

ADLES

Association en didactique des langues étrangères en Suisse
Verband Fremdsprachendidaktik Schweiz
www.fremdsprachendidaktik.org

Call for papers

Foreign Language Learning for All. Methodological and Didactical Perspectives and Questions



6th and 7th September 2018
University of Teacher Education, Canton Vaud
Lausanne
www.hepl.ch/colloque-adles

The Swiss Association for Foreign Language Teaching and Learning (ADLES) organizes a first international conference in September 2018 with a focus on methodological questions in foreign language teaching. That appears to be of particular relevance in the context of Swiss education and language policies which have clearly promoted intensified language learning over the last decade (Hutterli, 2012). There are questions such as which experiences have been made in teaching foreign languages in a school environment, which empirical research findings are available, and which concepts have been developed for teacher education. Over the last few years, numerous research and development projects have addressed those questions, see e.g. *Babylonia 3/2016* where over 30 projects were presented.

The topic of the first international ADLES conference “Foreign Language Learning for All” can either be regarded as a political catch phrase or as a request; in both cases the critical issues are its successful implementation and feasibility. Some basic points to be considered are competency-oriented teaching, the conception of the teaching of foreign languages for different target groups, questions of differentiating instruction, and the specifics of different target languages.

The conference takes up those questions and offers opportunities for presenting projects, for debates, and exchanges. It emphasizes empirical research on methodological aspects of foreign language teaching because empirical evidence in this area is still largely lacking.

Proposals can be submitted for the following conference themes

1. Methodological concepts for a heterogeneous foreign language classroom
2. Methodological concepts for the implementation of plurilingual language learning
3. Methodological specifics of foreign language learning at different school levels
4. Target-language-specific methodological concepts, in particular for distant languages

Thematic Strands

1. Methodological concepts for a heterogeneous foreign language classroom

Even though a homogeneous classroom has always been a myth, heterogeneity is an increasingly prevalent phenomenon today due to migration and greater access to education. What is meant by heterogeneity in this context is a diverse student body in a broad sense, which should not be reduced to special needs students. Teachers are dealing with sociocultural and gender-specific dimensions of diversity, with linguistic diversity (e.g. questions of retrospective multilingualism) and with cultural diversity. On top of this, differences arise from heterogeneity in terms of competences, skills and learning profiles.

In this complex context, the implementation of a national language and education policy takes place, it stipulates the teaching of national languages and foreign languages and sets prospective plurilingualism as the educational goal for all learners.

The contributions in this strand present concepts and methodological approaches which stem from research on the practice of language teaching and which could be shown to work effectively in the context of foreign language learning and teaching in heterogeneous groups.

2. Methodological concepts for the implementation of plurilingual language learning (Mehrsprachigkeitsdidaktik/ integrierter Sprachendidaktik)

In language didactics two perspectives coexist in relation to plurilingualism, one of them a retrospective, the other a prospective one, which, together, are also termed “integrated language teaching methodology” (Hutterli, 2012 p. 66-68). These perspectives are also reflected in the so-called pluralistic approaches as presented in Candelier and Schroeder (Babylonia 2/15).

A retrospective plurilingual approach attempts to foster the students’ awareness for the diversity in terms of languages and cultures on the basis of available materials (e.g. FREPA, ELBE, EOLE) by making visible the linguistic and cultural diversity of students, families, school classes and living areas. This form of plurilingual approaches supports linguistic and cultural learning at school but is to be distinguished from a prospective plurilingual approach. The latter is about coordinating language teaching at school and developing plurilingual and culturally diverse competence profiles among the students.

The contributions in this strand relate to one of these two perspectives and present practice-oriented research findings in the area of methodology. For example, they can deal with previously acquired competences that are used as resources for further language learning, with interdisciplinary aspects of language teaching, with content- and language-integrated learning (CLIL), or with the question of vertical coherence (across school levels) of language instruction.

3. Methodological specifics of foreign language learning at different school levels

Foreign language learning has ceased to be a privilege of students in (upper) secondary education, where a lot of responsibility is delegated to the learners to continue their language education individually, after having left obligatory school (e.g. through generically defined ‘stays abroad’, or attending language courses at their own cost). Early and more intensive foreign language learning is now common across most European countries, and while its implementation in Switzerland is still under way, there have already been a wealth of experiences to justify the policy decisions taken in the last two decades, but also to gain insights from areas where the expectations may have been too high. Contributions in this strand address methodological issues related to the needs that arise in these specific contexts, including age-appropriate and subject-appropriate (e.g. profession-specific) methodologies, didactic and methodological coherence between different

subjects (e.g. different languages, or non-linguistic subjects), as well as between different levels of education (e.g. at the transition from primary to secondary, or secondary to vocational or tertiary education).

4. Target-language-specific methodological concepts, in particular for distant languages

In the context of L3 acquisition languages are termed “distant” languages if, based on different factors, they are perceived as “rare” or “uncommon” and, consequently, as difficult to learn by students. Hence, a language is not per se a distant language but it can be classified as such on a scale of distance which is determined by A) the amount of contrast between the L3 and the L1/L2 of the learners and B) the linguistic and cultural background of the learners. The more “distant” a language is perceived to be, the greater the time needed for its acquisition, since the conscious and unconscious knowledge of the L1 and L2 are not activated or can only be used in a limited way.

Distant languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, Japanese or Russian, to name but the most widespread ones, are taught in a multilingual environment which in turn influences the learners and their expectations regarding the outcome of acquisition. The amount of teaching offered in this area is by no means comparable to that offered for European languages, even though economic, scientific and cultural contacts are being intensified as a result of globalization. Currently, these languages are only offered on a voluntary basis with very few lessons a week in the Swiss upper secondary state schools. The teaching of a distant language is thus markedly different from the teaching of English, for example. Furthermore, if we consider that achieving a given level of competence in a distant language requires a significantly higher investment of time by the learners, it is evident that teachers need to think particularly carefully about the methodological-didactic requirements for the achievement of the learning goals.

Of particular interest for this conference are contributions which deal with the methodology employed in public and private courses or projects, or with questions surrounding the training of teachers in the area of didactics of distant languages and cultures.

Literature

- Babylonia 3/2016. *Forschung und Entwicklung – Recherche et développement – Ricerca e sviluppo – Perscrutaziun e svilup.* (<http://babylonia.ch/en/archive/2016/number-3/>)
- Babylonia 2/2015. *Pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures.* (<http://babylonia.ch/en/archive/2015/number-2/>)
- Babylonia 1/2014. *The earlier the better? Early foreign language teaching.* (<http://babylonia.ch/en/archive/2014/number-1/>)
- Babylonia 3/2012. *Fremdsprachenunterricht für Lerner mit besonderem Förderbedarf – Enseigner les langues étrangères aux élèves à besoins éducatifs spécifiques – Insegnare le lingue agli allievi con bisogni educativi specifici – Instruire linguas a scolars cun basegns educativs specificfs.* (<http://babylonia.ch/en/archive/anno/number-3/>)
- Babylonia 4/2009. *Integrierte Sprachendidaktik und Mehrsprachigkeit – Didactique intégrée et plurilinguisme – Didattica integrata e plurilinguismo – Didactica integrata e plurilinguisssem.* (<http://babylonia.ch/en/archive/2009/number-4-09/>)
- Babylonia 1/2008. *La didactique intégrée des langues: expériences et applications – Mehrsprachigkeitsdidaktik: Erfahrungen und Umsetzung – La didattica integrata delle lingue: esperienze e applicazioni – La didactica da linguas integrata: experienzias ed applicaziuns.* (<http://babylonia.ch/en/archive/2008/number-1-08/>)

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Hutterli, S. (Ed.) (2012). *Coordination of Language Teaching in Switzerland. Current Status – Developments – Future Prospects*. Bern: EDK/CDIP. (<http://www.edk.ch/dyn/25888.php>)

Types of Presentations

Proposals can be submitted for three different types of presentations:

- **Paper Presentation:** Paper presentations last maximum 30 minutes (20 minutes for the presentation/talk and 10 minutes for discussions).
- **Symposium:** A Symposium lasts a maximum of 90 minutes, includes three presentations and leaves a total of 30 minutes for discussions. Symposia provide a venue for a group of presenters to propose a set of papers based on a shared theme or topic. Contributions have to be based on research projects. Plurilingual symposia are welcome.
- **Poster:** The time slots scheduled for the poster presentations offer opportunities for posters to be presented to the audience and for exchanges amongst and with the participants. Posters are ideal to present work-in-progress as well as preliminary results. Posters have to be in A0 format (84.1x118.9 cm).

Languages: Proposals can be submitted in German, French, Italian, and English. Presentations are given in the language chosen for the proposal and should be supported either visually or with the help of a summary in another conference language.

Submission Guidelines

All proposals must be submitted electronically on the website (Conftool link).

No more than two proposals per person may be submitted.

Proposals must include the following:

Presentation/Poster

- Title
- Abstract: Abstracts must not exceed 500 words and include a description of the theoretical framework, the context and the research questions. In the case of empirical research, a description of the research design and the data will be of particular importance.
- Keywords: 3-5
- Contact details of the presenter

Symposium

- Title
- Description of the Symposium (must not exceed 250 words)
- Contributions: The abstracts of the individual contributions must not exceed 500 words and include a description of the theoretical framework, the context, and the research questions. In the case of empirical research, a description of the research design and the data will be of particular importance.
- Keywords: 3-5
- Contact details for every presenter. Please note that information regarding the proposal will only be sent to the first (primary) presenter listed. The primary presenter will be responsible for contacting all co-presenters with details about the conference presentations.

Proposal Review

All submitted proposals will be reviewed by two members of the scientific committee.

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Deadlines

Proposal Deadline: 15th March 2018

Presenters will be notified by email of the conference's scientific committee's decision by 30th April 2018

Conference Registration Deadline: 31st May 2018

Local Organisation Committee

Rosanna Margonis-Pasinetti (HEP Vaud)

Anca Mérot, secrétaire (HEP Vaud)

Ingo Thonhauser (HEP Vaud)

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