

Termdist – a joint Nordic terminology training initiative

Marita Kristiansen
Norwegian School of Economics

Ágústa Þorbergsdóttir
Árni Magnússon instituttet for islandske studier

Tässä artikkelissa kuvataan yhteispohjoismaisen Termdist-verkoston terminologia-alan koulutusyhteisyyttä koulutuskokonaisuuden sisältöjen sekä vuodesta 2009 toteutetun verkkopohjaisen kurssiformaatin käytännön toteutuksen pohjalta. Nordplus-rahoituksella vuonna 2005 käynnistetty yhteistyö on tähdännyt maisteritason koulutusohjelmaan (joint degree), jossa yhdistettäisiin eri toimijoiden kompetenssit. Koulutusohjelman sisältöä pohditaan artikkelissa suhteessa EU-sertifiointiin (ECQA Certified Terminology Manager) ja sitä verrataan Universitat Pompeu Fabran tarjoamaan verkkopohjaiseen maisteriohjelmaan. Pohjoismaisen kurssikokonaisuuden ensimmäinen moduulin (Terminology I, 7,5 ECTS) toteuttamista käydään artikkelissa läpi teknisten ratkaisujen, kurssisisältöjen, oppimistavoitteiden ja kurssi-arvioinnin perusteella. Lähes sata kurssin suorittanutta opiskelijaa eri pohjoismaista vuosina 2009–13 osoittaa, että koulutukselle on tarvetta. Kysyntä on ollut suurinta Norjassa, Ruotsissa ja Tanskassa, missä ei ole tarjolla laajempia terminologia-alan korkeakouluopintoja. Vuonna 2010 toteutetun ulkoisen arvioinnin mukaan 85 % opiskelijoista katsoi kurssin vastaavan odotuksia sekä sen sisältöjen olevan relevantteja. Viidesosa oli kohdannut teknisiä ongelmia ja usea opiskelija kommentoi lisäksi eri skandinaavisten kielten käytön olevan oletettua haastavampaa, joskin samalla myös antoisaa. Tämän pohjalta kurssiformaattia on kehitetty mm. lisäämällä aineistoihin rinnakkaissanastoja.

Keywords: Nordic co-operation, online course, Termdist, terminology training

1 Introduction

In this article, we will describe an initiative to establish a joint, internet-based terminology training programme in the Nordic countries. The initiative, named *Termdist*, was made by a group of researchers and terminologists in the Nordic countries who together formed a network with funding from the Nordplus Languages programme in 2006.

In the following, we will present the background and motivation for the network, the scope of the training programme, including a brief discussion of the challenges that have emerged during the planning phase, among other things, due to different educational systems and administrative and teaching conventions in our institutions. Next, we will briefly compare the training programme with the recommended content being used for

ECQA⁴⁴ Certified Terminology Manager, which is an EU certification of terminologist competences. We will also briefly make a comparison with an online terminology master's degree programme offered by the Institut Universitari de Linguística Aplicada (IULA) at Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Next, we will present some main findings from an external survey which we commissioned to evaluate the pilot course which was offered in 2009 (Terminology I) and the students' satisfaction. Finally, we will present this module in further detail, i.e., *Terminology I*, which has been offered once a year since 2009.

2 Background

As mentioned above, Termdist is an initiative for developing and implementing a joint web-based master's degree programme in terminology in the Nordic countries. To do so, a network was established in 2005 with financial support from the Nordplus Languages programme. Originally, the network institutions comprised seven universities and organisations, which are all driving forces of terminology in their respective countries:

- Copenhagen Business School (CBS), Copenhagen, Denmark
- Norwegian School of Economics (NHH), Bergen, Norway
- Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden
- Terminologikum TNC (the Swedish centre for terminology), Stockholm, Sweden
- The Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, Reykjavik, Iceland
- University of Southern Denmark, Kolding, Denmark
- University of Vaasa, Vaasa, Finland

Initially, the Institute for Interpretation and Translation Studies at Stockholm University, represented by Helge Niska, who was also the initiator of the network, was in charge of project management. However, when Stockholm University withdrew from the project in 2008, the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH) in Norway took over. In 2010 also the

⁴⁴ European Certification and Qualification Association, http://www.ecqa.org/index.php?id=158&no_cache=1

University of Southern Denmark in Kolding withdrew from the collaboration, whereas Karlstad University in Sweden joined in 2012, only to withdraw again in the spring 2014. The changes in the network institutions have been partly due to a shift in strategic focus at the institutions co-occurring with the retirement of those who represented the institutions in *Termdist*. In December 2015, the network institutions include CBS, NHH, TNC, the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies and the University of Vaasa.

The three higher education institutions CBS, NHH and the University of Vaasa all have a strong focus on specialist communication teaching and research, and terminology has for many decades been central. TNC, which is the national centre for terminology in Sweden, has solid experience in both teaching and practical terminology work, including standardisation, whereas the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies has long traditions of research on the Icelandic language, including terminology.

The origins of the Termdist network can be traced back to a Nordterm seminar on marketing and teaching that TNC held in Solna in Sweden in the autumn 2004. Nordterm is an association of organisations and societies in the Nordic countries engaged in terminology work, training and research dating back to 1976 (nordterm.net). A central theme of the Nordterm seminar in Solna was the lack of available terminology courses in higher education in the Nordic countries and following the seminar an initiative was made by Helge Niska with the University of Stockholm to get funding to establish a network for developing a training initiative.

One challenge for all the Nordic countries was the fact that there was not enough interest in each country to attract enough students to a master's programme in terminology. By establishing training as an inter-Nordic programme it would be easier to secure a sufficient number of students than if the individual countries or even institutions were to offer such programmes on their own. The aim was to establish a master's degree programme intended for students from all the Nordic countries. At the time, it varied to what extent terminology courses were offered in the respective countries. For instance, the University of Vaasa already had both campus and online courses in terminology, including a master's programme (as of autumn 2014, see Nuopponen, this publication)

whereas no courses were offered in Norway.⁴⁵ The target group would be people working with terminology and language for special purposes (LSP), such as translators, interpreters, information specialists, document specialists, technical writers and other experts in various fields.

From the beginning of the project, it has been an aim to teach in Scandinavian (Danish, Norwegian and Swedish). This is important from the perspective of language policies in order to strengthen the Nordic languages and prevent domain loss in line with the *Declaration on a Nordic Language Policy* (2006) issued by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Traditionally, the inhabitants of the Nordic countries, and in particular within Scandinavia, have been able to understand both the written and spoken language of their Nordic neighbours. It is an important goal for the Nordic Council of Ministers that this language comprehension is maintained and that the language users do not e.g. shift unnecessarily to English when communicating with each other. Having said that, the ability to understand each other in the Nordic countries is in general limited to an understanding of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish. Thus only the Scandinavian languages have been used as teaching languages.

With growing globalisation, the scientific community has become increasingly more international. This development has come at the expense of the Nordic languages, particularly the specialised vocabulary that is the base of all communications in all disciplines (cf. Kristiansen 2014; see also Hoel and Våge in this publication). English is increasingly becoming the language of instruction at Nordic universities and the same trend can be seen within trade and industry. The need for skills to handle specialised languages is therefore ever increasing (cf. Leino 2010), and with that the need for terminology management competence.

⁴⁵ NHH has later established a campus terminology course in a joint bachelor's programme with the University of Bergen. This programme will, however, no longer be offered as of 2015.

3 A joint Nordic master's degree programme

The point of departure for the project was to establish a joint Nordic master's degree programme. This should be in line with the Bologna declaration of 1999 (Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education 1999) since we assumed that, given the fact that all countries involved had signed this declaration, it would offer a common platform on which to build the various programme components.

An overall aim of the Bologna declaration is to create a higher education area within the EU (including the EEA) in which students, teachers and researchers can move freely between countries and in which students should be able to continue their studies in another country based on already completed studies in their home country. To achieve this, a system of two main cycles has been adopted, i.e., an undergraduate and a graduate cycle, corresponding to the bachelor and master levels, respectively. In addition, a joint system of credits has been established, including a common terminology and standard for student evaluation. These changes were thus an invitation to increase both transinstitutional and cross-border cooperation among higher education institutions.

Early in the process of discussing the possibilities of a joint Nordic master's degree programme (2005–2006) we therefore made an effort to find out to what extent a joint programme in line with the Bologna declaration would be feasible. A comprehensive effort was made to survey the national and local adaptations of the Bologna agreement. The survey showed that whereas all Nordic countries had adopted the joint system of credits, which is called the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the two-cycle system had not yet been adopted to the same extent in all the countries. Also, different practices existed in different institutions within one country, which made it necessary to establish a flexible master's degree programme plan and to make special adoptions in the first module that was developed (*Terminology I*, see section 4).

For instance, students could be recruited to the course either among those already enrolled in the various institutions or among people looking for continuing education. These two broad categories of prospective students would normally take two different master's

degrees, i.e., a 2-year master's degree (120 ECTS) or a so-called experience-based master's degree (1.5 year full time study comprising 90 ECTS, building on the students' already existing work experience). Whereas the University of Vaasa (Finland) traditionally offers 2-year master's degree programmes only, i.e., programmes comprising 120 ECTS, something which will qualify as a basis for PhD studies, CBS in Denmark would for this kind of programme normally offer experience-based master's degree. NHH in Norway may offer both variants, either through its regular system or through its NHH Executive department. Our solution has therefore been to establish a flexible model which would not exclude any of the institutions participating in the network, as illustrated in Figure 1:

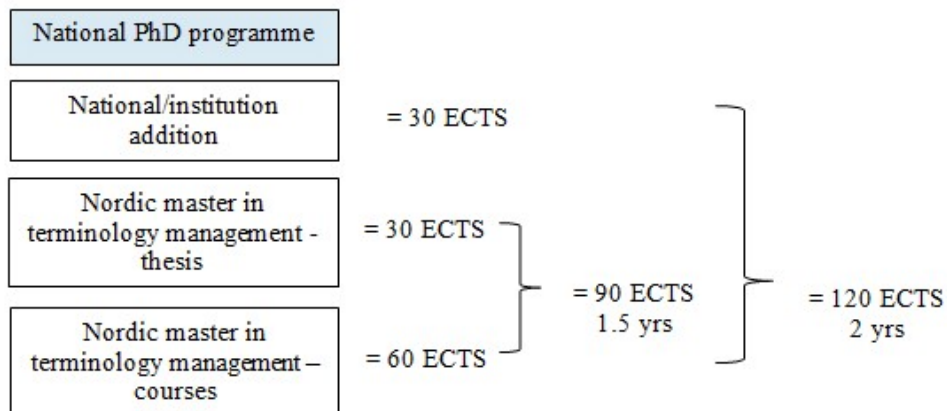


Figure 1. Nordic master's degree programme in terminology management

As indicated in Figure 1, the future programme will include a 60 ECTS course component which is described in further details below. On top of this, the students will have to write a thesis of 30 ECTS. These two components will together be sufficient for an experience-based master's degree. Since there is an outspoken goal with the University of Vaasa that all master's degree programmes should qualify for PhD studies, an additional 30 ECTS would be required to make the master's degree programme comprehensive enough. This is what is indicated by the "National/institution addition" box in Figure 1, and which would normally require the completion of 120 ECTS.

Another challenge is that the typical module size varies from institution to institution, also within the same country. Thus one Danish institution may offer 15 ECTS courses or modules whereas other institutions offer 10 ECTS modules. Furthermore, at NHH the typical module size is 7.5 ECTS, thus the planned terminology course would be twice as comprehensive as the ordinary courses offered at NHH. The University of Vaasa, on the other hand, typically offers 5 ECTS modules. There were also other minor differences, such as the fact that Denmark would require electives of at least 10 ECTS in a non-experience-based master's degree programme (cf. Grinstedt 2008).

In the initial project phase, we also investigated the possibilities of having a *joint degree*, i.e., a higher education qualification that is:

... issued jointly by at least two or more higher education institutions or jointly by one or more higher education institutions and other awarding bodies, on the basis of a study programme developed and/or provided jointly by the higher education institutions, possibly (Recommendation on the recognition of joint degrees 2004).

At that time joint degrees were not very common and when we surveyed the topic, only very few examples could be found. In recent years, joint degrees have become more common though and such programmes are offered at CBS, NHH⁴⁶ and Vaasa. One of the aims of having joint degrees is to encourage student mobility by establishing programmes where it is possible for students to take modules within the programme with another institution. However, the typical student in our programme would be one who is already working and who wants to study in addition. Mobility is therefore not something that is ideal for the students. In fact, students will frequently already be based abroad, i.e., outside the Nordic countries, in for instance France, Belgium or Luxembourg. Thus several will already be relatively mobile. Instead of having the flexibility of moving physically, our typical students will rather want flexibility in course structure, the way they can work with the course assignments, for instance by means of asynchronous discussions and the possibility to study at a distance. Another aim of having joint degrees would be to take advantage of the competence the various institutions have instead of having to specialise in all fields in all institutions. This is something that was discussed

⁴⁶ <http://www.nhh.no/no/studentsider/dobbelgrad.aspx>

in the network in the preparation of the various modules and which institution should be responsible for them (cf. section 3.1).

3.1 Planned course modules

As a result of the network's discussions, the curriculum of the master's degree programme was outlined and the study segmented into suitable modules, including seven courses and the writing of a master's thesis:

- Terminology I
- Terminology II
- Project management
- TMS/termbanks
- Language and terminology policies
- Knowledge management
- Translation-oriented terminology work
- Master's thesis (30 ECTS)

Course descriptions with learning outcomes have been outlined for all modules. However, at present only *Terminology I* has been developed and offered through the Termdist network (see also the Termdist network homepage, www.termdist.no, which is currently being hosted by the University of Vaasa).

Together, the network institutions cover both terminology research and teaching. However, the various institutions have different research profiles, a difference which is considered a strength for the future programme. The fact that some of the lecturers are specialists in knowledge management, ontologies and concept modelling, whereas others focus on term formation and neologisms, gives a natural allocation of teaching responsibilities among the network institutions in the programme based on their comparative advantages. Furthermore, TNC for instance has a much closer relation to actual terminology users than the research institutions and can therefore offer valuable insight into both project management and practical terminology work. This enables us to

apply solid competence on each topic in order to create the best possible programme. Thus the intention is not that all partners should participate in all modules. In the pilot course (see section 5) this is, however, the case since we have considered it important that all partners achieve first-hand experience from teaching terminology at a distance and dealing with students from all the Nordic countries.

4 Comparison with other European terminology courses

In the following, we will briefly compare the Nordic programme with the ECQA certified Terminology Manager and the Online Master's degree in Terminology offered by IULA.

4.1 The ECQA certified Terminology Manager

The European Certification and Qualification Association (ECQA) is an organisation that aims to develop and maintain a set of quality criteria and common certification rules across the different European regions to ensure the same level of training and certification quality in all participating countries. A group of experts, called Job Role Committee, defines the skill requirements for the certification of new job roles (professions). TermNet, i.e., the international network for terminology, has, together with the Job Role Committee of ECQA, developed terminology courses which lead to a European certification of terminology managers.

The *ECQA certified Terminology Manager* consists of two courses, a basic and an advanced online course. Both courses follow roughly the same structure and modules, however, the courses require different levels of knowledge. The *ECQA Certified Terminology Manager* courses or programmes, offered by TermNet do not qualify as actual university courses with ECTS credits since they are meant to be a certification of terminology managers who have certain competences. The skills hierarchy for the programmes contains six units, each with defined learning elements as illustrated in Figures 2 and 3.

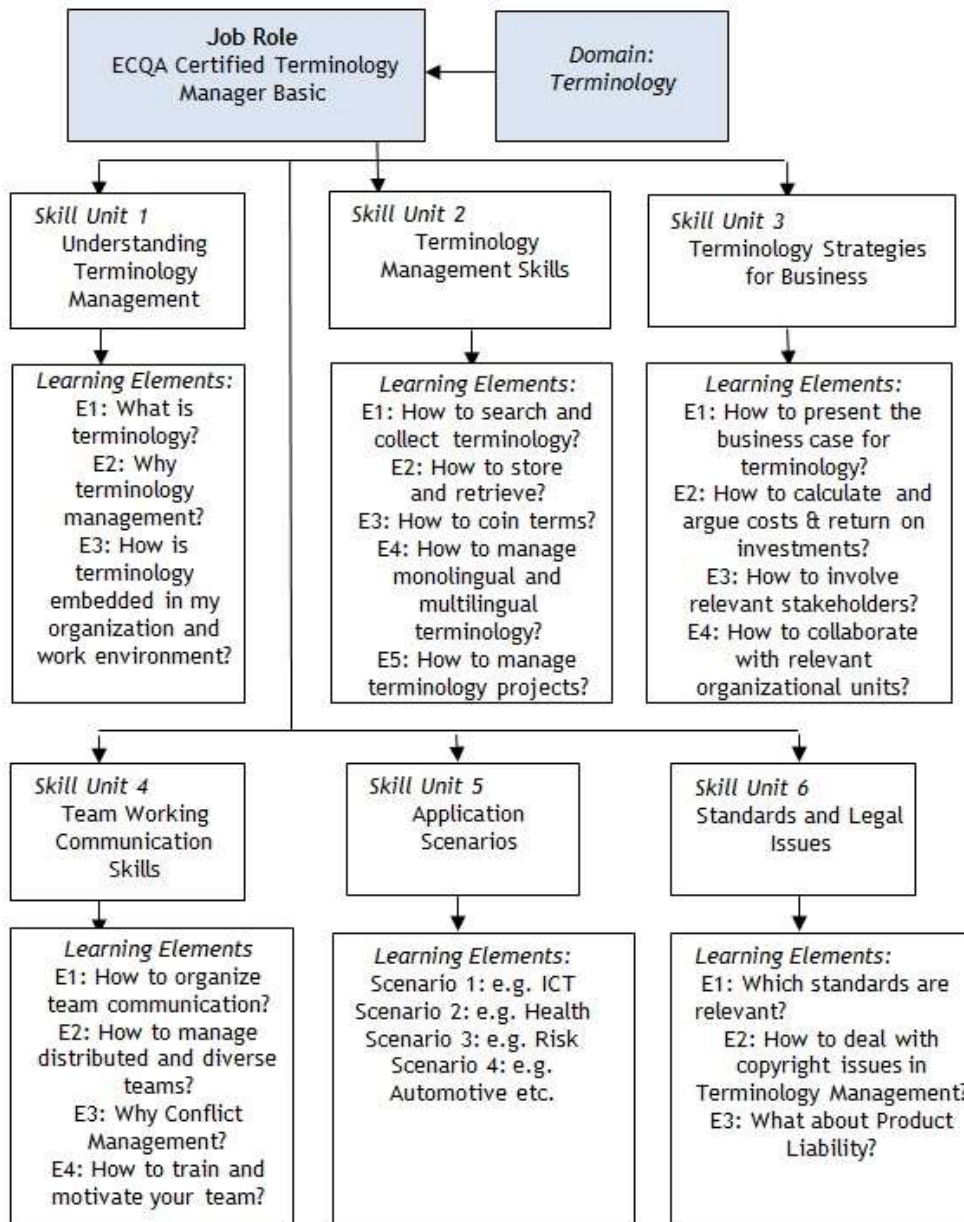


Figure 2. ECQA Certified Terminology Management Basic

If we compare the Termdist course and the ECQA Certified Terminology Management Basic course, most of what is included in *Skill Unit 1: Understanding Terminology Management* seems to be covered in *Terminology 1* and *Language and terminology policies* in the Nordic course. Furthermore, the study components of *Skill Unit 2: Terminology Management Skills* are covered in the modules *Terminology II*, *Translation-oriented terminology work*, *Knowledge management* and *Project management*.

There is more weight on Standards and Legal Issues in *Skill Unit 6* than there is in the Nordic course. It should, however, be noted that the Nordic countries have been among the leading nations in the ISO standardisation work within the field of terminology and the ISO standards are the foundation of the methodology taught. Thus such a module could easily be added.

If we take a look at the ECQA Certified Terminology Management Advanced which is illustrated in Figure 3, the Nordic course does not cover *Skill Unit 3: Terminology Strategies for Business Processes* nor *Skill Unit 4: Team Working & Communication Skills*. There has not been written much on these topics within terminology in the Nordic Countries and no Nordic teaching material is available.

However, it is undeniably a part of the daily work of many terminologists to have to justify the importance of for instance investing in terminology management systems or reaching agreement on for instance the definitions of terms. This part of the ECQA course would therefore be something which could certainly be added to the Nordic programme, for instance through the use of guest lecturers.

The module TMS/Termbanks corresponds roughly to the ECQA's *Skill Unit 5: Application Scenarios*. There are several locally developed TMS (Terminology Management Systems) in the Nordic countries, such as for instance the systems i-Term and i-Model developed by the DANTERMcentre in Denmark.

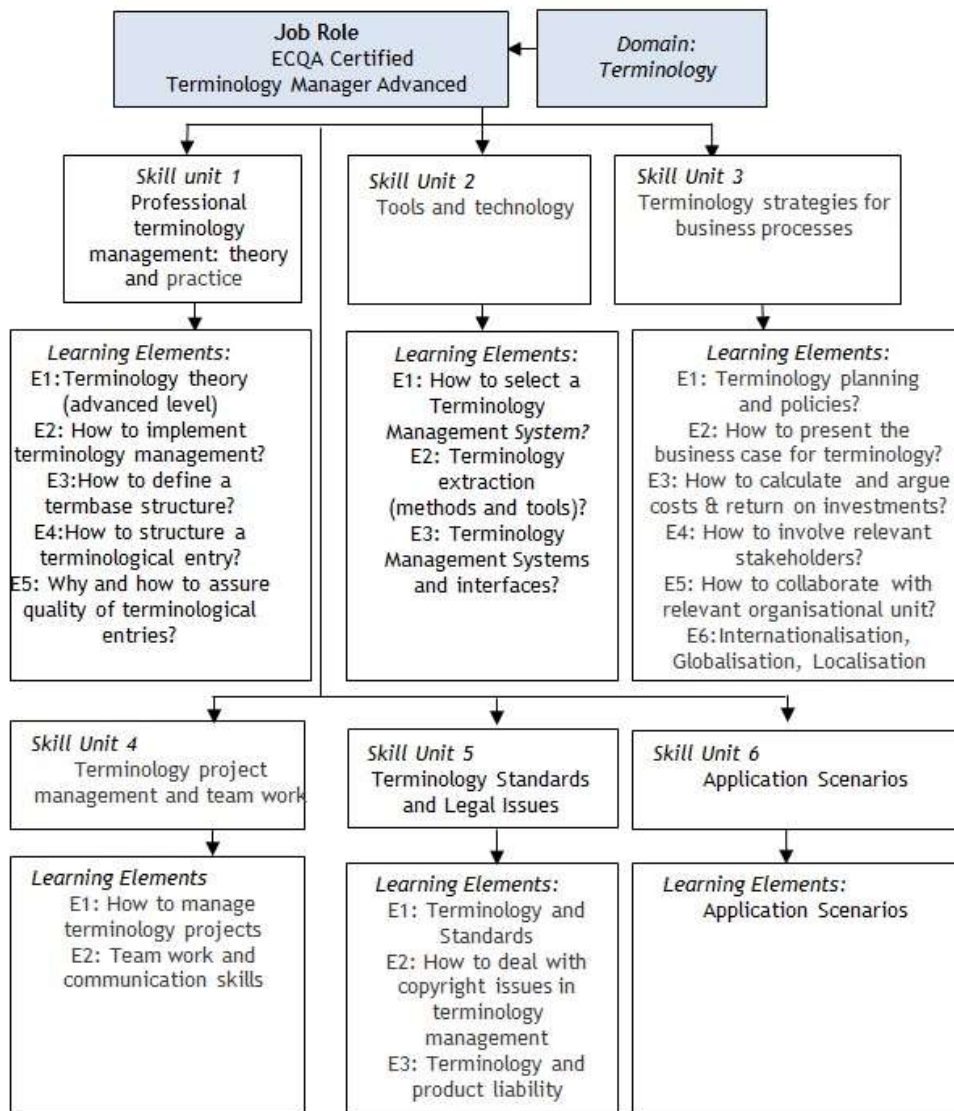


Figure 3. ECQA Certified Terminology Management Advanced

To conclude, there are some differences in structure between the Nordic and the ECQA courses. However, in general the Nordic course covers most of the learning elements of the ECQA programme (Nilsson & Nissilä 2009).

4.2 The IULA Online Master's degree in Terminology

In Spain, the University Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona offers an Online Master's degree in Terminology, organised by IULA. In order to obtain a master's diploma, students have to take 65 compulsory ECTS, including a 10-ECTS tutored final project and 10 optional ECTS. The Online Master's degree in Terminology is a modular programme that can be carried out sequentially in an 18–24 month period, but which also permits the students to work at their own pace, since all the modules are offered every two years. The modules are the following:

Compulsory modules

- Beginner level: Online Postgraduate Course on Introduction to Terminology (15 ECTS)
- Intermediate level: Diploma of Postgraduate Studies: Terminology and Professional Needs (30 ECTS)
- Workshop 1 – Complementary education: Methodology for Terminology Work (10 ECTS)
- Advanced level: Master Project (10 ECTS)

Optional modules

- Workshop 2 – Complementary education: Troubleshooting in Terminology Work (5 ECTS)
- Workshop 3 – Complementary education: Terminology Management for Translation Memories (5 ECTS)
- Workshop 4 – Complementary education: Neology (5 ECTS)

The Spanish master's degree programme in terminology comprises 75 ECTS; however, the modules differ from the ones planned for the Nordic programme. The first module, Online Postgraduate Course on Introduction to Terminology partially corresponds to Terminology I but it also covers other study components, such as history and organisation.

The module Diploma of Postgraduate Studies: Terminology and Professional Needs, which is 30 ECTS, partially overlaps with the study components in Terminology I (Terminology, terminography and lexicography), Terminology II (Terminology and documentation) and Translation-oriented terminology work (Terminology and translation). In addition, it also covers subjects such as standardisation and language teaching.

Furthermore, the components covered in Skill Unit 3 (Terminology Strategies for Business Processes) and Skill unit 4 (Team Working & Communication Skills) in the ECQA Certified Terminology Manager which were not covered in the Nordic programme, do not seem to be covered in IULA either.

Whereas the Nordic programme is offered in Scandinavian only, both the ECQA and the IULA programmes are offered in English.

5 The pilot course

In autumn 2009, the first module, Terminology I was run as a pilot course. This was to experiment with the online learning environment and to give us the opportunity to gain experience and improve the course. Since then, this course has been offered four times (autumn 2010–autumn 2013). The course equals 7.5 ECTS and spans over 11 weeks.

In conjunction, the participating institutions have provided all tutorial work and teaching. The learning activities are based on tutorial films, articles for the students to read, presentations prepared by the lecturers and posted in the learning management platform (LMS). Furthermore, asynchronous discussions between and among the students as well as the lecturers are used, in addition to individual exercises, both obligatory and voluntary, which are handed in through the LMS and commented on by the lecturers. The instruction language is Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, and sometimes even more than one language at a time.

In its initial phase, the network received financial support from the Nordplus Languages programme to have network meetings where all partners could participate. The

development of the pilot course was funded by Norgesuniversitetet (Norway Opening Universities). In addition, the Norwegian language council funded the development of some of the online teaching material. However, all funding has been given to network building and developing teaching materials. Thus, the network has not received any external funding for the actual running of the course, and the teachers' costs have therefore been covered by the partner institutions.

Many issues had to be considered before the web-based study in terminology could begin. The first task was to identify which terminology activities were already being carried out in the Nordic countries and a detailed overview of courses in terminology already taught was created, with respect to the target groups, duration, testing requirements, etc. Another task was to make a survey of Nordic articles and books that could be used as teaching material, as well as a list of experts and teachers in the Nordic countries that could possibly teach in the programme.

5.1 Learning management system and other technical solutions

A suitable electronic learning management system (LMS) which could provide a technical solution that could host the course also had to be selected. The ones considered were *Moodle*, *Blackboard*, *It's learning* and *Sitescape*, which were all used by the network institutions. Eventually *It's learning* was chosen.

The important factors to consider for the network were that we needed a stable system, a system for which we would receive technical support and also that the system was easy to use since many of the prospective students might not have any experience in using an LMS. In the external evaluation which was carried out after the completion of the pilot course (cf. section 5.3) we received some feedback on shortcomings of the technical solutions. One issue was in fact that some students had very little experience from using computers at all (Bruhn 2010: 5). To handle even an LMS is then a challenge. This is, however, rapidly changing and already after only a few years there are very many students who are familiar with *It's learning* or similar systems and most have used computers extensively.

So far we use little digital learning resources beyond the LMS platform. We offer the students a set of films originally made by TNC. A relatively low student activity in our asynchronous discussions, has, however, made us want to develop further and to initiate the use of other digital resources in the future. This could include for instance synchronic lectures which allow student participation, e.g. through the Adobe Connect platform which has been used successfully in an online course in legal translation (JurDist) at NHH.

5.2 Course contents

The aim of the pilot course, which is planned as the *Terminology I* in the master's degree programme, is to provide knowledge of the basics of terminology and the theoretical and methodological base of terminology work in accordance with relevant ISO standards (ISO 704:2009; ISO 1087-1:2000). The course gives an overview of fundamental concepts in terminology (concept, concept relation, concept system, characteristics, referent, term, definition etc.) and treats terminology projects and differences between general and specialised communication. Particular attention is given to a Nordic perspective in terminology work.

Students engage in practical terminology work and they are trained to identify concepts and establish concept systems by means of a termbase and a concept modelling module (i-Term and i-Model, respectively, developed and supplied by the DANTERMcentre), how to write definition based on a terminological analysis and how to identify and evaluate terms.

The learning outcomes are specified so that by the end of this course, students will be able to:

- structure concepts in conceptual systems
- use the principles for definition writing correctly and be able to describe them

- explain the principles of term creation
- select terms by established criteria
- argue for the role of terminology for efficient subject-specific internal and external communication
- use the basic terminological concepts correctly

Assessment is based on a digital portfolio consisting of four assignments. The student must submit four obligatory assignments, of which three are reworked following individual comments from the teacher. The final version of the portfolio should contain the original and the reworked assignments and three assignments must be satisfactorily completed. The portfolio must also include the student's reflections on the course as a whole including arguments for changes made in the final version of the portfolio assignments with reference to theoretical aspects. Grades are given on a Pass/Fail basis. The use of digital portfolios was at the time a new experience for the institutions in the Termdist network and the lecturers. It has given us valuable insight into other ways of assessing students besides the traditional school exams, which enables feedback and not only a final grade, and the method is now being used in several on-campus courses as well.

5.3 Experience from Terminology I

From 2009 to 2013, a total of 98 students have completed the course *Terminology I*. The students have come from all the Nordic countries. For organisational reasons, the Swedish students have been enrolled in the programme either at CBS, NHH or Karlstad University, something which makes it difficult to give an exact overview of the number of students per country.

However, on average most students have come from Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Only three Icelandic students have completed the course. Still, based on population, the percentage of the Icelandic students is not low. A university programme in terminology

is already available in Finnish in Vaasa, something which might explain the relatively low number of Finnish students. The overall figures for the five years the course has been offered is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Students by year

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Number of students	27	23	14	19	15	98

All Finnish students have been enrolled with the University of Vaasa, whereas students resident in Iceland have been enrolled with the University of Iceland. The Danish students have so far also been enrolled with CBS. The students that have been enrolled with NHH have all been part of the continuing education offered by NHH Executive, including Swedish students with some exceptions. To be able to better tailor the course to prospective students, it is obvious that more comprehensive data should be collected in the future to enable more detailed statistics.

A challenge for us is that there has been a considerable dropout of students each year (more than 25 per cent per year, although it is difficult to give exact figures). One reason which has been given by those who do not begin the course after they have accepted, or who drop out early, is that they realise it is too demanding to study on top of their full-time employment as translators or similar. This is of course a challenge; however, the course is especially tailored for students who are working full time. Thus this is probably a factor which will continue to influence the dropout level.

Another possible factor that may influence the dropout level may be language. At least, after completion of the course, a common feedback is that the students have found studying in a Scandinavian language other than their mother tongue more demanding than they expected it to be, although they consider it a positive experience. In order to help the students somewhat we have published information on how to communicate in the Nordic

countries.⁴⁷ Following the external evaluation and the experience made from the pilot course, we have also published minor parallel glossaries on the LMS platform.

The dropout may also be caused by other reasons, such as the educational background of students, their goals and interest in learning. The educational environment, such as the LMS platform, language competence, curriculum and the instruction provided may also have some influence, as well as social conditions of students, such as financing, career, family and health. In addition, students in Finland, Iceland who have been enrolled in their local universities, and those enrolled as ordinary campus students in Denmark do not have to pay for the course. Thus there is no registration fee that is lost if they drop out.

After the pilot course, an external evaluation was carried out based on a survey which was sent to all participants (Bruhn 2010). The aim of the survey was to investigate the students' experience and their opinions on the course in general (expectations, structure, relevance etc.), their own participation and preparation, and the learning environment (technology, feedback etc.). Those who responded to the survey could also write down their own comments which could be sorted into four main categories: content, technology, response/feedback and structure. Some general conclusions from the survey were:

- 90 % found the course to be in line with the course description and 85 % found it to meet their expectations.
- 85 % of the respondents said that the course is very or quite relevant for their education.
- 75 % could easily find the relevant course material/information; however, 20 % responded that they had been delayed in their work due to technical issues which required some kind of feedback.
- 40 % had to a certain extent had problems with file formats.
- 80 % reported that they had received satisfactory feedback from the lecturers in the online discussions.

⁴⁷ http://www.nordisk-sprakrad.no/folder_att_forstaa/folder_index.htm

The results from the survey demonstrate that satisfaction among students is high and that 85% would recommend the course to others. No serious problems or challenges were identified through the survey. One issue that did emerge from the survey, as well as during the course, was, however, that since the students used their own computers with different software and versions than used by the lecturers, it was sometimes problematic to open or read documents that were posted on *It's learning*. This was solved by changing all documents to the pdf format. Another initial problem was that automatic user information could not be sent to all email addresses, thus some students did not receive the initial information needed to be able to log on. Since the pilot course was NHH's first experience with non-campus students, this was an unexpected problem, but which could be easily solved.

To improve the quality of the course, internal evaluations were also carried out, and they resulted in changes in exercises and articles used as course material. Although 80 % of the students reported that they received satisfactory feedback in online discussions, the low level of participation in the discussions is something which we as lecturers see as a challenge still. The course requirements are concentrated on the portfolio assignments and so far we have no obligatory participation requirement during the course. As a consequence, many students are relatively inactive in discussions, something which does not create an active and solid environment for dialogue among the students and with the lecturers as well.

6 Concluding remarks

The experience from planning and running the Nordic terminology course (*Terminology I*) shows that a joint web-based master's degree programme in terminology is a realistic option, and that there is a need for this kind of training. There are, however, some issues to consider, such as getting the students to participate more actively in the discussions, both to enhance student participation and also their feeling of belonging to a course. Also, even though it has in general been a success teaching in three languages; Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, it does make studying more difficult for some students. Also, people who do not command Scandinavian cannot take the course, something which

limits the number of students we are able to attract. Changing the teaching language to English would be a possible solution. However, we would then lose some of the Nordic perspective.

Although no serious technical challenges have surfaced throughout the course, it may also be time to consider the introduction of new tools in online teaching and also perhaps social media to create a better dialogue among students and lecturers and thus better learning outcomes.

One of the main motivations, for initiating the Termdist project, was that it would be easier to secure a sufficient number of students in a joint Nordic study than if the individual countries offered such education on their own. However, in order to further develop the programme and for the planned master's degree programme to become a reality, the organisational framework and the finances have to be secured. Whereas the module *Terminology I* will be offered again in the autumn 2015, there are no plans to offer the complete master's programme. The collaboration provides a common meeting point for terminology specialists in the Nordic countries, and it opens for other joint activities, such as for instance this publication, in which many of the Termdist participants contribute.

References

- Att förstå varandra i Norden* [cited 15.1.2015]. Available at: http://www.nordisk-sprakrad.no/folder_att_forstaa/folder_index.htm.
- Bruhn, Christian (2010). Ekstern evaluering af pilotkurset i terminologi. En bruger tilfredshedsundersøgelse.
- Deklaration om nordisk språkpolitik* [Declaration on a Nordic Language Policy] (2006). [cited 15.1.2015]. Available at: http://www.norden.org/no/publikationer/publikasjoner/2007-746/at_download/publicationfile.
- ECQA, Terminology Manager – Basic*. [cited 15.1.2015]. Available at: http://www.ecqa.org/fileadmin/documents/professional_leaflets/CTM_en.pdf.
- Grinsted, Annelise (2008). TERMdist. Et Nordisk Initiativ om en Masteruddannelse i Terminologi. In: *Nordterm 15 – Kunnskap og fagkommunikasjon*, 237–241. Red. Jan Hoel. Available at: <http://www.sprakradet.no/globalassets/sprakarbeid/terminologi/rapportar-og-sporjeundersokingar/nordterm15.pdf>. Bergen: Språkrådet.
- ISO 704:2009 Terminology work – Principles and methods*.
- ISO 1087-1:2000 Terminology work – Vocabulary – Part 1: Theory and application*.

- IULA, Online master in Terminology*. [cited 19.8.2014] Available at: http://eventum.upf.edu/event_detail/1401/detail/online-terminology-program.english-edition-2014-2016.html.
- Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education* (1999). [cited 2.5.2014]. Available at: http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna_declaration.pdf.
- Kristiansen, Marita (2014). Domain loss. On parallel language use, language policy and terminology. In TINT-dag 2013. Gent: Acadamia Press, 9–25.
- Leino, Anna (2010). Språkanvändning och terminologiska behov i Norden. En undersökning inom organisationer och bland universitetsstuderande. Non-published master's thesis, University of Vaasa.
- NHH.no. [cited 15.1.2015]. Available at: <http://www.nhh.no/no/studentsider/dobbelgrad.aspx>.
- Nilsson, Henrik & Niina Nissilä (2009). TERMDIST – nordisk terminologiutbildning i ljuset av europeiskt utbildnings- og certifieringsarbete inom terminologi. *NORDTERM 16 Ontologier og taksonomier* (cd-rom), 179–192. Eds. Bodil Nistrup Madsen & Hanne Erdman Thomsen. Köpenhamn: Institut for Internationale Sprogstudier og Vidensteknologi & DANTERMcentret.
- Nordterm.net* [cited 28.05.2014] Available at: http://www.nordterm.net/wiki/en/index.php/Main_Page.
- Recommendation on the recognition of joint degrees* (2004). [cited 2.5.2014] Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=320284&SecMode=1&DocId=822138&Usage=2>.
- ECQA.org* [cited 12.12.2014] Available at: http://ecqa.org/fileadmin/documents/EN_ECQA_CTM_Basic_Flyer_20110329.pdf.
- Termdist.no* [cited 07.08.2014]. Available at: <http://www.uva.fi/sv/sites/termdist/>.
- Termnet, Newsletter of International Cooperation in Terminology 100-2009* [cited 07.05.2014] Available at: http://www.termnet.org/downloads/english/products/publisher/TNN_100.pdf.