



AQUA-TNET Meeting – Dublin, December 2007

WP6: Languages and Linguistic diversity

Minutes

- Venue:** AquaTT
40 Lower Leeson Street
D2, Dublin
- Date:** Thursday, 13th December 2007
- Time:** 14:00 – 18:00
- Attending:**
- Margaret Eleftheriou (WP leader), AMC (Ireland)
 - Roisin Nash, Ecological Consultancy Services LTd. (Ireland)
 - William O'Connell (UK)
 - Elisabeth Grahl-Madsen, Bergen University College (Norway)
- Apologies:**
- Richard Fitzgerald, Martin Ryan Institute (Ireland)

Agenda:

1. Review of WP Deliverables
2. New Curriculum Chapter
3. Consideration of other WP ideas
4. WP6 ideas
5. Conclusions

1. Review of the deliverables

A review of the deliverables was given by M. Eleftheriou, giving an update of the position since the Annual event in Crete.

The survey on language teaching across the AQUATNET network had been updated and expanded to include a bigger section on student perceptions of the courses and methodologies on offer. Mrs Eleftheriou and Dr O'Connell had prepared a poster for the EAS meeting in Istanbul in October (abstract attached). M.Eleftheriou also gave a presentation to the student Workshop in Istanbul, on the languages aspect of the PESCALEX project which also forms part of the WP6 deliverables. As a result of this presentation, it had been agreed that the student survey was to continue, and funding had been secured via the EAS student committee to adapt the PESCALEX language game for the needs of the EAS conference in Poland in September 2008.

The review of the curriculum regarding marine science and language teaching provision had been radically rethought and rewritten, before, during and after the Annual Event, because of the massive amount of data that is becoming available resulting from the changes to EU language teaching policies (there will be at least two more EU reviews before the end of the

AQUATNET project and it would be wise to include the latest data as part of this deliverable).

The review of EUROPASS is also awaiting the latest changes in EU policy before being finalized. For instance, the European Language Passport, now incorporated into EUROPASS, has generated more than 50,000 language passports since its inauguration in 2005, with more than 180,000 templates downloaded to be completed online. In addition, more than one million European CVs have been generated online and 1.7 million have been downloaded. (And yet this is the feature of which most AQUATNET respondents showed most ignorance!).

The web portal on language provision is currently being completed in the PESCALEX website, which will be an important link in the AQUATNET website. It was noted that some interesting ideas had been put forward by WP1 concerning the online provision of courses.

2. New Curriculum Chapter

R. Nash has written a new chapter of the review, entitled 'Are school curricula meeting the needs of students today, for tomorrow?' The core group considered this first draft and agreed that it contained some extremely relevant ideas, but that it should be redrafted before being circulated further.

3. Consideration of other WP ideas

We agreed with WP5 concerning the need for a stronger focus on lifelong learning and the need to reach out with specific activities to other sectors (school, vocational, adult) and have suggestions below.

Involvement of graduate alumni was also endorsed by Ms. Grahl-Madsen, who said that this two-way learning process was often used in Norway and was very successful in bringing industry/company issues into under-graduate courses, and was seen as very relevant by the students who were eager to listen to the real life experiences of these alumni.

We also agreed with the need to upgrade courses and materials, and if these should be online courses, then they should be designed with the practicalities of online upgrading embedded in the construction.

We felt that the quality control issue is very important and must not be omitted from any aspect that is being considered.

With regard to the suggestions from WP1, Ms Grahl-Madsen did not think that for AQUATNET to be the preferred European website for information concerning ERASMUS placements was a good idea, as in her organization students do not have a choice but are sent to the institutions chosen by the tutor or professor. Otherwise we were in agreement that courses, course packages and programmes should be fully described.

We were also in full agreement that new tools should be incorporated into courses that are already available (Ie, video streaming using webcams, etc). This type of technology is in common use by students and other users (Youtube, Facebook, mobile phone technology) and should form part of the new proposal.

We spent some time discussing the development of a course in European aquaculture involving lecturing from several countries. We were in favour of this (stressing that it is perhaps more difficult than it seems to get such a course agreed at the legislative/administrative level). We also agreed that the courses should be in English.

4. WP6 ideas for the future

Dissemination as an extremely important part of any new proposal was stressed, as this is one of the assessment criteria which is often largely ignored by authors of scientific proposals. Industrial/company involvement is also an important element. Since Outreach is a significant component of dissemination, all agreed that one of the unexpected outcomes of the PESCALEX project, the PESCALEX language game, should play an important role in a new proposal, in the following ways:

- i) as part of the induction process for students about to go on work placements or exchanges – to organize pre-mobility workshops in which learning at least some of

- the required language could take place, along with a group meeting with other students involved in the exchange(s). For this the game would have to be further developed in accordance with a future AQUATNET WP on mobility/exchanges
- ii) there is very little involvement of companies with the language side of work placements and this should be addressed in a future proposal. We need to find out what are industry's language requirements, and see how they can be brought into the picture. We also need to look at how these specific requirements fit in with normal language courses. The PESCALEX language modules could be very useful at specific points, for specific needs, i.e., the complete beginners' units right at the start, followed by conventional language classes for one month, followed by the rest of the PESCALEX units used on open/distance/flexible learning mode.
 - iii) The language modules could also be used to retrain older workers, which would chime with the lifelong learning programme. Many workers wish to travel for work purposes, but one major obstacle is their lack of language knowledge.
 - iv) The PESCALEX language and fish health modules should be as functional as possible (including the possibility of updating and upgrading materials, as well as including a more sophisticated audio component) as part of a future proposal.
 - v) Other possible subject areas for the PESCALEX treatment could be: recirculation techniques; quality control; automation technology.

Margaret Eleftheriou
18th December, 2007.