



**ALADUN2025 International Conference
23-24 June 2025
Université Grenoble Alpes, France**

Call for papers

Picking up a language at university: Diverse beginner learner experiences

While the status of English as a *lingua franca* has been widely established, individuals engage in diverse multilingual experiences across various contexts (professional, academic, relational, leisure, online or face-to-face). These experiences underscore the inherently multilingual nature of communication in today's world (Kalaja & Melo-Pfeifer, 2024).

Different university curricula offer optional language learning courses as interdisciplinary or elective courses that students can opt for to explore new languages or cultures. This can be a chance to continue a language learnt in secondary school, while for many, this can be an opportunity to start learning languages they have never encountered before. In some programs, such as French as a Foreign Language (FLE) didactics, this opportunity takes the form of a hands-on experience with a reflective mindset, often involving writing learning diaries (Cadet, 2007). Since the early 1980s, there has been an interest in “the experience of an individual within the classroom, whether in the role of the teacher or the learner” (Cicurel, 2015: 38). In a broader sense, the linguistic diversity of university language programs – both in language centers and in foreign language and civilisation departments – supports personalised learning, hence fostering diverse learning experiences.

At the core of our research focus at ALADUN, Lidilem Lab, lies the teaching and learning of beginner languages, and their use, which we propose to explore at the conference through the lens of lived experience.

The importance of the experiential dimension may have been overshadowed at one point by the utilitarian character associated with the competences described and promoted in the CEFR (Longuet & Springer, 2021); however, recent publications have reintroduced this aspect, in

particular the place of lived experience in existing didactic models (Puren, 2022), and emphasised that “the paradigm of experience is now unavoidable in language didactics” (Rivière, 2019: 106).

The language experience is linked to the learners’ lived experiences, through different forms that Puren (2022) describes as “notional components”, citing among others the authentic, the spontaneous, the affective, the emotional, the pleasurable, the relational, the interactive, or through pedagogical approaches that mobilise an imaginative or artistic dimension. These dimensions echo research on the imaginaries associated with language teaching and learning (Muller, 2021), on the place and role of the body and emotions (Eschenauer et al., 2022) and on the contribution of artistic practices (Aden, 2008). This also includes biographical approaches (Molinié, 2013) that shed light on the lived experiences of the subject.

Finally, the linguistic experience, understood as repeated use that makes it possible to achieve a certain intimacy with the language learned, can also be seen as a means and an opportunity to consider the language-object other than through formal or conceptual descriptions, that is, by placing emphasis on the affective, familiar and expressive dimension of language (Saussure, 2024). Language practice contributes to the constitution of an “imaginary” and to the development of familiarity with the language-culture, and it can give rise to emotions (positive or negative) which constitute the language experience and the learning experience as well (OR which are part of the language experience and also of the learning experience) (Guedat-Bittighoffer & Dewaele, 2024).

One might think that experiences of situated learning – mobility experiences, for example, rarely concern beginning learners, and that the possibilities of contact with speakers or language resources available outside the classroom for languages other than English are rarely mentioned in research on informal activities. However, contact with speakers or cultural elements of the target language can also be considered lived experiences, regardless of the level of competence acquired. The conference will offer the opportunity to highlight experiences related to the use of the new language in university learning contexts, in circumstances or situations that go beyond the classroom setting.

While lived experience is often learner-centered, the teachers’ perspectives cannot be overlooked, as they too may have a particular teaching experience with a group of beginner learners. This prompts reflections on their representations, the pedagogical stances they adopt, their instructional design strategies and applied teaching practices.

This conference will thus focus on understanding the initial stages of the new language learning process and the discovery of a language-culture, from the perspective of experience, by exploring its different facets, that can be made both by learners and teachers. This can be compiled through various corpora (interviews, questionnaires, learning journals, teacher logs, feedback, filmed lesson sequences, etc.).

From the learner's point of view, lived experience can concern:

- initial expectations and representations versus the reality of the experience gained,
- the place given to prior-learning or usage experiences (in relation to the language learned or other languages),
- the materiality of the language and its physical, sensory and/or emotional experience,

- the perception of proximity or distance in relation to a system of references forged by L1 or by languages already known, besides spatial, sociocultural or affective elements,
- the links that can be made with experiences lived outside the classroom (through more informal activities or through opportunities to encounter or use the learned language-culture).

From the teacher's perspective, the experience can also be explored through:

- the way in which teachers experience teaching beginners and adapt their activities to this audience,
- the way in which teachers shape or seek to shape the experience of beginner learners,
- the teacher's conception of learning or of language at a beginner level (in relation to other levels of competence),
- pedagogical approaches designed to elicit an experience, including corporeal engagement,
- tools that provide learners with digital experiences (immersive devices, telecollaboration, serious games, etc.),
- the use of different resources to anchor learning in a creative, literary or intercultural experience,
- the impact of teachers' experiences, including their training, on their teaching approaches and practices in the context of early learning.

Proposals may address one or more of the themes mentioned above, and this list is not exhaustive. The conference aims to serve as a forum for reflection and discussion on research rooted in field-based and practice-oriented studies. In this view, contributions drawing on participatory or collaborative approaches (Miguel Addisu & Thamin, 2020) are encouraged.

Proposals for oral presentations can address any language taught or learned at university. We accept abstracts written in the following languages: English, French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. Oral presentations should be delivered in one of the above languages, and slides should be in French.

The conference will be held exclusively in person.

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Abstracts (500 words maximum with a limit of 5 bibliographic references) must be submitted online at <https://aladun2025.sciencesconf.org/>

Key dates

Submission deadline: ~~15 March~~ **30 March 2025**

Notification of acceptance: 26 April 2025

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