

# [Technical and Community Support for Sustainability]

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## 1. Introduction

The goal of WP4 (Technical and Community Support for Sustainability) in the SpeakApps 2 phase was to ensure the expansion of the platform covering a wider number of courses, users, languages and materials. In order to achieve this aim and in order to face a growing number of accesses, it was of extreme importance to provide the SpeakApps platform with an adequate infrastructure and a prompt and efficient technical support for any queries and incidences from teachers and institutions. The following delivery will provide an overview of the changes occurred in the chore and the essence of the SpeakApps platform, its database of Open Educational Resources (OER) throughout the SpeakApps 2 phase. These changes not only dealt with the preparation and adaptation of the OER to the arrival of the new languages, but also with the introduction of mechanisms for quality assurance and peer feedback and with the upgrading and improvements of its features. Another important objective was to make the navigation more intuitive and user-friendly in view of the SpeakApps platform expansion to new languages and institutions in order to have a wider and more cohesive community of teachers. This report also outlines the number of queries and incidences that the technical team addressed both from the Moodle and from the Mahara community.

### 1.1. New languages and translations

The SpeakApps platform currently comprises 13 languages, 2 of which (Greek and Euskera) are not languages related to the project yet. The original languages in SpeakApps 1 were Catalan, Dutch, English, Irish, Polish and Swedish.

The SpeakApps 2 phase saw the inclusion of Italian (replacing Romani), German, Croatian, French and Spanish. The integration of these new languages implied the change of the platform interface, the creation of demo classrooms, the translation of each demo classroom into the correspondent language and the creation of tasks and activities for Langblog and Tandem tools in each target language. In addition, the SpeakApps team, with the aid of an expert team of translators, proceeded with the translation of the SpeakApps tools (Langblog, Tandem, Videochat), of the OER and of the Infoblog manuals for each language, which provide important instructions addressed to teachers and students on the correct use of the SpeakApps tools.

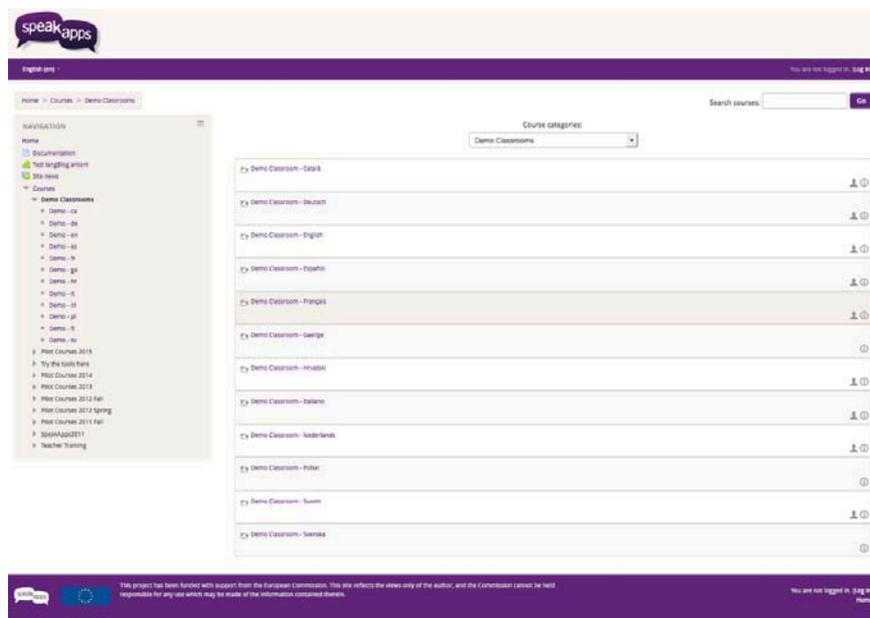
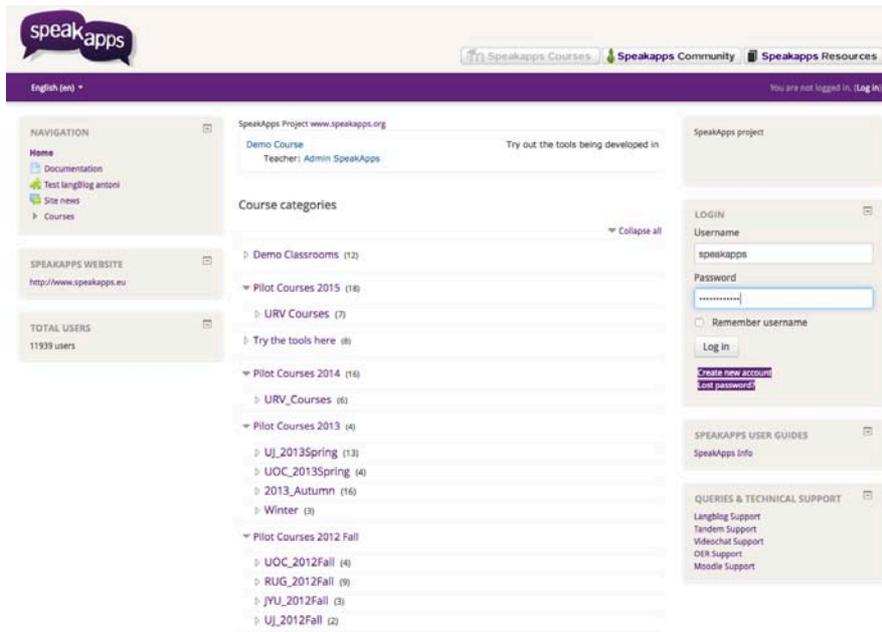
More in detail, the translations covered the following elements:

**Infoblog** (manuals of instructions on the use of the tools). These translations can be viewed following this link (<http://langblog.speakapps.org/speakappsinfo/>)

The **SpeakApps Website** (<http://www.speakapps.eu/>)

The **SpeakApps tools**, which include: the OER, Langblog, Tandem and Videochat. These tools were translated by means of a translation editor named *Poedit* (<http://poedit.net/>) and are available as .po files in the supporting documents corresponding to the present deliverable.

**Demo classrooms.** The SpeakApps demo classrooms can be accessed through the Moodle, as the following image shows:



## 1.2. New features in the OER and in the tools

Following the Review Board recommendations (WP3 output), new features were developed to adapt the infrastructure of the SpeakApps platform and of its OER to a larger number of users and resources. The changes mainly covered the organization of its didactical resources and a more fine-grained design of the platform interface. For a general overview of the SpeakApps OER and its languages, see D4.1.

The innovations introduced in the OER of SpeakApps in 2014 have been:

### First term 2014

- Collaborative editing
- Search filtered by author
- Insert third party content (Embed HTML)
- Improvements in the preview of tandem tasks (more similar to how they appear in the Tandem tool)

### **Second term 2014**

- Insertion of two more instructions in the Tandem Task (different input for each student)
- Improvements in the “copy task” function. When a new task is created from another task whose status is “published”, the status of the copy is “Work in Progress”.
- Improvements in editing tasks (correct positioning of the focus)
- Improvements in the attaching file function (when attaching a file, the “add a file” button does not disappear)
- Improvements in the view of lists (possibility to open elements in a new window)
- Introduction of different typologies of tandem tasks in order to have different categories of tandem tasks in all the languages.
- Introduction of stars to indicate the rating of tasks by peers.
- Introduction of Suomi and Greek with the Greek alphabet.
- When creating a Tandem Activity, it is possible to write an introduction and a conclusion to each task.
- If you preview a Tandem activity, you are asked to select if you want to see it under the point of view of student 1 or student 2.
- Mobile version of the OER
- Application of the OER for mobile phones

This section has shown how the infrastructure was prepared and organized to face the expansion of the SpeakApps project. The following sections outline how the technical support issues were addressed in order to monitor the whole platform and to ensure the establishment of firm relationships with the other partners and institutions involved and in constant growth.

## **2. Technical support provision**

The goal of D4.2 (Technical Community Support for Sustainability) was to ensure that all the technological issues deriving from a continuous enlargement to new courses, teachers and groups were properly addressed. This required constant technical support for any incidences and queries regarding the platform. The technical support was provided at two main levels: through the Moodle option through the SpeakApps Website (2.1.) and through the online community *Mahara* (2.2.)

### ***2.1 Technical support provision through the Website***

The following list describes the number of incidences our technical team addressed all over the SpeakApps2 phase.

## Queries and Requests addressed to the Technical Team in Moodle:

Total number of requests: **27**

Total number of requests solved: **27**

Total number of queries: **30**

Total number of queries solved: **30**

As it is possible to notice, all the requests and queries were answered and solved by the technical team.

In addition, with the opening of the project to new institutions, through the pilots and the teacher training courses, it was a crucial aspect to be prepared to cope with the new technical issues that arose and that regarded the integration of the SpeakApps tools to the virtual learning environments of other institutions. The following list describes the institutions the SpeakApps technical team offered aid to.

- Support to the RUG (P3) in order to integrate the SpeakApps tools in their LMS (Blackboard)
- Support to JU (P4) in order to integrate the SpeakApps tools in their LMS (Moodle)
- Support to the EOI (Escuela Oficial de Idiomas) Vall de Ebron (Spain), in order to integrate and set up the SpeakApps tools in their LMS (Moodle)
- Support to the school of Bell-Lloc in Girona (Spain) with the installation of Langblog and tandem in their machines.
- Mahara for the University of South Africa ([www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)) providing support to the instalment and setting of the Mahara provider to Siboniso Ronald Sithole (Systems Developer - Programmer Department of ICT [Academic Systems]) integrated with their LMS (Sakai)
- Support to Ruhr University Bochum, Germany to install SpeakApps in their LMS (Moodle)
- AEK (Alfabetatze Euskalduntze Koordinakundea) [www.aek.org](http://www.aek.org). Organization for the use of basque and adult literacy in Euskal Herria. Over 100 teaching centres and 600 teachers.

## 2.2. Technical support in Mahara

The *Mahara* groups linked to the SpeakApps platform and OER have been dynamically monitored. Among these groups there are the 5 support forums of *Mahara*, one connected to each tool of the SpeakApps platform directly from the SpeakApps Moodle space (also see D4.1). These 5 groups represent the system established in order to face an expected growing number of queries and incidences.

The following data describe the number of incidences attended in *Mahara* for each SpeakApps tool and respective support forum.

### Support Forums in Mahara

#### Langblog support

Number of queries: **7**

Number of queries solved: **5**

Number of pending queries: **2** (because the users abandoned the conversation thread)

### **Tandem support**

Number of queries: **16**

Number of queries solved: **13**

Number of pending queries: **3** (because the users abandoned the conversation thread)

### **Videochat support**

Number of queries: **2**

Number of queries solved: **2**

### **OER support**

Number of queries: **2**

Number of queries solved: **1**

Number of pending queries: **1** (because the user abandoned the conversation thread)

### **Moodle support**

Number of queries: **3**

Number of queries solved: **3**

Total number of queries: **30**

Total number of queries solved: **24**

Number of pending queries: **6** (because the users abandoned the conversation thread)

As the list shows, all the queries were properly addressed and when this did not occur the reason was due to the users who abandoned the thread of the conversation in the forums.

In addition, some of these data do not just include incidences but also pedagogical suggestions or commentaries from teachers to the SpeakApps team with the aim of strengthening the bond with the team. Feedback in all cases was provided.