SPEAKAPPS

Production and interaction in a foreign language through online ICT tools

Final Report   Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

Speaking is one of the hardest skills to put into practice when learning a foreign language. Very often formal second or foreign language acquisition settings provide insufficient opportunities for everyone in the classroom to practise the language. If the learning is done through an online course, speaking is mostly put aside in favour of writing, reading and listening. SpeakApps aims to fill this gap by providing ICT-based services and pedagogies to practise oral competencies online: speaking production and interaction in the CEFR, thus offering a way for all foreign language learners and teachers to practise and evaluate speaking skills at a distance or outside the physical classroom. The activities and tools provided in SpeakApps are designed to be used both within face-to-face and blended courses and as the main speaking activities for online courses.

SpeakApps is mainly aimed at foreign language teachers who want to offer their students further opportunities for speaking production and interaction. These teachers will find in SpeakApps a resource from which to learn, teach and contribute. Organised as an open source software community and cloud service, all materials, activities and tools are available for download, online use and further development. In this way, the project is also aimed at developers who wish to contribute further to the development of the tools. While not being the main target audience of the project or this report, language learners remain the main end-users of the tools developed within the project and their needs are the prime reference for the design of materials and contents. The project aims to reach a large number of learners by targeting their teachers providing them with materials, ICT tools, training and a community of practice.

The configuration of the Consortium ensured the necessary expertise and contacts were available to fulfil the project objectives. The five Consortium partners, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Spain) the University of Groningen (The Netherlands), Jyväskylä University (Finland), Jagiellonian University (Poland) and Dublin City University (Ireland) gather together vast expertise in the use of ICT for language learning and teaching, teacher training and development of learning technologies. In addition, between all the partners, the project covers different educational contexts (distance, blended and face-to-face) and languages (Catalan, English, Dutch, Swedish, Polish and Irish) which include more widely and lesser taught languages, in both second and foreign language contexts.

SpeakApps employs a user-centred design approach for activities and tools, and goes through iterative cycles of development and testing, piloting both tools and their pedagogical use in parallel. The SpeakApps platform is available from its website (www.speakapps.eu) with an open area with general information of the project, public documentation, videos and other dissemination contents. From the website registered users (anyone can register by creating a free account) can access Moodle classrooms where the three tools developed in the project are available. These tools are **Langblog**, an audio/videoblog for oral production, **Videochat**, a videoconferencing system designed for the specific needs of small group work for language learning, and the **Tandem** tool, a content management system for synchronous pair tasks. User guides and video-tutorials, as well as technical support blogs are also available from the SpeakApps Moodle environment. Linked to the website and Moodle environment is also a key application in the project, the SpeakApps **Open Educational Resources** space with a repository for tasks and materials, where contents can be shared, downloaded, or edited online by means of the OER editor. Collaborative creation of contents online is also possible, and contents can be easily searched for according to search criteria based on task design principles. Finally, a Mahara space integrated into the platform provides a space for social and professional interaction amongst language teachers.

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1.   Project Objectives

The SpeakApps project focuses on creating a free and open source online platform and service that gathers ICT-based applications and pedagogies to practice oral skills online.

The concrete project objectives of SpeakApps are:

1) To set up a platform and service for the practice and improvement of speaking skills in foreign languages.

2) To develop learning activities and tools to be offered through the platform.

3) To work towards a self-sustainable community where interested parties collaborate in the extension of tools, materials and services.

The SpeakApps platform will thus serve a community composed of foreign language teachers and their students with:

1. Easy access to innovative and interactive online tools for learning and teaching languages, like Langblog, Videochat and Tandem.

2. Virtual classrooms to carry out pedagogical activities.

3. Pedagogical materials and contents, as well as tools for creating and managing materials for synchronous tasks.

4. Technical and pedagogical guides to assist SpeakApps users.

5. A social network offering a common space to exchange ideas and methodologies.

In addition, teacher training is offered as an important element to ensure that the objectives above are met in an optimal manner.

The SpeakApps project was inspired by a common set of challenges that the language learning community faces on an everyday basis, including:

- Formal second or foreign language acquisition settings do not provide enough room for everyone to practise the language.

- The ephemeral nature of speaking which makes it difficult for students to obtain feedback on their performance, preventing them from properly revising and improving their oral skills.

SpeakApps aims to fill these gaps by designing a popular language learning site supported and built by a large community that enjoys and takes advantage of the possibilities offered by e-learning. The further integration of the tools and activities developed in SpeakApps into virtual classrooms and /or the use of these tools and activities in the SpeakApps platform itself increases the time learners can spend practising oral skills outside traditional contact teaching hours and facilitates the provision of feedback on their recorded performance.

2. Project Approach

The starting point of SpeakApps is the need language learners have to overcome the challenge speaking skills pose to them, as well as the need to assist teachers in finding the optimal way to help their students overcome this challenge. The SpeakApps answer to these needs is increasing opportunities for L2 oral practice online using ICT tools. It is only natural then that the learners and their specific needs within a given context together with their teachers' perception of how to address these needs constitute the basis of this project's cycles of development of the pedagogical activities and the ICT tools which will enable students to carry out these tasks.

The project starts out with a comparative study of current practices of learning and teaching online in terms of foreign/second languages. For this study the partner institutions in SpeakApps share their experience in teaching speaking skills covering a wide range of educational settings (face-to-face/ blended /distance, second/foreign language learning), proficiency levels (A, B and C in the CEFR) and six different languages: Catalan, Irish, Polish, Swedish, Dutch and English. Following this, a review of existing tools is made, as well as a list of resources and services available for language teachers. The main aim of this report is to inform the design of tasks and tool development for the project, and to make it widely available to language teachers who want to learn more about what is already available. The document is available on our website under the Dissemination section.

The next step taken is a survey designed to collect information from students of the six project target languages, addressed not only at students in the partner institutions but also others in university or adult education. This survey gathers information that helps define the specific elements, functionalities and characteristics that need to be present in SpeakApps, both from a pedagogical and technical point of view. Commonalities and differences amongst the project target languages needs are identified, and point to areas of collaboration, specifically during the teacher training and task design phases. The report resulting from this project phase is also available from our website under the Dissemination section.

From this background work, a user-centred design of activities and tools emerges in parallel, while feeding each other with the outcomes of pilots which increase gradually in size and scope. Through iterative cycles of development we approach the study of new innovative uses of ICT tools which make possible a) an increase of hours of student engagement with well-established good teaching practice, as well as b) the development of new creative ways of improving speaking skills.

From a technological development point of view, SpeakApps is based on iterative cycles and a user-centred design, a design philosophy and a product development approach that places the end user of an application at the centre of each design phase in order to ensure that the end product will respond to the users' needs, wants and limitations. Pilot studies are carried out early on and are key to successive iterations of development.

This project approach meant that partners contributed to all work packages and that almost all work packages overlapped in time, the results of each iteration being used as new requirements for other work packages in the next iteration. To fit better into such a model, after the first project meeting of Consortium partners, the decision was made to slightly modify the work plan, bringing the start date of pilots closer to the beginning of the project and delaying to some extent the development of templates and guidelines for task design in order to allow these to grow from the pilot experiences. The results and feedback from teachers after the first two cycles of pilots prompted a change of approach in relation to the development and sharing of pedagogical materials and contents. Rather than setting up a bank of materials and guides for upload and download linked to a community space, we decided to set up a wiki based Open Educational Resources environment serving as a repository and online editor at the same time, letting this application be the starting point for

the development of a community of teachers. Guidelines and recommendations were built into the OER environment and influenced the design of forms and fields for the creation and upload of new materials.

After completing the main developments of platform and tools, and two cycles of pilots carried out at the partner institutions, the next step was opening the platform and tools to teachers and their students in other educational institutions/sectors. This allowed us to validate the products (pedagogical and technological) so far developed and identify new areas of development, as well as gradually build up a community around the platform by incorporating those teachers who participate in the pilots and fostering through training and dissemination actions the collaboration and exchange of ideas, ultimately working towards the creation of a living and self-sustainable community.

Throughout the project partners have undertaken dissemination activities giving talks on the project at teacher association conferences, CALL conferences and approaching teachers in other institutions. Through our website teachers and educational institutions have also been in touch with us and expressed their interest in joining the project. These teachers were key to the second round of pilots conducted during 2012 Spring and Autumn semester and will contribute to continued sustainability of the project. We have collaborated during the project with over 20 institutions from partners other than the Consortium partners, and collaboration agreements for future project phases have been initiated at the time we reach the end of the project with many of these. This entails reaching a wide audience of teachers and students who can in turn reach out to further sectors of the target population ensuring thus a growing community of users and contributors to keep alive the SpeakApps community beyond the end of the project duration.

3.   Project Outcomes & Results

The project work for SpeakApps is organized around the following steps:

**1. Benchmarking and Student Requirements**
The first phase has two main objectives: 1) to elaborate a comparative study of the current practices of learning and teaching online in terms of foreign languages, with a special focus on oral skills, and 2) to gather user requirements of university students and adult learners with regards to the online learning of a foreign or second language.

The production of a **state-of-the-art review of current practices** was a key expected outcome for the first phase of the project. The analysis of available tools and pedagogies directed towards the development of productive skills (spoken) not only informed the design of a beta version of tools and of preliminary tasks, but it also contributed to the sustainability of the platform, tools, and pedagogical approaches that were tried and improved during the project. This report, consisting of 3 separate documents focusing on scenarios of current practices, tools available, and a state-of-the-art review, is available from the SpeakApps website. Video recordings by teachers reporting on current practices in the partner countries are also available from the website and the SpeakApps YouTube Channel, under the title of Teacher Voices.

In order to guide task and tool designers, another key expected outcome is a description of **user requirements and profiles** of the target users of SpeakApps: the language learners. We gathered these through surveys and interviews with teachers who were our most immediate target in terms of gathering information and disseminating the project in order to make our tasks and tools reach a large student population. A report with the results of each of the 6 target languages, together with learner scenarios is publicly available from the SpeakApps website.

2. Platform, Services and Pedagogical content.

The Speakapps platform includes tools, materials and activities addressing the needs for speaking skills. It combines a Moodle based platform with virtual classrooms where the tools are available, a Mahara based space for the teacher community to exchange ideas, and a wiki based Open Education Resources (OER) space.
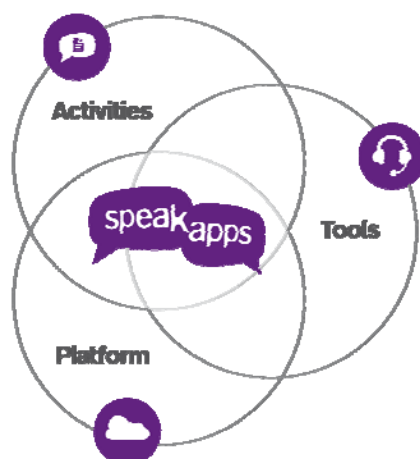

www.speakapps.eu

The platform also includes infoblogs with user-guides and video-tutorials, and blogs for technical support which have been the means of communication between the platform administrator, the UOC, and the rest of Consortium partners, collaborating institutions and teachers.

The following is a description of the tools developed during the project and integrated into the platform:

Langblog is an audio/videoblog used for the teaching of oral production skills. It uses blogging technologies to create a Voice forum which facilitates access to audio and video files, easy recording and upload of audio and video files, and interaction amongst group members. Adapted from WordPress, audio and video posts are directly created online by means of Flash, with no program installation required.
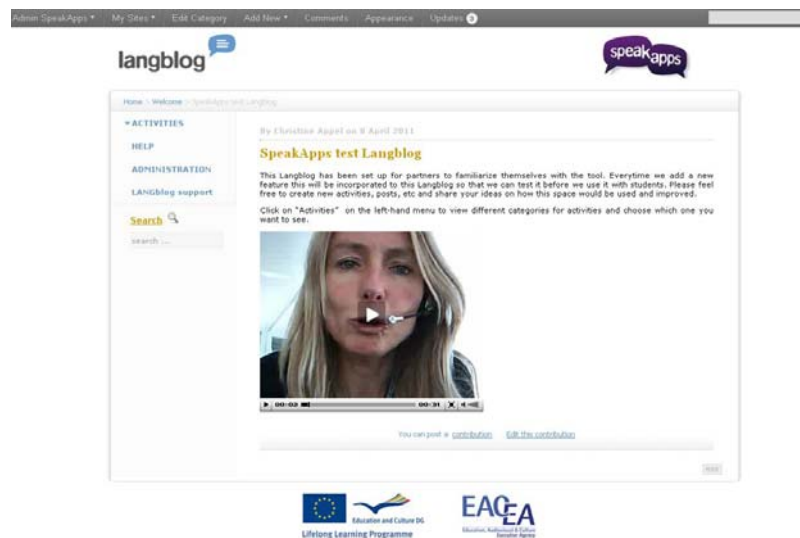
Videochat. This tool allows for videoconference sessions with up to 6 people, using audio or video. The main idea is to make it easy for students to set up a session without the intervention of the teacher and to record and archive the recording without the need for installing additional software. There are two interfaces: the recorder and the player. The recorder distinguishes itself from already existent videoconferencing systems by its ease of use, recording and archiving, its main features. The player's most distinctive functionality is the solo/mute buttons which allow teachers to listen to the group or to a specific learner in isolation. There is no moderator or administrator roles, all participants have the same profile since the tools is designed specifically for language students carrying out synchronous tasks is pairs or small groups.
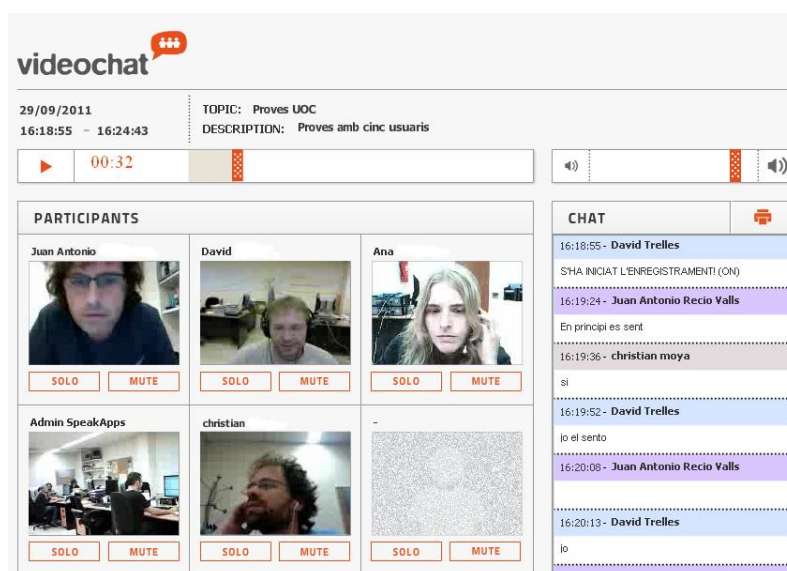
Tandem tool. Tandem is a content management system for synchronous oral tasks for language learning. This tool administers complementary contents to students working on a task together in an online synchronous medium. The tool retrieves the user information from the environment (e.g. Moodle classroom, Mahara group) and connects a pair of students to carry out a language learning task. It assigns each student a role (i.e. student A, student B) and hands out to each student different contents belonging to same task in order to prompt authentic goal-oriented communication characteristic of fill-in-the-gap tasks. The tool is independent of the communication tool used (skype, adobe connect, videochat, written chat,etc). An integration of the Videochat and Tandem tool are possible if demand arises.
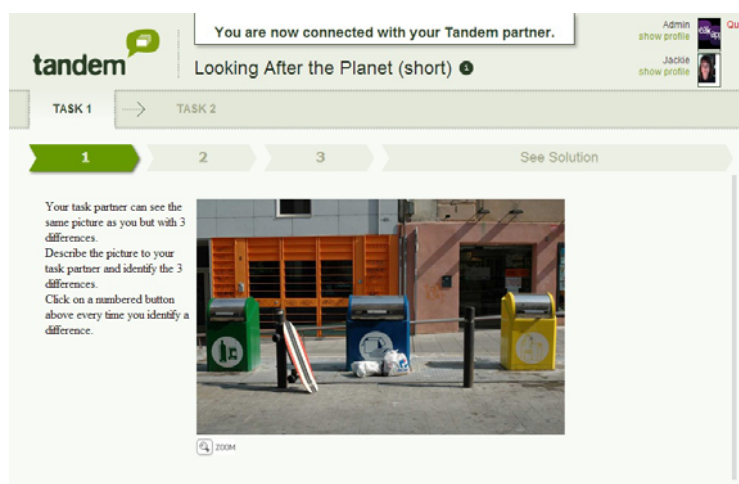

SpeakApps Open Educational Resources

Speakapps OER is a bank of resources and ideas language teachers can browse and contribute to for speaking practice activities in and outside of the classroom. Language teachers often have their own collection of resources and activities, and the Speakapps OER provides a shared storage facility while also offering an ever-increasing repository of activities which teachers can consult for inspiration and use with their students for speaking practice of a foreign language.

Within language learning and teaching, there are two main aspects to speaking practice; oral production and speaking interaction. The aim of many of the activities and tasks within the projects in the Speakapps OER is to encourage students to practise speaking in one of these two ways, but there are also other activities and tasks which can be used prior to those tasks (pre-teaching) or as follow-up, such as vocabulary research or writing tasks.

The searchable projects, activities and tasks in Speakapps OER, which language teachers can use as in their existing format or adapt, add to or combine in the most appropriate way for their teaching context, are in a variety of languages: English, Catalan, Irish, Dutch, Polish and Swedish. The projects, activities and tasks in Speakapps OER may be stand-alone or they may be linked together, but the user can also create new combinations from existing projects, activities and tasks currently prepared for any of the different languages. The projects, activities and tasks can be used with the Speakapps tools, but they are not limited to use with these tools and can easily be used with whichever tools the language teacher has available or is used to working with.

Speakapps OER is user-friendly and easily exploitable. Projects, activities and tasks are tagged, facilitating searches by topic or task type. Projects, activities and tasks can be exported in a variety of formats, either for use with the Speakapps tools or for use with the teacher's existing tools. The editing feature of Speakapps OER is easy to use, and users can create their own projects, activities and tasks either by copying and editing an existing one, or by creating a completely new one. The various fields are self-explanatory but the FAQs provide helpful information for any questions the user might have.
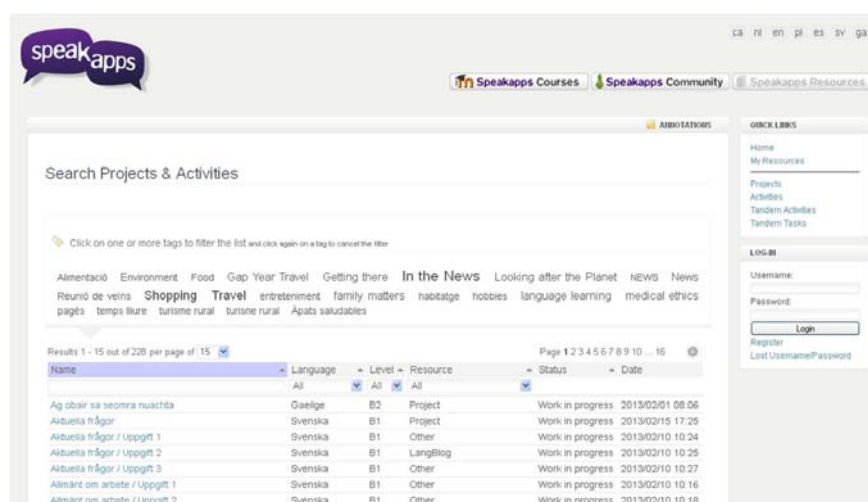
The above four applications were developed at the UOC and have been shared at the Open Source Community Sourceforge. During the project more than 80 classrooms for pilots were set up in the SpeakApps Moodle platform and 7,180 students piloted the tools, either within the SpeakApps platform or through an integration of the tools in other educational institutions' virtual learning environments. The social networking space for teachers remains to be fully exploited and is one of the objectives in the exploitation plan.

Registration to this site is free and the three tools described above are available to view and use in the Demo course in the SpeakApps Moodle platform. Teachers who are interested in piloting the SpeakApps tools should write to speakapps@uoc.edu describing their teaching context, target language and level.

3) Pilots. Evaluation and recommendations

The tools were developed through a cyclical design process. Findings from usability tests and pilots were used as input for making adjustments to the tools and tasks which went through a series of changes throughout the two years of the project. Issues were documented and solutions were integrated in constant process of revision and improvements based on both teacher and student feedback. The evaluation instruments were partly modelled on evaluations that the UOC carried out with 4,000 students and 178 participating teachers earlier in the project (the report of these evaluations were made available as part of the EuroCALL 2011 proceedings). By the end of the project 7, 180 students had participated in the pilots.

4) Teacher training programme

SpeakApps has provided teachers participating in the project with training, guidance and support in using the SpeakApps tools. In a joint effort all SpeakApps consortium partners came together to design the SpeakApps teacher training programme offered in February 2012. Participants in this course came from different teaching contexts and countries. The syllabus and materials were made available to participants and some of them went on to adapt them for an adaptation of the teacher training course to the specific needs of teachers in their educational setting.

Workshops and presentations also took place during the project, a total of 32 teacher training actions with 643 participants in total.

5) Sustainability Models and exploitation plan

The project aimed to develop an exploitation plan that would include a detailed business model for the continuing development and maintenance of the SpeakApps platform. Secondly, it aimed to establish agreements and collaborations with teachers and institutions within the partners' home countries and beyond. The results in this respect are two documents available from the SpeakApps website:

a) A sustainability framework, rooted in ecological approaches to language teaching and learning and in system theories, that can be used by large collaborative Computer Assisted Language Learning Research and Development Projects;

b) An exploitation plan, based on the initial consortium agreement and guaranteeing continuing access to the platform and tools to all SpeakApps partner institutions and collaborators for at least one year following completion of the project.

In addition, 33 educational institutions have collaborated or participated with the SpeakApps project.

6) Dissemination

Following we highlight selected SpeakApps dissemination initiatives

SpeakApps Website

The SpeakApps website (http://www.speakapps.eu) is a key dissemination element. Besides promoting and explaining the project's goals and services, the website is the entry point to the platform and all the public project outputs. As a demonstrator of SpeakApps, the website was put in place at the beginning of the project and has grown and evolved with it.

Dissemination Strategy Plan

The dissemination strategy plan was put together in the initial stages of the project and has guided the pace and content for actions taken under the umbrella of this workpackage. The products of these actions are all published in our website. Following are examples that illustrate the type of dissemination actions we have carried out:

- SpeakApps bookmarks, visiting cards and leaflets have been distributed amongst partners to be given out at conferences, seminars and meetings with teachers. These are also available on the SpeakApps website.

- A Youtube SpeakApps channel including: an introductory video about the project (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFAfJojlO0k&feature=related), the series TeacherVoices, the series SpeakApps tools and our Video-tutorials.

- A SlideShare account for SpeakApps: http://www.slideshare.net/speakapps

- SpeakApps Twitter Account: @SpeakApps

European Day of Languages 2012

SpeakApps marked the celebration of the European Day of Languages on September, 26th, 2012 with the organization of activities that simultaneously took place in five European cities: Barcelona (Spain), Dublin (Ireland), Groningen (Netherlands), Krakow (Poland) and Jyväskylä (Finland) —cities that correspond to each SpeakApps partner.

The programme of the SpeakApps EDL celebration included a plenary lecture given by David Singleton, professor of Applied Linguistics at Trinity College Dublin, about the role of age and learning environment in second language acquisition. This plenary session was held in UOC's headquarters, in Barcelona, and was available via streaming. Questions, remarks and feedbacks from the SpeakApps cities were gathered via Twitter, through the hashtag #speakappsEDL. In some cities, the plenary session continued with local practical workshops where foreign language teachers received practical guidance on the SpeakApps online tools. You can watch extracts from this day's events (http://youtu.be/Odw7NOmXeaU ; http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqnNDJ4_rrAPCI_dUk5nhJA5ATYC-ESC0) both from the SpeakApps website and YouTube channel.

Some of the workshop activities on this day are publicly available in the Moodle platform in the virtual classroom "European Day of Languages".

SpeakApps presentations

The Consortium partners have presented the project at conferences, seminars and workshops with the purpose of reaching the target audience of the project, with an emphasis on language teachers. There have been 51 presentations made so far, a complete list of all the presentations with links to their related documents can be found in the SpeakApps website. We describe a few illustrative examples of events where Consortium partners have presented SpeakApps:

APAC February 2011,Teachers of English in Catalonia Association, Annual Conference. (UOC)

Presentation on social media and SpeakApps at the University of Antwerp in March 2011 Linguapolis (Language Centre). (RUG)

CALICO 2011 (Victoria, Canada) (RUG)

Eurocall 2011 conference, the following presentations were made:
- Poster presentation: "SpeakApps: Oral production and interaction in a foreign language through online ICT tools". Author: Christine Appel. (UOC)

- Poster presentation: "Langblog: an exploration of affordances for online oral production and interaction". Authors: *Françoise Blin, Mairéad Nic Giollamhichil, Colm Ó Ciardubháin.* (DCU)

- Paper presentation: Task design for L2 oral practice in audioblog. Authors: Christine Appel, Federico Borges (UOC)

Language Center Days 2011 in Tampere, Finland. (JYU)

Seminar held at the JU Centre for Distance Education in October 2011. Presentation of the project objectives to a group of academics from several Krakow universities. (UJ)

Presentation at EduLearn 2012, 4th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies, Barcelona (Spain). 2-4 July 2012. Authors: Christine Appel, Sake Jager, Francesc Santanach.

Eurocall 2012 conference, Paper presented: Task and tool interface design for L2 speaking interaction online. Authors: Authors: Christine Appel, Joaquim Moré, Jackie Robbins, Tony Mullen.

Conference Nauczanie języka polskiego i kultury polskiej w Polsce i na świecie. sukcesy, problemy, wyzwania (International conference for teachers of Polish language, literature and culture), Gniezno (Poland), 13-15th September 2012.

4. Partnerships

The configuration of the Consortium ensured the necessary expertise and contacts were available to fulfil the project objectives. The five Consortium partners, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Spain) the University of Groningen (The Netherlands), Jÿvaskÿla University (Finland), Jagiellonian University (Poland) and Dublin City University (Ireland) gathered together vast expertise in the use of ICT for language learning and teaching, teacher training and development of learning technologies.

The five Consortium universities cover 5 different countries and their networks and contacts put together will ensure the continuation and sustainability for the project. National, regional and local approaches are key for the promotion of foreign/second language learning. Nevertheless, a European approach provides also added values such as the promotion of language awareness, opportunities for networking for foreign language teachers, and increased contact for language learners with their target language and speakers/learners of this language. SpeakApps contributes to the promotion of foreign/second languages by providing language teaching institutions in Europe with a new means to enhance the diversity of the language learning activities they offer to citizens. Multilingual, multicultural and multicountry initiatives are best approached with a European perspective since it can ensure the balance among the difference languages and cultures, the neutrality of the funding, and the promotion of a unique aim pursued by all partners. The end goal of this approach is that national, regional and local institutions will use the outputs of the SpeakApps to enhance their foreign languages activities.

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) coordinated the project. It has more than 8,000 foreign language learners every semester. Being a completely online institution, the University had been working on designing and developing tools for online language learning and have extensive experience in their use. The UOC leads the development of pedagogical content, services and platform, and Dissemination. It also contributed to the specification, design, validation and piloting of the language learning materials and the tools used in support of them for Catalan and English. In the case of English the validation of linguistic and cultural content was carried out by the Irish partner.

The University of Groningen (RUG) contributed to the definition of users' requirements, profile and scenarios for Dutch and the specification, design, validation and piloting of the language learning materials and the tools used in support of them for Dutch. RUG also coordinated workpackage 4, Pilot Studies.

The Jÿvaskÿla University (JYU) contributed to the definition of users' requirements, profile and scenarios for Swedish and the specification, design, validation and piloting of the language learning materials and the tools used in support of them for Swedish. JYU was also heavily involved in the teacher training programme and community building design, and worked on sustainability models together with the Irish Consortium partner.

Jagiellonian University was responsible for the definition of users' requirements, profile and scenarios for Polish and its tasks involved participating in the design of all materials, translating all materials, applications and documents into Polish, validating the activities and materials with respect to the Polish culture and broader context, and piloting the applications and participating in the dissemination of results.

Dublin City University (DCU) was responsible for all contributions in relation to Irish as well as cultural and language content validation for English. DCU made a large contribution to the business plan to ensure sustainability of the project, and palyed an important role in the definition of tasks, a key concept around which most of the project developments revolve. Finally DCU was responsible for writing the benchmarking report.

For more information on the individuals and institutions involved in the project, please check
http://www.speakapps.org/partners/

With the participation of partners in five different countries, the project covered different educational contexts (distance, blended and face-to-face) and languages (Catalan, English, Dutch, Swedish, Polish and Irish) which include widely and lesser taught languages, in both second and foreign language contexts:

The Consortium partners had known each other long and collaborated extensively mainly through their active participation in EuroCALL, (European Association of Computer-assisted Language Learning). The Consortium held meetings at the venues of Eurocall 2011 (Nottingham) and Eurocall 2012 (Gothenborg). There were three SpeakApps presentations at the 2011 conference and two at the 2012 conference. Being aware of each other's expertise, environment and interests was a plus that added quality to the Consortium.

The global participation of partners through the whole project was key in order to a) validate that all outputs are culturally appropriate, b) bring everyone's expertise and feedback, c) ensure a deep knowledge of the project for further appropriation of its results and for dissemination purposes, d) provide more opportunities for exploitation and sustainability, e) have a balanced distribution of tasks among all partners. The fact that all partners contributed to all workpackages and had to work closely together gave its fruits, not only in terms of quality, but also in terms of additional outputs. An example is the online teacher training course being offered in January 2012 in the SpeakApps Moodle platform which was jointly run by UOC, JYU and RUG. A joint presentation with the title of "The SpeakApps Teacher training programme: a meta-design model for using open educational resources" was presented at the EUROCALL Computer-Mediated Communication and Teacher Education Special Interest Groups (SIGs) joint event held in March 2012 at the University of Bologna, Italy, on the themes of openness and sharing in language teaching and learning.

5. Plans for the Future

Our priority at this point is to guarantee continued access to the platform of Consortium partners and collaborators, and maintain the activity on the platform in order to achieve critical mass of users that will yield a cost-efficient use of the platform. In this respect we plan to work towards a commercialization plan that can offer free use to individual teachers, and reasonable pay-per-use rate for institutions making a large-scale use of the services.

Our efforts for the future are pointing in three directions:

a) Mainstreaming of results in the 6 SpeakApps languages. In this area we have initiated contacts with Governmental educational departments and are planning to offer teacher training to secondary school teachers,

b) Multiplication of results by targeting teachers of other languages, we are currently in contact with teachers of Spanish, French, German, Romani and Croatian.

c) Exploitation of results and Sustainability.

As well as ensuring the sustainability of the platform, we will also focus on the continuing work of integration of the SpeakApps tools into virtual learning environments via LTI modules, following a Software-as-a-service model. This model allows for collaborators to bypass some of the spaces on the SpeakApps platform and integrate the tools directly into their own VLE's while still benefiting of updates and support from the SpeakApps machines. Illustrated below is the architectural structure of SpeakApps based on cloud computing and LTI modules.
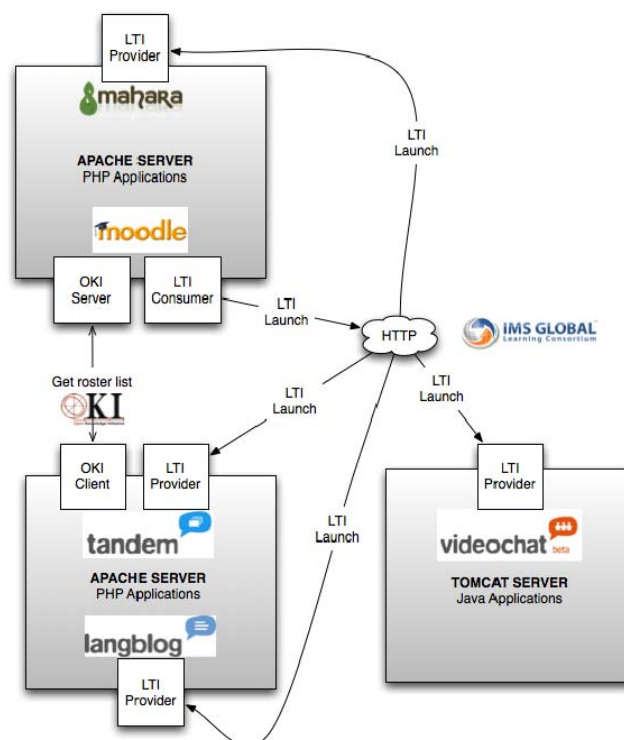
The UOC will maintain the SpeakApps website, and the maintenance of the platform until it reaches a self-sufficient stage. In order to support the exploitation and dissemination actions planned, the Consortium is currently preparing an application for the LLP KA2 Accompanying Measures.

6.   Contribution to EU policies

SpeakApps has addressed the following KA2 specific actions:

- awareness raising activities(by improving access to language learning facilities) through its teacher training actions, and by making available its platform, tools and resources to teachers and students.

- development and dissemination of language learning materials, mainly through the SpekaApps OER site, teacher training sessions, workshops and conference presentations.

 In relation to EU policies, contributions are described below:

1. To help improve the quality, attractiveness and accessibility of opportunities for lifelong learning: We follow a user-centered design process: requirements gathering in WP2, design and development in WP3 and evaluation in WP4. This design ensures that the project outputs are usable for everybody and that user needs, wants and limitations are addressed. By using ICT within a web 2.0 framework, SpeakApps also ensures that it will be open and reach a wider audience.

2. To reinforce the contribution of lifelong learning to social cohesion, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, gender quality and personal fulfilment: These aspects are addressed by fostering an autonomous learning process of speaking skills using ICT-based services and culturally appropriate content through a multilingual and multicountry platform.

3. To contribute to increased participation in lifelong learning by people of all ages, including those with special needs and disadvantaged groups, regardless of their socio-economic background: Accessible and usable online ICT-based services represent an easy-to-use access to foreign language learning and make it possible for distance learners to go beyond self-study by joining online learner groups guided by a teacher.

4. To promote language learning and linguistic diversity: This is one of the pillars of the project by providing a holistic and multilanguage platform for target language use. SpeakApps project developments are focused in two respects: 1) providing ICT-based content and services to improve the speaking skills related to foreign language acquisition; 2) a multilingual and unique platform and community that by its characteristics will also promote awareness on linguistic diversity. From its beginnings, SpeakApps has worked with 6 languages (widely and less widely taught languages). Moreover, a long-term goal of the Community is set in place the mechanisms for easy inclusion of new languages through user contributions.

5. To support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning: This is a key element, all project outputs are innovative ICT-based content, services and pedagogies for the practice and improvement of speaking skills in a foreign language.