

Foreign Language Proficiency & Certification amongst Youths in Malta – from Compulsory Schooling to Courses for Specific Purposes.

Dr Mario Pace
University of Malta

mario.pace@um.edu.mt

Foreign language competence and proficiency and intercultural understanding:

Optional extras?

Luxury?

An essential part of being a citizen.

The ability to understand and communicate in other languages contributes :

to the cultural and linguistic richness of our society

increases personal fulfilment and promotes global citizenship.

The EC fosters multilingualism and language learning:
'mother-tongue +2' - Barcelona Summit - March
'02.

The individual citizen needs training:

- for professional and personal projects
 - to have knowledge of languages
- to understand different languages and cultures
 - to operate within them.

EC - four major reasons why it fosters multilingualism and language learning:

- I. to promote intercultural dialogue and a more inclusive society;**
- II. to help the public to develop a sense of EU citizenship;**
- III. to open up opportunities for young people to study and work abroad;**
- IV. to open up new markets for EU businesses competing at the global level.**

“The ESLC sets out to assess students’ ability to use language purposefully, in order to understand spoken or written texts, or to express themselves in writing”.

- ❑ Language competencies provided by educational systems still need to be significantly improved.
- ❑ There is an overall low level of competences in both first and second foreign languages amongst students in all participating states.
- ❑ Despite a growing recognition that proficiency in at least one other language is advantageous in today’s world, a lot still needs to be done.

The Report from the thematic working group "Languages for Jobs" European Strategic Framework for Education and Training (ET 2020)

- Demand for foreign languages and communication skills is steadily rising on the European labour market.
- Reduce the gap between offer and demand of language skills and increase the motivation of learners

Need for new methods of teaching languages:

- more learner-focused
- more practically oriented
- more applied to professional contexts.

	% of cohort
Year	Did not sit for any Foreign Language at SEC level %
2011	33.5
2012	39.1
2013	38.5
2014	35.6

Source: *MATSEC Statistical Reports*

Languages require a new market and their teaching and learning must go beyond formal schooling.

Students are more willing to work hard at something when they realise that they are able to apply it to real life.

It is not surprising that the market of foreign language learning and teaching is improving steadily among adults and decreasing at school level.

% of 16 year-olds who finished with certification in a Foreign Language at the end of their compulsory schooling

	2012	2013	2014
	% of cohort	% of cohort	% of cohort
French	22.8%	22.2%	21.8%
German	3.9%	4.2%	5.0%
Italian	26.3%	30.5%	26.7%
Spanish	2.8%	4.6%	3.4%
Source: MATSEC Examiners' Reports			

Foreign Language Proficiency & Certification

At levels 1, 2 and 3 of the
Malta Qualifications Framework

Dr. Mario Pace

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Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education

The programme:

- ❖ a home-grown alternative assessment based on subject proficiency
- ❖ seeks to provide a clear description of what individuals 'can do' with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context.
- ❖ presents 3 levels of proficiency and describes what an individual can and cannot do with language at each level, regardless of where, when, or how the language is acquired.
- ❖ enable learners acquire and develop a communicative competence which allows for an effective and meaningful interaction in diversified social contexts.

Out of a total of 77 students who followed LPA programme in Italian at level A1:

20 students obtained certification in 4 skills – 26%

21 students obtained certification in 3 skills – 27%

20 students obtained certification in 2 skills – 26%

9 students obtained certification in 1 skill – 12%

7 students failed to sit for any of the exams – 9%

The introduction of the LPA programme has:

- ❖ raised an awareness of the urgent need to diversify the Maltese local language training market
- ❖ courses in foreign languages for specific purposes
- ❖ more diverse language provisions and work-based learning, including the opportunity to study languages for specific purposes.

September 2015:

**The introduction of foreign language
courses for specific purposes in
the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS)**

and

**the Malta College for Arts, Science
and Technology (MCAST).**

Thank you for your attention.

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