

*SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT AS SUBMITTED IN SEPTEMBER 2009 FOR FUNDING*

The Common European Framework of Reference or CEFR has become increasingly important in the curriculum across Europe for foreign language teaching (CEFR survey 2006). Competency in *intercultural communication* is considered fundamental and its definition, partially based on C. Kramsch and P. Nelson's research (1996), comprises openness to the other culture, among other features, as well as awareness of one's own 'otherness'. However as G. Zarate (1993) states, to be able to acknowledge one's own perspective, there must first be a self-discovery stage--or what we called 'intracultural' identity in Baider and Charalambidou (in press). Indeed, the CEFR (paragraph 1.6.2) encourages local users to adapt the given framework to their own local needs. However it is noted (CEFR survey 2006) that one of the main drawbacks is the lack of *contextualizing* the textbooks such as the *Referentiel* (Hachette 2008) that are published within this framework.

Our project answers this need for contextualization within the Greek-Cypriot community, and aims to: contribute to the teaching of French as a foreign language; enhance cross-cultural communication; and enrich research in contrastive semantics, within a social-constructionist framework. Our data will comprise both a written and a spoken corpus in order to investigate lexical usage and prosodic patterns that express certain basic emotions as described in Ekman (1992): joy, fear and anger, as well as love and hate, which will be considered as emotions (see Terkourafi and Bali 2007, esp. their discussion on the lack of difference between feeling and emotion for the Greek language). These emotions have been chosen in order as well to compare our data with previous studies (see the cross-linguistic studies for French and Anglo-Australian in Béal 1990; on anger in Italian and French in Mrowa-Hopkins & Stramb 2005)

The idea of such a project was conceived after a pilot study (restricted to the expressions of love and fear) was carried out in 2008 and 2009 within the student communities in France (University of Lille and Poitiers) and in Cyprus (Baider and Charalambidou in press; and Baider and Valetopoulos 2009). In this corpus-based study we aimed to contribute to the description and analysis of linguistic and cultural variations in the conceptualizations of love, and fear, through a contrastive semantic analysis of the translational equivalents in Cypriot-Greek and French.

The written data obtained in the pilot study (roughly 200 questionnaires in each country, for the two languages and for the same emotion), revealed differences in cultural keywords amounting to 30% of the data collected (see Methodology below), and distribution differences of the same keywords, despite major similarities. With regard to language teaching, these differences point to different lexical fields to be known and to be learnt in order to improve language learning from the perspective of effective cross-cultural communication. Moreover, the different associations made by the French and Greek Cypriot students can also be considered as 'markers of culture, according to Leontiev (1978) and Vygotsky (1962 [1934]) who identified a link between linguistic associations and ethnological perceptions of the socio-cultural world. Thus, these markers carry implicit social norms and values as much as national stereotypes. As such, these social norms could be explicated by means of cultural scripts so that when the words are taught, the concepts are defined in a "neutral metalanguage" (Wierzbicka 1996, 2002). However, to accomplish these objectives, our corpus must include and analyse more data and other written linguistic evidence (Goddard 2009) found in the literature of cross-cultural life experience for French and Greek Cypriot communities.

As well, audio-visual data are necessary to complete a written corpus and will take the form of 15 interviews for each language. These face-to-face encounters will be used to refine our lexical findings-- as was the case in the *Cultura* project (see Bibliography), as they give informants a chance to make sense of the word they chose in the questionnaire and to counterbalance the weaknesses of the written data (see Methodology). This phase of the project will be carried out with Professor Philippe Martin and the software *WinPitch* that he has been developing for the past 15 years. We will study and work on the differences in prosodic contours between French speakers and Greek-Cypriot speakers as found in the interviews. First, prosody conveys semantic information too often ignored in studies on emotions. Second, intonation must play a larger role in the actual Common European Framework of Reference for language teaching. Third, the University of Cyprus is planning for a Language Laboratory to open in the next two years; preparing prosody seminars for language teaching is therefore necessary and important. Finally the audio-visual data will allow, at a later stage and in another project, a discourse and conversational analysis of both communities in terms of emotions as well as the study of the non-verbal communication such as gestures and mimics relaying emotions.