

Plurality of learning in Language Centers

The 31st RANACLES Conference (2024), dedicated to all forms of unconventional practices in language learning and teaching, revealed a great diversity in our language centers. In line with this diversity, the 2025 Conference aims to explore more broadly the plurality of learning that centers seek to trigger, encourage and strengthen.

The term “Language Center” itself covers a variety of realities with “almost as many titles as there are structures” (Brudermann et al., 2016, §6). “Indeed, there are “*maisons des langues*”, “language departments”, “language services”, “language centers” and only one UFR LANSAD [*faculty of languages for specialists of non-language disciplines*], at the University of Lorraine” (Vega Umaña, 2021, p. 22¹). The status and backgrounds of the people who work there are just as varied. “Indeed, teaching practices are many and varied, because there is diversity of context, teaching location, teacher status and student profile” (Chaplier, 2022, p. 381²).

Thus, the present Conference will welcome proposals for papers aimed at providing an overview of this plurality of practices, profiles and learning in these different structures. What languages are studied? With what objectives? What is the place of languages for specific purposes (LSP)? What plurilingual practices, such as intercomprehension between languages, are being developed? Are learning strategies being transferred? And, above all, can we identify common themes and issues in this diversity of contexts, languages and cultures, and learning systems?

This plural framework is reflected in the diversity of approaches and practices, inviting us to refine their characterization while offering an overall vision. In the field of didactics of English for specialists of other disciplines, for example, this plurality is reflected in the absence of a unified theory or method of analysis (Chaplier & O'Connell, 2015). Similarly, research in the didactics of English for specific purposes (ESP) relies on “theoretical eclecticism” and varied methodological frameworks (Belan et al., 2023). This Conference seeks to explore these dynamics by extending the reflection to other languages and questioning the impact of this diversity on learning in language centers.

Proposals will focus on one of the following three areas:

Theme 1: Plurality of learners and profiles

Students have a wide variety of profiles and needs, depending on their course of study, previous experience and career plans.

Universities are marked by linguistic diversity, with national students sometimes speaking languages other than French, and international students, whose numbers, according to Campus France, have

¹ « En effet, il existe des « maisons de langues », des « départements de langues », des « services des langues », des « centres des langues » et une seule UFR LANSAD, à l’université de Lorraine » (Vega Umaña, 2021, p. 22)

² « En effet, les pratiques pédagogiques sont nombreuses et variées car il existe une diversité de contexte, de lieu d’enseignement, de statut d’enseignants, de profil d’étudiants » (Chaplier, 2022, p. 381).

risen to 430,466 international students enrolled in 2023-2024, an increase of 4.5% from the previous year. This plurilingual context provides an opportunity to go beyond English both in language teaching and in research in language education (Le Lièvre, 2024; Gouaïch, 2024).

Studies have shown that international students, and refugees in particular, need to be encouraged and valued by teachers at university (Bikie Bi Nguema et al., 2020). This is just as true for any individual, but particularly important for the integration of these students. This involves breaking down barriers between the language repertoires of our student bodies. This decompartmentalization makes it possible to recognize and value plurilingual skills such as metalinguistic reflection (Herdina & Jessner, 2002), cross-linguistic transfer, adaptation to varied communication contexts and intercultural communication (Franceschini, 2018). It also encourages the learning of new languages and content (Coste & Cavalli, 2015).

As part of the quest for a more inclusive society, we also question the contribution of language centers to the inclusion of students with specific needs and/or specific status: working students, students with disabilities, high-level athletes and student artists... Few studies have examined their needs and learning strategies (Kormos & Nijakowska, 2017).

The following questions, among others, could be addressed within this theme:

- What are the developments in student needs analysis (Labetoulle, 2022)?
- How is pedagogical differentiation being carried out?
- What multilingual practices are being experimented with?
- Are national and international students' language repertoires taken into account in language courses for specialists of other disciplines?
- What diversified pathways are available to meet a variety of professional goals and further study projects? What types of collaboration are encouraged among groups of learners with heterogeneous profiles and backgrounds?
- What arrangements are put in place to integrate and adapt to the varied needs of students from different languages/cultures (international students, refugees, etc.)?
- What are the needs of students with disabilities, working students, high-level athletes and student artists? What types of inclusion, support and follow-up are offered? What roles do teaching teams play, and what training do they receive?

Theme 2. Plurality of learning environments and of the uses of digital technology

The diversity of our language centers calls for a plurality of uses and learning ecosystems, whether digital or hybrid, but also artistic (Manoilov, 2023) and informal (Toffoli, 2020) in particular. The lockdowns of 2020-2021, related to the COVID-19 pandemic, accelerated the development of blended courses (Schmoll, 2024). Distance learning practices are diverse in form and purpose. From remediation practices (Poussard, 2021) to serious games (Yassine-Diab et al. 2021, Nairanen, 2022), for example, we wish to examine the various environments, as well as the roles and representations of those involved. Despite the democratized use of digital technology, language centers are also places for face-to-face socialization, conviviality and multiple interactions, where uses vary from one site to another. Papers will present research and practice on the following questions:

- What forms of blended learning are being implemented?
- Have digital resources and open educational resources generated "new types of guidance for learning processes" (Amadiou, 2021)? How can we characterize them? How can they be assessed?
- What role does digital technology play in remediation?

- How are language labs used today (Abou Haidar, 2021)?
- How are artificial intelligence and machine translation tools used for language learning (Molle et al., 2024)?
- How are serious games used?
- What tutoring programs are in place and how are student tutors' roles assessed (Muller, 2015)?
- How is student artistic expression integrated in language teaching and learning?
- What place is given to informal learning?

Theme 3. Plurality of skills

Since 2001, the CEFR has introduced the notion of competence into language teaching. More recently, the competence-based approach has gained ground in the French education system, becoming the fundamental reference in higher education. We wish to open the discussion to the plurality of language and transversal skills developed in languages for specialists of other disciplines and LSP (Alaez Galan & Kalyaniwala, 2024) in language centers, at to how this affects teacher training (Causa & Derivry, 2013). We therefore invite proposals on the following points:

- development of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic skills (CEFR, 2001)
- development of specific discourse skills related to LSP (Bouyé et al., 2023)
- development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence (CEFR, 2018)
- development and enhancement of metacognitive skills
- development of digital skills
- development of emotional intelligence
- development of creativity (Lubart, 2003)
- self-assessment tools tested with students
- role of assessment and evaluation of transversal skills developed in language learning situations (Brudermann et al., 2024)
- creation of a common framework of language skills specific to learners of non-language disciplines (Maison des Langues, Université de la Réunion, 2020-2024)
- professional development among language teachers, and the impact on their professional identity, sense of efficiency and quality of life at work
- skills developed by teachers and researchers as part of EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) programmes.

Proposals for papers, in French or English, can be in any of the three areas, and should take the form of a 250–300-word summary (not including bibliographical references) and 2 to 5 key words. Both pedagogical notes (in “workshop” or “poster” format) and research papers (in “presentation” or “poster” format) are welcome.

Submission deadline: 15 May on <https://ranacles2025.sciencesconf.org>

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