

ECOSTAR: English as the Cornerstone of Sustainable Technology and Research

HAPPY SUMMER "VACATION"



To all of our dedicated educators: wishing you a good vacation from the intense academic year, and a pleasant and fruitful summer to all.

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Field Monitoring Meeting with Alba Chiara Tiberi at TAU on June 18th

Hosted by Elana Spector-Cohen and Rosalie Sitman

We were very fortunate to have a Field Monitoring visit so early on in the project with the Tempus Project Advisor for ECOSTAR – Alba Chiara Tiberi. I hope that by now our European partners and the Israeli partners who couldn't be there have managed to read the report from the meeting, which provides a review of all the dedication and hard work that has gone on in these first few months. The joint PPT "From EFA to ECOSTAR" was very impressive I felt very proud to be part of this group of dedicated partners. It was also important to meet Marissa, the Director of National Erasmus Israel and the new Erasmus coordinator – Kathrin Theurillat, together with Iris Barner from the EU delegation to Israel. Much support was offered and felt from them and I hope we will make the best use of their services. Although we have not yet received the Field Monitoring report, we heard from Chiara "I would like to thank you and all the project partners for the well prepared and interesting meeting. I have learned a lot and was pleased to see how the project is progressing and how people are committed to its success."

I also would like to thank Elana and Rosalie for the thoughtfulness in all the preparations for the meeting, and of course, for providing sustenance! -

Judy

From left to right : Rosalie Sitman, Assaf Farhadian, Elana Spector-Cohen, Marissa Gross-, Kathrin Theurillat, Ingrid Barth, Iris Barner, Miriam Symon, Alba Chiara Tiberi, Linda Weinberg, Judith Pressman, Yshai Gabai, and Ruthy Fortus in the foreground!



CEFR Symposium at Tel Aviv University – Elana Spector-Cohen

On May 8, a symposium entitled *The CEFR as a Method of Evaluating Language Quality* was held at Tel Aviv University and attended by approximately 120 policy makers, researchers and teachers of a variety of foreign languages in diverse contexts in Israel. The conference was organized by Elana Shohamy, Rosalie Sitman and Elana Spector-Cohen of Tel Aviv University together with Jörg Klinner of the Goethe-Institut (and sponsored by the Goethe-Institut, Tel Aviv University and ACROLT - the Academic Committee for Research in Language Testing). The morning session was entitled *The CEFR - Familiarization and Contextualization*; the speakers, Erna Gille (Cito / The Netherlands) and Nick Saville (Cambridge English Language Validation / UK) gave introductory presentations on the genesis, development and current status of the CEFR; and the multiple uses of the CEFR, respectively. The second session included a panel of representatives from the Israeli Ministry of Education, the Instituto Cervantes de Tel Aviv and the Goethe-Institut in Israel to discuss the teaching and assessment of foreign languages in their contexts in Israel. The afternoon session was entitled *Critical Perspectives and Challenges of the CEFR*. Speakers were Bernard Spolsky (Bar Ilan University / Israel), who spoke about the history of scales; Michaela Perlmann-Balme (Goethe-Institut / Germany), who discussed the European Survey of Language Competence of the CEFR; and Piet v. Avermaet (Gent University / Belgium), who presented misuses of the CEFR in adult immigrant tests in Europe.



Piet v. Avermaet of
Gent University

Finally Elana Shohamy (Tel Aviv University / Israel) discussed unresolved issues of the CEFR and Rosalie Sitman, Elana Spector-Cohen and Iair Or presented ECOSTAR in a talk entitled *Localizing the CEFR*. The



Elana, Rosalie and Iair Presenting ECOSTAR

ECOSTAR project created a great deal of excitement and interest, and most of the questions in the final Q & A session were related to it. Many participants expressed their support and interest in hearing more about the project, including the world-renowned invited speakers. To summarize, it was a very interesting and successful day. The participants, many of whom knew little or nothing about the CEFR, were given a general introduction to the framework and were also introduced to various critical perspectives. Finally, but certainly not least, it was a perfect opportunity to disseminate information about ECOSTAR, and the 'ripples' created by the symposium are still being felt today.

Report on the EALTA Conference: Is my B1 your B1?

Prof Ofra Inbar, Tel-Aviv University

The European Association for Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA) 11th annual conference took place at the University of Warwick from May 29 to June 1. The conference theme was *The CEFR and Language Testing and Assessment – Where are we now?* with the various presentations focusing on various facets of the framework, from its ethos and theoretical underpinnings to psychometric alignment issues. Though the

Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR). It was concluded that it is vital that all ECOSTAR partners are fully conversant with the Blue Book. (Can be found online: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf)



NITE – Update and Request for Participation

In this newsletter, we'd like to relate to two topics: the ECOSTAR project and the English as a foreign language course levels set by the Council for Higher Education (MALAG)



ECOSTAR - NITE is starting to collect data for the study which will enable us to create an initial link between NITE English test scores and CEFR levels. We have received input from the English teachers at TAU regarding their judgment of what course level would be able to take which TELC test, and we look forward to receiving input from the teachers at the other partner institutions (we know it's exam and grading time and everyone is very busy ☺). During the next two months, some of the NITE editors will also take the C2 TELC test.

We'd like to take this opportunity to ask our European partners (those who haven't replied yet) if it would be possible to administer a short NITE test (50 minutes net) to their students who are participating in a course at a designated CEFR level. We would like to do this at the beginning of the coming school year, but if another time is more convenient, let us know.

EFL levels - We had a look at some of the data from NITE examinees. The figure shows data from 78,134 examinees who took either the English section of PET or the AMIR test in the period of July 2013 – May 2014 (a whole year of test dates). AMIRAM data are not included. The number of examinees is shown on the vertical axis and score points appear on the horizontal axis. For example, almost 1,400 examinees received the highest score – 150.

The following table shows the percentage of students (out of the 78,134) grouped according to the MALAG cutoff scores.

MALAG Grouping	Cut-off scores	Percentage of students at each level
Pre-basic A	50-69	9
Pre-basic B	70-84	16
Basic 1	85-94	12
Basic 2	95-99	5
Advanced A	100-119	24
Advanced B	120-133	19
Exemption	134-150	19

It seems to us, at least based on the numbers, that the Basic 2 grouping is superfluous (especially given the error of measurement) and should be combined with Basic 1, so that there would be at least 14 score points at each level. We'd like to know what your experience "in the field" is. Perhaps our future delegation to the MALAG could bring this up with them.

Have a wonderful summer, and looking forward to seeing you in Italy! – Ruth

EMI in the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca and the Role of English Teachers

The ECOSTAR team invited the Dean of the Machine Building Faculty (MBF) from the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Professor Daniela Popescu, PhD, to answer a few questions on the English medium specializations from the MBF. The *Robotics* specialization in MBF is the longest running EMI in the Technical University. It was founded in 1991 under the supervision of Professor Daniela Popescu and has been offering an accredited undergraduate program ever since.

The first question asked regards the objectives of EMI and of having a *Robotics* specialization in English. Prof. Popescu pointed out that the main objectives of EMI in the Technical University are ERASMUS mobilities for students and staff, internationalization and increased employability for Romanian students who are enrolled in EMI.

The first objective was achieved from the beginning of the program. ERASMUS exchange students have enrolled in *Robotics* specialization and their number is growing every year. This is beneficial for the Technical University as an established and trustworthy higher education institution in Europe and for its students who, in turn, can travel abroad and study in partner countries.



Sonia with Dean Popescu

Internationalization, however, is not an accomplished objective. *Robotics* specialization has not yet enrolled any international students for a full four-year undergraduate program. Although curricula and tuition are entirely in English for the EMI specializations, administrative and bureaucratic infrastructure in English are still to be improved. Efforts are being made to counsel and fully inform prospective students (whether in ERASMUS programs or international students) about the content of the curricula, rules and regulations of the Romanian higher educational institutions, etc.

Prof. Popescu underlines the fact that, despite this, the most important aspect of EMI has always been increased employability for graduates of EMI. In Transylvania, where TUC-N is located, the European manufacturing and assembly industry has subsidiaries and workshops which are important providers of employment opportunities for engineering graduates. Graduating an engineering specialization in English is one of the most important competitive advantages on the local and international labour market. Statistics show that our EMI engineering graduates find jobs much sooner after graduation than those who studied the same specialization in Romanian, many being selected by employers even before graduation.

The English division of the Department of Modern Languages and Communication contributes to EMI in the Technical University by providing ESP and general English classes, designing ESP syllabi for under and post-graduate programs, assessment and certification for academic staff and students according to CEFRL. When asked what more the English division could do to support EMI, the Dean said that, due to limitations imposed by the general curriculum of engineering specializations, the number of English language classes offered to EMI students cannot be increased. Within these limitations, however, English teachers can

contribute by continuously adapting syllabi to students' individual needs and by including in the needs analyses the language practices of the prospective employers. She suggested English teachers should participate in the discussions, training sessions, workshops employers have with EMI engineering students/graduates. These events are regularly organized by TUC-N which keeps a close contact with the business and industrial environment. Exploiting these events as basis for understanding how English is used on the job and in professional environments would help English teachers address more specific needs in the language class. - *The interview was conducted and summarized by Sonia Munteanu, on behalf of the ECOSTAR team from The Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, 30th of June 2014, Cluj-Napoca*

Work Package 2 – EFL Learning Packages

Since our last newsletter, we have been continuing the development stage of WP2 at IDC. We have held regular team meetings to define what we mean by a learning package and have developed our first learning package for the B1 level on the topic of veganism. In order to see how to integrate technology into the learning packages, the OU team and IUCC came to IDC, and we have also met with TAU in order to incorporate the CEFR framework into our activities. Hanna Jubran (NAC) is an active member of WP2 and came to IDC (see the photo) to present a learning package for the B1 level on organ donation, which led to a productive discussion.

Now that our academic year is over, we plan to make great progress over the summer. In this next stage, we would really appreciate contributions from our European partners, so please be in contact with us if you are able to assist (msymon@idc.ac.il). We would like to develop learning packages for the B2 level on globalization, cross-cultural awareness, plagiarism, and environmental issues. In addition, we hope to build learning packages for the C1 level on ethics, innovation, and preparing for the global workplace. Although it wasn't included in *our initial proposal, we all feel that it would also*



From left to right: Monica Broido (IDC and TAU), Hanna Jubran (NAC), Avigail Kirschenbaum-Noy (IDC), Leor Cohen (IDC), Miriam Symon (IDC), Noa Kadman (IDC); not in photo Daniel Portman (IDC).

be beneficial to develop a learning package for the A2 level, so we hope to build that around a sports theme. As you can see, we have set ourselves very ambitious targets for the summer, so we would really appreciate contributions from all partners. Wishing you all a wonderful summer – Miriam and the IDC team.

On the Horizon for WP 4 – by Linda Weinberg

A scheduled meeting for WP4 will take place at the University of Leicester from 7th- 8th July between the WP leader and the core team members from ULeic, IDC, TAU and UM. While research and investigations into the implementation of EMI, and discussions on how it should be adapted and recommended for the

Israeli context continue, the syllabus for the proposed content modules has to be prepared and made ready for presentation to partner institutions. The modules will be ready for piloting during the 2015-2016 academic year; but as we know, introducing any new courses into the curriculum is a time-consuming challenge and therefore, following this July meeting, the partners should already be able to arrange to meet with the relevant departments and present this new and exciting course for their approval. A detailed report will be shared following the meeting.

Focus on a Partner – University of L'Aquila, Italy -

Towards the coming Consortium Meeting in L'Aquila we asked our Italian partners to please write something about L'Aquila and the University. The following is only part of what Barbara and Anna prepared, and we look forward to learning more in Italy. We hope to 'put the spotlight' on a different partner in each newsletter.

The University of L'Aquila, founded by Ferrante D'Aragona in 1464 and closed at the beginning of the 20th Century, was re-established in 1952 and has become an important centre of higher education. It is located in the city of L'Aquila, capital of the Abruzzo Region and one of the main cultural centres in Italy.



The town was built between 1240 and 1290 and its historical centre boasts many important churches and monuments that constitute a relevant part of the Italian cultural heritage. Unfortunately the city was hit by an earthquake in 2009 destroying a great part of its historical centre which is now under reconstruction and renovation. Its territory was the cradle of pre-Roman and Roman settlements of which several villages have still preserved relevant historical, archeological and art heritage, for more than 4000 years.

The University is a public teaching and research institution developed in three main campuses: the city centre, with the departments of Humanities and administrative offices; Coppito, with the study fields of Sciences and Medicine and Roio with engineering courses.

The recent national reform of Higher Education eliminated university faculties, thus transforming the former 9 Faculties (responsible for degree programmes) and 18 Departments (responsible for research and doctoral studies) into 7 new Departments:

1. Biotechnological and Applied Chemical Sciences
2. Civil, Construction Architectural and Environmental Engineering
3. Human Studies
4. Industrial and Information Engineering and Economics
5. Information Engineering, Computer Science and Mathematics
6. Life, Health and Environmental Sciences
7. Physical and Chemical Sciences

which offer:

- 30 Bachelor Degrees
- 32 Master Degrees
- 4 single-cycle Master Degrees (Medicine, Dentistry, Architecture Engineering, Educational Sciences)
- 11 Ph.D Programmes

including the fields of Engineering, Biotechnologies, Sciences, Computer Science, Economics, Education, Humanities, Medicine, Psychology, and Sport Sciences.

Furthermore the university offers its approximately 20,000 students several specialisation schools, specialising-master courses and vocational courses. The 197 Laboratories, the CERFIS and MEMOCS Research Centres and the CETEMPS and DEWS excellence research centres contribute to providing the students with an international and scientific environment. Many members of its distinguished faculty of about 600 professors and researchers have received international recognition and are considered leaders in their fields of research.

In recent years the University of L'Aquila has increased international relations and enhanced cooperation with the surrounding territory. The administrative structure has changed accordingly so that many new activities have been promoted. In particular, the **Research and Technology Transfer Area**, consisting in:

- ✓ **Technology Transfer Office**, offering companies the access to applied research and strict cooperation with researchers for a fruitful technology transfer;
- ✓ **University Research and Relationships with Departments Office**, coordinating and supporting Departments and Research Centres in all procedures related to the management of research funds provided by national and international bodies;
- ✓ **International Projects Office**, supporting academic staff in answering to the calls for proposal within EU and International Programmes;
- ✓ **International Relations Office**, managing the University international relations by providing the necessary support to the Pro Rector for IR in finding and managing the European Union funds for international mobility of students and teachers, manages LLP/Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus projects as well as agreements with foreign universities.



The Human Studies Department

The centralised "**International Project Office**", in cooperation with IRO, has implemented in the last 5 years many international projects among which:



Lillian, Barbara, Fatima

- ❖ 16 TEMPUS projects (in several geographic and thematic areas)
- ❖ 11 EMA2 (Balkan area, Central Asia, Pakistan, India, South-East Asia, Middle East, Syria, Central America)
- ❖ 60 bilateral agreements with non-EU countries
- ❖ 4 LLP/Leonardo Projects
- ❖ Erasmus Mundus Master Degree (Mathmods)
- ❖ Several research projects (FP7)

University of L'Aquila has actively participated in the Bologna process since the beginning and has extensive experience in cooperation activities.

Internationalisation has given rise to:

- ❖ 2 joint Bachelor and honour Bachelor degrees
- ❖ 5 joint Master degrees
- ❖ 1 Erasmus Mundus Master degree
- ❖ Several joint PhD programmes

In the years to come the main objectives shall be enhancing the university's international reputation and offering its students a solid cultural foundation and a challenging environment. In this way students can develop skills and capacities in order to be competitive in a globalised world characterised by continuous **and** quick transformation.

2nd Consortium Meeting – September 3rd – 4th

The 2nd ECOSTAR Consortium meeting will be hosted by UNIVAQ in L'Aquila on Wednesday Sept 3 – Thursday Sept 4. The theme for this gathering will be "Next Steps". Each Work Package Leader, together with a European partner will present the challenges/questions resulting from the first 6 months of the project, questions concerning what next steps are called for, and at the end of the second day to come up with the plan and clarity of our goals for the next six months. For those who weren't in the Field Monitoring meeting, it will be important to go through the Power point presentation and the minutes from the meeting to be as updated as possible. A shorter summary will be sent out by mid-August with any further updates from the WP leaders. In this way, our time, which is valuable, can be focused not on what was, but on what was learned, and how to proceed.



Hotel Reservation

Remember to contact Hotel Federico II to confirm your reservation (with credit card information), and be sure to mention you are part of the **"Progetto Tempus ECOSTAR" at the University of L'Aquila** in order to get the special price that Barbara has procured for us (They have the names of all who confirmed their participation).

The rooms are reserved from the 2nd - 5th of September, and you may make your own arrangement if you want to come earlier or stay later.

The prices are for a single person and include breakfast, in rooms that sleep 1,2,3, or 4

Doppie Uso Singolo (double room for 1 person only):	40 €	Doppie (double room) (2 people/room)	30 €
Triple (3/room):	28 €	Quadruple (4/room):	25 €

We would like to try to be there by late afternoon/ evening on Tuesday, and perhaps gather for a meal together before we begin - details to follow.

email info@hotelfedericosecondo.it. Telephone - +39 0862-22060.

Barbara will be sending out more information about transportation and other information for our stay in L'Aquila. Thank you to Barbara and Anna Tozzi for all their arrangements.



ECOSTAR Portal and Facebook Page – WP 5 & 7

We hope you have all seen the beginning steps of our FB page "Tempus ECOSTAR" and the foundation for the ECOSTAR portal at moodle.iucc.ac.il/ecostar/ . All Work Package Leaders are encouraged to begin to use the Moodle "Project Management, Work Packages" and to upload materials to help create the basis for a working portal. For anyone who still wants to contact Eli Shmuel with any suggestions or features you would like to see in the portal, please do so in the next few days. Yshai is working with a graphic artist to create a good look for the FB page. In the meantime, there are some pictures from the Field Monitoring and other meetings for your enjoyment.

Personal News

Congratulations to:

Ofra Inbar of TAU on her promotion to Professor

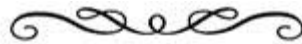
Yshai Gabai - on the birth of his son

Rosalie Sitman - on the marriage of her son

Ingrid Barth - on the upcoming marriage of her son

Condolences to:

Eli Shmueli on the loss of his mother



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Dear ECOSTAR partners,

Thank you for the much appreciated
time and effort in contributing to this
newsletter.

Please continue to send in your
summaries, articles, photos.

In best support,

Judy