be used in different countries of the EU. We depend upon the expertise of our German, Finnish, and Italian partners in this phase as well.

- The second part of the coursebook will be written for intermediate students, as a continuation of the first part.

- Both coursebooks will include an audio CD containing a number of listening exercises recorded by different native speakers to provide the students with a rich source of varied and realistic language input and exposure.

- Accompanying videos will contain appropriate audio-visual material depicting realistic and relevant language situations, enabling open and distance learning, as well as independent study. It will also be suitable for students with learning disabilities. The video aims to fill an existing gap in the currently available range of learning materials, which includes only one (!) similar video.

- A CD-ROM for each coursebook will integrate the package with the increasing trend towards CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), highlighting interactive multi-media activities suitable for both classroom use and independent study.

### **3.2 Impact**

The target groups of this project include all language learners who wish to study Hungarian as a foreign language. Although at present the number of these learners is much smaller than in the case of more widely used languages, there is no doubt that it will increase considerably after Hungary has become an EU member state in 2004. Already in the present pre-accession state the target groups are becoming more diverse due to constantly widening economic and cultural partnerships. To give one example, consider of the growing number of Erasmus students who spend their study abroad period in Hungary year after year.

The needs of these students cannot be satisfied without authentic, high quality language learning materials and tools that are readily available for their use. International students, such as the afore-mentioned Erasmus students, will be the first to participate and benefit from these new teaching and learning materials. The MULTIHUN package will subsequently become available at all institutions where the Hungarian language is taught.

In addition, all Socrates students who come to any Hungarian university for an exchange programme, will also be able to use the package, and with the help of the CD-ROM, they will be able to continue their studies after their return to their home institutions. The CD-ROM also makes distance learning and independent study possible for students to start their studies without a teacher, which will be particularly useful for businesses, or anyone interested in learning Hungarian at home. Students with learning disabilities can naturally also benefit from the flexibility of CD-ROM learning by being able to study at their own pace and review as often as needed.

Since the student support grammar reference book will be available not only in Hungarian, but in English, German, Italian and Finnish as well. This variety will surely satisfy the needs of speakers all throughout the EU and the greater global community.

### **3.3 Target languages**

The main target language of the products is naturally Hungarian (HU), however, one part of the toolkit – the student support grammar reference book (parts 1 and 2) will also be published in English (EN), German (DE), Italian (IT), and Finnish (FI).

### **3.4 Methods and didactic approaches**

The products are based on a communicative approach to language learning and teaching which emphasizes authentic language (dialogues, simulated situations, mini grammar lessons with accompanying application to speech and language). Within this contextualized approach to language learning and teaching, the products also promote a focus on form, and are furthermore designed to allow for learner autonomy through self-study and use.

### **3.5 Teaching / learning environment**

The coursebooks are primarily designed for group-based intensive language courses, however with the help of the grammar reference books and the multimedial learning environment (videos and CDs) individual study will also be supported.

### **3.6 Information and communication technologies**

The package is designed to function in a multimedial (computerized and video) environment. With the help of the CD-ROM, the videos and the audio CDs, students will be able to continue their studies and review what they have learned after their return to their home institutions. These components of the toolkit also make distance learning and independent study possible for students to start their studies without a teacher, which will be particularly useful for businesses, or anyone interested in learning Hungarian at home.

## **4 EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION**

### **4.1 Monitoring and evaluation**

In order to achieve a quality product, permanent monitoring and evaluation of the work is indispensable. To ensure this, at the very beginning, Project Management Groups will be formed at each institution. This will be facilitated by an initial coordinators' meeting in Szeged where we will refine the workplan and divide the whole project into even smaller working units and finalise the exact timing and responsible persons for each component. A very useful feature of this preparatory work will be the creation of a precise Gantt-chart, which includes the milestones of the project. In our previous experience with similar projects we have always found this tool indispensable.

Following this, coordinators will be assigned to ensure constant e-mail contact between the participating institutions, and will organise regular monitoring and evaluation meetings. We shall also establish an internet project website which will be helpful for working together on specific tasks in a virtual environment.

Each year the coordinating institution will organise a summer course for testing and evaluating the learning materials. These events will provide a natural occasion for the coordinators' meetings, which can be considered as the milestone checkpoints of the project. On these occasions we plan to invite external experts who will be requested to evaluate not only the products but also the project in general. These annual evaluations will serve as a source of continuous feedback for project management as well.

Final reflections and self-evaluation will be developed during the planned closing methodological conference in August 2006. On this occasion we shall reflect on our work and we hope that the invited national and international groups of experts will additionally provide high quality feedback on our achievement.

## 4.2 Testing and evaluation

The designed role of the partner institutions is to help in trying out, testing and evaluating the MULTIHUN package. This work will be carried out partly at the partner institutions, and partly during the summer courses organized each year in Szeged.

These meetings will monitor and compare results and problems encountered in using the different language versions of the materials, in order to improve and refine them. The materials will also be tested on different groups of students (in classes and for independent study), who will be asked for feedback on their appropriacy and user-friendliness.

It should be emphasised here that two out of our three partner institutions pride themselves with well organized, high quality and internationally known Hungarian departments which are centres perfectly equipped for such tasks. Verona has become a partner institution on the basis that many students from this university come to study in Szeged and for this reason the University of Verona has decided to start a pilot course in preparatory Hungarian. This is conducted by teachers of our department in Szeged and it provides excellent testing ground for the MULTIHUN package.

Besides internal testing and evaluation, we also plan to involve external evaluators. For this purpose we have contacted the Institute of Linguistics from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Balassi Institute in Budapest; the latter being the leading centre of teaching Hungarian as a foreign language in our country.

We plan to have the whole package published by August 2006, so the project closing methodological conference will also serve as a roundup for the previous testing and evaluating sessions.

## 4.3 Dissemination

We intend to present and disseminate the materials in such a way as to encourage innovative techniques and good practices in language teaching. Our goal is to provide supplementary information to teachers, along with the scope of raising awareness of professional standards and methodological principles in the field (replacing traditional views with a more modern, communicative approach). Starting at our own university, we intend to share our ideas and expertise with teachers from other institutions in Hungary. Eventually, the whole EU will become involved by means of local, national and international workshops and meetings organised together with the partner institutions.

Our ideas will also be aimed at decision-makers and key education professionals, with the intent of promoting teacher training in Hungarian as a foreign language (HFL) in Hungary – especially at our institution. We will also encourage the teaching of Hungarian as an optional subject at the high-school level in EU countries with Hungarian minority groups.

As Hungarian language teaching materials are relatively difficult to market and commercially under-represented, it will be important to send promotional materials to major bookshops, universities and independent language schools. The courses themselves will be extensively advertised abroad, in schools, universities and embassies in the framework of summer courses, semester study-abroad programs and exchange programs.

Again we should mention the Balassi Institute in Budapest, which is the centre of Hungarian lecturers working abroad. They supply teaching and learning materials to Hungarian departments worldwide and they have already showed great interest in our MULTIHUN package in the making. Our *Hungarian Grammatical Exercises* booklet – which has been published independently from the MULTIHUN package – has already been widely used in these institutions.

## 5 PARTNERSHIP COMPOSITION AND CONTRIBUTION

### 5.1 Type, size, expertise, experience of the participating institutions

The coordinating institution as well as all the partner institutions are large, established European universities (EDU4) with a long academic history and a solid reputation. They are dedicated to academic research and teaching in general. The specific departments/faculties are involved in the field of language teaching, methodology research, and publication of materials; three of the four partners are directly involved in teaching Hungarian as a foreign language.

#### COORDINATING INSTITUTION:

–Hungary & East-Central Europe International Studies Centre of the University of Szeged, Hungary.

#### OTHER PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS:

–Hungarian Department, Institute for Finno-Ugric and Uralic Studies, University of Hamburg, Germany.

–Institute of Finnish and General Linguistic Studies, Department of Finno-Ugric Linguistic Studies, University of Turku, Finland.

–Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature, University of Verona, Italy.

Our own department includes teachers with extensive experience in teaching Hungarian as a foreign language (since 1971) to students of all levels and many different nationalities. Furthermore, we have longstanding expertise in training teachers of Hungarian as a foreign language, in preparation of original teaching materials, as well as considerable academic background in methodology and research related to the field. So far we have published the following textbooks and exam materials:

–*Build Your Hungarian* by Irén Annus (4 editions between 1990 and 1998).

–*ULTH Magyar Egyetemi Nyelvvizsga Felkészít – University Language Test of Hungarian Preparation Guide* by Irén Annus (2 editions: 1994, 1996).

–*Beginning Hungarian: Grammar Notes and Exercises* by Anna Fenyvesi (1996).

–*Magyar nyelvtani feladatok haladóknak* [Hungarian grammar exercises for advanced learners] by Péter Durst (2001).

Our department has always actively participated in methodological and related research work; in 1997 we organized a nationwide conference on teaching Hungarian culture to foreigners.

Over the past three decades we have participated in numerous study-abroad and exchange programs for cultural exposure, language courses and academic study (including USIA Samantha Smith grants, exchanges with the Oregon State System of Higher Education, University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, TEMPUS and Erasmus programs). Presently nearly 50 university students are studying Hungarian language and culture in our program yearly, and more than half are Erasmus students. Our department at the same time functions as a centre and orientation site for the international students while our Program Manager, Ms. Ágnes Bata, has been the institutional coordinator for incoming Erasmus students.

We also organize yearly summer courses, which during the past two years have served as official Intensive Language Preparatory Courses of the Erasmus program (ERASMUS-ILPC 2001-2-2, 2002-2 ). To back this program, the general Erasmus project of our university (45999-

IC-5-2001-1-HU-Erasmus-EPS1) has supported the pilot-publication of the first volume of our coursebook package: *Lépesről Lépesre -- Első Lépés: Jó napot kívánok!* [Hungarian Step By Step -- First Step: Good Morning!]

The director of our program (the coordinator of the present project, Dr. György E. Sz nyi) and our staff members have extensive past experience in coordination and management of national and EU projects. In the former category, we should mention several grants from the Hungarian Ministry of Education for developing our curriculum and infrastructure. Among EU projects, besides the above mentioned Erasmus ones, Tempus JEP-2606-93 and Tempus UM\_JEP-1405-1999 deserve mentioning. The former was coordinated by the University of Sussex with the participation of the University of Göttingen and the University of Szeged, while the latter “University Management” project was coordinated by our institution (other partners: University of Sussex, University of Paris X, ESMU, Brussels). During this project we have gained valuable and useful experience in running and managing large scale projects with several international partners.

The other participating institutions also have experience in teaching Hungarian as a foreign language, and will provide invaluable linguistic knowledge regarding the language-specific particularities inherent to the teaching of Hungarian for the English / German / Italian / Finnish speaking target groups, specifically with a view to anticipating specific problems in learning the target language for the different groups. We count on them to proofread, test and provide feedback on the teaching materials and create the student support grammar reference book.

The Hungarian Department of the University of Hamburg is the second largest centre of Hungarian Studies in Germany after Göttingen. Our partner-coordinator there, Dr. Tiborc Fazekas, is a leading expert in Hungarian Studies and in teaching Hungarian as a foreign language. The department has a professor and a relatively large number of students who all fully support our application.

At the University of Turku, the Hungarian Department is part of the Finnish Institute, which is the largest unit of the Faculty of Humanities. It has excellent resources and infrastructure as well as a large number of students to test our learning materials. The partner-coordinator, Ms. Judit Varga, has been a lecturer of Hungarian there for a long time, and she is a dedicated and experienced teacher of Hungarian as a foreign language.

The University of Verona has joined our project on the basis that the Faculty of Foreign Languages regularly sends many students to our faculty of Arts within the Erasmus exchange scheme. These students usually take Hungarian language as one of their subjects. To raise interest towards language learning, in 2002 the University of Verona has launched an experimental Hungarian language course to which one of our lecturers has been invited. This has made us realize that Verona could be an excellent testing ground for such students who do not have any background in learning Hungarian. The Erasmus coordinator of the Verona Faculty, Prof. Carla Sassi, is very supportive of the project. We have great expectations about this aspect of our transnational cooperation.

## **5.2 Other institutions**

Beside the mentioned partner university departments there are no other institutions involved in the project.

### **5.3 Specific tasks of partners**

As has been outlined above, the core of the project is the creation of the MULTIHUN language package at the University of Szeged. The partner institutions, however, have a crucial role in the testing, enhancing and finalization of the product. They are also expected to be the first users of it.

As for the specific tasks, we count on our partners in proofreading, testing, evaluating and providing feedback on the teaching materials. They have also undertaken the task of creating the German, Finnish and Italian versions of the student support grammar reference book.

### **5.4 Cooperation and communication**

Cooperation will be carried out according to the workplan below. The efficiency of the cooperation and communication will be ensured by the regular coordinators' meetings and the high quality electronic network connections among the partners. The annual external evaluation will pay special attention to the monitoring of the quality and efficiency of communication.

## **6 PLANNING OF ACTIVITIES**

### **6.1 Stages**

The stages of our project correspond to the creation of the different components of the MULTIHUN package. These are:

- Finalized edition of the beginners' coursebook
- Creation of Grammar Reference Book 1
- Creation of the intermediate coursebook
- Creation of video, audio CD and CD-ROM materials for Coursebook 1
- Creation of Grammar Reference Book 2
- Creation of video, audio CD and CD-ROM materials for Coursebook 2
- Translation of the Grammar Reference Books into English, German, Finnish and Italian

The above stages are complemented 1) by the annual summer courses which aim at testing and evaluating our learning materials; 2) the project closing international seminar for teachers of Hungarian as a foreign language.

### **6.2 Workplan**

See the detailed tables of actions, outputs and timing on pp. 18-20 of the application form.

### **6.3 Duration**

The duration of the project is planned to span over three years because the objective is the creation of a complex language learning package which has many components and it cannot be completed in a shorter time. We need to keep in mind the requirements for testing and reviewing-revising which are time consuming activities.

## **7 CONTRIBUTION TO TRANSVERSAL POLICIES**

The project, by promoting the teaching of a less known and used European language that shortly will become an official language of the EU, will promote language learning and teaching; prepare the enlargement of the Union, and contribute to European stability and unity, even fight

against prejudices and xenophobia. Through some specific features of the MULTIHUN package it will also promote lifelong learning and equal opportunities for disabled persons.

## **8 OTHER ASPECTS**

A short comment on the sustainability of the project: after having completed the project and thus having used up the allocated funds we will be able to sustain the project through the income generated from the marketing of the produced MULTIHUN package. This income will be used for reprinting the existing materials and also for creating the advanced level components of the package.

**Objectives:** The *teaching of Hungarian to foreigners* is a timely issue considering the imminent enlargement of the EU. In the pre-accession state, the demand for up-to-date course-books of Hungarian with authentic texts and exercises is growing rapidly. The project intends to replace existing out-of-date materials, which were designed according to traditional methods of grammar-translation. Instead, the MULTIHUN takes a *communicative 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:** The creation, testing, evaluating and production of the package which will consist of *two sets* (Beginners' and Intermediate levels), each offering a *coursebook, a grammar reference book, a video, and audio CD and a CD-ROM* with exercises developing integrated skills. **Outputs:** by advancing the teaching of a less known/used European language that shortly becomes an official language of the EU, the project promotes language learning/teaching and prepare the enlargement of the Union. Some features of MULTIHUN will also promote lifelong learning and equal opportunities for disabled persons.