

## ***Languages for Europe Think Tank – 16 June 2007***

### **Multilingualism**

#### **Introduction**

To help further our deliberations, Hanna Komorowska has offered to prepare for us a list of questions based on topics and themes which have been discussed at meetings of the EU High Level Group on Multilingualism, of which she is a member.

Following a successful seminar in Brussels in March, the British Council is considering a joint project with Glasgow University to explore issues related to multilingualism, including how the British Council should shape its policy in Europe and what activities it should plan over the next two to three years. Glasgow has submitted a draft proposal to the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Knowledge Transfer (KT) Fellowship Scheme. This will be considered in September and – if approved – work will start in November. We would like to offer this proposal for discussion as an example of one response and as a prompt to Think Tank members to help them think through what policy and action they would like to see in their countries.

#### **Task for our June meeting**

Think Tank members will be invited to discuss the questions and issues presented by Hanna Komorowska. Meanwhile they are invited to read the attached excerpts from the proposal to the AHRC - at least the summary on page 2 - and use these as a stimulus to consider issues of concern for us, such as:

- What would be a sensible and realistic policy approach to multilingualism for a cultural agency in Europe?
- How can governments/agencies/institutions best develop their policies?
- How can they achieve impact with outputs such as those proposed (including publications and small scale events)?
- What might be amended or emphasised in this proposal?

*[please note that the attached paper should be treated as ‘in confidence’ since at this stage it is just a proposal and not yet agreed between the parties]*

TOB / TB

06.06.07

**AHRC Application for a Knowledge Transfer Fellowship between Alison Phipps of Glasgow University and Nigel Bellingham of the British Council**

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**Objectives**

To work as academic **adviser to a British Council Working Group on Multilingualism**. This working group would be formed as a direct result of an AHRC Knowledge Transfer Fellowship with the **specific aim of developing fundable projects**, to be proposed to the European Union.

ii) **To produce a free publication Multilingual Life** (max 30,000 words), published by the British Council with the support of the AHRC, which informs its partners and participants in British Council sponsored events, seminars, conferences and classes, of the challenges and demands of multilingualism. This would also be available as a PDF download with associated website, pod and webcasts (recorded professionally through the University of Glasgow's Media Services) which bring multilingualism to life. It would highlight the role of multilingualism, for British Council partners and event participants, in the cultural contexts of work, tourism, leisure, creative and performing arts and international educational mobility.

iii) **To direct two small scale events**, which pilot the approaches and test the feasibility of project proposals developed by the multilingualism working group. These would be hosted and marketed by The British Council, funded and directed through the AHRC KT fellowship scheme. In addition a further follow-up seminar at the end of the Fellowship would aim to reflect the potential of KT working between HEIs and The British Council for the future.

**Summary**

This Knowledge Transfer Fellowship will develop a partnership between The British Council and myself in order to enable existing research to inform British Council policy and future directions for its work on multilingualism.

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. It has recently begun the task of changing the focus of its English language education programmes to take into account the role of English as an international language worldwide, and, within Europe, European policy on Multilingualism.

Working together in partnership with EUNIC (The European National Institutes for Culture) The British Council drafted a series of recommendations on language learning in the European Union in 2006. These recommendations, together with the European Commission's new political agenda for multilingualism in the wake of the accession of new member states (which has lead to the establishment of a new portfolio for multilingualism), have fundamentally changed the political landscape within which the British Council operates in Europe.

This proposal grows out of the rapidly changing societal and intercultural contexts of migration, asylum, global tourism, and the accession of new member states to the European Union with the attendant mass migrations from Eastern Europe to the U.K. in particular. Multilingual living has become commonplace. Those speaking languages other than English have changed the language-scapes of the U.K. It is vital, in policy terms, that The British Council and the U.K. government are able to respond to the considerable challenges multilingualism poses. This is only possible if the high quality research into multilingualism and intercultural language education, already conducted in English-speaking contexts, is used to inform future activity.

This Knowledge Transfer Fellowship will develop a partnership between The British Council and my own research into languages and intercultural education in order to enable this existing research to inform British Council policy and future directions for its work and teaching on multilingualism.

## AHRC Knowledge Transfer Fellowship Scheme: Case for Support

### Multilingualism and the British Council.

**Alison Phipps, University of Glasgow and The British Council**

#### Context

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. It has recently begun the task of changing the focus of its English language education programmes to take into account the role of English as an international language worldwide, and, within Europe, European policy on Multilingualism. Working together in partnership with EUNIC (The European National Institutes for Culture) it drafted a series of recommendations on language learning in the European Union in 2006. These recommendations, together with the European Commission's new political agenda for multilingualism have fundamentally changed the political landscape within which the British Council operates in Europe. In March 2007 the British Council organised a seminar in Brussels, at which the applicant was a keynote speaker, in order to forge initial partnerships which may inform its changing relationship to multilingualism. This seminar culminated in a 3 hour debate in the Committee of the Regions, in the European Parliament, led by the British Council, where the prospects for promoting languages, multilingualism, and languages education through teacher education (CPD) were presented.

In the past the U.K has not been known for progressive policy work in the field of multilingualism. U.K. citizens have been known as monoglot, rather than polyglot and the strength of English as an international language, however contested this may be, has led to complacency amongst citizens and in public institutions with regard to the learning of languages other than English. The recent AHRC review, along with national surveys such as the *The Nuffield Languages Inquiry* (2000) and *A New Landscape for Languages* (Kelly & Jones 2003) all highlight the crisis with regard to language learning in the U.K.

It is in the context of this crisis that my own ethnographic and conceptual work has taken place, seeking to provide thick description of the changing nature of modern languages in an intercultural and educational context. In *Modern Languages: Learning and Teaching in an Intercultural Field*, I, together with my co-author Mike Gonzalez, produced a full analysis of the higher education language learning crisis, collected narratives and developed proposals and concepts for multilingualism which have been well received in the profession. In *Tourism and Intercultural Exchange* (a project funded by the AHRC), I, together with my co-author Gavin Jack, conducted an ethnographic enquiry into the concentrated multilingual and intercultural contexts created in Scotland by tourism. This research, also well received in the field, highlighted the extent to which translation and intercultural learning occur in cultural contexts beyond formal institutional language learning.

Furthermore, as co-editor with Professor Michael Byram of the successful book series *Languages, Intercultural Communication and Education*, published since 2000 by Multilingual Matters, as co-editor, with Professor Mike Robinson, of the journal and book series *Tourism and Cultural Change*, and as former chair of *The International Association for Languages and Intercultural Education*, I am well placed to survey and transfer existing research and activity in the field of multilingualism and intercultural education. I am a regular keynote speaker on languages and intercultural education, and a member of several advisory boards and working groups, e.g. The Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies network of The Higher Education Academy; CILT, The National Centre for Languages; and Scottish CILT, all of which work on languages education at policy level within higher education.

Latterly, I conducted a three year auto-ethnography of tourist and adult language learning class in order better to understand the way in which language study occurs outwith formal public sector educational contexts. This research was also funded by the AHRC. It resulted in the monograph *Learning the Arts of Linguistic Survival: Linguaging, Tourism, Life*, which was described by Professor Henry Giroux, Macmaster University, Canada, as 'probably the most important book on languages, tourism and pedagogy in the last fifty years.' The project was rated 'outstanding' by the AHRC and the book is the publisher's nomination for the BAAL book prize 2007. In addition, upon publication of this latter work, significant media interest was generated relating to multilingualism with highly positive and engaged lead articles and editorials in *The Daily Express* and *The Daily Star*, *The Times Educational Supplement*, *The Glasgow Herald*, *The Evening Times* and with a live interview for *BBC Radio Scotland*.

The British Council has to work with the vicissitudes of popular opinion, as reported through the media, and within the changing languages policy landscape of the U.K, its devolved parliaments, and within Europe. The recent publication of the National Languages Strategy for England and Wales, and the consultation for *A Strategy for Scotland's Languages* (March 2007) together with a European Directive on Multilingualism mean that engagement with academic work on multilingualism is both desirable and necessary for The British Council to be able to deliver its own and the government's strategic objectives in this area.

More broadly, and in summary, this proposal grows out of the rapidly changing societal and intercultural contexts of mobility, asylum, global tourism, the accession of new member states to the European Union with the attendant mass migrations from Eastern Europe to the U.K. in particular. Multilingual living has become commonplace. Those speaking languages other than English have changed the language-scapes of the U.K. It is vital, in policy terms, that The British Council is able to respond to the considerable challenges multilingualism poses for intercultural dialogue. This is only possible if the high quality research into multilingualism and intercultural language education, already conducted in English-speaking contexts, is used to inform future activity.

## Aims and Objectives

- i) *To work as academic adviser to a British Council Working Group on Multilingualism. This working group would be formed as a direct result of an AHRC Knowledge Transfer Fellowship with the specific aim of developing fundable projects, to be proposed to the European Union.*

These projects will have as their objective the development of partnership working (face-to-face and virtual) on multilingualism, informed by the KT fellow's existing research, between HEIs, Cultural Institutes, language educators and teacher educators, business and NGOs.

The project proposals will relate, in particular, to the CPD activities of The British Council within Europe and in particular to informing and developing its own language educators and wider network of partners for multilingualism. With regard to the research already undertaken by myself this will focus particularly on the training of teachers for both formal and informal multilingual contexts; those of life-long and of student learning as well as those of tourism, or NGO work with asylum seekers and refugees. The proposed RA also has considerable appropriate experience in this respect.

- ii) *To produce a free publication Multilingual Life (max 30,000 words), published by the British Council with the support of the AHRC, which informs its partners and participants in British Council sponsored events, seminars, conferences and classes, of the challenges and demands of multilingualism. This publication would also be available as a PDF web object with associated website, pod and webcasts which bring multilingualism to life. It would highlight the role of multilingualism, for British Council partners and event participants, in the cultural contexts of work, tourism, leisure, creative and performing arts and international educational mobility.*

In 2006, as part of its initial work of engagement with English as an International Language the British Council published a publication, by the applied linguist David Graddol entitled *English Next*. This built on a previous report by Graddol (1997) *The Future of English* which helped develop a new agenda and framework for understanding the international development of English. This second objective builds on the significance and success of this knowledge transfer activity in the field of English language education, but with the focus on language learning and intercultural engagement through multilingualism. As well as providing support to language teachers, cultural educators and British Council policy makers this work would be a tangible sign of KT activity in the national and European contexts of multilingualism. It will reach a global audience not otherwise likely to engage with the findings of existing research.

- iii) *To direct two small-scale events (face-to-face and virtual), which pilot the approaches and feasibility of project proposals developed by the multilingualism working group would be hosted and marketed by The British Council. In addition a further follow-up*

*seminar at the end of the Fellowship would aim to reflect the potential of KT working between HEIs and The British Council for the future.*

These events would test, for example, CPD activities relating to multilingualism and language teaching provided by the British Council. The actual focus and planning of the CPD events will be part of the KT activity and only broad potential themes may be determined at this stage. This third objective, then, grounds the KT Multilingualism Working Group policy discussion and the production of resources for multilingual practices within The British Council, in live multilingual and intercultural contexts. It thereby strengthens the case for both project funding for multilingual activity through The British Council and within the European context, by creating a track-record in multilingual education within the British Council, and informed by existing high quality research in the field.

### **Outcomes and Benefits**

The Fellowship will enable engagement on the part of The British Council with high quality, ethnographic and conceptual research on multilingualism and intercultural dialogue.

The application and transfer of research on multilingualism to projects aiming to support teacher education, CPD and resource development within The British Council, will enable practitioners and British Council officials to gain an understanding of new research into language learning and its intercultural dimensions. For example, The British Council's world-wide work with language teaching assistants is likely to benefit from the development of project proposals and resources directly related to teaching, living and working in multilingual contexts.

The HEI will benefit from close working partnership with The British Council, learning through direct experience of the potential for future KT activity and policy work in the context of language and cultural policy with external agencies. The international networks and partnerships for future working for the HEI will be considerably enhanced. This is of particular significance at a time of large scale internationalisation of the student body. The resources developed in partnership with The British Council, through KT activity, will be of direct relevance and aid to The University of Glasgow's own development of international programmes to support students in their multilingual studies and working. It is likely that these resources, made available via The British Council, would also benefit other HEIs similarly engaged in internationalisation programmes. The proposed final seminar will reflect, evaluate and disseminate this KT learning.

The Fellowship will enable me to develop a fuller understanding and appreciation of the intercultural work and language teaching already undertaken by The British Council in Europe. It will also enable me to develop my experience of partnership working from within the Higher Education languages policy networks into other key cultural

institutions. In addition, it will lead to an engagement with national and European policy on multilingualism, through the Common European Framework.

This multilingual and intercultural engagement will lead to the generation of new knowledges and new shared working practices of national, European and potentially global reach.

Action research and focus group methods of evaluation will be used with partners as part of the evaluation phase of the project to capture information on the tangible benefits to all partners of the KT fellowship.

### **Working in Partnership**

This is a nascent partnership between The British Council and myself. I have previously given keynote lectures in Germany and Portugal for the British Council. The British Council seminar from March 20-22 2007, in Brussels, laid the foundation for the development of multilingual project proposals as part of the British Council's European remit, of which this proposal for an AHRC KT Fellowship is one tangible outcome.

### **Describe your understanding of the Partner's needs and aspirations for the KT programme.**

The British Council is engaged in a programme of considerable structural and strategic change. It has developed an outline policy on multilingualism and has, in the past worked with Applied Linguists in the field of English language education to develop its educational outreach and cultural programmes of activity. In the changed contexts of multilingualism and of policy changes at national and European level the British Council needs to work closely with academic modern linguists whose research has been concerned with multilingualism and intercultural dialogue.

#### **i) Respective roles and responsibilities**

The role of The British Council would be to provide the context and partnerships, drawn from rich existing networks from Britain and Europe, through which the working group will function. Reasonable staff time (...) will be allocated by The British Council to this project.

The role of the KT fellow will be to inform and co-develop policy and achievable projects informed by her considerable expertise, experience and existing research on multilingualism in contexts within and beyond formal language education.

In addition, the KT fellow would work to produce research-based content for both the publication and web resources which will form the KT underpinnings for this project. The British Council would provide the publication outlet. Both partners would work together, with an identified Research Assistant to produce an attractive, high quality

publication and web resources, fully illustrated and drawing together existing research into new, accessible KT informed resources aimed at British Council participants and teaching staff.

**ii) Management of the programme of work**

The work of the overall KT project will be managed by the KT Working Group on Multilingualism - a partnership between the AHRC KT fellow and the British Council. This will take place through initial monthly, and then bi-monthly meetings. This group will monitor work and enable structured management of the developing project proposals and emerging programme of KT activity related to the three key aims.

Direct responsibility for the management and delivery of the resource materials (aim ii) will reside with the KT fellow.

The work of the RA will be managed by the KT fellow, informed by the direction established by the KT Working Group on Multilingualism.

The KT fellow’s work will be managed in partnership by The British Council and The University of Glasgow. An initial meeting between the named project partner and the KT fellow’s line manager will be arranged at the outset to establish a clear management framework and working relationship.

**Ownership and Intellectual Property**

Intellectual Property of the KT working Group on Multilingualism will be owned of The British Council and the KT fellow, and other partners who may be involved in the development of project proposals.

Intellectual Property of the publication and web-resources will be the property of the author, who will be the KT fellow.

Intellectual Property involved in the development of pilot events and seminars will be owned by The British Council and the KT fellow.

**Proposed KT Programme of Activity**

**Timetable**

<b>Timetable</b>	<b>KT Activity</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>November 2007</b>	Establishment of KT Working Group on Multilingualism	First Meeting of Group Establishment of working remit and agreement of programme of work to include aims and objectives ii & iii above.

	Outline proposal for publication <i>Multilingual Life</i> . Meeting of KT working group.	Appointment of full time R.A. to work on co-ordination of working group production of publication and resources and direction of 2 events (I, ii & iii)
<b>December 2007</b>	Meeting of KT working group to consider project proposals.	Generation of initial project proposals and to agree focus and proposed draft content for publication and web resources.
	Discussion of plans for focus and partners for two pilot events/ seminars.	Establishment of initial contact with potential partners for two pilot events/ seminars
<b>January 2008</b>	Writing of draft of <i>Multilingual Life</i> - Part I  Development of web resource to support Part I.  Virtual meetings using Moodle/ VLE and video/internet resource.	Circulation of draft for comment to KT working group.  Pilot of use of virtual technology for meeting practices.
	Planning of pilot event	Outline proposal for 2 events
<b>February 2008</b>	Meeting of KT working group	Outline project proposals for discussion and decision, linked to proposals for pilot events
	Writing of draft of <i>Multilingual Life</i> - Part II  Development of web resource to support Part II	Circulation of draft for comment to KT working group.
<b>March 2008</b>	Pilot Event	Feedback and assessment of outcomes of pilot event in context of aims I & ii
	Writing of draft of <i>Multilingual Life</i> - Part III  Development of web resource to support Part III  Virtual meetings using Moodle/ VLE and video/internet resource.	Circulation of draft for comment to KT working group  Refinement of virtual working practices.

<b>April 2008</b>	Meeting of KT working group	Decisions relating to project proposals and pilot events
	Writing of draft of <i>Multilingual Life</i> - Part IV  Development of web resource to support Part IV	Circulation of draft for comment to KT working group
<b>May 2008</b>	Pilot event	Feedback and assessment of outcomes of pilot event in context of aims I & ii
	Reflection and revision of project proposals in the light of feedback	Revised project proposals incorporating feedback, reflection and assessment.
<b>June 2008</b>	Meeting of KT working group	Evaluation of project proposals in relation to pilot events
	Writing of draft of <i>Multilingual Life</i> - Part V  Development of web resource to support Part V	Circulation of draft for comment to KT working group
<b>July 2008</b>		
	Continuing revision of draft and resources	Circulation of revised drafts and resources to KT working group and external readers. reviewers
<b>August 2008</b>	Meeting of KT working group	Detailed plans for final stages of project proposals and KT fellowship
<b>September 2008</b>	Work on final draft of <i>Multilingual Life</i> and web resources  Virtual meetings using Moodle/ VLE and video/internet resource.	Circulation of final copy and resources.  Reflection and evaluation of virtual meetings.
	Action research and focus group evaluation to capture information of the benefits of KT activity	Report and evaluation of action research and focus group evaluation.
<b>October 2008</b>	Meeting of KT working group	Project evaluation, HEI-KT seminar and launch events.