

# **SIGMA Scientific Committee on Languages**

## **LANGUAGE STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN FRANCE**

**Thomas Fraser**

Université Charles de Gaulle - Lille III

---

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. The national linguistic situation**

##### **1.1.1. National language(s)**

French is the official language of the French Republic, and has been recognized as such by article 2 of the Constitution since 1992. Among the regional languages which are still spoken in peripheral areas Breton, Basque, Catalan and Franco-Provençal (Occitan) can be mentioned. Dialects of national languages of neighbouring countries are also spoken in frontier or peripheral regions, including Flemish, related to Dutch, Corsican, related to Italian, and Alsatian, a Low Alemannic dialect of German.

##### **1.1.2. Language policy**

There is a tradition of state intervention in language matters in France, which dates back to 1539 when the royal decree of Villers-Cotterêt laid down that French was to be used instead of Latin in court proceedings. This tradition has been expressed in official policy either through attacks against regional languages - as, for example after the French Revolution, or in the first decades of the Third Republic - or by a stubborn defence of French against the threat represented by the spread of a foreign language on French soil. The latest political expressions of this tradition are the law voted by parliament in 1975 (called the "loi Bas", after its promoter Pierre Bas), which intended to protect the French consumer by making the use of French compulsory in retail trade situations and in work contracts, and the 1994 law (called the "loi Toubon", after the Minister for Culture, Jacques Toubon), which extends the compulsory use of French to education, radio and television, conferences organized in France and to the whole field of labour law.

It should be added that the most recent law is to be applied "without prejudice to the laws and regulations relating to regional languages", for, in spite of the pre-eminence of French, a law dating back to 1951 (the "loi Deixonne") permits, and even promotes the study of regional languages and dialects in those areas where Breton, Basque, Catalan and Occitan are spoken; the same measures were applied to Corsican in 1974. These five languages, to which we should add Alsatian and Gallo (a North-Western French dialect spoken in upper Brittany), can be chosen by pupils sitting the "baccalauréat".

#### **1.2. The system of higher education**

Given that France is a highly centralized state and that it has a national educational system, one would expect to find a certain unity in the organization of higher education. It is true that there is a law governing higher education and that university degrees are approved at national level, but in fact there is considerable diversity, both in the type of institutions that cater for post-secondary education and in the number and type of diplomas awarded.

The most important body is made up of the 79 universities (including the technological university at Compiègne and the French university of the Pacific, which have special status). The universities are divided up into U.F.R. ("unités de formation et de recherche"), service departments (libraries, further education and students' services) and institutes or schools which, though officially part of the university, enjoy a certain financial and/or administrative autonomy (including the university institutes of technology -I.U.T.- and the seven political science institutes -I.E.P.). Most universities are pluridisciplinary, with the U.F.R. to a certain extent covering the same fields as the old faculties. In some large towns, however, the universities specialize in a certain range of subjects (science, law, arts, etc.), which explains why, even though languages are taught in every university, some have no language departments as such.

Alongside the universities there are four national polytechnical institutes (I.N.P.), which are governed by the same rules as the universities, four applied science institutes (I.N.S.A.) and independent engineering schools. The Ministry for Higher Education also has responsibility for fourteen "grands établissements", including the Collège de France, and the Ecoles Normales Supérieures. Mention should also be made of the business schools, of which there are 282, with limited numbers of students, and whose status varies: while a small number of these are public, the vast majority either depend on local chambers of commerce or are entirely private, in which case they may or may not be recognized by the state.

There are also five private catholic universities in Angers, Lille, Lyon, Paris and Toulouse which have the right to prepare students for the programmes of national diplomas by signing agreements with public universities.

One of the peculiarities of the French educational system which sets France apart from other partner states in the European Union is that alongside the higher education institutions proper there is an entire parallel system of post-secondary school education organized in the secondary schools themselves. Two different structures fall into this category: on the one hand there are the post-secondary technical courses ("sections de techniciens supérieurs" - S.T.S.) which prepare pupils for the national technical diplomas (BTS); secondly, there are the special classes which prepare pupils for the highly competitive entrance exams to engineering and business schools and to the Ecoles Normales Supérieures. These classes, known as the "classes préparatoires aux Grandes Ecoles" (C.P.G.E.), do not award diplomas, but those pupils who do not gain a place in one of the "grandes écoles" may be given the equivalence of a first university diploma to enable them to carry on with their studies.

Admission to higher education depends on the type of institution. Universities are open to all school-leavers who have passed the "baccalauréat", theoretically without any restriction. On the other hand, candidates for admission to S.T.S., C.P.G.E. and to engineering schools have to go through a selection process; in the universities, it is only the affiliated schools and institutes (including the I.U.T.) which are allowed to select their first-year students.

Higher education in France is organized in cycles, each cycle leading to national or university diplomas which are commonly referred to in relation to the number of years' study following the "baccalauréat". So, for example, the first cycle of studies in higher education corresponds to 1st and 2nd years (bac+1 or bac+2), the second cycle, normally to 3rd and 4th years (bac+3 and bac+4), the third cycle corresponding to postgraduate studies and being referred to as bac+5 and beyond. In the universities, with the exception of faculties of medicine and pharmacology, the first cycle leads to a two-year national diploma called the Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Générales (DEUG); official texts brought out by the Ministry for Higher Education designate the various fields of study covered by the DEUG, outline the course content for each speciality and determine the minimum number of teaching hours. The first cycle also includes the BTS and the Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie (DUT), the latter being awarded by the

I.U.T. The second cycle also leads to national degrees, the most widespread being the "licence" (bac+3) and the "maîtrise" (bac+4); here once again the Ministry lays down the general framework for the programme in order to guarantee its national character. Another type of national second cycle diploma awarded by the universities is the "maîtrise de sciences et techniques" (MST), and a diploma in business studies, the "maîtrise de sciences de gestion" (MSG), both of which aim to prepare students for professional life; they are both two-year diplomas and the universities are left a great deal of freedom to draw up the programmes, many of which require a good knowledge of languages. The postgraduate diplomas of the third cycle prepare students either for professional life, or for research: firstly, there is the "diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées" (DESS) which combines theory and practice in specialized fields of study, and secondly the "diplôme d'études approfondies" (DEA), which introduces the student to research techniques and corresponds to the first year of the doctoral programme. The doctoral thesis itself, which is normally completed three years after the DEA, is the final diploma in the third cycle.

Universities also award their own diplomas ("diplômes d'université" - DU), which are not financed by national government funds; the programme content is decided by the university authorities, who often try to meet local needs. Some universities award their own language diplomas when they cannot meet the national requirements for a complete diploma.

### **1.3. The impact of secondary education on language studies in higher education**

The study of a foreign language is compulsory in secondary education from first year, a second language can be studied as an option in third year, or in fifth year, and a third language may be added as an extra option in fifth year. The first foreign language is English, which is studied by 85.2% of pupils in junior schools in the state system, whereas only 13.6% study German as a first foreign language and 0.8% Spanish, other languages rarely being on offer at this level. (The figures are for 1992-93) There is little change in the senior school system (years 5, 6 and 7) and they show an even greater imbalance in the vocational schools, where 93.8% of pupils study English. It is because of the possibility of studying a second foreign language from year 3 that Spanish and German still keep up a certain vitality and that Italian survives outside the regions that border on Italy. Spanish is most popular with pupils in years 3 and 4, with 52.6% of pupils choosing to study it, as against 24.5% who choose German, 16.6% English and only 5.6% Italian. Once again the situation is virtually the same in the senior school system. It is possible that the development of foreign language teaching in primary schools, where English is slightly less dominant, may have an influence in the future on the choice of the first foreign language in secondary schools, but for the moment only 38% of pupils in the final year of primary schools are given the chance to study a language.

The dominant position of English in secondary education is reflected in the number of teachers recruited. For example, taking into consideration only the competitive examination to recruit certified teachers (CAPES - see below §3), in 1993 there were 2305 potential appointments in English (though only 1032 positions were filled), compared with 630 authorized recruitments in Spanish, 320 in German, 35 in Italian and 10 in Portuguese.

If we examine the situation in higher education, we will once again find English in first place, though this position is less dominant, since 73% of those who choose a language option study English. However neither Spanish nor German benefit from the relative drop in numbers studying English, since those languages are chosen by only 9% and 8.4% of students respectively. On the other hand, students - and in particular language students - take advantage of the variety of languages on offer in many of the larger universities, to begin a new language, and in particular one which they could not have learned in secondary school. When we come to look at the situation in language courses in

universities, it is surprising to note, given the role played by English in secondary education, that only 53.6% of language students enroll for degrees in English. Over the last ten years there has been an increase in the number of students enrolled in Spanish, since they now represent 21.5% of university students in languages. This can probably be ascribed to the choice made in secondary schools for the second foreign language option, and it means that many of those who enroll in Spanish courses do so after only five years of study, and with a reduced number of hours per week compared with the first language.

The failure rate in language courses is generally higher than for other subjects, being as high as 70% in first year in some universities. The students themselves are often surprised by the standards required of them. Yet the official programmes set very clear objectives for secondary school language teachers, who are expected to consolidate the pupils' acquired knowledge and skills in order to develop their ability to understand a foreign language and to express themselves independently; the pupils are also expected to widen their cultural horizon by studying texts and documents, and to reflect on the way language and languages function. (This was expressed in the Bulletin Officiel de l'Education Nationale in February 1987.) The difference between the level theoretically reached by the pupils and the real level that so many language students have can be partly explained by the fact that, even though all pupils have three hours per week per language, language skills are not tested in the same way in every course; moreover, marks obtained are not taken into account for university entrance, since school-leavers are allowed to enroll in the course they choose. It should also be remembered that languages in the school curriculum are part of a comprehensive programme and that pupils who wish to pass the "baccalauréat" have to devote a considerable amount of time to studying other subjects, with programmes just as ambitious as those of languages. On the other hand, it is probably true to say that the relative importance of languages in the schools has a positive influence on language studies in non-language programmes.

## **2. LANGUAGE DEGREE PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY UNIVERSITIES**

### **2.1. Traditional Language/Literature programmes**

#### **2.1.1. Content and objectives**

In theory undergraduate studies are in the middle of a reform which began at the start of the 1993-94 academic year and which should go on until 1996. Some universities have already implemented the new DEUG course, while others still base their courses on updated versions of the programmes brought out in 1973. The most recent texts from the Ministry, while reasserting the national status of university diplomas, leave more latitude to the universities and merely lay down general objectives to be met by every DEUG, whatever the subject area, and draw up a short list of subjects that must be included in each programme. The first cycle courses in literature and languages are supposed to provide the student with training in methodology, while at the same time increasing his or her specialist knowledge and approaching related subjects so as to allow the student to switch courses if necessary. The DEUG in foreign language, literature and civilization, which is made up of eight to twelve modules spread over two levels (and not years) must contain the following course components: written and aural comprehension, written and oral skills, translation, foreign culture and civilization, linguistics and stylistics, foreign literature. Most universities have retained those subjects which were compulsory in the 1973 programme, and in particular French language and literature and a second foreign language, and they also offer a wide range of options.

It is in the second cycle of the traditional programme that the reform has brought about the main changes compared with previous programmes:

1. the total number of hours has been redistributed between "licence" and "maîtrise", the latter gaining in teaching hours;
2. as is the case for the DEUG, there is no rigid definition of compulsory subjects, the universities being left to draw up their own programmes;
3. the "licence" may be combined with a special subject, one of the aims of which is to provide more varied career prospects for language graduates.

The "licence" should comprise at least 350 teaching hours of which at least 250 should be devoted to written and oral language (with "some provision" for language for special purposes), and to the linguistics, literature and civilization of the language studied. It should be noted that these official programmes allow only for single-language courses, a second language being possible as an outside or optional subject. Another stipulation of the official text is that half the language programme should be devoted to contemporary society, economy and culture. When a special subject is combined with a language degree, the courses of this speciality represent 125 teaching hours. The special subjects are French as a foreign language, regional languages and culture, general and comparative literature, languages and computer science, and information science. These last two represent an innovation compared with the past. Universities which introduce a speciality in languages and computer science provide training in new technology and programmes are also to include courses in language planning. In the courses on information science students are introduced to methods and techniques used in storing and retrieving information and documents. Finally, it should be noted that in the new programmes, universities are encouraged to include "an introduction to the professional environment in a variety of ways" in their "licence" programmes.

The "maîtrise" programmes officially comprise 350 hours, just like "licence", though in actual fact this corresponds to only 100 teaching hours, which is twice the number permitted in the previous texts. The student is expected to devote the rest of the time to research, and to the writing of a dissertation (in the English sense), written in the foreign language studied; the dissertation is then defended during a viva. The aim of the "maîtrise" is therefore to provide an initiation to research methods, and it constitutes both a testing-ground for postgraduate studies and the qualification required to be a candidate for the "agrégation" for those who are not already teachers. In recent years there has been a drop in student numbers in "maîtrise", students preferring to turn directly to the teaching profession after the "licence".

### **2.1.2. Structure of programmes**

In spite of the officially declared intent to diversify degree programmes, teaching remains the principal career open to students of traditional language programmes. This explains why degree programmes are strongly influenced by the programmes of the competitive examinations (CAPES, "agrégation") which allow access to the teaching profession. It is for this reason that exercises such as translation, critical commentary and analysis of texts and documents and "dissertation" (in the French sense) are so important in the assessment of undergraduates.

In the DEUG programmes of language degrees, students receive between 12 and 15 hours' tuition a week, a minimum of 8 to 10 hours being devoted to the main subject in first year, with the students specializing more in second year. Teaching is carried out through lectures ("cours magistraux" - CM) or through supervised work groups ("travaux dirigés" - TD) or else in practical tutorials ("travaux pratiques" - TP). Student numbers vary according to the university and the language course, but it is not unusual to find 400 students in a first-year English lecture, or 60 students in "supervised" work groups. The number of hours devoted respectively to the study of language, literature and civilization will vary according to the university and the interests and specialities of the teaching staff, but a typical first-year programme would include 5 to 7 hours devoted strictly to language teaching, including a complete revision of the grammatical structures

of the language, despite the level the students have theoretically reached at the end of their secondary education; grammar courses are usually based on linguistic theory, the aim being to provide the student not only with a better practical knowledge of the language, but also with the analytical methods that one would expect to find in any university course. This is probably one of the main differences between "traditional" language courses and other university language programmes. Among the exercises that the students are given training in, the following can be mentioned: written and listening comprehension, an introduction to précis-writing in order to improve writing skills, and of course the theory and practise of translation; translation, both from and into French, is used both as a means of contrasting linguistic systems and as a means of testing vocabulary, style and grammar. Students also follow courses in phonetics and phonology - the emphasis laid on such classes depending on the language studied. Courses in literature and civilization, which are often closely associated in the first two years, try to provide students not only with the necessary background knowledge to a foreign culture but also with the basic concepts they will need during their university studies. Since the lectures are usually given in the foreign language, they can also be used to back up language tuition. In the language programmes leading to the DEUG, university teachers, who are responsible for the course content, have never really managed to find the perfect balance between the study of works of literature, the study of literary genres, the factual history of literature or methodology, and in civilization courses between historical background, the study of contemporary society (politics, economics, culture, etc) or a specific theme. This constant hesitation over the content of such programmes reflects the difficulty university teachers experience in trying to reconcile their academic standards with what the students expect to find in a language course.

In third year the students really begin to specialize in their language, since out of approximately 12 hours per week at least 75% of the time is spent on the main subject, and sometimes 100% if the student chooses internal options. As is the case for the first level, there is considerable variety both in the course structure and in the course content, but generally speaking translation, linguistics, literature and civilization are to be found everywhere. Translation from and into French is often still considered as a literary exercise, training students for national competitive exams still being the most important objective. Linguistics programmes are varied, since emphasis may be on in-depth study of a grammatical category, or on text linguistics, sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, etc., depending on the special interests of staff members. Literature courses, once again, tend to be oriented towards success in the competitive exams, since the students are trained to write "dissertation" and text analysis. The major universities offer a wide range of options at this level, reflecting the research interests of the teaching staff; a glance at course catalogues shows special subjects devoted to a particular genre, to a particular period, to a geographical area, to non-literary means of expression (cinema, painting, architecture, etc.), or to special topics in linguistics, in translation theory, to languages for special purposes, to language teaching methodology, etc. The choice a student makes for the "licence" option will often be confirmed the following year, in "maîtrise".

Working conditions in "maîtrise" enable staff and students to have a different type of relationship, since teaching is normally carried out in seminars, the students being given practise in oral presentation of their work. Formal written exams are rare at this level, assessment being limited to the students' personal work and to a final oral exam. The degree is awarded to students who have successfully completed course work and who have written a research paper prepared under the supervision of a professor and examined by two staff members. It is interesting to note that at this level, where the constraints of the competitive exams are absent, the failure rate is low for students who complete the course; on the other hand, students often find it difficult to complete the research paper in one year, especially when they have just embarked on a teaching career, and they spread the research work over two or three years.

### **2.1.3. Impact of Community programmes to date**

It is difficult to know precisely how many students from traditional programmes take part in ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes. There are, however, two factors which may act as a curb to student participation. One is that students of the major European languages - English, German, Spanish and Italian - have a long tradition of spending a "year abroad", using either personal initiative or else the exchange programme for foreign language assistants in secondary schools. French students who spend a year on such programmes keep up some contact with their universities and often enrol for exams. Another factor is that students may be afraid of losing contact with French academic exercises which they will need on their return if they are to face the competitive exams for the teaching profession.

## **2.2. 'Alternative' programmes**

### **2.2.1. Content and objectives**

The "applied foreign languages" programme (LEA) was set up in France in 1973 and is now prepared in 48 universities. The complete course comprises the DEUG, "licence" and "maîtrise"; in fourth year the student can specialize either in business studies or in translation. The number of teaching hours is higher on this course compared with the "traditional" course, to allow for the fact that there are two compulsory languages; for the first two years (DEUG) there are at least 900 hours, in "licence" 550, of which 400 must be devoted to core subjects, and in fourth year there are 375 teaching hours. Some of the compulsory language courses at DEUG level are identical to those in the "traditional" course (comprehension, expression, translation and civilization), except that here the programme applies to two languages; to these course elements we should add an introduction to the specialized language of business and economics (in both languages) and an introduction to economics and business. Since most universities add tutoring in written and oral skills in French, and basic computer studies, there is little room for any options. In third year in-depth study of two foreign languages is carried on, the official programme insisting that these languages should be "operational and specialized"; the civilization programmes try to give the students the skills and knowledge to be able to analyse the economic and social problems of the countries whose language they are studying, and also the means to understand the institutions and the administrative and legal systems; the study of management and international trade are also introduced at this level. The aim of the LEA course is not to train managers and specialists of various aspects of industry and commerce, but rather to train linguists sufficiently versatile to adapt to a variety of situations in industry, and to put their language skills to good use. To help towards this objective, the students spend a period in work placement in "licence" and write a report on their experience. A longer period of work placement (generally two months) is provided for in "maîtrise", where contact with the world of business is also carried out through people from industry taking part in the course as part-time members of the teaching staff; officially one third of the teaching should be done by part-time staff with business experience. As for the language teaching at this level, the course content will depend on the students' specialization. One of the main differences between the "traditional" course and LEA at this level is that a research paper is not a compulsory element of the course and its assessment, since it may be - and generally is - replaced by a written report on the period of work placement.

In a very small number of universities the applied language course leads not to an LEA degree, but to a "maîtrise de sciences et techniques" (MST) which is characterized by a heavier course load for students (1500 hours spread over the two years of the course), and which comprises a longer period of work placement. The added hours compared to the LEA course are usually devoted not to the languages, but to the applied field. Among the specializations which exist, we can mention international trade, tourism, law, economics, international transport and scientific and technical information processing.

### **2.2.2. Structure of programmes**

As far as language skills are concerned, there are few differences between the applied language course and the "traditional" course, but even though there is a common core of language teaching (grammar, comprehension, written and oral skills), most universities now consider the two programmes as completely distinct courses, often administered by different departments. If there is a difference in the language courses, it can normally be seen in the texts that are used to illustrate the language teaching; this is particularly the case in translation classes, where students are required to translate texts that present the same linguistic difficulties as those in the "traditional" course, but with the added difficulty caused by the specialized vocabulary. The civilization programmes generally try to provide an approach to the economic problems of contemporary society, but in fact the actual programme will depend on the university's academic resources. The same is true of the applied fields, but in DEUG most programmes offer an initiation to law and economics, and many add to this courses in management, marketing and accountancy. It should be remembered that these programmes require two languages, with English being offered in every university, and being compulsory in half of them. In "licence" the students have approximately 20 hours per week of classes, with the language programmes being progressively more oriented towards the special applied fields. Exams use the same methods of assessment as in the "traditional" programme. The same academic work is carried out in "maîtrise", with the added specialization in business studies or translation.

### **2.2.3. Impact of Community programmes to date**

Students on LEA courses are very much involved in ERASMUS and LINGUA exchange programmes. Of the 48 universities which provide this type of course, 37 take part in at least one Community programme. For a large number of these students, such exchange programmes represent the only way to be able to spend a long period in the country or countries whose language(s) they are studying, for although some LEA students are accepted on the foreign language assistant exchange programme, priority is always given here to students on "traditional" programmes. More than half the ERASMUS programmes listed under section 09.1 (EC languages) and the LINGUA Action II programmes (20.0) coordinated by French universities describe the area of study as "languages and business studies". Some universities make at least one stay in a foreign country a compulsory part of the course. In three universities (Aix-Marseille I, Chambéry and Dijon) students can be awarded two, and even three degrees. In some universities it is the period of work placement (usually in "maîtrise") which has to be undertaken in a foreign country, in which case, it may qualify for funding under COMETT.

## **2.3. Postgraduate programmes (up to and including doctorate)**

### **2.3.1. Content and objectives**

A first distinction should be made between postgraduate studies which prepare students for some aspect of "professional" life (i.e. outside teaching) and those which lead up to a thesis. In the first case, the degree awarded is the "Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées" (DESS), in the second it is the Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies (DEA). The DEA is necessary to begin research leading towards a doctorate, and the DEA year is in fact the first year of doctoral studies. In both cases students must have a "maîtrise" in order to apply, and candidates are selected on merit.

In the field of languages the Ministry for Higher Education officially lists some 30 DESS. Closer examination of the course content shows that 10 of them are in fact degrees in law or economics, the courses being under the administrative responsibility of the corresponding faculties or departments, and the language component being simply a service course. (On the other hand, there are DESS which the Ministry lists under "communication" or "management" and which would rather qualify as language diplomas.) In eight cases the DESS is a translation programme which will be dealt with

below (§5), which leaves some 15 DESS which can be considered as professionally oriented postgraduate programmes in languages; in most cases they are the continuation of second level LEA courses, and the students admitted to the programmes tend to be LEA graduates, even though the courses are open to graduates of other subjects with a sufficiently good level in languages (as, for example students who have spent a year on an ERASMUS exchange).

It is just as difficult to know from the list drawn up by the Ministry precisely how many DEA courses are devoted to foreign languages, since the names of some courses (as for example "texts and languages" ) are ambiguous and may concern French. There are approximately 75 such courses in the whole country, most of which cover the whole field of studies related to one language or family of languages, so we find, for example "English studies", "German studies" or "Romance studies". The situation is far from being uniform, since in some cases a DEA may be jointly awarded by a consortium of universities (e.g. "Anglo-Irish studies awarded by Caen, in association with Lille III and Paris III), in other cases a DEA may concern various languages grouped together (e.g. German, Scandinavian and Slavonic literature and civilization at Nancy II) or again, a single language may be spread over several DEA courses (for example, the postgraduate student of English has a choice between five different courses). The situation depends very much on the qualified staff available in each university.

### **2.3.2. Structure of programmes**

Teaching in DESS courses is by seminar, with a total of some 300 teaching hours being spread over a shortened university year of roughly 20 weeks, in order to allow students to work a compulsory training period in a professional situation and to write a paper which will be taken into account in the final assessment. The programmes cannot be described in detail, given the diversity that is allowed at this level. To give some idea of what is offered by universities, the following courses can be mentioned: "Press correspondent in English-speaking countries" at Paris III, "Iberian and Latin-American studies applied to management" at Paris IV and "European tourism" at Chambéry.

The DEA course, spread over one year, is taught by seminars devoted to theoretical and methodological questions and the student is also taught research techniques. There are approximately 200 hours spread over the year and the final assessment takes into account the work done by the student in the seminars, and also a research paper written by the student, which is often a first approach to the thesis that will be undertaken the following year. Most DEA programmes are devoted to the fields of study that are to be found in "traditional" programmes and are largely dominated by literature courses, with civilization and linguistics being added in some universities. On the other hand, only three courses are on offer at this stage on language teaching methodology (Grenoble III, Nantes and Paris III), one deals with research in translation studies (Paris III) and one on language for special purposes (in fact, English) that Bordeaux II prepares with two other universities. It is not surprising, then, that completed doctoral theses should be on the traditional areas of study.

### **2.3.3. Impact of Community programmes**

Since studies leading to the postgraduate DESS and DEA diplomas are spread over one single university year, and since students, especially in DEA, very often work full-time, ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes have had less impact than at undergraduate level. There are, of course, exceptions, particularly in DESS, where integrated programmes can be offered to students, with universities from various member states collaborating on the course (e.g. the DESS in European tourism from Chambéry). Students carrying out a period of work placement in another country can also benefit from the COMETT programme.

## **2.4. Career prospects for graduates of language programmes**

Teaching is still the main career outlet for students who have followed the "traditional" course in language, literature and civilization. According to a survey carried out by a research team whose job it is to study the relationship between jobs and qualifications (CEREQ), and analysing the professional status in 1991 of language students who had graduated in 1988, 74% of those who had left university with a "licence" and 82% of "maîtrise" graduates worked, at one level or another, in teaching; 49% of those who had a "licence" and 58% of "maîtrise" graduates held tenure. Among the reasons which can be put forward to explain this, there is on the one hand the fact that there has been a recruitment drive in recent years, with an increase in the number of posts available through the national competitive exams, and on the other hand there has been a corresponding decline in the number of jobs available in industry. The same survey shows that 76% of "maîtrise" graduates had not experienced any unemployment in the 33 months after graduation. For the majority of the 24% "licence" graduates from a traditional language course who were working in industry, the position held was a junior one, 14% working as secretaries, as against only 8% as executive secretaries.

Teaching can even be a possible career for LEA graduates, since 21% of those who had obtained a "licence" or "maîtrise" in 1988 were working as teachers in 1991, but only a very small percentage (2%) , had successfully taken the competitive CAPES or "agrégation" exams, which is not surprising, since the LEA course does not prepare students for the academic exercises, especially in literature. The majority of LEA graduates look towards industry, which employs 79% of "licence" holders and 74% of those who have a "maîtrise". The range of positions held, and the areas of commercial and industrial activity concerned, reflect the polyvalent nature of the course: graduates are to be found as office workers, secretaries, receptionists, archivists, researchers in communication firms, executive secretaries, sales representatives, export agents, forwarding agents, etc. On the other hand the position held rarely corresponded to what a graduate had been led to expect, only 8% of graduates holding executive or managerial posts. This situation reflects the difficulties the course has had to be accepted by employers, since graduates find themselves competing on the one hand with young people who have followed a two-year professional course (DUT or BTS) and on the other with graduates from business schools. Because of this, many LEA graduates try to complement their language training with further study, often with a specialization.

When we come to look at postgraduate doctoral studies in languages, it is clear that higher education is virtually the only outlet; however, if it is necessary to hold a doctorate in order to apply for a lecturing post in universities ("maître de conférences"), holding one by no means guarantees a position; a French candidate for a position in higher education in languages has only a 25% chance of being "qualified" (i.e. authorized by a national board to apply to a university) if he only has a doctorate, whereas if he has a doctorate and has been successful in the "agrégation" exam, his chances immediately go up to 90%.

## **3. INITIAL AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

### **3.1. Initial training**

#### **3.1.1. Institutions responsible for training**

Secondary school language teachers can belong to different categories according to the type of school in which they teach and the type of national competitive recruitment examination they have taken. In junior secondary schools ("collèges" ) but also in the senior schools ("lycées") we find those who have been successful in the CAPES ("Certificat d'aptitude au professorat de l'enseignement du second degré") and who have therefore received "certification". Those who are qualified to teach in vocational

secondary schools ("lycées professionnels") have taken the CAPLP2 and teach two subjects (foreign language with French). Then those who have passed the "agrégation" exam teach mainly in the "lycées", including in the post-baccalauréat classes; there are also language teachers with this qualification who teach in universities. There is also another category of secondary school teachers - the "professeurs d'enseignement général de collège (PEGC) - whose numbers are now decreasing, as there has been no further recruitment since 1990 and those who belong to this category have been encouraged to seek promotion. The "licence" is a necessary requirement to enter for the CAPES or the CAPLP2, and the "maîtrise" is necessary for the "agrégation", unless one has already been successful in one of the other competitive exams.

Courses preparing candidates for the competitive exams, and professional training are to be found in two types of institutions. Universities normally deal with the academic subjects whereas professional training is rather the responsibility of the "Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres" (I.U.F.M.), which were set up on an experimental basis in four regions in 1990, before being extended to all 28 academic regions the following year. These I.U.F.M., which are associated with all the universities in the region, federated all the institutions or authorities which had until then been involved in training educators. It should be added that the I.U.F.M. employ teachers and lecturers of various categories and belonging to different fields of study, and so they also have specialists in languages, and at the same time, in universities, there may be courses preparing undergraduates to go into teaching.

### **3.1.2. Content of training programmes**

Candidates for the CAPES and CAPLP2 competitive exams are examined not only on academic subjects, but also on various aspects of the teaching profession. Preparation for this part of the exam, including knowledge of the organization of education in France and of the official school programmes, is carried out by the I.U.F.M. Part of the programme is moreover common to all student teachers, no matter what level of teaching they intend to go into. Students are also expected to sit in on classes and they may be given lectures on the theory of language teaching. It should be noted that this part of the training programme is compulsory only for those students who receive an allowance (of approximately 70000 F per annum), but it is recommended for all those preparing for the exam, in addition to the academic courses provided by the universities.

If the student gains a place in teaching after the competitive exam, he or she becomes a trainee teacher and earns a salary while continuing his or her training at the I.U.F.M. The training period includes teaching practice, with the trainee in charge of one or two classes, usually at different levels, a personal study analysing some aspect of teaching methodology and giving rise to a written paper (those who have taken the "agrégation" are exempted from doing this paper) and additional teaching on some aspect of education or on the subject taught, in which case the universities are generally involved. The final assessment takes all three elements into account and the final examination board decides whether the trainee teacher can be given tenure.

### **3.1.3. Structure of programmes**

The three recruitment examinations are made up of written papers after which the successful candidates are declared eligible to go forward to the next stage, made up of oral exams, with the content varying according to the type of exam. The programme for each exam is decided nationally each year. For the CAPLP2 there are two written papers, the first on the foreign language, with a translation and an essay on a general topic, the second being a "dissertation" or a critical commentary on a work of French literature. For the oral, there are three one-hour exams, the first being an oral presentation in the foreign language, followed by a critical commentary on a French literary text, and the third being an oral presentation of a problem related to teaching. For the written part of

the CAPES exam, there is a "dissertation" in the foreign language relating to an author or a question on the programme, followed by a translation, then a critical analysis in French of a text taken from one of the works on the programme. For the oral part of the exam, there is once again the presentation of a problem related to teaching and an hour-long discussion of a problem in the foreign language, the precise form the discussion takes depending on the foreign language. As for the "agrégation", there are four long written papers (including, once again, a "dissertation", commentary on a text and translation from and into French) and three or four oral presentations. The juries also give a mark which takes into account the quality of the candidate's spoken language. It should be mentioned that a foreign language teacher is not obliged to spend any length of time in the foreign country, the most recent official instructions simply stipulating that a long stay in the foreign country is "highly recommended" before the student-teacher joins the I.U.F.M., thereby suggesting that the responsibility for organizing this belongs to the university or to the student himself.

#### **3.1.4. Impact of Community programmes to date**

ERASMUS and LINGUA programmes have had little impact until now on teacher training courses, partly because of the way teachers are recruited, partly because of the number of different authorities who might take responsibility for such programmes (universities, through their departments of education, I.U.F.M., and the administrative authorities at regional level). Besides, the I.U.F.M. are too recent a creation to have been able to develop international relations. At present 16 out of the 28 I.U.F.M. take part in ICPs, most of them being in the field of education (05.0).

### **3.2. In-service training**

#### **3.2.1. Institutions responsible for training**

In each academic region an office has been set up with responsibility for the in-service training of all those who work in education. This is the "Mission Académique de Formation des Personnels de l'Éducation Nationale" (MAFPEN), whose director has the task of coordinating in-service training programmes set up by the universities or the I.U.F.M., or by the MAFPEN itself in conjunction with other institutions. The Ministry also invites tenders from universities for various in-service programmes that correspond to specific needs.

It should also be mentioned that teachers' associations also play their part in keeping their members up to date with new advances in language teaching. The language teachers' association (APLV) or the I.U.T. language teachers' association (APLIUT) organize seminars and conferences or publish journals that try to stimulate ideas in language teaching.

#### **3.2.2. Content of training programmes**

Two types of programmes should be distinguished: on the one hand there are those which aim to improve the general academic level of teachers, to raise standards in the field of study, and to provide opportunities for promotion; on the other hand there are those which offer training in new technology or new methodology or in adapting to new programmes. A good example of the first type can be seen in the vast retraining programme which was aimed at the PEGC ("professeurs d'enseignement général de collège"), who taught two subjects at lower secondary school level without necessarily having a degree. In 1985 a programme was set up in association with the universities allowing those PEGC who wished to take part to work for a DEUG, a "licence" and sometimes beyond; those taking part were given time off and their schools were given financial compensation. Using the experience gained while this programme was being implemented, the MAFPEN encourage temporary teachers working on a contract basis to

take the degree exams necessary to sit for the competitive exams, or else they allow time off to allow them to prepare for the competitive exams. It should be mentioned that the various competitive exams (CAPES, CAPLP2, "agrégation") can now be taken by staff already working in education ("concours interne") and that one of the roles of the MAFPEN is to help teachers to get promotion.

For the other type of programme the various MAFPEN publish an annual list of training programmes available in each academic region and circulate it in schools. Teachers are invited to enroll for the programmes of their choosing, most of them being organized during normal working hours. Among the programmes most likely to interest language teachers, there are courses on the use of video in the classroom, on computer assisted language teaching, or else courses with a more academic content. On the other hand it is rare to find programmes aimed at improving linguistic ability, the official opinion being that being inducted by a competitive exam is proof enough of language proficiency. Finally, mention should be made of summer courses, organized in the universities with ministerial approval and funding, and which generally train teachers in new technologies.

### **3.2.3. Structure of programmes**

The programmes of the internal competitive exams are partly the same as those of the older traditional external exams, except that there is slightly less insistence on academic performance (but which is by no means absent) and added importance given to language teaching experience. It is the universities which prepare candidates for these exams, the teachers being given timetables in their schools which enable them to attend the courses. In some cases teachers are given sabbatical leave to prepare for the competitive exam. It should be mentioned that the internal exam is less prestigious than the external one.

The training programmes organized by the MAFPEN are not assessed and no certificates or diplomas are awarded.

### **3.2.4. Impact of Community programmes to date**

It is difficult for in-service training programmes to find a place in Community programmes. It should be mentioned, however, that among the training programmes organized by the MAFPEN, there are some which inform teachers on how to take part in Community programmes.

## **3.3. Training of teachers of 2nd language**

### **3.3.1. Institutions responsible for training**

The training of teachers of French as a foreign language (FFL = "FLE") is carried out in the universities, generally in French or linguistics departments. 28 universities award a "maîtrise" degree in French as a foreign language; the same universities also award "licences" in French language and literature or in a foreign language or in linguistics with FFL as a special subject mentioned on the diploma; it is necessary to hold one of these "licences" in order to enroll for the "maîtrise" course. Generally speaking these universities also put on optional courses in FFL at DEUG level.

It should be mentioned that teachers of French as a foreign language have no officially recognized status, since there is no civil service competitive exam corresponding to their speciality. Teachers of FFL in the universities or other language schools are usually employed on limited work contracts, or else they are recruited as secondary school teachers in another subject, then go on to teach FFL.

### **3.3.2. Content of training programme**

The general content of the "maîtrise" course or of the FFL option in the three "licences" is defined by official texts. The "licence" programme includes a course in the didactics of French, courses in French history, civilization and literature, and a compulsory beginner's class in another foreign language. The "maîtrise" course comprises theoretical classes in linguistics and communication and in cultural anthropology applied to France and French-speaking countries, and theoretical and practical classes in didactics of French language (learning theories, teaching methods, assessment methods). The student also has to do a four-week period of teaching practice and write a report on this experience. It should be mentioned that the university of Paris III awards a university diploma in the teaching of languages and culture in Europe, the methodology of FFL being extended to 2nd language learning in general.

### **3.3.3. Structure of programmes**

At "licence" level FFL is an option with a particularly heavy timetable, since the compulsory course elements are taught over 125 hours. The students who follow this course come from different academic backgrounds, since students of French language and literature are to be found alongside students from the various language degree programmes, as well as ERASMUS students. The compulsory class in a language at beginners' level is organized on a language that no student knows. At this level only the theoretical part of the course is examined, since students' practical teaching experience is limited. It should be added that attendance on this course is an added advantage for candidates for posts as French language assistants in schools abroad.. The "maîtrise" course in FFL provides for 350 teaching hours, at least 250 of which must be devoted to the subjects listed above (§3.3.2.). At this stage the practical teaching experience is an important element in the training and in the final assessment. This teaching practice is often carried out in the university itself when it has a department of foreign students or else in the university's further education department teaching French to immigrants.

## **4. LANGUAGE PROVISION IN UNIVERSITIES FOR STUDENTS OF OTHER DISCIPLINES**

Tuition in a foreign language was made compulsory in all DEUG courses by the 1992 reform. The official texts are worded as follows: "at first and second levels at least one foreign language must be taught using different skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing), emphasis being laid on scientific subjects" The reorganization of medical studies also makes provision for language teaching, and languages are to be found in all the specialities leading to the DUT. In the two sections following the distinction will be made between those programmes in which the foreign language is an integral part of the course (§4.1.) and those in which, despite the compulsory nature of the language teaching, the language course is rather an accompaniment (§4.2.).

### **4.1. Language studies integrated into non-language programmes and language options offered in combination with non-language programmes**

#### **4.1.1. Content and objectives**

It is probably in the modern French language and literature course ("lettres modernes") that we can find the most long-standing tradition of foreign language training alongside the traditional courses. It should be added that in the competitive exams (CAPES and "agrégation") the students take a written translation paper (into French) and there is also an oral exam in the foreign language. The translation into French in the CAPES is at least as difficult as the same exercise at "licence" level in the specialist courses, and the undergraduate programmes in French language and literature reflect this ultimate objective at DEUG and "licence" levels. Although teaching is far from being the main career outlet for graduates from this course, translation into French is still the main academic exercise, with other exercises in writing skills in DEUG. In "licence" there is

often a programme in literature and/or civilization on top of the translation course, with the works being studied in the foreign language. English is the main language studied, most students having already taken it at school, followed by German, Spanish and Italian. Mention should be made here of bi-national degrees which are open to students who hold a DEUG in French, and in which classes take place in French and in the language of the partner country. Examples are the Franco-Italian "licence" and "maîtrise" in Chambéry and the Franco-German degrees awarded by Metz and Paris III.

A second type of course in which languages are associated with other subjects was set up by the university of Paris X-Nanterre in 1985; the so-called "bi-DEUG" courses combine a language (English, German, Spanish, Italian and Russian) with either law or economics. Unlike the LEA courses the student takes only one language, and the field of study this language is applied to is limited. The law programme or the economics programme show in fact only slight variation compared to the corresponding specialist programmes, and although the number of hours devoted to the language is not as high as in the "traditional" course, it is higher than in LEA courses. The same type of programme is to be found in Le Havre and in the new universities in the Paris region. Mention should be made here of a Franco-British "licence" degree in European economics awarded by Nantes and Middlesex University.

#### **4.1.2. Structure of courses**

The courses in which languages are combined with other subjects have exactly the same structure as all the national diplomas. In the programmes in French language and literature, the weekly course load in languages varies between two and four hours up to and including the preparations for the competitive exams. Generally speaking, however, there are no languages in "maîtrise", except in the case of the bi-national degrees. In the combined language/law and language/economics diplomas there are between 8 and 9 hours per week of language and 10 to 12 hours in law and economics. It should be noted that in order to allow language/law students to carry on this combination in 3rd and 4th years, Paris X has set up a university diploma, the "Diplôme d'études juridiques appliquées (DEJA) which can be prepared in addition to the national degrees in law. The DEJA is awarded to students who have successfully followed modules on the law of the countries concerned and modules in written and spoken language; the student must also spend a period of six months (following the "maîtrise") in work placement in a foreign country and write a report in the foreign language.

#### **4.1.3. Impact of Community programmes to date**

Except in the case of the bi-national diplomas, the French language and literature programmes have not been actively involved in student exchange programmes. In the law and economics programmes it is mainly towards the end of the course that students take part in ERASMUS programmes, the number of hours taught in the first two years making earlier participation difficult.

### **4.2. General and subject-oriented language courses accompanying non-language programmes (service courses)**

#### **4.2.1. Content and objectives**

In social and human science programmes (history, psychology, philosophy, sociology) there is a tendency to lay the emphasis on reading skills in language courses, since the students are often required to read documents on their subject of study in a foreign language. In economics, law and business studies programmes, though language teachers also base their classes on texts dealing with the main discipline, more emphasis is laid on communicative skills. In science courses emphasis is mainly on oral skills. It should be noted however that it is only possible to give general tendencies here since the

situation varies from one university to the other. Some universities have developed a real policy for language teaching using the services of a centralized language unit to provide language courses for all non-specialists. In other universities it is the U.F.R. of the different disciplines which organize their own language courses, the language teachers working in close collaboration with teachers of the specialist subjects; this is the case, for example, in the I.U.T., and it is in situations of the second type that we find most emphasis laid on languages for special purposes. English is by far the dominant language in every type of course. Some idea of the importance of English compared to other languages can be had if we look at the number of language teachers in the I.U.T., for which separate statistics are kept: out of a total of 584 language teachers, 505 teach English, 57 German and 18 Spanish; as for Italian and Russian, there are only two permanent members staff for each language in the whole of France. It should be noted that to comply with the regulations making languages a compulsory element in every programme universities have to recruit vast numbers of temporary staff, generally speaking among secondary school teachers. On the other hand there is no systematic use made of native-speakers.

#### **4.2.2. Structure of courses**

In most courses students are given between 1 hour 30 and 3 hours per week of language tuition during the first two years. Although there is no legal obligation beyond, most universities continue the language courses. In social science courses, where emphasis is often laid on reading comprehension translation into French is still used as a means of assessing these skills. In other courses it is communicative skills, both written and oral, which are assessed.

#### **4.2.3. Impact of Community programmes to date**

Programmes in which language courses have the status of service courses have been very active in ERASMUS programmes. Here again the I.U.T. can be used to illustrate this tendency, since all I.U.T., except the most recent creations, take part in ICPs. For students, no matter what the subject of study, ERASMUS provides practical language experience after what can only be a limited amount of classroom teaching, and therefore enhances the students' chances of finding employment. This means, however, that exchanges with Ireland and the United Kingdom are oversubscribed, English dominating the secondary school system, and the 50 hour language preparations that universities set up in "minority" languages is in no way sufficient preparation for a period of study in one of the countries where the language is spoken.

### **5. THE TRAINING OF TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS**

#### **5.1. Institutions responsible for training**

There are different ways of classifying institutions which train translators and interpreters. A first distinction can be made between those which provide two separate training courses (translation and interpretation) and other which simply include the two terms in their name, playing on the confusion that exists in the general public between the two activities. It is also possible between those who are members of CIUTI (Conférence Internationale des Instituts Universitaires de Traducteurs et d'Interprètes) and the others. Then a distinction can be made between public and private institutions, and finally the level of the final diploma should be taken into account. All these criteria will be borne in mind when presenting the situation in France.

Two schools that train students for both translation and interpretation are members of CIUTI, both of them situated in Paris. There is first of all the Ecole Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs (ESIT) a school which is affiliated to the university of Paris III and which awards students both national diplomas and university diplomas up to

level Bac+5, in translation or in interpretation. The second institution is the Institut Supérieur d'Interprétation et de Traduction (ISIT), a private institution depending on the Institut Catholique de Paris; the ISIT awards its own diplomas up to level Bac+5, once again in both translation and interpretation.

The Institut de Traducteurs et d'Interprètes in Strasbourg, which is now part of the university of Strasbourg II, awards both a university diploma at level Bac+4 and a national diploma (DESS) in both specialities, and the Institut de Perfectionnement en Langues Vivantes (IPLV) which is dependent on the catholic university in Angers trains translators in 4 years and interpreters in 5, awarding its own diploma.

Mention should be made of the LEA course leading to a "maîtrise" with a specialization in translation (with 15 universities at present offering such a course), though it would probably be more true to say that many of these universities train trilingual assistants who may on occasion help in translating specialized documents. There are also 9 universities which award DESS in translation, very often with a particular specialization.

Finally, there are also a certain number of private institutions which offer courses leading to diplomas which have the words "translation" or "interpretation" in their names, but in most cases they are secretarial courses or course preparing people to work in the export trade.

## **5.2. Content of training programmes**

Only the training programmes of schools which are members of CIUTI and other schools or universities which award degrees up to level Bac+4 or Bac+5 will be mentioned here.

There are only four courses in France which could be called training programmes for interpreters, two of them being in the schools which are members of CIUTI. The ESIT recruits students at "licence" level and candidates are required to have spent at least 18 months in two separate foreign countries. Students are given both a theoretical and a practical approach to interpretation, with practice becoming more important in second year, when techniques of consecutive and simultaneous translation are taught. The student also follows classes in law and economy. There is a choice of ten languages on the course (Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish), most students opting for a trilingual course (English, French and another language), although there is also a bilingual option (English-French, French-English). The content of the ISIT programme for the conference interpreter option is similar to that of the ESIT, but with fewer languages on offer. As for the programmes to be found in the Strasbourg institute and the IPLV in Angers, the main difference with the other two programmes is that although they are situated at level Bac+5, the specialist training in interpretation is spread over only one university year.

The translation programme at ESIT has a strong theoretical leaning (linguistics and translation theories) but also includes methodology (introduction to active reading, rapid acquisition of specific subject knowledge), as well as an introduction to economics and the organisation of industry. To these courses are added practical exercises in translation, advanced skills in languages and classes in terminology. Most students opt for a trilingual programme in translation, with French, English and another language (Arabic, Chinese, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish.), but other combinations are possible. A similar programme is offered by the other institutes and schools, as one would expect, with perhaps greater emphasis being placed on terminology

Most of the DESS programmes in specialized translation also have theoretical, methodological and practical elements in common, but they also reflect the specific interests either of the university or of the region. So, for example, Toulouse II specializes more particularly in the aeronautical industry, Rennes II in terminology and in food and

agriculture, Pau puts the emphasis on scientific translation, and Lyon II on medicine and pharmacology. The university of Lille III offers a DESS in translation and the cinema, the students being trained in dubbing and sub-titling, while INALCO puts on a specialization in information management, with language classes being adapted to information technology, and the students being introduced to communication studies and to scientific and technical culture. Finally, the university of Paris VII has two DESS programmes, organized within two different departments: the first of these, which recruits mainly from among LEA students, combines translation of specialized texts and lexicology with new technologies (setting up data bases, automatic translation, computer-assisted translation, computerized terminologies); the other one is open to those who have a "maîtrise" in English or in French and offers training in literary translation, with part of the course being devoted to stylistics and writing practice.

### **5.3. Structure of programmes**

A distinction should be made, particularly for the programmes that depend on the private schools, between the level of the final degree (which can be Bac+4 or Bac+5) and its length, which depends on the student's entrance level. The ISIT, for example, admits students to first year (with the baccalauréat), to second year (with a DEUG, for example), or to 3rd year (for graduates holding a "licence", an entrance examination being organized at every level. The ESIT recruits at DEUG level for its three year translation course, though graduates with a "licence" can also be admitted for a two year programme; their interpretation course lasts two years and is open to "licence" holders. Selection is, of course, very strict at the entrance examination, and after the first year of studies. Those who continue to graduation come out with a DESS. As for the DESS awarded in the other universities, candidates - who must have a "maîtrise" - go through a strict selection process there again, and follow a one year course.

A certain number of features are shared by all the programmes, in particular concerning the participation of professional translators on the course and the professional experience the students must acquire through a period of work placement, which can vary in length. It is in the Paris VII DESS programme specializing in "language industries and translation" that we have the most novel organization in this field, since students spend alternate periods in university and work placement during the academic year, then spend three months full time in industry. The work experience gives rise to a written report and to another written paper (translation, bilingual or trilingual glossary, data base, etc.), both of which are taken into account for the final assessment.

### **5.4. Impact of Community programmes to date**

Translators' and interpreters' schools and the various courses situated at level Bac+5 have not been active in ICPs until now. For example, there is a very limited French participation in ERASMUS programmes listed under 09.4 (translation, interpretation), only universities preparing LEA degrees taking part. Lack of participation can be explained by a number of factors, including the intensive nature of many programmes, the fact that the DESS course only lasts one year, and also the need that is felt to give the students a uniform training.

### **5.5. Career prospects outside the areas of translating and interpreting**

There is only a small number of positions available in industry in the field of translation, since few firms require the services of a translator on a regular basis. There are, however, a number of ways in which translation graduates can use their skills professionally, for example by working freelance, or by looking for a position in industry where specialized translation is only a part of the professional activity which the employer appeals to when necessary, the rest of the time being taken up by other duties. Translators have also been known to set up in business, in partnership with specialists in other fields (data

processing, terminology) to offer a variety of services related to languages. Translation is also carried out professionally as a principal or secondary part time activity, with teaching often being the other activity. If translation is the main activity, teaching languages in adult education centres is a common way of supplementing income, but qualified translators have also gone into teaching to ensure a fixed income and supplement this with their translation activities. In this respect it is interesting to note that qualified language teachers make up a high percentage of candidates for translation courses at DESS level, and since they have practised translation throughout their studies they are often successful. Graduates from such courses often set up associations which allow them to offer their services to potential clients while at the same time carrying on with another activity.

Trained translators can also find employment in film and media as technical communicators, and some multinational concerns also employ terminologists, but for the moment the number of positions available is very small.

## **6. LANGUAGE STUDIES IN NON-UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **6.1. Language programmes**

There are no language programmes in higher education in France outside universities. Mention should be made, however, of the literature and language options in the C.P.G.E., where up to 6 hours per week are devoted to language teaching, with literature, civilization and translation being studied in preparation for competitive entrance examinations to the "Grandes Ecoles". The language programme comes on top of a very full course in French, philosophy, history, and Latin or Greek. Pupils who follow the two-year course may be awarded a DEUG in a language by equivalence. Those who are successful in getting in to one of the Ecoles Normales Supérieures follow a course of study which enables them to prepare the "licence" and "maîtrise" at the Sorbonne and later to take the "agrégation".

Because of the specificity of such courses, there is no participation in Community programmes.

### **6.2. Language studies integrated into non-language programmes and language options offered in combination with non-language programmes**

A distinction will be made here between two different types of institutions that offer courses in post-secondary school education. First of all there are the "Sections de Techniciens Supérieurs" which prepare pupils, either in public or private secondary schools for the national vocational diploma BTS, with its 53 specializations in industry and 35 specializations in the services. Secondly, there are the 282 schools specializing in business and commerce, with either public, semi-public or private status.

#### **6.2.1. Content and objectives**

Languages are studied in all these programmes, the number of hours varying with the professional orientation of the course; language teaching is usually adapted to this professional orientation. The main difference that exists between the two types of institutions is that since the S.T.S. prepare pupils for a national exam the language teaching aims at bringing as many as possible up to the required level. On the other hand, the business schools, which do not have the constraints of a national exam, can fix the objectives of their language courses more freely.

#### **6.2.2. Structure of courses**

In those S.T.S. which offer the secondary industrial specializations, two hours per week over the two year course are devoted to language tuition. English is by far the most dominant language, and is even compulsory in certain programmes. In the tertiary sector training programmes there are generally three or four hours per week devoted to a language, and a second language can be added to the programme, either as an option, which remains optional at the exam (i.e. only marks above average are taken into account), or else completely integrated into the programme, which is the case for the commercial courses. One of these courses ("trilingual secretarial assistant") has a language programme similar to the one to be found in LEA, with four hours per week devoted to each language, to which is added two hours per week of secretarial skills in each language. In most BTS programmes the final exam in languages is written, with an oral being added in secretarial and commercial courses.

The place languages have in business schools can be seen first of all in the competitive entrance examinations. Generally speaking competence in two languages is expected, and the weighting given to languages in the final mark puts them on the same level as mathematics or French. The entrance exam for H.E.C. ("Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales") can be used to illustrate the importance given to languages: for the first foreign language there is a written paper lasting three and a half hours, and two and a half hours for the second language, with tests on grammar, translation, reading and writing skills, and in both languages this is followed by an oral exam. Language courses in the schools are of course only one aspect of the programme which includes management, accountancy, financial management, law and general studies. Since these schools are well endowed and have small numbers of carefully selected students, they provide excellent conditions for language teaching; students are taught negotiating skills, public speaking and report-writing in the language classroom, and there are lectures in civilization and culture of foreign countries and in many cases lectures in management or economy in a foreign language.

### **6.2.3. Impact of Community programmes to date**

The S.T.S. do not participate to any great extent in European student exchange programmes (the latest edition of the ERASMUS handbook lists 22 of them, half of which are in private schools). It is not easy for such programmes to take part in programmes because of the number of teaching hours per week over the two year course, in preparation for the national examination. On the other hand, business schools are very active members of ICPs, a period of one year abroad often being an integral and compulsory part of the course; the European programmes are added to the bilateral exchanges many of the schools have with the United States, Canada or Japan so as to offer a wide choice to students; in many cases the students have the opportunity to work towards a foreign diploma during their period abroad. Such international programmes are used as incentives by the schools to attract students to their courses.

## **7. NEW NEEDS IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGE STUDIES**

Identification of needs and requirements in the area of language studies and, consequently, of deficiencies and gaps in language programmes and courses.

### **7.1. In undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by universities**

In spite of the generally high academic standards to be found, traditional language programmes in universities suffer from the fact that they have been developed with a view to training the élite of the teaching profession, with the "agrégation" being the final goal, whereas universities are having to answer needs for mass higher education.

#### **7.1.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies**

Efforts have been made over the last 20 years or so to diversify language courses, with first of all the introduction of linguistics to the programme, then the creation of the LEA degree, and more recently with the possibility of adding special subjects to language degrees or of combining a language with other subjects such as law or economics, but this diversification should be continued to offer a wider range of courses to students. Experimentation with new courses should not be limited to the "traditional" programmes, since LEA courses are also due for reassessment, taking into consideration the content of the course and its specialities at "maîtrise" level. Some universities where the LEA programme exists still seem to be in some doubt as to the true nature of the programme, hesitating between an advanced language course with modules in law, economics or management being added to allow graduates to adapt to industry, and a multidisciplinary course preparing for jobs in the service industries, with languages being an added extra, as is the case with certain BTS programmes.

In both "traditional" and "applied" courses, it is certainly necessary to put more emphasis on oral skills, since students have little opportunity to speak the foreign language on their course, but the solution to this problem implies more funding for equipment and appropriate staff.

In postgraduate studies the major requirement in order to meet the foreseeable developments in language studies would be to encourage research in two areas which so far have been neglected in France, namely in languages for special purposes and in language teaching methodology. To illustrate the neglect that these fields suffer from it is interesting to examine the qualifications of candidates for lectureships in English in 1995: out of 212 candidates who held a doctorate, 20 did not have qualifications in the subject area, 97 had completed a thesis on a literary topic, 49 on some topic related to "civilization" studies, 30 had done research in linguistics, and only 11 on subjects related to ESP and 5 in didactics. One of the responsibilities of thesis supervisors would be to direct good students to unexplored areas.

### **7.1.2. Seen in relation to professional requirements**

It is a well known fact that economic experts find it difficult to foresee the evolution of the job market over the next five years, let alone beyond that. The language graduate will require sound theoretical and practical knowledge in order to adapt to any possible evolution. The systematic introduction of new technologies to language courses would be an added advantage for the student.

### **7.1.3. Seen in relation to the creation of Europe**

In too many cases ERASMUS type exchanges are looked upon as one means amongst others to allow students to spend an extended period of time in the country whose language he is studying. However important this objective might be, it can only lead to a development of exchanges towards member countries are most widely taught, that is towards English- and German-speaking countries in France and towards French-speaking countries in return, to the detriment of exchanges with countries whose languages are less widespread.

Moreover, the European dimension is too often absent from language courses, which are exclusively directed towards the culture and civilization of countries where the language is spoken. "European studies" courses are virtually absent from French university syllabuses.

## **7.2. In initial and in-service language teacher training**

### **7.2.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies**

The national competitive recruitment exams ensure good academic standards and a good level in linguistic competence in language teachers, and it is necessary to maintain these, but it is also necessary to provide the necessary professional training for teachers, not only by making them aware of the realities of school teaching, which is now done in the I.U.F.M., but also by making language-teaching methodology part of the curriculum. Progress was made when a "professional" paper was included in the CAPES recruitment exam, and when special competitive exams were set up to allow promotion of teachers ("internal" exams), but such initiatives are too often the source of ideological arguments.

Efforts have also been made in the field of in-service training, and at present funding is available for this, but too often the training periods deal with topics such as teaching-aids or approaches to the school programme and not enough emphasis is laid on keeping up language teachers' knowledge of the language.

### **7.2.2. Seen in relation to professional requirements**

With the development of early language learning in primary schools, it would seem necessary to define a general policy in order to determine the status of teachers who take part in this activity, only taking the interests of the young learners into account. At present 38.8% of those who do this type of teaching are secondary school teachers who theoretically have the necessary knowledge of the language, but it would be necessary to ensure some form of certification for primary school teachers who wish to teach languages, or else to resort to primary teachers who would teach their own language.

### **7.2.3. Seen in relation to the creation of Europe**

Few secondary school language teachers take advantage of the possibilities they have of taking part in exchanges or study visits within the framework of Community programmes, and in particular LINGUA. Local education authorities need to inform teachers of these possibilities.

## **7.3. In language provision in universities for students of other disciplines**

### **7.3.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies**

The situation would appear to be satisfactory on paper, since languages are taught on all courses, but a certain number of deficiencies can be pinpointed. First of all, because of the combined effects of the presence of languages everywhere and the lack of permanent teaching posts, universities resort to the services of temporary language teachers who, no matter how dedicated and competent they are, can never be completely integrated into interdisciplinary teams of teachers. In some programmes for non-specialists the language courses are given a low weighting in final exams compared to the specialist subjects, and so students find it difficult to assess the importance of languages.

As regards course content, it would appear necessary to extend the offer of languages beyond English, which is too often the only possibility.

Another difficulty comes from the fact that there is at present no objective reference system to be able to situate the language competence of students and to determine the level of courses to be made available.

### **7.3.2. Seen in relation to professional requirements**

The very fact that languages are compulsory on all courses comes partly from the programmes having been devised after consultation with people from industry. In this respect it is interesting to note that the Instituts Universitaires Professionnalisés (I.U.P.),

which were created in 1992, have made two languages compulsory to answer the needs of industry.

### **7.3.3. Seen in relation to the creation of Europe**

Efforts should be made to allow students whose course requirements include a period of work placement to carry it out in a member state of the European Union.

## **7.4. In the training of translators and interpreters**

### **7.4.1. Seen in relation to the development of language studies**

The situation in the courses which train interpreters can be considered as satisfactory, since academics and professional interpreters work hand in hand. Existing programmes therefore meet professional requirements and can meet any foreseeable development of these requirements. When it comes to the training of translators, it would appear necessary to carry out an audit of existing courses, including LEA programmes, and to limit the opening of new courses.

### **7.4.2. Seen in relation to professional requirements**

It is in the field of translation that some form of control would appear necessary in order to come up with an official status for the professional translator. It is also necessary for young people to be fully informed of what translation is as a career and how translators are trained.

### **7.4.3. Seen in relation to the creation of Europe**

International co-operation exists through professional bodies such as the International federation of translators (FIT) and the International association of conference interpreters (AIIC), and translators' schools encourage candidates from foreign countries to apply, but, as we saw above (§5.4.) there are virtually no exchanges of the ERASMUS type. Co-operation between translators' schools has to be encouraged.

## **7.5. In language studies in non-university institutions of higher education**

### **7.5.1. In language programmes**

As we have seen (§6.1.) there are no language programmes outside the universities, except in the case of the C.P.G.E.

### **7.5.2. In language provision for non-language students**

When we consider the place taken up by languages in business schools, the level of funding they have for new equipment and their participation in Community programmes, the situation can be described as satisfactory. Moreover, since they are closely linked to industry they can adapt constantly to whatever needs might be expressed.

In the S.T.S., and in particular in the industrial specialities, where a language is compulsory but has a very limited timetable compared with the technical subjects, a reorganization of the course, concentrating the language teaching over a short period of time would probably be more efficient than the present situation, with a weekly class. The pupils' motivations for learning a language would be higher if, instead of including the language in the final examination with a low weighting, the language test was separate from the main exam, with a certificate in language proficiency being required.

In these S.T.S. courses students should also be encouraged to do their work placement in another European country.

## **8. MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO SATISFY THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED**

### **8.1. Measures to be taken in the area of initial and in-service teacher training**

#### **8.1.1. Measures within the responsibility of the institutions**

Since teachers are civil servants, it is neither the universities nor even the I.U.F.M. which have primary responsibility for initiatives which might be taken in the field of language teacher training. Nevertheless some universities have acquired considerable experience in teaching French as a foreign language, and carry out research in this field. Co-operation between teachers and researchers in FFL and staff in the language departments could therefore be encouraged in the universities. It should be noted that the renewal of language teaching methods in certain British universities was partly inspired by methods developed for teaching English as a second language.

In the area of in-service training, the MAFPEN, which was set up in order to co-ordinate training initiatives, should work in closer co-operation with the universities in order to offer language teachers programmes that help to maintain good academic standards and the good level of linguistic competence.

#### **8.1.2. Measures within the responsibility of the regional and national authorities**

At present it is only recommended that language teachers should spend a long period of time in a foreign country (see §3.1.3.) and although some I.U.F.M. have taken initiatives to make it easier for young trainee teachers who have not already done so to meet this recommendation, measures should be taken to make the "year abroad" an essential requirement for language teachers.

In order to extend the range of subjects offered, especially at school level, to less widespread languages, it would be possible to allow language teachers with competence in another language to teach this other language. The Ministry might take the initiative of setting up, on an experimental basis, bilingual competitive recruitment exams, at CAPES or "agrégation" level, combining German with Dutch, for example, or Spanish and Portuguese, or English and Swedish. Such a measure would probably meet with opposition on the part of those who think that standards would drop, but there is a model for this type of competitive examination, since the "lettres classiques" course combines Latin and Greek.

#### **8.1.3. Measures within the responsibility of the European Union**

With the increase in language teaching at primary school level initiatives should be taken at Community level to encourage and facilitate exchanges between primary school teachers. Such exchanges could be restricted to those teachers who already have a university degree in languages so that they would be able both to teach their native language in the foreign country and, on their return, to let their pupils benefit from their linguistic experience.

### **8.2. Measures to be taken in universities (outside the area of teacher training)**

#### **8.2.1. Measures within the responsibility of the institutions**

Now that the Ministry has introduced a policy of negotiating four-year contracts with universities, with objectives being set out for, amongst other things, the creation of new

courses and new diplomas, universities can now take more initiatives. This framework could allow them to improve certain aspects of language teaching.

The success of most LEA programmes has shown that the fact of learning two languages does not prevent the student from reaching a high level of proficiency in both languages. It is probably even true to say that knowledge of one language makes it easier to learn a second one, especially if the two languages are related. This principle could therefore be extended to the "traditional" courses, with the Belgian programmes in Romance or Germanic languages serving as possible models. Such programmes could attract students towards less widely taught languages. Universities could also, with the same objective in mind, set up intensive courses before the beginning of the academic year. Such courses, which would not necessarily be taken into account for the final diploma, would allow students in languages that are not taught in secondary schools, to reach a reasonable level of competence so that the level of the diploma would be close to that in other languages. (Such a programme has been set up in Lille for Dutch.)

More universities should follow the initiative taken by those such as Chambéry which has set up bi-national diplomas allowing students to carry out part of their studies in a foreign country.

An initiative which should be encouraged, in particular in LEA programmes, would be to use a foreign language to teach another subject, which would of course imply recruiting members of staff on a temporary or permanent basis with foreign qualifications. An interesting development in this respect has been set up at the university of Lyon II, which has opened its buildings to the universities of Barcelona and Frankfurt so that teachers from these universities can teach their discipline in their own language.

Universities can also take measures concerning their internal structures in order to encourage teaching of foreign languages. If it is true to say that language teachers working with non-specialists should be able to collaborate with teachers of other subjects, they should also have the opportunity of working with other language teachers. The creation of language centres would allow universities to co-ordinate language teaching activities and also to save money. Structures of this type would also encourage research in language teaching methods and would also provide a service to traditional specialist courses.

### **8.2.2. Measures within the responsibility of the regional and national authorities**

It is the Ministry for higher education and research which decides on the level of funding for universities, and language courses receive the lowest level of funding. Such a measure does not take into account the special equipment required for language teaching, nor does it consider the fact that teaching groups in languages need to be small to allow for oral work, nor the fact that languages with smaller numbers cost more per student than major languages.

### **8.2.3. Measures within the responsibility of the European Union**

Authorities in Brussels should take initiatives in order to encourage the setting up of European networks of teachers of particular languages (networks devoted to German in higher education, to Portuguese, etc.). Contacts should be encouraged between higher education teachers with the same interests and experiences.

An initiative could also be taken in another area, to encourage universities to use the resources of ERASMUS students in their institution who could be used as "tutors" with language students.

### **8.3. Measures to be taken in non-university institutions of higher education**

### **8.3.1. Measures within the responsibility of the institutions**

The reorganization of timetables to allow the schools to set up intensive courses would make for more efficient language teaching in the S.T.S.

### **8.3.2. Measures within the responsibility of the regional and national authorities**

Redefining the national programmes for the BTS exams, by separating the language proficiency test from the other subjects, would give languages a better place on the programme.

### **8.3.3. Measures within the responsibility of the European Union**

The S.T.S. should be encouraged to access the COMETT programme so that students can carry out work placement in a EU country.

---

## **REFERENCES**

*Recueil des lois et règlements de l'Education Nationale, Volume IV, Enseignements supérieurs.* Publication de l'Institut National de Recherche et de Documentation Pédagogiques.

Lenoël, Christine et Marliot, Marie-Catherine, *Les métiers des langues*, Collection L'Étudiant pratique, 1994.

*Les langues étrangères*, Collection ONISEP Avenirs, 454, 1994.

*Les métiers de la gestion*, Collection ONISEP Avenirs, 455-456, 1994.