



REPORT FORM FOR NETWORK ACTIVITIES

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Confidential

1. Lead Applicant

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Title (Dr, Professor, etc)	Dr		
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Present appointment and employing institution

Reader in Hungarian; UCL SSEES

Role in activity

Principal Co-ordinator

2. Activity details

Type and title of activity

A language project to develop new teaching and learning methods for the acquisition of reading skills in morphologically complex languages Reading Strategies for Postgraduates: the Finno-Ugric Interface

Location

UCL SSEES EELC Department 16 Taviton Street London WC1H 0BW
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Date

From: January 2009	To: May 2010
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Brief Description of activities carried out (please include or attach a confirmed list of participants)

<p>The Principal Co-ordinator of the Hungarian and Finnish projects is Daniel Abondolo (Reader in Hungarian) and the participants are Riitta-Liisa Valijärvi (Teaching Fellow in Finnish) and Eszter Tarsoly (Teaching Fellow in Hungarian), all of UCL SSEES.</p> <p>The project explored the particular difficulties encountered by research-focused postgraduate learners of Finnish and Hungarian: two less-widely taught morphologically complex languages; and its primary aim was to identify key areas of grammar and vocabulary that account for these difficulties, as well as to address these problems by developing materials which include text-based exercises. A secondary aim was to investigate the kind of impact that language structure and type (in this case the agglutinating nature of both Finnish and Hungarian) has, or indeed should have, on language teaching and learning.</p> <p>In the frame of the project, sample chapters have been produced for a Graded Reader of both Finnish and Hungarian, which will be presented at the UCL SSEES Language Seminar on 3 June 2010. The two participants presented their work at an early stage at the conference <i>Languages of the Wider World: Valuing Diversity</i> in September 2008 at SOAS, which led to the publication of an academic paper (in press) in <i>The Language Learning Journal</i>. The participants also organised a Finnish-Hungarian International Studies Day in December 2009 and are now working towards finding further opportunities to disseminate their work and discuss their findings with colleagues.</p>

3. Achievement of stated aims and objectives

Please summarise how the stated aims and objectives of the activities proposed have been achieved and how these have helped to further the aims and objectives of CEELBAS.

Our aim was to contribute to developing multi-disciplinary, language-based research capacity around key research themes by producing training materials suitable to build up expertise in the area of social sciences and humanities in Finnish and Hungarian. This aim is in line with the aims and objectives of CEELBAS and it has been achieved as follows:

The main objective of the project was to address the difficulties faced by research-focused learners which are peculiar to Finnish and Hungarian because of their morphological complexity. These languages can be described as 'morphologically complex' because in theory most nouns and verbs can appear in hundreds or thousands of forms.

Aspects of grammar and word-formation in Finnish and Hungarian differ radically from other languages of Europe. Nevertheless, to one degree or another, all textbooks treat Finnish and Hungarian as Standard Average European languages, a practice which is misleading for learners for two reasons: they first have to acquire a terminology which is widely used in the description of Indo-European languages, only to be told later that Finnish and Hungarian are "special cases", where the terminology in question cannot be applied in the same way as it applies to Indo-European languages.

The language project has explored these pitfalls of the learning and teaching of Finnish and Hungarian by mapping the areas of grammar where Finnish and Hungarian are fundamentally different from more widely taught languages and identified the problem areas that render the acquisition of reading skills the hardest in these languages. It also investigated the usefulness, or the lack thereof, of terminology and the role of linguistic approaches to language teaching. These findings were summarised in a journal article (in press).

Based on these findings, the participants laid out the plans of a duo of text books, one for Finnish and one for Hungarian, each consisting of ten units. Each unit addresses one main and several additional grammar points among those that have proven to be the most relevant for acquiring reading skills. The readers include an introduction to the main features of the languages and general information about text reading strategies. Each unit also includes sections on the lexicon, specifically: word formation, the use of dictionaries, and methods of acquiring the extensive and seemingly impenetrable vocabulary of Finnish and Hungarian.

4. Outcomes

Please indicate the outcomes and 'value for money' of activities carried out.

There are two major outcomes of the project: altogether six sample chapters of two graded readers and the outline of the remaining units, and a peer-reviewed academic paper. Furthermore, a study day was held (December 2009) and a seminar has been organised (for June 2010). This is good 'value for money' for CEELBAS as only 65 hours of work per person was covered by the funding.

The first outcome is a detailed plan of two text books, consisting of ten units each: a Finnish and a Hungarian Graded Reader for research-focused learners on *ab-initio* to advanced reading courses, with texts and exercises that are tailor-made to suit the needs of students who are learning Finnish and Hungarian in the CEELBAS network. Three sample units have been produced both for the Finnish and the Hungarian Reader, which will be circulated among Language Teaching Fellows first only internally at UCL SSEES. The participants will discuss potential ways of improving their work with colleagues on 3 June 2010 on the UCL SSEES Language Seminar.

Given that UCL SSEES's expertise in teaching these languages for research purposes at postgraduate level is unique in the UK, the project also contributed to innovation in teaching methods while providing an example of best practice in materials development for advanced skills in languages for research, thus paving the way for modes of delivery that are more fit for purpose in the teaching of the languages in question. The participants have sketched the outline of this approach, informed, where necessary, by the various sub-disciplines of linguistics in an article titled 'The role of linguistics in language teaching: the case of two less widely taught languages - Finnish and Hungarian', which has been accepted for publication in

The Language Learning Journal (to appear later in 2010).

5. Breakdown of total costs for workshops (please attach evidence of expenditure)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Key speakers (Travel, accommodation and subsistence)	
Postgraduate participation	
Room/equipment hire	
Administration costs	
Printing and publicity (including conference packs)	
Other (please specify	
Total expenditure	
Total contribution invoiced to CEELBAS	

The costs of the workshop have been generously supported by the Hungarian Cultural Centre and the Finnish Cultural Institute, thus they are not applicable.

Costs of the Language Seminar session at UCL SSEES will be met from the SSEES Director's budget.

6. Breakdown of total costs for projects (please attach evidence of expenditure)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Staff costs	1,551.56 x 2
Equipment/technical costs	
Administration costs	
Other (please specify	
Total expenditure	3,103.22
Total contribution invoiced to CEELBAS	

7. Dissemination and further research

Please give details of dissemination of the outcomes of the workshop/project and any further research planned.

The participants presented their work at an early stage on a conference organised at SOAS, University of London, titled *Languages of the Wider World: Valuing Diversity* in September 2008. During the event it was suggested that the participants collaborate at a later stage with teachers of other morphologically complex languages (e.g., Turkish), who have produced, or are working on, similar projects.

The participants used the draft chapters of the Readers on MA New Language courses, in hard copy, during the 2009-2010 academic year and collected further ideas of improvement.

They also organised a one-day International Studies Day in December 2009, with participants from Finland, Hungary, and the UK. This Studies Day explored the cultural as well as linguistic aspect of teaching these languages, thus it contributed to developing the authors' ideas on the types of texts that should be included in the Readers.

The methodological conclusions that the authors drew while outlining and writing the sample units of the Readers have been presented in a journal article (see previous sections).

Sample chapters from the Readers will be presented to the SSEES Language Seminar on 3 June 2010, where the project participants will also discuss their plans to develop, and ways of improving, the Readers.

The participants have submitted an abstract to the conference *LANGUAGES FOR THE 21st CENTURY: Training, Impact and Influence* in September 2010 in Sheffield. Our proposed paper aims to discuss the most intriguing methodological questions raised by our project, namely: 1) the way in which new grammar points are introduced: whether to start from grammar and build up to text as in the Finnish Reader or start from text and lift the grammar out of it, as in the Hungarian Reader; 2) the adequate level of morphological analysis when trying to draw the learner's attention to processes of word-building; 3) the elements of lexis to include in the reader: whether the lexis discussed in the reader should be based on frequency or other considerations; 4) the interface between language and culture: how to develop learners' cultural competence, i.e. sensitivity to style, discourse and the key narratives of the language-and-culture in question; and 5) the types of exercises and the level of linguistic analysis that they require.

The second part of the project, i.e. completion of all ten units, the printing and electronic publication of the Readers, is subject to further funding. After having secured further funding, the participants will complete the Readers and organise a CEELBAS workshop with the participation of all network institutions by Spring 2011.

A longer-term aim is to update the Readers with new texts and exercises every year, which will be presented in disciplinary groupings to suit the needs of research-focused learners, studying Hungarian and Finnish in the CEELBAS network, thus producing an infinitely expandable series of Graded Readers for these languages.

8. Signature and date

Applicant's signature

Date: 7 May 2010

Institutional authorisation (if required)

Position:
Date:

Institutional CEELBAS Network Primary Contact

Date:

This form must be accompanied by an invoice from the applicant's institution, supported by receipts or other evidence of the expenditure incurred.

Please send the completed form to: CEELBAS Administrator, SSEES, UCL, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT and by email to: ceelbas-network@ssees.ucl.ac.uk.

CEELBAS is a consortium of UCL,
University of Oxford and University of Birmingham



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