POOLS-T workshop and meeting 28ᵗʰ to 30ᵗʰ September 2009

The POOLS-T workshop and project meeting were held in Avenue Louise in Brussels.

The flat Kent Andersen rented has a living room just large enough to accommodate a meeting this size.

Caoimhín Ó Donnaíle and Kent Andersen met there on Sunday 27th to discuss our software and consider new initiatives. The rest of our group arrived on the Tuesday.

The minutes below were taken by Søren H. Jørgensen, SDE College

First day - main workshop Tuesday 29ᵗʰ September

Present: Germana D'Alessio, Valentina Lella, Ellen Ejerskov, Caoimhín Ó Donnaíle (Kevin Donnelly), Gordon Wells, Kent Andersen, Søren H. Jørgensen, Torben Kjær-Pedersen, Jan Hardie, Gareth Long, Angelica Bucur (the last two were external evaluators)

Absence: alas, the Greek partners had an accident on the way there

9:15 Kent welcomes the teams

9:20 Gareth's presentation: Gareth is one of the external evaluators. It is easy to lose sight of the original brief of a project, but so far in POOLS-T there are no indications that this project is doing that. This being an LLP project, it must be shown throughout that the project is really transnational. There might be new assessors on every new leg of a project. Gareth and Angelica could act as "the devil's

advocates" to ensure that we anticipate possible interpretations by new assessors. Angelica commented that this project is very innovative, more so than most educational projects.

Gareth: Perfect that there's a clear open-source identity throughout.

One of the evaluators said that this is genuine LLL! And that our website offers a huge store of language learning materials.

The TextBlender (and the tools section as a whole) is an excellent example of a balance between attractive content and clear ICT-based instruction.

9:50 Kent appraised the involvement of various partners.

Angelica lauded the news aspect of the POOLS-T online presence and the fact that the project is on target after one year and adding value for other partners. She likes our dissemination actions, e.g. number of newsletters and brochures distributed, developed indicators (activities, days spent by partners, etc.)

Angelica feels confident that we'll follow up on the REMINDERS (See below).

Gareth felt it was a good indicator that other educational and trade areas have interest in our programs and use them.

BREAK 10:25-10:40

Kent then explained why some of the activities decided at last meeting had not been carried out, e.g. translating the first version of the manual into the other languages (a new version of the software made that manual outdated). Kent finds that Kevin's new program WordLink will be better suited for students, and therefore he will stop development of his special Student-CLIL version.

Kent gave a quick summary of exploitation and dissemination activities since the March meeting, e.g. EuroCall workshop, a meeting with the exam auditors from the Danish ministry of education where DVDs and CDs were handed out to auditors responsible for language exams, these audit exams across Denmark and may thus disseminate the project to a wider number of colleges and his speech at the European Day of Languages in Flanders, a description and video recording of his presentation there can be watched from edt-vl.be

On Ocober 7th Kent has arranged a meeting with language teachers from all colleges in Southern Denmark where the project will be disseminated and materials handed out.

11:00 Ellen presented some of the results of her test of the TextBlender w/ 10 students on the 14th September. These students made some comments which really benefited the immediately ensuing work by Kent and Kevin on the TextBlender, one improvement was that TB now has 36 new language combinations.

Students: Students could record each others' presentations w/ video cameras or mobile phones instead of having to stand in front of the class doing their presentation. Kent said that Ellen's task-based context was a demonstration of new ideas he had never thought of, which goes to show how other teachers and students add their own value, also when it comes to the contexts where the programs could be used.

11:25 Germana: Swiss team designed their own manual for their tests. The students' level were B1-B2 (for the second testing they were and A2 and B2) in the European levels. They used two English language videos. For the first test the averages 3.8 points for ease of use, 4.25 usefulness. After the second testing they interviewed students.

Valentina:: TextBlender was more successful than WordLink, because there were some teething problems with WordLink at the time. They are going to be testing it again

Germana: Teachers really see the worth of TextBlender.

We then watched a DVD with student interviews: two students wanted better support for phrasal verbs, another student said the UI was a little old-fashioned. Valentina then presented the feedback from their students. Some of the best results: 82% of their students said the TextBlender helped them to read the text faster and 63% think they will likely use the TextBlender again – 24% very likely.

12:00 Gordon talked about the dissemination of the project. This takes place internally to all college staff and regionally through the UHI network newsletter. They reach onsite and remote students. Local press. HMIE, Her Majesty's inspectors of Education, assessed the European projects to be examples of Sector Leading Innovative Practice! They will place information about these projects on their own website, www.hmie.gov.uk.

12:20 Kevin showed a web presentation on Sabhal Mohr Ostaig. He showed us www.vertalen.nu, whose entries are addressable, which is why they can be accessed by TextBlender and WordLink. Kevin showed us the use of in WordLink in the Opera browser. Up until now it has not worked with subscription dictionaries, but that has changed (provided you have a subscription). Lemmatization is an issue that may have been partly resolved now because of this ability to link to use www.vertalen.nu. WordLink doesn't work with very flashy pages or badly written (old) pages. Recently some old out-of-print dictionaries have been placed online (by Google Books and web.archive.org) and their pages can be accessed through WordLink when someone enters the first word of every page (!) in his database. These pages can then be linked to, and the user will have to scroll down to the word they want. One request has been the ability to "Compose", where a user can type in or paste in a text with difficult words, and then click on the difficult words. One advantage of WordLink over TextBlender is that it will give the student the option of choosing a target language, unlike TextBlender, where the teacher will have set the target language beforehand. It's very easy to place a link in a webpage to WordLink.

14:55 Kent on Matching Quality Criteria as decided in March 2009: We are on schedule with the number of 2-300 students and 30 teachers participating. Jan has prepared some materials on English-speaking singer-songwriters. Kent said there will be an FTP-link on www.languages.dk so project partners can upload their contributions. Kent plans to include a "save as" option in the TextBlender so data can be saved as a .tbk file for later editing.

Our new feedback form has revealed that most users are happier with the new version. Kent really values and studies the text comments that are submitted through the feedback form.

Checkup on decisions made during the POOLS-T Workshop in Bruxelles 24th-26th of March 2009

- Start a search for tables of lemmatization for languages. We started the search
- To make a mirror site for the wordlink software. Postponed until the tools is ready
- Start looking for monolingual dictionaries, Danish – Danish, etc. Still ongoing.
- The workshop in September was moved forward one day from the 29th of September to the 28th of September. OK
- Caoimhín will mail a feedback form to be used with Wordlink and all teams will the have their students test the Wordlink and fill in the forms. That was sent out before the summer holidays.
- Improve wordlink to make popups for the dictionary entries instead of opening another webpage. Has been dealt with, see below.
- The Swiss members have agreed to write an article about the project. This they have done

- The next newsletter will be ready in the next few weeks. Done
- The Dutch team will translate the tools manual from Dutch into English and mail it to the other teams for translation into their languages (SUPSI will translate the manual into German and Italian). This was abandoned as the new version of TextBlender was totally different from the version described in the manual. The final version will of course have a matching manual in the project languages.
- Hans, Ricardo, Frans and Ellen are to do a compilation of a draft version of the CLIL-guide, with help from Elisabeth and Evangelos and peer reviewed by all of us. Is ongoing. Will be discussed tomorrow.
- Each partner prepare a webpage using the textblender, to use as example for materials created using the program. Has happened.
- Each partner will investigate which dictionaries the students usually use / prefer. The results to be sent to Caoimhín. Both Caoimhín and Kent have received suggestions.
- Frans suggested about a search for partnership application projects to get more funding. For bringing students to our workshops. There are seemingly no funds available from any other sources than the project funds, which would limit the project. It would be work-intensive to bring students along for a meeting like this.

More Dissemination:

Ellen presented the Dutch dissemination activities and plans for future dissemination:

The WordLink and TextBlender tools were / are to be demonstrated at the following events in 2009

Activity	Place / date	Participants
Comenius "Automobility" project	Kuopio, Finland 14 April 2009 – 18 April 2009	Bridgwater college SAVO, Kuopio, Finland SDE, Odense,DK Technical College, Latvia
LLP Eucinmove project	Jyvaskyla, Finland 22 March 2009 – 25 March 2009,	JAO, Finland IDCollege and Clusius College, NL SDE, Odense, Denmark
Horizon College, sector Style and Design	Hoorn 26 June 2009	Style and Design Teachers
Demonstration to CLIL representative of European Platform, Onno van Wilgenburg	Haarlem 17th August 2009	European Platform, Haarlem
LLP Eucinmove project (2); demonstration to Birmingham City College staff	Birmingham 28 September 2009	Birmingham City College
Presentation to sector of Retail Staff Horizon College	Hoorn 17 September 2009	Retail Staff
Demonstration to language teaching staff , sector of Engineering	Hoorn and Heerhugowaard 15 October 2009 Heerhugowaard, NL	Language teachers
Short course on using Wordlink and TB 1.0 to HC	Hoorn and Heerhugowaard, 2010	Language and vocational subject teachers

teachers(voluntary basis)		
Workshop at ICT conference,	Veldhoven, NL on 14 and 15 April 2010	All levels

Germana: We would like to wait presenting the Pools-T tools after we have developed CLIL materials so we can present it internally to SUPSI teachers, then to teachers from USI (Universita Della Svizzera Italiana); ETAS (association of English teachers in Switzerland); we have two international exam centres situated at SUPSI (Cambridge ESOL and Goethe exam centre Prüfungszentrum); Language mobility services, language schools, private language shools and secondary schools. We are part of seven Swiss vocation Universities, some of which are our partners in developing a videogame for language learning (Mystery Code); we recently became an International Office (September 09) and therefore we can present the project to our Erasmus partners and present the project also to the IRUAS members (Int'l offices of Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences).

Gareth said it would be worth mentioning that Her Majesty's inspectors of Education will link to our project on website

Kent: We should try to compete to win The European Label 2010!
Kent will be holding the presentation in Fredericia for the VET teachers referred to earlier.
Efvet in Bilbao in October another chance to disseminate the project.
It would be an option to move the last POOLS-T meeting to Bordeaux instead of Bruxelles because we have been invited to the EuroCALL event there.
Kevin and Kent showed us some more pages using the WordLink tool.
Kent said that he has observed students' behaviour to be that they look up many more words when they have programs like TextBlender and WordLink in front of them.

16:15 Discussion on what should be done to facilitate choice of interface language.

Instead of "Insert image" we would like to have "Insert media" since it will soon become possible to insert videos also (videos that do not launch automatically/autoplay).

Discussion on ways and relevance of the old POOLS logo used in connection with some of the new projects such as POOLS-T.

Second day - main workshop Wednesday 30th

Present: Germana D'Alessio, Valentina Lella, Ellen Ejerskov, Caoimhín Ó Donnaíle (Kevin Donnelly), Gordon Wells, Kent Andersen, Søren H. Jørgensen, Torben Kjær-Pedersen, Jan Hardie, Gareth Long, Angelica Bucur (the last two were external evaluators)

9:20 Walkthrough of the project blog

KENT: The blog doesn't work properly in IE8 at the moment, it will hopefully be working again some time in October. One solution would be to move the blog to another blog server, but we would miss some of the statistics that Wordpress provides. Then rundown of sundry user entries. When you write a post, it is important that you choose a category (on the right). You can subscribe to the blog using RSS.

9:50 Walkthrough of the TextBlender
KENT: A new step at the end with a summary of the user's choices/selections will be added. Having to select an audio player twice will be eliminated in the next version. We want to consider a possible

tracing system.

To-do: The install a dictionary options should be more user friendly and e.g. immediately tell a user that a dictionary link has been created.

Torben's idea: only two buttons instead of ten saying "Choose image" and "input text".

10:40 Progress report from the two teams involved in CLIL.

Dutch report on the meeting with the Greek team in Alexandropoulos: interesting applications of CLIL assignments. It could be any subject, but it means teaching/learning the subject in an L2. Ellen and Frans contacted the greatest authority on CLIL in Holland Onno van Wilgenburg, senior project officer of an authority on primary and secondary education in Holland. They discussed the advantages of CLIL in the education system. In Holland there are about 100 schools that participate in CLIL education projects and the number is growing. The main reasons for that are that CLIL will attract many youngsters and parents who feel that CLIL is a good offer in this globalized world. Wilgenburg said that he would be interested in helping vocational schools in implementing CLIL. Ellen would also like to discuss with us what the contents of a manual for CLIL should be. Kent said that what we promised was to show how our tools could be a help in a CLIL environment. Two ladies in KU Leuven want to help us.

Germana said our decision had been to show how TextBlender could be embedded in CLIL practices, but also to have a small collection of best practices. Angelica felt that we should have this manual ready in February if we are going to be participating in the European Platform conference. It would be good to finish it during the next workshop. Ellen: This would be around January 15th, the examples would be from our vocational environment, and it would be very natural to then ask them if/how they could use TextBlender in their environment. Germana: It would be great to also show/offer/mention several levels of difficulty. Gordon: It would be preferable to also show that the TextBlender is not the absolute answer to every problem in language teaching, and to show where it fits in, it should be contextualized. Gareth: Have a look at older projects on the subject, they might include some pitfalls to avoid.

Ellen: We did read up on the subject, as well as researching it online and we chose one written by the University of Utrecht with the title: Didactische richtlijnen bij tweetalig onderwijs (Didactic guidelines for CLIL education)

New examples of assignments in TextBlender and WordLink for the CLIL: Germana and Valentina will cover civil engineering and health care, Ellen is thinking of an assignment in marketing or a product presentation (they will contact the Greek partner about their subjects for the assignments), Gordon: ICT and music, and Kent: Electricians.

To-do all teams: search for monolingual dictionaries and email the links to Kevin.

11:25 Kent handed out the INTERNAL EVALUATION POOLS-T form.

Kevin showed a new feature that unfortunately only works in Opera, Chrome and Safari for now: "Split screen", where the entry you click on will appear in a separate portion of the tab or window, that is even resizeable!

11:40 Small groups working with TextBlender

14:00 Lunch

14:50 Kent showed us various contributions from the teams from before the break, some included videos, and some of those had a video whose transcript was the text placed in TextBlender.

15:00 Kent: Quality control of achievements. Kent promised Angelica to amend the schedule and achievements so they will include the deadline for the case studies for the CLIL guide.

Decision list Sept. 2009

- Pools-T logo replaces the pools logo in all outcomes. A.s.a.p.
- Each team to prepare a lesson demonstrating exemplary CLIL using TextBlender and WordLink. To be sent to Ellen no later than January 15th
- Blank line under each photo inserted in a TextBlender produced web file. A.s.a.p.
- Saveas option to be included in the TextBlender. A.s.a.p.
- TextBlender to have a summary page: A.s.a.p. (and no later than mid-November)
- DIY video prototype of the TextBlender: To be ready by mid-November
- Links to monolingual dictionaries to be sent to Caoimhín: October 2009
- Next meeting to be in Brussels March 16th to 19th
- All partners to monitor blog: On a weekly basis (minimum) or use RSS feeds
- All partners to blog comments and suggestions to entries
- Decision on the TextBlender: The users' ability to change of colours and fonts in the program should be in one of the next upgrades. November 09
- Kent to investigate a possible tracking option in the TextBlender
- Update the pools-t schedule document (online from the archive) with above decisions