



Lifelong
Learning
Programme



Metalinguistic Awareness Tests
in European Languages

QUALITY FINAL REPORT

Of the “MATEL” (Metalinguistic Awareness Tests in European
Languages) Longlife Learning Programme Project

Project number 543277-LLP-1-IT-KA2-KA22MP

By

S&P Statistics and Psychometrics Ltd

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I. INTRODUCTION

The present report is the final Quality report of the whole MATEL Project and it covers the period March, 1st, to November, 30, 2015, end of the project.

The task was assigned to *S&P Statistics and Psychometrics Ltd*, P2 in the MATEL project, after the Monitoring visit from the EACEA on February, 27, 2015 at the premises of the Coordinator, Rome, via dei Marsi, 78.

On that occasion, the EACEA's evaluators recommended to displace the responsibility for the Working package 2, Quality, from the Third Country Partner, Dr Sonia El Euch (UQTR- Université du Québec-à-Trois Rivières-Canada), P6 in the project, to an European Partner. The choice fell on P2, as documented by the Minutes of the Monitoring Visit (see MATEL website: www.matelproject.com, private access).

After the three Quality reports already made by P6 (www.matelproject.com, private access), that covered the first year period of the project, it was agreed by the Partnership during an in-person Meeting on March, 13, 2015 in Rome, that the new person responsible for WP2 had to provide an overall report covering the months from March to November, addressing the various stages of the last part of the project.

The immediate task P2 had to face in his new role was to appoint an external evaluator. This was implemented in the first half of March, 2105, after examining the Cvs and estimates of 3 possible candidates. The choice fell on Dr. Lucilla Lopriore, University of Roma TRE, based on her consolidated experience with language teaching and teacher training, as a Member of the Board of TESOL International and past President of TESOL Italy, and on her international background (see attached CV). After informal contacts with Dr Lopriore, and after encountering her at the in-person Partners' Meeting on March,13 in Rome, the contract was signed on March,16, 2015.

Based on the contract, the documentation for drafting the Quality report relies on both the documents available to all the MATEL Partners (digital products from the MATEL website, paper products, participation to common events, in-person encounters, etc.) and on the Evaluation report prepared by Dr Lopriore. Therefore, the present Quality report was elaborated drawing on these two main sources.

It will first recall some basic information about the MATEL team and the objectives of the project, and then evaluate the extent to which these objectives have been achieved, the quality of the outcomes and the perspectives they open for research and education.

II. PROJECT GENERAL INFORMATION

II.1) Duration

24 months: 01 December 2013 – 30 November 2015

18.01.2014 (Kick-off meeting-Rome) – 20.11.2015 (Final Conference on project presentation-Rome)

II.2) Team Members

Italy:

P1: Università La Sapienza, Roma

- Maria Antonietta Pinto mariantonietta.pinto@uniroma1.it

Contract:

- Irene Bracone
- Federica Micale
- Sara Spanò

P2: S&P Statistics and Psychometrics Ltd

- Paolo Iliceto

Contract: Gabriella Candilera

Spain:

P3: Universidad de Granada

- M.^a Pilar Núñez Delgado ndelgado@ugr.es
- José Rienda Polo
- Juan Mata Anaya
- Irene Alonso Aparicio

Contract: María Santamarino Sancho

P4 : Universidad del País Vasco

- David Lasagabaster david.lasagabaster@ehu.es
- Aintzane Doiz
- Juan Manuel Sierra

Contract: Jon Ander Merino

Austria

P5: Austria Innsbruck Universität

- Ulrike Jessner ulrike.jessner@uibk.ac.at
- Barbara Hofer

Contract:

- Verena Moroder
- Claudia Pellegrini

Canada, Québec

P6: Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières

- Sonia Eleuch sonia.eleuch@uqtr.ca
- Luc Ostiguy

Contract:

- Isabelle Monette

II.3. Main Objectives

The main objectives of the MATEL Project at Application stage (www.matelproject.com , private access) addressed two levels: **research** and **educational**, to be implemented at different stages of the duration of the project.

At the research (R) level, the objectives were:

- To *validate* the linguistic versions of some metalinguistic ability tests (in English acronym MATs), already existing, namely the French and Spanish THAMs (acronyms of the MATs in these languages) on samples of participants having these languages as their L1. In particular, the Spanish THAM-3 (16 years and beyond) had to be validated under the supervision of the University of Vitoria Gasteiz on young adults, and the Spanish THAM-2 (9 to 14 years) under the supervision of the University of Granada on children and preadolescents. The French THAM-3 was to be validated under the supervision of the University of Québec à Trois Rivières on young adults.

As the MATs, in their original language, i.e. Italian, are based on a common theoretical framework, and have been validated with a standard psychometric procedure, this same procedure had to be applied also to the other linguistic versions.

- To *translate* the MAT-2 and the MAT-3 into German, under the supervision of the University of Innsbruck. For testing the impact of these new linguistic versions, pilot studies were envisaged on samples of German-speaking participants of the age range targeted by the above tests.

Having validated tests in a given language considerably widens the range of possibilities for both research and education as it enables all the users, be they teachers, educational or clinical psychologists, to draw screenings of strengths and weaknesses on the basis of *national standards*, and to develop remedial or enhancing programmes accordingly. Furthermore, a same validated test in different languages allows for multiple comparisons between subjects having these languages as their first or second, or third language, which benefits teaching in plurilingual educational programmes.

- **At educational (E) level**, the partners aimed at creating educational resources based on a distinctive feature of the MATs, namely the fact that these tests elicit *reasoning* about language more than *knowledge* about language, which constitutes the essence of their “meta” nature.

At Application stage, it was agreed that this objective had to be implemented by means of didactic videos showing the interactive use of parts of the MATs. Practically, beyond the outcomes of individual assessment, it is possible to stimulate subjects to elaborate further on their own answers and on those of peers participating to a focus group, under the guidance of an expert in a given metalinguistic task. While the test, per se, provides a static assessment, interaction on parts of the test works on the zone of proximal development (ZPD, Vygotsky, 1939) .

After the Monitoring visit of February by the EACEA’s evaluators, on February, 27, 2015, the Partners were requested to create a clearer linkage between the tests and diverse areas of the curriculum for the age ranges targeted by the project, i.e. Junior, High school, and University level (See WP 11 EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES in the New Work Plans, www.matelproject.com), which entailed a new effort for developing teaching materials

In general terms, the research part of the project had to be implemented in the first year of the project, officially starting from the beginning of December, 2013, but practically after the kick-off in Rome, January, 2014, whereas the educational part had to take place in the second part, from January to November 2015.

At the Monitoring visit stage (end of February), the 6 Working packages related to the R part (administration of the tests, validation, translation and piloting, from WP5 to WP10) were completed. There were 5 more WPs to be completed: Management, Quality, Dissemination, Exploitation and Educational resources.

III. EVALUATION

III.1. Stages of the implementation of the project in the period March-November 2015

We will distinguish 3 main stages in the overall period March-November

First stage: March – Mid-May 2015.

Major milestones:

- Global readjustment of the project after the EACEA Monitoring visit: Amendment request with new workplans in the 5 remaining WPs of the project, and new budgets
- Appointment of the external evaluator
- Contract to another associate of the private company S&P Statistics and Psychometrics Ltd, P2 in the Project, Dr G. Candilera for implementing statistics tasks
- Approval of the progress report and Amendment request.
- Starting dissemination activities in various countries
- Enrichment of the website with new ppts, opening the facebook page of the website from the MATEL's Coordinator.
- Implementation of parts of the videos, booklets and of new educational tools.

Second stage: Mid-May 2015 - 30 August 2015

Major milestones:

- Dissemination activities in various countries
- Enrichment of the website with ppts, reports, minutes, newsletters, videos, pictures and posts from the facebook pages (Un of Granada and Rome) devoted to MATEL
- Implementation of the videos, booklets and of new educational tools.
- Drafting of the articles for the Special issue on the Research part of the MATEL project and related reviewing process.

Third and final stage: September, the 1st – November, 30, 2015

Major milestones:

- Completing the dissemination activities in various countries
- Enrichment of the website with ppts, reports, minutes, newsletters, videos, pictures and posts from the facebook pages (Un of Granada and Rome) devoted to MATEL
- Finalising the implementation of new educational tools.
- Amendment for updating the name of the new Head of the Department of Developmental and Social Psychology- SAPIENZA, legal representative of the MATEL Project.

Past Head: Prof. Emma Baumgartner. New Head: Prof. Alessandra Talamo.

- Finalising the reviewing process of the articles for the Special issue on the Research part of the MATEL project.
- Preparing the Final Conference and the last in-person meeting.

III.2. Sources of documentation

The sources for this Quality report are, for the major part, the same as those that the external evaluator and every Partner could access, in addition to the evaluation report itself, for the reasons explained in the contract stipulated between the external evaluator and the responsible for the Quality WP.

a) Participation to common events or meetings and related documentation:

- In-person Partnership Meeting: Rome, March, 13
- Skype meeting May, 29
- Skype meeting September, 14
- Final Conference, November, 20
- In-person Meeting, Rome, November, 21.

All these events and meetings were anticipated by **agendas** emailed in due time, documented just afterwards through **minutes**, and synthesised through **newsletters**.

b) Access to the public and the private part of the MATEL website (www.matelproject.com)

In these two parts, every Partner and authorized user can visualise:

- Newsletters
- Agendas and Minutes of events and meetings
- EACEA documents
- E-mail exchanges between EACEA and the Partners
- Ppts or videos on dissemination activities, workshops and seminars aimed at presenting the MATEL project and/or its outcomes
- Short reports on these same activities (pdfs with pictures and/or attendance sheets)
- Ppts of presentations of the Partners in National or International conferences
- Didactic videos and related booklets
- List of publications of the Partners
- List of academic and educational forums
- List of Conferences attended by the Partners
- Selected publications of the Partners in full version
- Statistical databases of the validations and of the pilot studies.
- Description and comments about the research results of the project

- Manuals of the validated tests or selected items (for copyright reasons) of the validated tests or newly translated tests.
- Educational resources in the form of :
 - a) General guidelines
 - b) Metalinguistic exercises or other types of classroom activities
- Facebook pages of the University of Granada, responsible for the website, and the University of Rome SAPIENZA
- Twitter pages.

c) Personal encounters and e-mailing with Partners

P2, responsible for the Quality report, had the possibility to visualise some of the paper products of the MATEL team, such as the French book on Metalinguistic Awareness by Pinto & El Euch (2015), the two booklets of the translations of the MATs into German, the MKT-2 and MKT-3 at the Final Conference and to be informed about these products all along the publication process.

At the same time, the scholarly articles on the research results of the MATEL project, now in press in a Special Issue of the *RIVISTA DI PSICOLINGUISTICA APPLICATA / JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLINGUISTICS* (*The “MATEL” (Metalinguistic Awareness Tests in European Languages) Project: Validations and Translations, 2015, 2.*) were accessible first via e-mail, at the moment of the submission to the reviewers, and then at proof correction stage.

III.3. Fulfillment of the objectives

- A) Strategies for reaching quality
- B) Completeness
- C) Diffusion.

A) Strategies for reaching quality

Research.

For fulfilling the research objectives, **a common methodological framework** was paramount at both administration and statistical processing stage.

The administration and coding of the results and the validation databases had long been completed by the end of the first year and reported in the Management and Quality reports related to that year.

During the second year, some further statistical processing was performed that added to the quality of the results, namely **Confirmatory Factor Analysis** applied to the Spanish THAM-2, Spanish THAM-3 and French THAM-3, and some **preliminary validation operations** on the results of the pilot studies, *beyond what was foreseen at Application stage*, which also added to the scientific interest of these results, as pointed by the reviewers.

The main scientific effort was produced in writing all the articles dealing with the validations, the pilot studies and the translation of the tests in the aforementioned Special Issue of RIVISTA DI PSICOLINGUISTICA APPLICATA / JOURNAL OF APPLIED, 2015, 2.

The articles have been sent to **anonymous reviewers** working for a different institution than that of authors, with reliable background concerning psychometrics applied to psycholinguistics.

These reviewers, one from I.N.V.A.L.S.I: *Istituto nazionale per la Valutazione del Sistema Educativo di Istruzione e di Formazione / National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System*) and the other from the University of l'Aquila, did not know each other, and both expressed favourable opinions about the **soundness and consistency of the methodology** used throughout the various studies.

Some revisions were requested, which were punctually performed and eventually accepted.

In addition, the whole Special Issue undergone a **linguistic revision of the English form** by expert in English linguistics.

The full version of this issue is in press at the moment and will be available only in the private part of the MATEL website, for copyright reasons whereas a shorter version is already available in the public part of the website.

Educational products

Videos and booklets

To reach the best possible quality in implementing the didactic videos, a **prototype** was elaborated, showing the interactive use of parts of the Italian TAM-3 with transcriptions and comments on the interactions visible on the video itself in You tube.

These verbal written parts were translated into Spanish and French to serve as models for the Spanish and the Canadian Partners, together with **guidelines in various languages** for performing the focus group and the video itself, all present in the website, private access.

After the first implementations of the videos, the Spanish Partner P3 proposed to create a **booklet** reporting transcriptions and comments to make the video more user-friendly and **enjoyable as a pedagogical tool**. The proposal was accepted by all the Partners involved in the creation of didactic videos, so that each video has its accompanying booklet, a resource not foreseen at Application stage.

In addition, with respect to the initial plan, that established 4 didactic videos in 3 languages, **one more video** was developed for Junior school level, in Italian, to match the Spanish version foreseen for this age. This added product highlights the **consistency of the approach** of these educational products.

The publication of these booklets was also **qualitatively upgraded with respect to the initial plan**. Upon suggestion of the Spanish Partner P4, the Partners explored the possibility to have all their products published with an ISBN code.

This possibility has been examined for months, to check the feasibility within budget limits. A solution was found with the Press of the University of Rome SAPIENZA with a modest expense faced by the Coordinator. **All the booklets have been published as pdfs with ISBN code, logo and copyright from SAPIENZA** and uploaded on the website, public part, together with the videos.

Manuals of the tests

The manuals of the Spanish THAM-2 and THAM-3, with updated introduction, examples of the coding system and divulgative information about the psychometric characteristics have also been published with an ISBN code and are available to any user on the public part of the website as an educational resources as well as a research tools.

However, the manual of the **Spanish THAM-3** was funded by the University of the Basque country in the form of an **e-book** whereas this solution was not possible for the University of Granada (P3) and for the all the other publications for budget reasons. The manual of the THAM-2 benefitted from the possibility of being published with an ISBN code by SAPIENZA as the booklets of the videos.

For copyright reasons, only selected items of the newly translated French THAM-3, German MKT-2 and MKT-3 were uploaded on the website as pdfs. In all cases, indications are provided for purchasing the integral paper versions of these publications.

Metalinguistic exercises

The most consistent application of a **metalinguistically-based approach to learning abilities** implemented by the MATEL team is represented by a series of activities that teachers can perform in the classroom in different disciplines. This is the object of the “Metalinguistic exercises as classroom activities”, that target the age levels of the MAT-2 and MAT-3, i.e. from Junior to High school up to university level.

These exercises address metalinguistic abilities that are indispensable for comprehending **mathematics problems texts, history and geography texts and figurative language texts**. To ensure **ecological validity**, texts were chosen with the help of Primary and Junior school teachers among the most commonly used school manuals.

The metalinguistic approach of the above exercises was then applied in some classrooms, as already practiced in a CDrom published by the Coordinator and Dr D. Fulgenzi (see Publications in the MATEL website, public and private access).

Students in Psychology volunteered for **piloting advertisement texts** presented with a metalinguistic approach on different types of students, and the impact was successful, as documented by their **protocols**, now under analysis for Master dissertations.

Languages: the **ML exercises are available in 4 languages**: Italian, German, Spanish and French following the same pattern, with the **same sequences and directions in each**.

B) Completeness of the fulfillment process.

Research level:

All the objectives related to the research part of the MATEL project were reached:

- the 3 tests that had to be validated are now validated and they are usable by subjects having Spanish and French as their first language, in every Spanish- and French-speaking country in the world, or by learners of these languages as L2 or as second languages.
- The 2 tests that had to be translated into German were successfully translated, on the basis of a lengthy and very rigorous consulting with experts, as witnessed by one of the articles of the above RIPLA / JAPL Special issue.

- The piloting of the translated German tests on German-speaking subjects was implemented and yielded very promising results, as attested by another article of the Special Issue.

Educational level:

- *All* the products foreseen in the old and in the new work plan of the Educational resources (WP11) were implemented and even some more were developed.
- One more didactic video (in Italian) has been developed, beyond the original plan, and it provided an important comparative element for the didactic video at the same age level in another language, and an element of developmental continuity with respect to the videos for older ages.
- Unforeseen booklets accompanying the videos were developed, as stated above.
- The metalinguistic exercises are a publication **of more than 300 pages, with a unitary conceptual framework, a unitary procedural structure, and in 4 languages.**

C) Diffusion

The Dissemination report, by P3, recently uploaded in the private part of the website, and the Press release of the Final Conference (November, 20, 2015), public part of the website, give an exhaustive picture of all the activities implemented for diffusing objectives, actions, strategies and achievements of the MATEL project, at both research and educational levels.

III.4. Perspectives for exploitation and sustainability.

The minutes of the skype meeting of September, 14, 2015, the Newsletter of November, 15 and the minutes of the in-person meeting of November, 21, all documents uploaded on the website, private access, describe several significant initiatives for the exploitation stage of the project.

We will briefly list the most relevant:

- the **Final Conference** as a moment for favouring networking between the Partners and other significant interlocutors.
- The **grant** obtained by the Coordinator together with Prof. O. Floquet (principal investigator in this grant), French Linguistics SAPIENZA, for developing metalinguistically-based teaching materials in French and other languages
- The signed **agreement** between the Coordinator and **2 universities from Portugal** for using the recently translated MATs into Portuguese in research and education
- The agreement between the Coordinator and 2 Professors of the University of Laval and UQAM (both in Québec) for **translating the English MAT-3 into Persian (Farsi)** and piloting it in 2016.
- The **invitation from LERTIE** (Laboratoire d'Etudes Transdisciplinaires et Interdisciplinaires en Education) – **UQTR** to the Partners for exchanges bearing on research and education.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This report overviewed the strategies and the actions taken for achieving the objectives of the MATEL project. It evaluated the extent to which these were achieved and the quality reached by the products delivered and diffused as a basis for future developments.

Based on the ample documentation provided in both the private and the public access parts of the website of the project (www.matelproject.com), on the personal meetings and e-mailing between P2 and the other Partners, and on the visibility of certain products, S&P Statistics and Psychometrics Ltd, in the person of Dr. Gabriella Candilera, author of this report, considers that the MATEL Project has not only achieved all its objectives but reached high quality in the products it delivered.

As such, these products will have a significant impact on research on metalinguistic awareness (MLA) and on metalinguistically-based education.

Rome, December, 3, 2015.

S&P Statistics and Psychometrics Ltd
Responsible for the WP2- QUALITY of the MATEL Project.
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