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Intro

In this second newsletter you'll discover the progress we've made in the TALES@home project. We've started interviewing multilingual families to further develop the different tools we want to digitalise in the app. You'll also read a short report of the project meeting which took place in London in January. This meeting was all about sharing experiences in working with these tools. After this meeting, we were ready to have the students at Howest, a Western-Flanders based College, start the development of the digital version of our tools. Finally, you'll also find some EU-news in this newsletter.

Second meeting of the professionals T@H in West Ealing (London)

From 16th till 18th of January the second meeting of the project TALES@Home took place in West London, in a district called West Ealing. Like all of London, Ealing has a rich mix of different cultures, centering around the Irish and English communities but also with a strong Aussie, Kiwi and South African influence. Ealing also has a large Polish community, which has its roots in World War II, when Polish fighters were stationed in the nearby Northolt RAF barracks. Arriving in Ealing the first thing which impressed us are the wide roads with plenty of café terraces and little restaurants.

Double Helix Resources, our London-based project partner, hosted this second meeting. Everything was perfectly planned in order to make our stay pleasant and our work efficient.

A few highlights of this meeting



- a very interesting exchange of the results of the first 50 interviews of the multilingual families;
- very good suggestions from all the partners, which will be used to shape the tool;
- a further elaboration of interviews with professionals;
- a lot of planning of work that should be done in the next period;
- a couple of boxes of Walker's Shortbreads, which were appreciated by all the partners;
- a huge box of Belgian pralines (appreciated in particular by our Italian partners);
- a fire evacuation during the meeting, because it is well known that it is good to alternate intellectual work and physical exercises;
- a strong sun entering our meeting room, so strong that the projection of our slides was almost impossible;
- Spicy food in a couple of multicultural restaurants of West Ealing.

The next meeting of the partners will take place in September in Vilnius (Lithuania). We are already looking forward to exchanging the further results of our work.

TALES at home: a first exploration of the subject with multilingual families

Hilde De Smedt (Foyer)

In the first research phase of the project, we've interviewed several multilingual families in each participating city.

We had two main goals:

- Understand more about the way languages and multilingualism are experienced by adults and children in these families.
- Try out a first design of visual templates to learn more about approaches that can be useful when developing the tool.

We learned a lot about the visuals used in the templates, what worked and what didn't. In the next phase we'll start building and testing the tool while continuing the research.

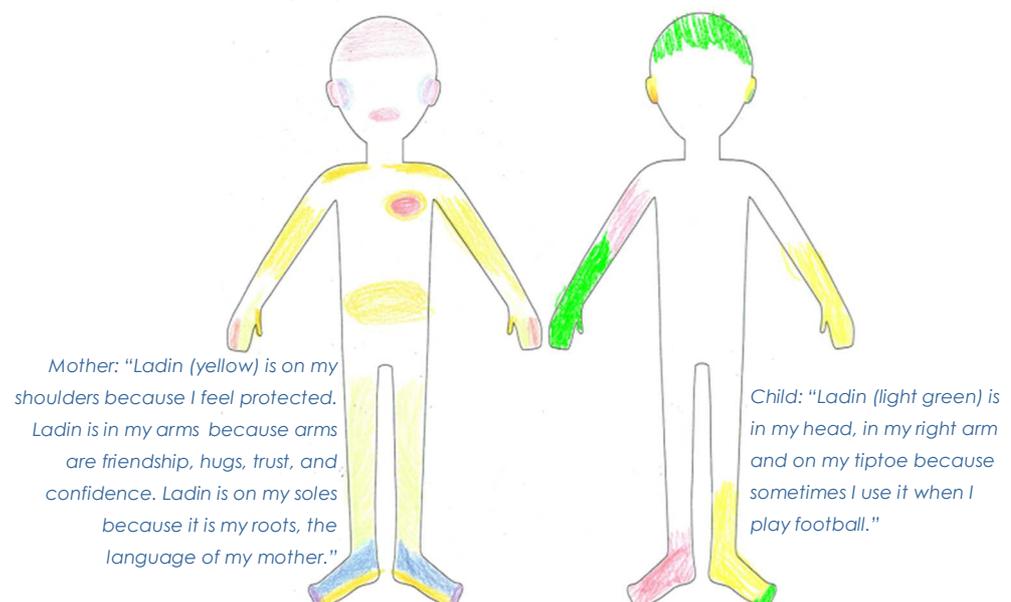
We chose to execute oral interviews using three different templates. The interviewers went to the families' home to interview one parent and one child (age 7 to 14). Apart from the templates, time was taken to understand the (migration) history of the family and to get an overview of language use and skills. In this way about 50 families were interviewed.

We will describe our approach by giving some illustrations of the results using these templates. We've also added some general comments on what we learned from these interviews.

1. Language portraits

Parents and children are asked to list the languages that are significant to them and link them with a color. Afterwards they were asked to give these languages a place in the body (or around it).

Illustration: This family is interviewed by EURAC in Bolzano (Italy) and lives in Val Badia, one of the two trilingual valleys of South Tyrol. Next to German and Italian, Ladin is also spoken in this valley. It's a Rhaeto-Romance language mainly spoken in South Tyrol, Trentino and the province of Belluno. These illustrations are the portraits drawn by the mother and by the child. In the example we highlight their comments on Ladin. Note the different significance of this language for both.



2. Language domains

Parents and child received a second template on different language situations at home (such as dinner, visits, bedtime rituals, etc.). They listed up the languages they were using in each situation and linked it with a smiley to express how they felt about the language use in this particular context.

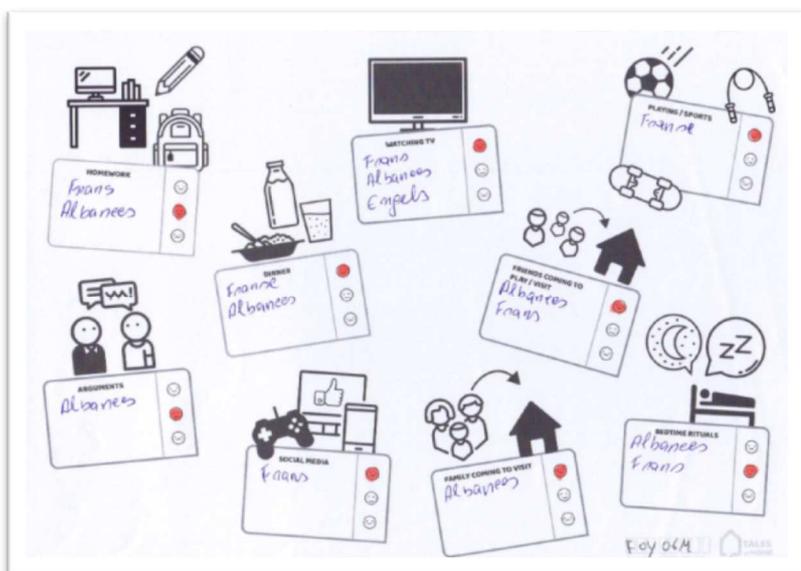


Illustration: This Albanese family, living in Brussels, was interviewed by FOYER. They have a complex migration history which translate in a complex language situation: the mother's best language is Albanese but the children's strongest language is French. Now and then the father has to take up the role of mediator. In this template the mother expresses the stress she experiences in certain specific situations. When helping her child with his homework, when having an argument or when reading bedtime stories, her child being stronger than herself in French creates some difficulties and frustration.

3. Timeline

This third template was only taken up with the parents. For two languages they draw a line to show the evolution of their skills in that language (full line) and how their emotions change over time (dotted line).

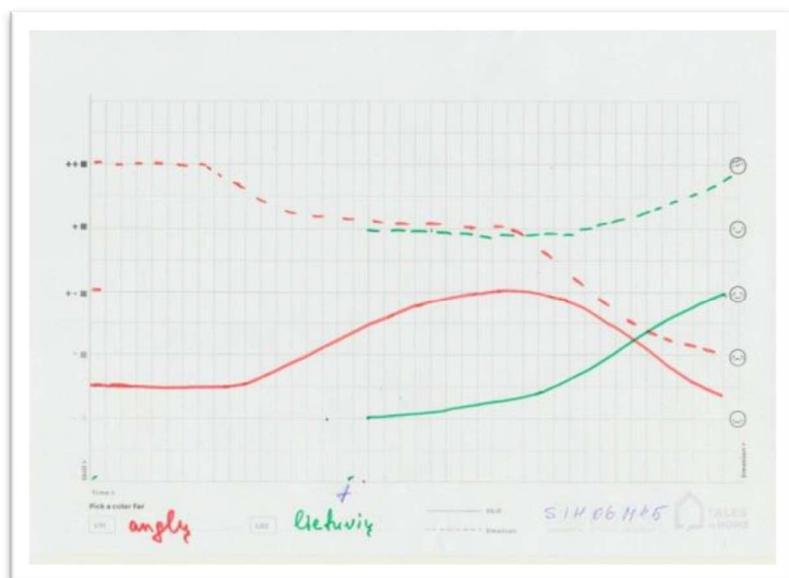


Illustration: This family lives in Vilnius and was interviewed by Soros International House. They are from Azerbaijan. The family moved to Lithuania only five years ago, as their father started a business in Lithuania. The family focused on learning Lithuanian very quickly. In this timeline the mother draws her skills and emotions for English and Lithuanian. English because she always wanted to learn this language, as she finds it beautiful. So her emotions related to English start off very positive, even though she acknowledges that her English proficiency isn't that high. Unfortunately, lately she hasn't had many opportunities to practice and use this language, so her emotions fell down along with her skills. She started learning Lithuanian 4 years ago, her achievements are very high, and so she started liking the language and getting more confident.

4. Some general observations about what we learned about the families:

- The reflection on languages and emotions was something new for most of the families.
- The interviews helped to reveal:
 - o frustrations (for example when parent and child cannot find the words to talk about a problem);
 - o sense of exclusions (mother using a language with other family members and friends which the child does not understand);
 - o a desire for control (a father who continually asks what mother and child are telling in another language);
 - o a missing sense of belonging to a community (for example, 'here in Belgium I am considered an Italian and in Italy I am considered a Belgian');
 - o aspects of their language story they never thought about.

We also learned a lot about the visuals used in the templates, what worked and what didn't. In the next phase we'll start building and testing the tool while continuing the research. We will analyse more profoundly the findings of these interviews and are conducting interviews with professionals.

Putting students at work!

Over the duration of five intensive weeks, eleven students from HOWEST were fully focused on one assignment: designing and developing an application for TALES@HOME, or at least what it could become. It is quite a challenge to design for a variety of multilingual users of different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, children as well as adults.

They started with a workshop from Foyer to introduce them in topics of language, emotion and multilingualism. During different exercises they experienced how multilingual children and adults feel about languages and they were introduced in approaches to express these feelings.

During the following weeks the students looked for solutions in an easy-to-use user interface and a visual driven experience.

On Friday the 17th of February the students presented their work before a jury. This resulted in creative ideas that will be used as an inspiration for the further development of our application. There were examples of roadmaps linked with language use, (language)avatars created by the family members, and different visualization for language skills and emotions sometimes linked to a specific situation.





EU news

Communication skills for migrant children

In an ever-changing world, some children are learning a different language at home than what they need to use at school. The Welcome Project uses a Multimedia Learning Kit to help children acquire necessary vocabulary to start school through playful activities. One of the benefits of this kit is that it can be used by educators and parents alike.

Learn more about it and start using and sharing it: <http://welcomm-project.com/>

European Toolkit for Schools

Promoting inclusive education and tackling early school leaving

Early school leaving remains a key issue in Europe, despite having decreased through successful measures since 2005. Check out the updated European Toolkit for Schools - supported by Erasmus+. It is helping make schools more inclusive and offers resources for all people involved in education.

More information on <http://www.schooleducationgateway.eu>.

There are specific topics about language learning.

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