



HERMES Conference 2002

Tübingen, 12 to 15 July 2002



MINUTES

Participants: 12 participants from 7 countries (AT, DE, FI, IT, SI, SK, UK)

Beginning: Friday, 12th, evening (informal meeting)

End: Sunday, 14th, 3.30pm (followed by cultural programme)

Departure: Monday, 15th

The aim of the conference was to present the activities and the results of the working group in year 2 of the project, to discuss means of improving the number of participants and to plan the activities of year 3.

1. Welcome

The Conference was opened on Saturday morning at 9.00 am by Dr. Johann Fischer, HERMES Co-ordinator and Director of the Language Centre at Tübingen University. Johann presented the agenda of the conference (see attachment 1) and then gave a general overview on AFANet and HERMES, especially for participants who attended a HERMES Conference for the first time and wanted some general information on the TNP AFANet, and the relation between AFANet and HERMES. Further information is available on the websites (see attachment 2):

AFANet: <http://www.afanet.info>

HERMES: <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/hermes/>

Johann pointed out that most activities that were planned in year 2 of the project could be realised. Only the organisation of our workshops proved to be difficult. This was mostly due to the fact that the official agreement on our project proposal from Brussels came very late, and that the information on the budget was not available before beginning of February 2002. It was therefore not possible to start planning before that date. It then proved to be already too late for a workshop to take place in April, as interested partners had already other obligations or did not have enough time to solve financial questions. It also proved to be too late to run a series of workshops for piloting our training materials, as May was already the end of the academic year in many European countries. Due to the approaching end of the academic year, language teacher were facing a very high workload and were busy with final examinations and marking, thus having no time to attend workshops.

Emphasis was therefore put in the **development** of training material instead of **piloting** material. Material has e.g. already been developed for general professional development courses for teachers of Italian, although this was supposed to take place in Year 3 only.

2. Report on workpackage 1: Key curriculum research on language levels and assessment (Johann Fischer)

Unfortunately, the two colleagues from Gödöllő who had taken over the co-ordination of the activities of WP 1, Ildikó Tóth and Judit Szabó, were unable to attend the conference due to other obligations. Therefore Johann gave a short summary of the activities undertaken so far (in the previous TNP and in years 1 and 2 of the current TNP project) and of the activities planned in the future.

The first step within this workpackage had been the development of level descriptors based on the Council of Europe levels and the first version of the German UNICert level descriptors. It appeared that the Council of Europe descriptors were too general on the higher levels, particularly on levels C1 and C2, and did not take into account the particularities of university and academic linguistic needs and competences.

In step 2 these descriptors, developed by Johann Fischer and Etain Casey, were used for the development of a questionnaire on levels of language competence at UCARS (Universities and Colleges of Agriculture & Related Sciences). The aim of this questionnaire was to get an overview of the existing entrance and exit levels at UCARS and the progress the students made during their studies, taking into account the number of teaching hours in their curriculum. The results proved that the situation was considered very unsatisfactory and that quantity and quality of language teaching at UCARS needed to be intensified.

In step 3 (year 1 of the current project) Johann and Etain developed a questionnaire on language testing at UCARS and sent it out to AFANet partner institutions. The results from 13 institutions showed that a high number of language teachers wished stronger European co-operation in language testing in order to reach common standards. They also expressed their need for professional development activities in language testing.

In step 4 (year 2 of the project) workshop modules and a handbook were developed by Ildikó and Judit, concentrating on the testing of receptive language skills. A first workshop was planned in Gödöllő in April 2002 for teachers of English and German, but could not take place due to the low number of registrations. This workshop had been postponed and would now take place end of September.

In year 3 of the project (step 5) the working group would develop training modules for the productive language skills, which would then be calibrated in a second workshop.

As the existing “can do” statements were not always appropriate for academia in general and for agricultural and related sciences in particular, the HERMES group wanted to develop and calibrate detailed “can do” statements for language teaching at UCARS in step 6. These “can do” statements had to concentrate on the specific language needs of UCARS students in their studies and their future professional activities, and should take into account the competence of research done under the guidance of the Council of Europe (*Common European Framework of Reference, Language Portfolio*) and by other projects like DIALANG or Hungarian, Dutch and Finnish as well as Canadian scales.

Johann gave then a detailed presentation of the workshop on testing receptive language skills to take place in Gödöllő end of September (see attachment 3)

3. Report on workpackage 2: Professional development courses for language teachers at UCARS (Etain Casey)

Etain Casey (King’s College London) gave a summary of the activities in year. Unfortunately, a workshop planned for May 2002 in Bologna could not take place due to the low number of

registrations. It appeared that a workshop for three languages to take place at the same time, working on parallel lines and bringing together trainers from a series of institutions from different European countries was too complicated to arrange and had a negative impact on planning. It was therefore decided to offer workshops for only two languages at a time in the future.

As the workshop in Bologna could not take place, efforts were put into the development and revision of training material. Emphasis was put in the development of material for French and the revision and finalisation of the English material (see attachment 4 for provisional content structure). Instead of running the workshop in Bologna with only very few participants, it was decided to postpone the calibration of the training modules to year 3 and to start already the production of training material for the fourth language, i.e. Italian. Some material for the French group however would be calibrated with students at the University of Tübingen (DE) and reviewed. Furthermore, during project year 2 the working group added new members to the group of trainers and started to train them in the training.

4. Report on workpackage 3: Professional Development ICT Courses (Lisa Lena Opas-Hänninen)

In year 2 Lisa Lena Opas-Hänninen (University of Joensuu) and Hermien Miltenburg (Wageningen University) developed training modules for professional development ICT courses according to the decisions taken in year 1. These modules were then calibrated in a workshop in Vienna end of May / beginning of June 2002 with the title “Texts, corpora and language testing software: Tools for the language teacher” (see attachment 5). A provisional report (see attachment 6) is already available. A handbook for these training modules was under production and would be finalised by the end of year 2; it would then be available on the HERMES website.

The workshop in Vienna appeared to fulfil ideally the needs of teachers at UCARS, as there was a strong pressure on them to use ICT in language teaching and learning, but there was not enough training for them within their institution. Lisa Lena pointed out that many language teachers did not even have basic computer skills and that it was therefore very difficult to run professional development courses due to the heterogeneity of the participants’ levels in computer skills. The high demand for this kind of training courses was proven by the fact that the maximum number of possible registrations was reached, encouraging the HERMES group to continue these activities and to add an ICT component also to professional development programmes within the other working groups.

In year 3 a second workshop was planned, this time working on parallel lines with two groups, i.e. it would be run in English and in German. In this case helpers might be needed for each group to assist the trainers. It would therefore be necessary not only to revise the existing modules, but to develop similar modules in German.

The participants at the conference also discussed the necessity of pre-course questionnaires, and the need of a short course before the actual training module for people with no or very limited computer skills. The problem of dealing with mixed ability groups was discussed in further detail.

Johann explained that shorter workshop modules would be developed, aiming at the development and use of Internet-based case studies. These modules would be developed for all four project languages, as HERMES promised in the project application that the group would develop material for all four languages, i.e. English, French, German and Italian. These modules would then be piloted in short workshops (two days) during year 3.

5. Report on workpackage 4: Research on the most appropriate methods to develop a stronger interaction between language teachers and subject area specialists (Etain Casey)

Etain briefly summarised the aims and objectives of this workpackage, which were: to discover the current co-operation between language teachers and scientists in the departments of agriculture, to find out different ways of co-operation and to describe methods of best practice. In year 1 of the project a questionnaire was sent out to analyse the present situation. The results were presented briefly at the HERMES Conference in August 2001, and in year 2 the results were analysed in further detail, in co-operation with Jean Mertens (Institut Supérieur Industriel de Huy, BE) and Hermien Miltenburg (see attachment 7). Interviews with scientists were carried out during year 2 by Etain and Hermien.

Etain pointed out that the results varied from very positive examples, wishing a strong interaction between both groups of academics, to rather negative comments, saying that language teaching and language support was not necessary at all. But in general, the positive comments prevailed. It was interesting to note that the subject area specialists seemed to be more enthusiastic about a stronger interaction than the language teachers.

The audience mentioned that it would be useful that this report were available not only in English, but that a translation into French, German, Italian, maybe Spanish might be needed.

In year 2 best practice scenarios for the co-operation of language teachers and subject area specialists were developed, notably by intensifying a co-operation in the development of agricultural case studies and their use by both subject area specialists and language teachers. The co-operation with the WebCase project (see below) was in this respect very helpful for the development of models of best practice.

It was planned to run a joint distance learning course using an Internet based case study developed by the WebCase project and leading to a final presentation session run by Philip Cain (Senior Lecturer in Farm Business Management at the University of Newcastle) and Etain Casey (Head of Communication Skills at the English Language Centre at King's College London). This course, planned to take place in April 2002, was postponed to November / December 2002 (i.e. to year 3) due to organisational problems. The results from this workshop would allow to further develop models of best practice and to disseminate the results in year 3.

The initially planned workshop where language teachers and subject area specialists would meet was substituted by a series of more informal meetings on the occasion of workshops and WebCase co-ordination meetings. This allowed not only to reduce costs and time spent on travelling, but also to discuss possible co-operation and interaction and to further develop ideas and concepts along with the different meetings.

6. Minerva project “WebCase” (Etain Casey, Johann Fischer)

Etain and Johann briefly presented the Minerva project “WebCase”, co-ordinated by Philip Cain (University of Newcastle), which was an outcome of the AFANet activities. The aim of this project was the development of six Internet based case studies in farm management. These case studies would be developed by partners in Denmark, Hungary, Italy and the United Kingdom and should be used in the training of students in farm management in universities in various European countries.

The role of HERMES in this project was the revision of the texts from a linguistic point of view. It was necessary to check and reformulate the texts for the linguistic needs of both mother tongue speakers of English and non-native speakers of English. It was therefore essential that the language used was kept clear and relatively simple, and that the understanding of the texts did not require specific cultural or national knowledge. In this respect the texts coming from mother tongue speakers of English proved to be as difficult to revise as the texts from non-native speakers of English.

The second role of HERMES was the production of glossaries for the six case studies: The HERMES group would identify the list of words, the authors would produce a paraphrase in English and a translation of the words into their mother tongue, and HERMES would then produce a translation of the words into German and French.

HERMES' interest in the project was also a possible adaptation and use of these case studies for language teaching purposes, but also the gain of experience in the production of case studies.

This Minerva project was therefore one model of a possible co-operation between language teachers and subject area specialists, showing the mutual benefit from an interaction between both groups of academics.

7. The Slovenian Problem-Based Learning Project (Marija Lešnik)

Marija Lešnik (University of Maribor, SI) presented the Slovenian Problem-Based Learning Project (see attachment 8), in which she was involved. The underlying concept was very similar to the general professional development courses of the HERMES activities, i.e. the use of task-oriented teaching methods in language teaching, like global simulations, project work and case studies. A stronger interaction between both projects was therefore desirable, and it was agreed that Robert Beck (Universität für Bodenkultur Wien, AT) would attend the next meeting of the Slovenian PBL Project group in Ljubljana, where a stronger co-operation could be discussed.

Doris Conrad (Università degli Studi di Bologna, IT) pointed out that this approach was very similar to the German "Systemtheoretische Didaktik", developed by König & Riedel already in 1975, and that she was very interesting in contributing to this approach.

8. Dissemination

The group discussed possible ways of improving the dissemination of the HERMES results. At present over 120 persons were on the mailing lists, but the number of registrations was relatively low. Several problems were discussed:

- the addressee did not always hand on the information to his or her colleagues (even within the same institution), as various reactions had shown;
- the registration fees were considered to be relatively high, both for language teachers in CEE countries (due to low salaries) and for language teachers from the EU (as in many cases they were paid on an hourly basis, keeping their income very low as well);
- on the other hand, these fees were needed to finance food arrangements and cultural programme;
- the invitations went out far too late in year 2, which was due, once again, to the late information from Brussels on the continuation of the project and on the budget available.

On the other hand, the reactions from many partners showed that they were very interested in our activities and that they followed their development very closely, stimulating the working group to continue in this direction. It was therefore decided to start an early planning of the activities for year 3 of the project and to present the partners early enough with the whole list of planned activities so that they could choose suitable workshops and make their planning, albeit the fact that the co-ordinator had not yet the necessary information on the budget by that time.

9. Planning activities for Year 3

It was agreed to continue the activities as originally planned. In order to be able to pilot the professional development modules both for French and Italian, it was decided to run two workshops, each combined with a workshop on the two languages already piloted, i.e. English or German. In order to pilot ICT training modules for French and Italian, Johann explained that he intended to organise two short “case study and Internet” workshops, adding a second component to the ICT activities and further developing the training activities of workpackage 2.

(For a detailed programme for Year 3 see attachment 9.)

10. End of conference

The Conference ended at 3.30 pm. Johann thanked all participants for their active participation and for their efforts all through Year 2 of the project. It appeared that all envisaged results could be achieved, which was only possible with the active support of many partners from various institutions all over Europe. These activities had a very positive impact on language teaching at UCARS and all efforts were therefore very useful and highly appreciated by the project partners.

Johann Fischer, Tübingen
(HERMES co-ordinator)



Annual Hermes Conference Tübingen, 12 to 15 July 2002



AGENDA

Friday, **12 July**: 8.00 p.m – *informal meeting and dinner at restaurant*

Saturday, **13 July**: beginning at 9.30 a.m.:

1. Welcome
2. Report on **workpackage 1: Key curriculum research on language levels and assessment** (Johann Fischer)
3. Report on **workpackage 2: Professional development courses for language teachers at UCARS** (Etain Casey)

Lunch

4. Report on **workpackage 3: Professional Development ICT Courses** (Lisa Lena Opas Hänninen)
5. Report on **workpackage 4: Research on the most appropriate methods to develop a stronger interaction between language teachers and academic staff** (Etain Casey)

Dinner

Sunday, **14 July**: beginning at 9.00 a.m.:

6. **Minerva project “WebCase”** (Johann Fischer / Etain Casey)
7. **The Slovenian Problem-Based Learning Project** (Marija Lešnik)
8. **Dissemination** (all)

Lunch

9. **Planning activities for Year 3** (all)

3 p.m.: End of conference

followed by cultural programme

Monday, **15 July**: departure



Websites:

AFANet:

www.afanet.info

HERMES:

www.uni-tuebingen.de/hermes/



Workpackage 1: Key curriculum research on language levels and assessment

Step 1: Development of level descriptors based on Council of Europe levels

Step 2: Questionnaire on levels of language competence

Step 3: Questionnaire on language testing at UCARS

Step 4: Development of workshop modules – emphasis on receptive skills



Workpackage 1: Key curriculum research on language levels and assessment

Step 5: Development of workshop modules – emphasis on productive skills

Step 6: Development and calibration of can do statements for language teaching at UCARS



**Workshop “Language Levels and Assessment”
Gödöllő, 28th September to 3rd October 2002**

Sunday, 29 September

09.00 *Budapest / Gödöllő sightseeing (optional)*

15.00 Opening of the course

- **discussion and finalisation of the language competence level descriptors**
- **own testing situation compared to the established levels and language requirements of given universities or colleges**
- **Welcome party**



**Workshop “Language Levels and Assessment”
Gödöllő, 28th September to 3rd October 2002**

Monday, 30 September

a.m.: Principles of language testing

- **introductions**
- **ranking of language skills (link to needs analysis survey conducted by HERMES in year 1)**
- **ranking of language use settings (academic vs. work-related)
main emphasis on certification (proficiency testing)**
- **input on the main testing principles (LSP focus!)**
- **input on the general do’s and don’ts**



**Workshop “Language Levels and Assessment”
Gödöllő, 28th September to 3rd October 2002**

Monday, 30 September

p.m.: Testing READING

- **discussion point: through audio or video?**
- **input on the role of specifications**
- **brainstorming task types of testing main language skills**
- **item analysis**
- **evening: cultural programme**



**Workshop “Language Levels and Assessment”
Gödöllő, 28th September to 3rd October 2002**

Tuesday, 1 October

a.m.: Testing READING

- **item writing**
- **mutual solving and analysis of the new test**
- **feedback, suggestions for improvements**
- **warning of method effect (the importance of using several tasks and task types)**



**Workshop “Language Levels and Assessment”
Gödöllő, 28th September to 3rd October 2002**

Tuesday, 1 October

p.m.: Testing LISTENING

- **input on the differences between reading and listening tasks**
- **warning of the method effect**
- **discussion point: through audio or video?**

evening: farewell dinner



**Workshop “Language Levels and Assessment”
Gödöllő, 28th September to 3rd October 2002**

Wednesday, 2 October

a.m.: Testing LISTENING

- **item writing**
- **mutual solving of tasks**
- **item analysis**
- **feedback, suggestions for improvements**

Feedback, evaluation of the course

p.m.: Departures after lunch, or afternoon at your free disposal

HERMES Workpackage: Professional Development

A Summary of ELT materials finalised during Year 2 to support Professional Development programmes

Vocabulary development:

Index of ELT materials
How to develop vocabulary

Writing

Writing and correction
How to prepare writing activities

Integrated skills (Speaking and listening)

How to write a Scenario that works
Using students as a resource

Listening

How to set up listening exercises

ICT (London)

**Integrating computer information sources into
language teaching**

Video

How to adapt commercial video
How to use video recordings of students
How to use video recordings for teaching teachers

Case studies, Distance learning (Minerva)

How to edit case studies for international readers.
How to write case studies for language teaching use



HERMES Professional development ICT course



Texts, corpora and language testing software: Tools for the language teacher

Hermien Miltenburg (Wageningen University) and
Lisa Lena Opas-Hänninen (Joensuu University)

1. Introduction
 - Presentation of the course and its aims
2. Summary of corpora and concordancing
 - What is a corpus?
 - What can you do with them?
 - Why would you want to use corpora?
3. An example of a corpus and its use
 - Corpus on the language of bioenergy, presentation
 - Using the corpus: the use of the definite article (level 2-3), the use of singular versus plural forms of words (levels 2-5), word formation (level 5); problem: identify the scientific words in the text and describe how they are used
4. HANDS ON: Learning how to access texts and prepare them for incorporation into a corpus
 - Sources of texts
 - Internet: how and where to get your texts; specialist sites, newspapers
 - Downloading the text
 - Stripping the HTML code: the NoteTab Light program – how and where to get it; making your text plain
5. HANDS-ON: Creating your own corpus
 - What is a concordance program?
 - What programs are available and what do they cost?
 - How and where to get the TACT program
 - Preprocessing your text(s)
 - Make a corpus using TACT
6. Summary of use of ICT for testing and handout
 - What is ICT testing?
 - What programs are available and what do they cost?
7. An example of a test
 - The program Question Mark Designer
 - Presentation of language tests on several levels

8. HANDS-ON: Learning how to build three types of questions
 - Multiple choice
 - Fill in the blanks
 - Multiple response
9. HANDS-ON: Creating your own language tests
 - Use the material from the corpus you just created
10. Discussion, evaluation and the future
 - Discussion on ICT tools
 - Evaluation of this course and suggestions for further training
 - Working together in the future

HERMES ICT Group

The ICT group developed a course on the basis of discussions during the previous years of the HERMES project and the experiences gained from previous courses. Two main areas were identified: the use of corpora in language teaching and making language tests. The experience gained this year will help the trainers to develop the course further and a second ICT course is planned for next year.

ICT course in Vienna 30.5-2.6.2002

The course consisted of two parts: the use of corpora and the use of ICT for language testing. One day was devoted to each of the topics and each day consisted of an introduction to the topic with practical examples in the morning and hands-on sessions in the afternoon. The course was carried out by Hermien Miltenburg (Wageningen University) and Lisa Lena Opas-Hänninen (Joensuu University). There were 13 participants from 7 different countries: Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Course programme

The expectations of the participants seem to have been satisfied and on the whole the participants were very happy with the course, so it was a considerable success. The participants were slightly more satisfied with day 2 (language testing) than with day 1 (corpora), but since the corpus section was quite heavy going for people who had never seen one, this is not surprising. (Course programme attached.) The main problem that the trainers experienced was the variation in computing skills among the participants and the fact that the overall level of computing skills was very low. This was not a complete surprise, but the level was in some cases so low (e.g. no skills in the use of a mouse, no knowledge of how to copy files in Windows) that it affected the training sessions and particularly on the first day many planned activities simply had to be left out since the pace at which things could be covered was very slow.

Despite this, the participants felt that they had learned many new things and although some did not feel confident that they could use these new skills on their own, they at least felt that they knew the underlying principles and would feel more confident about attending another course to learn more. The main problem experienced by the participants was also felt by the trainers, i.e. that there could have been more time for practice during the course. This would mean that the next course should be at least a three-day course, where two days would be devoted to corpus work, since it seemed to be, not surprisingly, considered more difficult than the language testing program. Some participants also said that it was quite tiring to cover so much in such a short time – they were quite tired in the evenings – and suggested that the days could be shorter and the course could span four days. Perhaps we should also consider devoting some time at the beginning of the course to simple computing skills needed for the course, since a little bit of training would go a long way and facilitate the rest of the training considerably. This was also noted by the participants, many of whom felt that they could have used some training in VERY basic computing skills (e.g. opening and closing files, getting to the internet, searching on the net). It was also very evident that a course such as this absolutely needs at least two trainers when there are around 10 participants and it wouldn't hurt if there were a few more people helping the participants with the lowest ICT skills during the course.

One problem was also that there were participants whose skills in English were almost non-existent; they were teachers of German. This was overcome by putting the non-English speakers in the back row and having the trainer who was not presenting sitting with them and explaining things in German to them. Clearly this is not an ideal situation, but those participants nevertheless felt that they too had learned something and thus it was worth the effort. Luckily both trainers spoke German. It seems that there is a need to give a course like this in German too; in fact, this was a point raised by some participants, who also said that staff members from their institution would have come otherwise, but felt that their English skills were just not good enough.

The participants seemed to be happy with the trainers and felt that they had explained things clearly. The participants also noted that the cooperation between the trainers was good. This was felt by the trainers as well. The two topics are closely related and the cooperation was successful, although it can be developed further, and will be, for the course next year.

The participants filled in evaluation forms at the end of the course and the overall evaluation of the course was very positive.

Organisation and setting

The participants were very satisfied with the organisation of the course. Vienna seemed to be a good choice for the venue of the course, since it is easily reachable. It is very centrally located in the area from which the HERMES project draws most of its participants. The participants were pleased with the practical arrangements of the course and the accommodation. From the trainers' point of view Vienna is also a good choice since it seems that it is easier to draw people to a course there than in many other places. The main problem experienced by the trainers was the slight problem of the computing facilities being a Windows NT lab, but that would most likely be the case in most other locations as well. Slightly frustrating, however, was the fact that the computing officers failed to respond to email prior to the course and the actual setup remained a bit of a mystery until the trainers actually were on the spot. However, at that time the computing officers were very helpful and suggested ways in which to overcome the most acute problems.

Plans for the future

As noted previously, it became quite clear that there is a demand for this type of a course and in the first instance it would be sensible to give the course next year again. It should be a slightly longer course in order to give the corpus component more time for practice, since it is clearly the more difficult part of the course. However, it is also clear that in the long run we should be planning to give the course in German.

What also became very clear to the trainers was that there is a great need for a course in VERY basic computing skills for language teachers. It is a fact, that many of the language teachers have not had much experience with a computer and now that some participants were saying that their university had plans for new computerized language labs, they clearly need to acquire some basic skills in order to be able to use the more advanced programs. To make this kind of a course in VERY basic skills meaningful, we suggest that those courses that HERMES carries out that have an ICT component should also have a half-day component on the basic skills. These could also be made meaningful in such a way that, for example, when learning to access the internet and search for material, it could be linked to searching for material on a particular, narrow topic related to agriculture and forestry, such as a language teacher might need when putting together a course for a very specific group of students. We realize that some subject area specialists might find this surprising, but we are confident that they would be rather surprised by the low level of computing skills found among the language teachers. We therefore feel very strongly that it would enhance the more advanced sections of any ICT courses if we included such a component of basic skills as an introduction.

On the whole this course demonstrated that there is a real need for training in the use of these kinds of materials for LSP teachers. The positive feedback from the course showed that we are on the right track and that we should continue to develop the ICT component of the HERMES project in order to provide language teachers with the skills needed to make the most of modern equipment and the software available.

Report on the progress of activities designed to create a stronger interaction between subject area specialists (SAS) and language teachers (LTS) at UCARS.

Working group: Etain Casey, Kings College London, Hermion Miltenburg, University of Wageningen, Elke Gigl Universitaet fur Bodenkultur, Jean Mertens

Activity

Distribution of a questionnaire designed to measure the current level of interaction between SAS and LTS, and the attitudes of both groups towards developing areas of common ground and co operation.

Methodology

In June of 2001 we sent out a questionnaire to all the institutions on our HERMES mailing list 32 in all. In January 2002 we contacted 3 UK universities and Joensuu in Finland. We mailed directly to Language Centre Administrators and language teachers and asked them to distribute the forms to those colleagues who they knew would be most interested in our survey and most likely to respond, both SAS and LTS.

We were most keen to receive replies from the SAS as we had already received quite a lot of information on the situation of LTS from previous questionnaires and personal contacts. The questionnaire itself contained a number of open-ended questions which we hoped the SAS and LTS would take advantage of to express attitudes to teaching and learning languages at UCARS.

Responses were received from the following

SUBJECT AREA SPECIALISTS		
<u>Institution</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Language of instruction</u>
France (1)	Oenology	English/French
Austria (11)	Agricultural sciences	German/English
Netherlands (10)	Agricultural sciences	Dutch/English
Germany (3)	Agriculture	German/English
Slovakia (1)	Agriculture	Slovak
Hungary (1)	Agriculture 1	English
Romania (2)	Agriculture	Romanian
UK (13)	Agricultural sciences	English
Finland (7)	Forestry	Finnish/English

LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Austria (4)	German,Italian,English,French
Hungary (2)	German, English
Slovakia (5)	English 4, German 1
Netherlands (1)	English
Italy (1)	German
Germany (1)	German
Poland (4)	English
Romania (3)	German, Russian

Preliminary Findings

The responses to the questionnaires produced a wide range of opinions on the relationship between language centres and SAS, the role of internationalism in universities and the merits and demerits of using English as a medium of instruction. The working group will analyse:

- instances of good practice in co operation between SAS and LTS
- factors which prevent co operation
- opportunities for SAS to make use of LTS expertise in communication to devise teaching material and for their own communicative ability in the target language of instruction

Plans for year 2

- to hold a conference to which SAS and LTS will be invited from UCARS in order to discuss best practice for stronger interaction. Advice from our contact LTS and administrators advises us that this would best be done as an adjunct to a larger AFANet event where interested SAS would already be present.
- to distribute a follow-up questionnaire to our respondents based on the results of the meeting
- to distribute a questionnaire to UK UCARS institutions
- to hold a workshop with the SAS currently working on the Minerva Case Studies project (Philip Cain, University of Newcastle) at which the LTS will work on the specific linguistic and cultural issues in these case studies if they were used with non native English speakers in a language class ie vocabulary; geographical and economic terminology; form of instructions for students; instructions; outcome eg documents, presentations; assessment criteria.

Outcomes

The topic of this study is of great interest not only to university teachers and students in Europe but to university financial and strategic planners. We hope to produce a series of papers analysing our discussions and results and to publish them .

We will produce adaptations of the MINERVA case studies specially prepared for use by LTS with advice from SAS.


Dissemination

We will use the AFANet network ie websites, newsletters and conferences to disseminate the results of our survey and conference reports.


We will also aim to publish in university journals and the education press throughout Europe.

"Why is it so difficult to teach a foreign language? To a large extent, it is because we are attempting to teach in the classroom what is normally - and perhaps best - learnt outside it."

(Don Byrne)



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Fakulteta za kmetijstvo

THE SLOVENIAN PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING (PBL) PROJECT

Marija LEŠNIK, Faculty of Agriculture, UMB

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● PBL - a joint project by

- the Slovenian Association of Teachers of English for Specific Purposes
- British Council, Slovenia
- Aston University, UK



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Young people who want to be successful and useful in modern society will need the following knowledge and skills:

- Independent problem solving
- Collaboration and productive team work
- Flexibility to adapt to changing demands and requirements and to be life-long learners
- Productive habits of mind (creative and critical thinking)
- Effective communication (Language is a tool. Your success depends on how well you can use it.)

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What is PBL?


<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traditional approach - Text-based - Teacher-directed - Lectures - Individual learning - Assessed by Teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PBL approach - Problem-based - Student-directed - Case studies - Out-of-class research, self-study - Co-operative learning - Self/Peer/Teacher & Subject Specialist Assessment
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In PBL, students are stimulated to:

- Search for knowledge in a systematic, scientific and realistic way
- Use modern technology
- Take responsibility for their own learning
- Work individually and in a team
- Understand and apply their newly gained knowledge

- PBL projects:
 - are authentic, not exercises
 - require enquiry, info-gathering, and reflection
 - have no simple, 'right' solution



The Tasks related to the students' work in a PBL situation:

- Brainstorm on the problem given.
- Identify their current knowledge and the new knowledge they need.
- Search for new knowledge (out-of-class research).
- Select knowledge and find a solution.
- Write up a report and give an oral presentation.
- Function well in a group.

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TENTEC steps for carrying out a PBL task:

- 1st TEAM MEETING (5 steps)
 - Step 1 Making the problem clear
 - Step 2 Frame/formulate questions and queries (brainstorm)
 - Step 3 Try to find explanations - identify current knowledge
 - Step 4 Structure ideas. Identify learning needs
 - Step 5 Formulate the learning aims and distribute assignments among group members
- Step 6:
 - INDEPENDENT LEARNING (OUT-OF-CLASS RESEARCH)
 Searching for extra knowledge on the learning aims from Step 5.
- Step 7:
 - SECOND MEETING
 Discussion and evaluation of new information → writing report/presentation
- PRESENTATION AND ASSESSMENT
 - self-assessment, peer assessment, teacher & subject specialist assessment;

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JAMIE McKENZIE'S RESEARCH CYCLE

- QUESTIONING (Why? How? Which?)
- PLANNING
- GATHERING
- SORTING&SIFTING
- SYNTHESIZING
- EVALUATING
- ⇒REPORTING



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Questioning & Planning - Use Three PRIME QUESTIONS

- WHY? cause&effect
 - Why do we have problems with?
- HOW? problem-solving
 - How can we change things for the better?
- WHICH is the best? decision-making
 - Given the choices before us, which is most likely to do the most good? Which plan is the best? Which solution will work best?

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Gathering New Information = With an Open Mind

- What is an OPEN MIND?
 - A mind which welcomes new ideas.
 - A mind which introduces new ideas to others.
 - A mind which is most comfortable in mixed company (people with different viewpoints).
 - A mind which prizes silence and reflection.
 - A mind which is filled with great questions planned by research team, which give birth to new ones as the research proceeds and the puzzle develops.
 - It is not the same as an empty mind waiting to be filled with information. (McKenzie, 1993)

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Effective Search by Using LOGICAL OPERATORS

- AND
 - (climate AND change) - searches for documents which contain both words;
- OR
 - (climate OR change) - searches for documents which contain either of these two words - usually too big a net is thrown;

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● NEAR

- (climate NEAR change) - searches for documents which contain those words within a certain word range of each other;

● NOT

- (climate NOT change) - helps to eliminate unwanted articles - articles contain the first, but not the second word.

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3. Sorting & Sifting Information

- = Building the meaning out of scattered pieces which will help solve the jigsaw puzzle.

● Ask yourselves:

- Is this data worth keeping?
- Will this info. shed light on our question?
- Is this information reliable?
- Do we have enough information?
- How can we summarize the best ideas?
- Are there any especially good quotations to paste in the document?

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4. Synthesizing & Evaluating

- On the basis of collected, sorted and sifted data, students provide at least tentative answers to the original essential questions which provoked the research project in the first place.
- It is now time to present a set of action recommendations.



5. Reporting

- **Group Presentation** of “the big picture” must be illuminating (=“casting light” upon the topic), but it must also be persuasive.

- **Group Report** must be written according to the Problem/Solution structure pattern (SFRE). “This is our situation (S), in which we have this particular problem(F). This is what we do about that problem (R) and here is why we think it is a good idea (E).

(Edge, J., 2001)

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“Each research team needs to step out of the activities periodically and ask a few questions: “How are we doing? Is our plan working? Do we need to shift strategies? Change our focus? Ask different questions? Consider different sources?” (McKenzie, 1995).

FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT OF SLOVENIAN PBL PROCESSES WE SHOULD:

- attract more subject teachers
- help Sts reach the required level of ability for autonomous learning (learning to learn should be a priority)
- develop their evaluative skills by providing them with suitable assessment tools that will foster their collaboration rather than competition;

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- include subject teachers at all institutions to assessment activities (OP, WR);
- apart from assessing a group as a whole, find out how to differentiate individual contributions;
- find out how to arrive to a fair final grade of students' linguistic competence;

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Proposals for future developments in UCARS

- incorporate PBL into the curriculum for language training of UCARS students (pilot project);
- explore which big agricultural issues could be researched by teams of students in different educational settings? Engage students in activities similar to those that they will find in real life, related to the context where they intend to use language;
- design cases (LTs + SASs) and build teams of students to research them;
- assess their attainment by using findings of WP1.

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5th Annual HERMES Conference, Tübingen, 13 to 14 July 2002**provisional programme Year 3**

<i>date</i>	<i>workpackage</i>	<i>activity</i>
?	WP 4	Piloting WebCase case study
23.-26.01.03	WP 2	Professional Development course German and French
13.-16.02.03 or 20.-23.02.03	WP 3	ICT course German and English
April 03	WP 1	Testing workshop: productive skills
Beginning May	WP 2	Professional Development course English and Italian
End May / beginning June	WP 2 and 3	Professional Development Case Study course English and German
Beginning July	WP 4	SARS workshop
Beginning July	all	6 th Annual HERMES Conference
September 03	WP 2 and 3	Professional Development Case Study course French and Italian

Subject to changes!

HERMES Conference, Tübingen 2002

List of Participants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Phone / Fax</i>	<i>Email</i>
E. Robert A. BECK	Universität für Bodenkultur Wien Zentrum für Internationale Beziehungen	Peter-Jordan-Str. 82A A-1190 Wien	Phone: +43-1-4069991 Fax: +43-1-4069991 or +43-47654+2606	erab3@mail.boku.ac.at
Janet BROWN	Carinthia Tech. Institute	Villacher Str. 1 A-9800 Spittal / Drau	Phone: +43-4762-90500-1216 Fax: +43-4762-90500-1210 or -81216	j.brown@cti.ac.at
Etain CASEY	King's College London English Language Centre	Strand GB-London WC2R 2LS	Phone: +44-20-7848-1604 Fax: +44-20-7848-1601	etain.casev@kcl.ac.uk
Doris CONRAD	Cilta Università degli studi di Bologna	Piazza S. Giovanni in Monte, 4 I-40124 Bologna	Phone: +39-051-2097750 Fax: +39-051-2097755	conrad@cilta.unibo.it
Johann FISCHER	Universität Tübingen Fachsprachenzentrum	Nauklerstr. 2 D-72074 Tübingen	Phone: +49-7071-2977408 Fax: +49-7071-295105	johann.fischer@uni-tuebingen.de
Catherine JAEGER	Universität Tübingen	Nauklerstr. 2 D-72074 Tübingen	Phone: +49-7071-2977407 Fax: +49-7071-295105	jaegercath@aol.com
Johanna JAKABOVIČOVÁ	Slovak Agricultural University Nitra	Tr. A. Hlinku 2 SK-94976 Nitra	Phone: +421-37-6508510	johana.jakabovicova@fem.un-iag.sk
Marija LEŠNIK	Faculty of Agriculture University of	Vrbanska 30 2000 Maribor Slovenia	Phone: +386-2-2505834	marija.lesnik@uni-mb.si

	Maribor		Fax: +386-2-2296071	
<i>Name</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Phone / Fax</i>	<i>Email</i>
Beate LÖH	Universität Hohenheim	Sprachenzentrum D-70593 Stuttgart	Phone: +49-711-4593521 Fax: +49-711-4593876	bloeh@uni-hohenheim.de
Blanca A. OLIVAREC ESCAMILLA	Universität Tübingen Fachsprachenzentrum	Nauklerstr. 2 D-72074 Tübingen	Phone: +49-7071-2977407 Fax: +49-7071-295105	olivarec2010@netscape.net
Lisa Lena OPAS- HÄNNINEN	University of Joensuu	P.O.Box 111 Fin-80101 Joensuu	Phone: +358-13-2572805 Fax: +358-13-2574211	lisa.lena.opas@joensuu.fi
Elisabeth TIMMERMANN	Universität Hohenheim	Reinsburgstr. 200 D-70197 Stuttgart		etim@germany.net