

Thematic Network Project in the area of Languages

Subgroup 8: Language Studies for Students of Other Disciplines

Second Language Needs in the Professional World: towards a realistic training of students in universities and tertiary education institutions

Workshop organised by Ana Martín Uriz,
held at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
on 2 October 1998

Sub-project 8: Language Provision for Students
Of Other Disciplines

Workshop on Second Language Needs in the Professional World

Appendix to the Final Report for Year Three

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THEMATIC NETWORK PROJECT IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGES

Sub-project 8: Language Studies for Students of Other Disciplines

Background

Considering the origin, aims and area of work of the Thematic Networks are not widely known in the academic and professional world, it seems worth starting with a brief explanation of their background so as to focus then on the Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages proper.

Thematic Networks, which form part of the Socrates-Erasmus Programme (1995-1999), are projects created for a period of up to three years. Their main objective is to bridge the gap between the majority of higher education programmes in the EU and both the state of development in research and the present needs in society and in professional environments. In other words, they aim at improving and consequently maintaining quality in Higher Education at a European level, in response to § 126 of the Maastricht Treaty.

Each Thematic Network focuses on all the aspects of a particular theme, as seen from the perspectives of the different types of higher education institutions participating in each project.

Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages

This project, which involves over a hundred European institutions and associations, was launched in 1996 with the aim of catering for the specific language needs of academic, social, professional and economic environments. In this area of language, which is complementary to the entire spectrum of subjects in higher education, ten key areas were identified, leading to the creation of ten sub-projects within the TNP. Subproject 8, which focuses on Language Studies for Students of Other Disciplines, makes up one of these ten sub-areas.

WORKSHOP: SECOND LANGUAGE NEEDS IN THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD: TOWARDS A REALISTIC TRAINING OF STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES AND TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Aims and objectives

Considering that the field of study of sub-area 8 is the second and foreign language training of tertiary education students with a non-linguistic profile, a first approach between the academic and the professional world seemed fundamental. Therefore, this seminar was organised with the aim of receiving feedback from both academic and professional groups which could shed light on this area and eventually contribute to the development of realistic curricula and realistic training programmes in universities and tertiary education institutions.

Thus, following decisions taken at the TNP Evaluation Conference in 1997, it was proposed to bring together academics, employers and representatives of local

and regional authorities to exchange views on the subject of language teaching and learning. In order to limit the scope of this area of work, the workshop was divided into the following sessions, each of which encouraged further debate.

- Linguistic training of university graduates and second language needs in multinational companies
- Language needs in a company offering services to travellers and tourists in the Spanish context.
- Second language training of undergraduate and postgraduate university students in several educational institutions in Madrid.
- Linguistic and cultural skills in international trade: Spanish businessmen in non-speaking and other Europeans in Spanish speaking countries.
- Discourse skills in peace building processes and in the setting up of services in developing countries.
- The role of non-native languages and cultures in commercial relations.

The members of sub-project 8 present in the workshop were the following:

Valère MEUS	Universiteit Gent, BE
Anne RÄSÄNEN	Jyväskylän yliopisto, FI
Thomas FRASER	Université de Lille III, FR
Claire BOURGUIGNON	Université du Havre, FR
Doris FLISCHIKOWSKI	Universität Potsdam, DE
John HAVELDA	Universidade de Coimbra, PT
Ana MARTIN-URIZ	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, ES
Brigitte FORSTER VOSICKI	Université de Lausanne, CH
Ray SATCHELL	University of Bristol, UK

The coordinator of sub-project 1 (Multilingualism), Franz-Josef KLEIN, Universität zu Köln, was also present at the workshop.

Main outcomes of the workshop

Though meant to be a forum for academics and professionals, the workshop also attracted a good number of graduate and undergraduate students. It has to be admitted, however, that the workshop failed to attract representatives of important academic target groups. This scarce attendance of academics from other faculties may lead to the conclusion that language learning is not one of their main concerns. Needless to say, more future co-operation between language teachers and those of other disciplines is essential if realistic objectives are to be achieved.

It should also be mentioned that the conference was attended by a significant number of academics in the area of second languages, who provided invaluable feedback during and after the workshop. The following were the main points made:

- It is recommended that countries which do not include language programmes in their graduate degrees provide language education at University level. When such training exists, the amount of time devoted to it is not sufficient if teachers are to work towards realistic objectives. University graduates in the

EU often take jobs outside their own countries, in response to job market needs.

- Cultural training seems to be lagging behind specific linguistic training, with few companies, such as Andersen consulting, organising specific courses and profiting, to begin with, from the cultural experiences of those professionals who have been working all over the world. So the need to provide intercultural skills in language programmes is evident.
- As for the design, development and implementation of university language programmes, there should be more co-operation between university language communities. In other words, people in languages should develop an awareness of themselves as a community and therefore put forward collective strategies, which will eventually enable them to implement change at national level.
- The difficulty of developing teaching materials illustrating cultural diversity within varieties of the same language is evident.
- There are not enough reliable and valid tests to measure both the linguistic and cultural skills of the candidates who are being selected.
- The academic world does not seem to be keeping pace with the development and needs of the professional market. Therefore actions should be taken. Otherwise the future of university access as well as higher educational institutions might be jeopardised by the upsurge of private institutions funded by private companies.
- The development and implementation of language programmes catering for the needs of the professional world, which should be the province of local authorities, does not seem to be an easy task since corporate needs, which vary from company to company and from region to region, are very difficult to define.
- There is a vast field for employment of University graduates with multilingual and multicultural training with Non-Governmental Organisations.
- It is obviously true that the English language is used systematically at corporate level. Nevertheless, the knowledge of other languages should not to be disregarded since it would be an advantage to have multilingualism in Europe. To put it another way, knowledge of English is not enough, employees also need to understand the language spoken in the country where they are working.
- Although it is true that lack of mobility brings about cultural differences, mobility, on the other hand, also requires financial support, which is at present not being given the necessary attention in the EU.

We present this Workshop report to the Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages.

Official opening

Professor Tomás ALBADALEJO

Dean of the Faculty

The Dean expressed his satisfaction for the celebration of the Workshop in the Faculty of Humanities and explained that language learning and teaching is one of the goals of this Faculty, which is evident from the language programmes

offered by its different Departments -classical languages and modern languages (both Indo-European and non-Indo-European). Professor Albaladejo highlighted that, since language skills are becoming a requirement in the professional world, a complete University education should include the knowledge and command of foreign languages especially in the present social and political European situation.

Welcome and presentation of workshop and Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages

Dr. Thomas FRASER,
Chairman, UNIVERSITÉ DE LILLE III, France

Fraser introduced the workshop by providing a brief summary of the establishment and development of the TNP in the Area of Languages and the sub-projects that form part of it and by giving detailed information about the activities of sub-group 8 since 1996:

- The elaboration of a survey on the way Higher Education Institutions throughout the European Union organise, develop and administer language programmes for students of other disciplines. The analysis of the responses revealed a great diversity across Europe.
- 1997-98. The establishment of a European database of research in the area of languages for students of other disciplines.

Other projects initiated in 1997 and still being carried out at present are:

- Analysis of preparation of students for mobility
- Needs of the professional world
- Workshops to address future needs of students
- Survey on University graduates on employment
- On going survey on employers' needs

The aims of the research into language needs in the professional world were to define the areas requiring foreign language skills, the languages needed, the contexts in which to use them, and the importance given to the language training of employees within firms.

After the first analysis we can anticipate that the English language seems to be a major requirement. The rate of response to the survey observed among the countries has varied greatly, from Denmark with a response rate of 46% to Spain with only 8%. The average response rate was 19% across Europe.

Needs Analysis

Ray SATCHELL
Language Centre Director, UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL, United Kingdom

Ray Satchell began by giving a brief presentation of the University of Bristol Language Centre. The Centre operates in four main areas:

- English as Foreign Language
- Applied Foreign Languages
- Language Testing and Assessment
- Multi-media applications
- External Language Services

The External Language Services Section offers a wide range of services to companies and institutions in the public and private sectors. These include:

- needs analysis and linguistic auditing
- in-company language programmes
- technical and subject specific translation/interpreting
- cross-cultural orientation programmes
- film dubbing and subtitling
- proof-reading services
- multi-media consultancy services
- job seeking and interview skills courses
- applied language courses in a range of subject areas

He then went on to discuss theories relating to needs analysis, and made a presentation of the 'Huchinson and Waters' model.

1. Necessities: negotiating skills, social skills, commercial skills
2. Lacks: analysis of what they don't have
3. Wants: personal wants vs. Company wants

A **Target situation analysis framework** consists of a series of questions such as:

- WHY is the language needed?
(study, work, training, other)
- HOW will the language be used ?
Medium: speaking, writing, reading
Channel: telephone, face to face
Type of text or discourse: academic text, lectures, informal conversations, catalogues, etc.
- WHAT will the content areas be ?
Subjects or Levels
- WHO will the learner use the language with?
Native speakers or non-native
Level of knowledge of receiver
Relationship(colleague, teacher, customer)
- WHERE will the language be used ?

Physical setting (office, lecture theatre, hotel, ...)
Human context (alone, meetings, demonstrations, ...)
Linguistic context (own country, abroad)

- WHEN will the language be used ?
Concurrently with the ESP course or subsequently
Frequently, seldom, in small amounts, in large chunks

A framework for analysing learning needs implies the following considerations:

WHY are the learners taking the course ?

- Compulsory or optional
- Apparent need or not
- Are status, money, promotion involved ?
- What do learners think they will achieve ?
- What is their attitude towards the ESP course ?

HOW do the learners learn ?

- What is their learning background ?
- What is their concept of teaching and learning ?
- What methodology will appear to them ?
- What sort of techniques are likely to bore/alienate them ?

WHAT resources are available ?

- Number of professional competence of teachers
- Attitude of teachers to ESP
- Teachers' knowledge of and attitude to the subject content
- Materials
- Aids
- Opportunities for out-of class activities

WHO are the learners ?

- Age/sex/nationality
- What do they know already about English ?
- What subject's knowledge do they have ?
- What are their interests ?
- What is their socio-cultural background ?
- What is their attitude to English or to the cultures of the English-speaking world ?

WHERE will the ESP course take place ?

- are the surrounding pleasant, dull, noisy, cold, etc ?

WHEN will the ESP course take place ?

- Time of day
- Every day/once a week
- Full-time/part-time
- Concurrent with need or pre-need

Hutchinson and Waters. *English for Specific Purposes: A Learner Centred Approach*. CUP.1987.

Professional expertise and intercultural competence

Anne RÄSÄNEN

Language Centre, UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ, Finland

Foreign language learning and teaching are topics of great public interest in today's Europe. With the rapid increase of internationalism throughout the personal, corporate, and public spheres of societies, communication in a foreign language is required more and more often at a level of proficiency which presupposes active, creative and professionally-oriented use of the foreign language in a variety of socio-cultural contexts both in the home country and abroad. While the pressures of internationalisation fall heavily on education and business sectors, in particular, apprehension towards their effects on what is considered unique and therefore worth preserving in the very fabric of each local language, culture and society also seems to grow. Since language is the cornerstone on which much of national identity and self-confidence is built, it is natural that specific attention is today directed at managing the potential conflict between maintenance of strong national integrity and internationalisation. Thus, educating professionals in a foreign language is no longer - if it ever has been - a "simple" matter of language learning and teaching, but a much wider issue involving development of many kinds of skills related to work performance in multicultural contexts, while at the same time strengthening the national identity and culture.

If we try to analyse **what components today's professional expertise includes**, we might come up with the following:

- professional qualifications, skills and know-how
- knowledge of foreign languages
- awareness and understanding of cultures
- interpersonal skills and team work skills
- ability to manage change and stress
- ability to tolerate uncertainty
- ability to solve problems
- ability to analyse information and actions critically
- ability to take and manage risks
- readiness for life-long learning
- initiativeness, innovativeness, and entrepreneurship

In addition, most jobs today also require **intercultural competence**.

Professionals who are successful in their home environments, will not necessarily be equally successful when working in an international environment with a different culture, and communicating in a foreign language. Various research findings indicate that many failures in international assignments result from cultural ignorance or misunderstandings (i.e. inability to understand foreign ways of thinking, behaviour, and communication). This is particularly true of cases where the professional does not master the language spoken in the country. Learning the local language is the window to the new culture, because language

and culture are interwoven and cannot be separated from one another. Successful work performance in international contexts often results from seeing cultural differences as a source of competitive advantage.

Developing **intercultural competence** is a slow process, because it **integrates language skills and human relations skills** and, therefore, includes cognitive (knowledge and information processing), affective (emotions, values), and behavioural (skills) components, such as

- ability to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty (also in language)
- situational flexibility and ability to deal with multiple cultures simultaneously (also through language)
- a realistic and strong sense of self, a healthy self-concept as a communicator
- good formal foreign language skills (i.e. knowledge of the language system)
- good communication skills in the foreign language (i.e. knowledge of how to use that system for own purposes)
- interpersonal skills (i.e. ability for social interaction and co-operation; disclosure)
- cultural literacy, e.g.
 - understanding and appreciation of one's own culture and foreign cultures
 - cultural curiosity and empathy
 - ability to recognise cultural differences and similarities
 - ability to refrain from snap judgements and stereotyping
 - patience and respect for different daily rhythms and customs
 - ability to communicate respect and co-operativeness
 - ability to give constructive evaluation and assessment
- intercultural sensitivity, needed to negotiate meanings.

Communication is always interactive, in other words, each participant's actions and interpretations also affect the other person's behaviour, and this is how meanings are created and constructed in concrete communication situations. Raising awareness of the factors involved in one's own linguistic and cultural behaviour is the first step towards understanding others and building intercultural sensitivity and competence.

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The **discussion** of these papers enabled the workshop to identify three common themes which emerged from the session as a whole:

- Although it is true that lack of mobility brings about cultural differences, mobility, on the other hand, also requires financial support, which is at present not being given the necessary attention in the EU..
- It is recommended that countries which do not include language programmes in their graduate degrees, such as Belgium, Switzerland, Portugal and Spain, provide language education at University level.
- University graduates in the EU often take jobs outside their own countries, in response to job market needs, therefore Higher Education should provide them with the qualifications needed to work in those countries.

Linguistic training of university graduates and second language needs in multinational companies

José Manuel PÉREZ DE LA CRUZ

Director, FUNDACIÓN GENERAL DE LA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID (FGUAM)

Pérez de la Cruz presented the FGUAM as a private institution, the main goals of which are promoting and managing new programmes and activities inside the University and raising funds to finance them. Among the different activities it has developed so far it seems worth mentioning the following : management of Master degree programmes, the provision of grants for students in training in companies, the promotion and implementation of joint research projects between the university departments and companies, etc.

As regards the survey on second language needs the TNP is carrying out, Pérez de la Cruz offered the foundation co-operation to find out about the situation of second language teaching in the different Master degrees managed by the GFUAM and in those offered in other Spanish Universities as well.

Finally, drawing on his own experience in the USA after he graduated, he highlighted the fact that cultural and social skills are as necessary as linguistic skills.

Marta MATA, Co-ordinator of the English Programme, John COOK, English tutor

ANDERSEN CONSULTING

In Andersen Consulting, a multinational company with subsidiaries all over the world, the corporate language is obviously English. Lack of command of this language would be a handicap for any employee working in this firm, since (s)he would not be able to attend international conferences, meetings, make or receive phone calls, to give some examples.

In order to avoid these situations and maintain a good level of communication world-wide, Andersen's employees are offered the following language training programmes:

- Language maintenance courses: aimed at avoiding loss of fluency in the language

- Language support courses: aimed at catering for the needs of those professionals who need to perform in very specific situations, namely meetings, presentations, etc.
- Intensive courses: aimed at brushing up or improving the competence of professionals during the summer.
- Communication courses: aimed at improving not only the communication skills but also the intercultural competence of employees who need to deal with people of different cultures simultaneously.

To conclude, Cook pointed out that communicative and intercultural competence should be considered the core of any language programme. In other words, the training of professionals in a foreign language should not be regarded simply as the teaching of language grammatical and notional functions.

Guillermo BERRIOCHA

Human Resources Department, BDF NIVEA, S.A.

With the aim of emphasising the importance given to foreign languages, Berriocha, who spoke on behalf of Nivea SA, provided the following list of requirements according to which his company recruits new staff:

- 1- Economics and business background
- 2- Fluency in English
- 3- Experience abroad
- 4- Fluency in German

As can be seen in this enumeration, foreign language competence is one of the main concerns of this multinational company. This is the reason why, when it comes to recruiting staff, they highly appreciate experience in an Erasmus program, to give an example. They believe that it is in programmes like these ones - that is outside the Spanish university context - that students really acquire the language.

Thus, Berriocha contended that, as far as language learning and teaching are concerned, something should be done to change the present state of affairs in Spanish universities. In his opinion universities should train students bearing in mind the needs firms have, that is, they should train students towards a realistic professional world.

María Luz de MIGUEL

Language Consultant, PHILIPS IBERICA, S.A.

After providing some information on the main features of Spanish learners, Ms de Miguel explained that competence in English is essential in a multinational company like Philips, where English is the corporate language.

Therefore, according to their needs, Philips provides its employees with the following type of training:

Priorities		
1. General English	2. Business English	3. English for specific purposes
Meetings, telephoning, presentations, social English	Attendance of congresses, training courses, explanations, business correspondence	Information handling (manuals, instructions, documentation)
<i>Cultural awareness</i>		
To succeed in	negotiating with business	people from other countries

As can be deduced from this chart, which reflects the needs of Philips SA, the language training employees receive aims at enabling them to increase their self-confidence as well as their cultural and linguistic knowledge of the language. De Miguel insisted on the important role the cultural component plays in the training of the company's employees since work behaviour and negotiation skills vary across cultures.

Peter SCHWARZENBAUER

General Director, PORSCHE ESPAÑA, S.A.

Peter Schwarzenbauer, at present working in Spain after 5 years of work experience in different countries, explained that the level of English of graduate students in Spain is rather low. Therefore, his experience in recruiting young professionals for Porsche has, so far, not been very satisfactory. Since business communication in multinational companies like Porsche is carried out in English people are no longer employed according to the same standards as before, that is those who cannot speak English have nothing to do in firms like these ones. In the same way as learning maths was the normal practice in the past, now language learning should also have a crucial role at both first and higher degree level. Students and academics should become aware of the needs of the professional world, and all this obviously involves a change of mentality. Paradoxically, in Europe, which is quickly advancing towards closer union, there is still a certain type of fear of communicating with other countries. Therefore, although from an economic perspective the EU seems to be doing quite well, the socio-cultural aspects still seem to be lagging behind. Now, if universities do not cater for the urgent language needs of potential professionals, it has to be assumed that only money will buy that training, which, at present, is already being provided by private institutions. In other words, as is the case with scientific research, there seems to be an imbalance between the private sector and national governments, which are gradually losing power in favour of the private sector. Thus, in the light of all the evidence he provided, Schwarzenbauer concluded by urging academics to do something to impede the advance of the private sector, which in concrete cases like that of Mercedes SA, are thinking of opening their own higher education institutions. Needless to say, this would lead to the increase of differences between the rich and the poor.

Lucía JIMENEZ

Training Department, PRICEWATERHOUSE COOPERS

PriceWaterHouse Coopers is a big multinational consulting company which provides customer service in different countries. Therefore, the role of the English language as the means of communication between the different subsidiaries and the clients and between the subsidiaries themselves is obviously crucial.

Consequently, when it comes to recruiting personnel, PriceWaterHouse requires intermediate and advanced level of English in the case of professionals and intermediate level in the case of clerical employees.

In order to improve company communication world-wide, PriceWaterHouse provides its professionals with training courses which, four years ago were optional but which now, due to the conditions of a bigger and more specialised market, are compulsory and form part of the professional training of its staff.

In spite of all the efforts made by this company, it is very difficult to carry out this type of training in a consulting firm like this, given the timetable and deadlines of these professionals whose job, among other things, also involves travelling and changing their residence very frequently.

Therefore, in order to tackle this problem in the most feasible way possible, this year they have decided to subcontract the English training with language schools, such as Wall Street Institute, which allow for more flexibility as far as time and place are concerned. Although they are fully aware of the weaknesses of this type of training, they have come to the conclusion that, given their urgent needs, this seems to be one of the most appropriate solutions.

According to their experience, the recent graduates who apply for their job offers have an intermediate level of grammar and of vocabulary knowledge and their main liability usually has to do with their communication skills. Needless to say, this level of language command is not sufficient in a company like this one, therefore the training they provide their employees with aims at enhancing their technical vocabulary knowledge (computing, economic, legal lexis), improving their social and communication skills as well as more specific professional abilities such as the presentation of given projects. Obviously all these parameters are different in the case of students who have lived or studied abroad.

Since this language training involves a big effort for the company, at present they are trying to raise the level of language knowledge required for the new employees they recruit and they believe that in twenty or thirty years' time the level of language knowledge of university graduates will have improved.

The **discussion** of the papers presented in this session led to an interesting debate, the main outcomes of which are the following:

- It is obviously true that the English language is used systematically at corporate level. Nevertheless, the knowledge of other languages should not to be disregarded since it would be an advantage to have multilingualism in Europe. To put it another way, knowledge of English is not enough, employees

also need to understand the language spoken in the country where they are working.

- Academic authorities should be pressed to introduce languages in non-linguistic faculties. In Spain, ironically, about 20 or 30 years ago, degrees in business and commerce included at least three foreign languages. Now English is compulsory only for Economics and Business Administration. With the revision of the Spanish University curricula, language courses in other degrees have become optional.
- Cultural training seems to be lagging behind specific linguistic training, with few companies, such as Andersen consulting, organising specific courses and profiting, to begin with, from the cultural experiences of those professionals who have been working all over the world.
- There are not enough reliable and valid tests to measure both the linguistic and cultural skills of the candidates who are being selected.
- The development and implementation of language programmes catering for the needs of the professional world, which should be the province of local authorities, does not seem to be an easy task since corporate needs, which vary from company to company and from region to region, are very difficult to define
- The academic world does not seem to be keeping pace with the development and needs of the professional market. Therefore actions should be taken. Otherwise the future of university access as well as higher educational institutions might be jeopardised by the upsurge of private institutions funded by private companies.

Language needs in a company offering services to travellers and tourists in the Spanish context

The Director of the Human Resources Department, who could not attend the workshop, sent the following summary of their language needs and policy:

Professional training has always been one of the main concerns of Aldeasa, whose management believes training is the only way of remaining competitive. The success Aldeasa has obtained so far is the result of their continuous search for new commercial strategies which can improve the quality of the service they offer to international passengers. One of the ways of catering for the needs of these passengers is to attend to them in their own language or if that is not possible, at least, in English. Therefore, for their selling points they recruit people who are fluent in English.

In order to reinforce and improve their employees' knowledge of languages, Aldeasa also organises language courses. These are not always English courses, the choice of language programme depends on their urgent needs. In other words, if they have a big proportion of customers of a specific origin, they organise courses to provide a better service to that group of clients. So far they have also developed programmes in French, German and Japanese.

These courses are planned and designed in conjunction with the students themselves who set their own aims and objectives according to their urgent needs. In order to determine their level, students sit for diagnostic tests. The

- 40% companies require experts

In the light of the results of this survey, professor García pointed out that students do not receive sufficient linguistic training. And she concluded by urging academics to try hard to create awareness among university authorities of the importance of this area of linguistic expertise and of the need to devote more time to the teaching of languages.

Professional training of postgraduate students

Karina VIDAL

Language Teacher, CITIUS Program, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID

The main aim of this talk was to describe the needs of postgraduate students and to highlight how, in the case of languages, the interests of companies (representing the professional market) and those of students coincide. The talk consisted of three parts:

1. A brief description of the origin, aims and development of the Citius Programme.
2. An explanation of the type of training postgraduate students receive and also of how the need for a Business English course in a programme like this was detected.
3. A description of the objectives and design of the subject *Focus on Business English*.

To begin with, Citius is a one year- programme run by the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid in conjunction with the Fundación Universidad Empresa. Its main aim is to provide graduate students with the opportunity to start their professional life in companies where they are assigned specific jobs for which they are recruited according to their background and qualifications. At the same time as they gain work experience, they have to attend classes at university so as to cover other areas which are of interest to the jobs they are carrying out. Therefore, to summarise, this training programme involves two parts, that is: specific in-company training as well as academic training.

Now, how did the idea of a Business English course in a programme like this come up?

Through his regular chats with the trainees, the Director of the Programme, Professor J.C. Bermejo, learned about the their interest in attending business English classes. Surprisingly, these postgraduate students, most of whom had been selected, among other requirements, because of their level of English, did not feel confident about their use of English in business situations. Besides, as the director also found out, Business English was also one of the concerns of the companies participating in the programme, about 60% of which are multinationals and 40% medium-sized national companies.

As far as the design of the course is concerned, after getting the students to sit for placement exams Vidal realised that though their level of English was, in general terms, quite good and they even recognised and produced some technical or specialist vocabulary in their field, they lacked both the general

business terms and the communication skills most business people resort to when they need to use English in the course of their work. Therefore, a modular-structured programme consisting of a grammatical and functional component and a lexical component (i.e. business content) was developed. These components are integrated into task-directed and communicative activities, each organised round a different business situation which usually tries to emphasise the significance of cultural diversity. The sources of both types of input are reading and mainly listening. The reason why most of the content is introduced through listening is because it is one of the main handicaps of postgraduate students. Secondly, and most important, because phonological short and long-term memory play a crucial role in language acquisition, as research evidence has shown. Thus, as the tendency in this population seems to indicate, even gifted graduates as the ones selected for a programme like Citius, feel unconfident when it comes to using English in their work, which implies that their training has not been realistic either. In other words, they need to be encouraged to carry out task-oriented activities and take on roles so as to simulate the kind of situations in which they may find themselves in their professional life, and in this way get into the habit of performing in business situations.

Isidro ARMENDAREZ

Language Teacher, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID (UCM).

Armendariz's talk reflected his experience as a teacher of English in the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration and in a non-university institution - Escuela Oficial de Idiomas.

In relation to language teaching at University level, he informed that in the past three languages were taught in university degrees, a situation that has unfortunately changed for the worse. Nowadays only some degrees include one language. Moreover, languages are no longer compulsory, they have become optional modules and, with the new revision, even some of these courses will probably be discontinued. If this is the case, English will be seriously affected. Underlying this present situation is the fact that students do not regard learning languages as something important. Moreover, many students do not even consider language skills a minor component in their degrees

However, if higher education started raising their awareness of the importance of the knowledge of languages for their future professional careers, they would feel more motivated and would progress more quickly. But if, on the contrary, they see that the tendency in universities is to discontinue language courses, they will most probably believe this type of knowledge is not really necessary.

Drawing on his own experience in the Escuela Oficial de Idiomas, Armendárez finally concluded by saying that the future of English language teaching seems to be the teaching of professional English. It should be pointed out that, in general terms, those people who go to the Escuela Oficial de Idiomas do not feel compelled to do so, as would be the case with a university subject; that is to say, they go the Escuela because they like English and they themselves have decided to learn the language. Nowadays, however, the trend seems to be changing since

more and more people go to this institution because they see language learning as a way of finding a job.

After the presentations, the **discussion** focused on the following outcomes and recommendations

- The amount of time devoted to language teaching in higher education institutions is not enough if teachers are to work towards realistic objectives.
- As for the design, development and implementation of university language programmes, there should be more co-operation between university language communities. In other words, people in languages should develop an awareness of themselves as a community and therefore put forward collective strategies, which will eventually enable them to implement change at national level.

Linguistic and cultural skills in international trade: Spanish businessmen in non-Spanish speaking countries and other Europeans in Spanish speaking countries

Jose Luis LAMAS

Trade Commissioner, SPANISH ADMINISTRATION

Lamas indicated that talking about linguistic and cultural skills in international trade was in fact « talking about what is evident » and added that he would be addressing the issue from a personal perspective and drawing on his own experience. He, himself, had to use foreign languages in his professional life as a Trade Commissioner, facilitating the opening of trade links between Spain and foreign companies in different countries.

He emphasised the fact that English is a necessary communication tool in a business transaction though not the only one. The weight of the local languages and cultures cannot be underestimated since, in most cases, marketing and commercialising a product abroad requires the use of the host country language. Furthermore, he claimed that a « basic » knowledge of the language in which the negotiation is carried out is insufficient and recommended the presence of a translator if necessary. Making business means signing contracts and misinterpreting a clause might lead to important losses for a company. In his opinion there is not a “language of business” but solid knowledge of languages. Unfortunately small and medium sized companies do not always perceive these assumptions.

Finally he concluded that the knowledge of a third or even a fourth language is being required more and more often in international contexts. To give an example, in the European Commission three languages are used and pressure exists to include six official languages. Moreover, he pointed out that we are now witnessing how local languages are gaining ground since the so called « international languages » are not succeeding in the achievement of international communication: in the USA business talks are in English and in the Middle East in Arabic.

As a conclusion, Lamas highlighted that:

- A sound knowledge of a second language is needed.
- Business transactions in a language you do not know well should be avoided.
- English is the business language but not in every situation.
- The use of only one international language cannot guarantee international communication.

The brief **discussion** that followed the talk focused on culture and there was general agreement on the fact that

- Markets cannot be opened unless cultural contacts precede

Discourse skills in peace building processes and in the setting up of services in developing countries.

Iván PARRO FERNANDEZ

COMUNIDAD DE SAN EGIDIO (Non-Governmental Organisation)

Iván Parro, a member of the *San Egidio* Community, founded in 1968 to work and co-operate in social projects in cities both in developed and in developing countries, spoke of the function of language and communication when dealing with human problems.

The organisation, through its commitments in different countries and from its involvement with immigrants, has been able to evaluate the major role native and non-native languages play in opening communication channels geared at polishing frictions, settling problems and reconstructing broken relationships. Parro regretted that a foreign language is not offered in the University Curriculum for students, such as future social workers, who might need it in their professional life.

An important aspect developed in the presentation was the role of languages in international affairs. The Community of San Egidio has intervened in a number of world conflicts in countries like Guatemala and Mozambique. In Mozambique one of their members was appointed by the UN to participate on a diplomatic mission –international observers were present during the democratic elections held after long years of fighting. The international observers had to act not only as observers but also as interpreters and mediators between the two opposing parties. The aggressive language used by the opposing parties was translated and transformed into a political discourse, a peace discourse.

During the discussion which followed this talk several points were became evident:

- There is a vast field for employment of University graduates with multilingual and multicultural training with Non-Governmental Organisations.
- It is necessary to provide intercultural skills in language programmes in view of the problems graduates in this field have to face.

The role of non-native languages and cultures in commercial relations

M. ANTON

Cultural Attaché, GERMAN EMBASSY

Anton presented a brief outline of the German language position in the world, paying special attention to the context in Spain. He underlined several factors that contribute to making languages important such as spread, number of speakers, strength in Science and Culture and the economic power of the speaking communities. He concluded that these factors converge in the German language although it is not a world language, that is, a language spoken in several continents such as English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Nevertheless German is the mother tongue of a hundred million Germans. Concerning the German language in Spain he pointed out that, in spite of the fact that German is an additional language in the school system, 12.000 students choose or specialise in German as the figures below illustrate:

- Secondary education 5.600 Students of German
- Universities 2.800 students of German
- Other programmes: German for Medicine, translators, etc

Anton argued that there is no competition among languages, and this does not favour European integration since studying a language also implies promoting mobility as well as studying the culture of that country.

John CROPPER

Vice director of Projects, BRITISH COUNCIL

Cropper started by saying that "English no longer seems to represent the language of Shakespeare but the one of Mickey Mouse".

In the past, he said, the reasons underlying language learning were mostly cultural, but at present we are witnessing a change of focus towards professional training. In other words, professionals need to learn the language of business and other professional fields. We could draw a comparison with Latin in the Roman Empire.

Now, for the first time, learning a language is related to the « customer needs » rather than to what teachers say, there is more freedom of choice. There are many examples that illustrate this needs-based learning in Southeastern Asian countries, in Slovenia or in many of the Eastern European countries.

This change has obviously brought about a change in language skills training. The language programmes specially designed for Singapore Airline's baggage handlers or NYC taxi drivers are clear examples of this present state of affairs. Evidently this is the result of living in a needs-based world.

Concerning English, there are about 130,000 million students world-wide, taking courses in a great number of different teaching centres. But what we can deplore is that the language level is lower. English has just become a tool that helps people to communicate.

J. VITAL MORGADO

Director of the Commercial Department, PORTUGUESE EMBASSY

Vital Morgado pointed out the Portuguese case is quite unique: 200 million people speak Portuguese world-wide –the fifth most spoken language- however only 10 million people live in Portugal.

The Portuguese school system includes two compulsory foreign languages : 3 years of French and 3 years of English. Languages later become important to those who specialise in business in Higher Education. As the market is very small and 80% of the external trade is done with EU partners, English is the leading language whereas French occupies a secondary position.

Nevertheless, Vital Morgado called the audience´s attention to the characteristics of a globalised market, where the telecommunication systems enable people to communicate and second and third languages are of great importance for small countries such as Portugal. Drawing on his own experience, he set himself as a good example of the outstanding role that the knowledge of local languages plays in international trade in small countries: it would not have been possible for him to do his job in the different positions he has held in NYC and in the Middle East without a good knowledge of languages. At present, being posted in Spain, he is trying to learn Spanish as fast as possible.

Joaquín LLISTERRI

Sub-director of Academic Programs, INSTITUTO CERVANTES

Llisterri started his talk by saying there are many reasons to learn Spanish as a foreign language. Among other things, it is the official language of 21 countries, which means it is spoken by 327,956,000 speakers. Besides Spanish is also spoken as a native language by 23,112,983 people scattered in different countries.

He made a point of the fact that though Spanish is a language with many varieties, native speakers do not find any difficulties when it comes to communicating since it is a fairly homogeneous language. He emphasised that one of the reasons for this homogeneity is the geographical location of the countries in which it is spoken –the American Continent.

Another fact Llisterri considered worth mentioning is that Spanish as a Second Language is a growing industry that generates an important income in different sectors and economic activities such as language services, publishing, language technologies, music, audiovisuals products, etc. He provided some data to corroborate the significance of this economic growth. For example, as for information technology, Spain has experienced:

10% growth in the IT sector in 1995-96

10.19 % increase in annual expenditure in IT in computers

11.9 % increase in computer users Feb-Nov 96

64.7 % increase in people with access to Internet from Feb-Nov 96.

300 % increase in sales of CD-ROM readers form 1993-95

The Instituto Cervantes has consolidated thirty research and development groups in which twenty five companies are involved giving rise to different marketing opportunities.

Having analysed the market situation, Llisterri focused on the role of the Instituto Cervantes which is the dissemination of the Spanish language and culture, the promotion of language teaching and the training of teachers. The Institute, founded in 1991, has rapidly grown:

- 36 centres
- 3,415 courses (increase of 20 % // last year)
- 41,261 registrations (increase of 21 %)
- 2,246 cultural activities
- 596,351 volumes (increase of 8 %)
Spanish for Specific Purposes (SSP) courses

His concluding words highlighted that life in the ' information society' involves developing the language industry.

During the discussion the following issues were raised:

- The importance of a second/foreign is closely related to economic reasons: languages most widely learnt are those in which business are conducted
- The difficulty of developing teaching materials illustrating cultural diversity within varieties of the same language

Closing words

Thomas **FRASER**
UNIVERSITÉ DE LILLE III, France

Thomas Fraser closed the workshop emphasising the importance of this pioneering attempt to initiate contacts between academics, society in general and organisations employing Higher Education graduates, which was, in fact, its main objective. He also pointed out that the enlightening outcomes of this workshop will enable Sub-group 8 of the TNP in the area of languages to make recommendations for the future under the auspices of the European Language Council.

THEMATIC NETWORK PROJECT IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGES

(in co-operation with the European Commission DG XXII)
Sub-group 8: Language Studies for Students of Other Disciplines
(Project 25197-CP-2-98-1-DE-ERASMUS-ETN)

Workshop: Second language needs in the professional world: towards a realistic training of students in universities and tertiary education institutions

(Contributions from the Scientific Committee of sub-project 8 and representatives from companies/enterprises and government bodies)

Madrid, 2nd October, 9.30 a.m., 1998

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Sala de Juntas del Decanato

AGENDA

Sessions chaired by Professor T. Fraser, Université de Lille III, France.

Organization and coordination in Madrid: Ana Martín-Uriz, Catedrática, UAM.

Cooperation: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

- 09.30 ***Official opening by the Dean of the Faculty.***
Professor T. Fraser: *Welcome and presentation of the workshop.*
- 09.45 Members of the Scientific Committee:
 Aims and objectives of Sub-group 8
 Students
 Teachers
 Employers' needs
 Cultural component
 Research
- 10.15 Debate
- 10.30 Fundación UAM, José Manuel Pérez de la Cruz, Director; ANDERSEN CONSULTING, Marta Mata, Coordinator of the English Program; BDF NIVEA, SA, Martín Guembe, Director of the Human Resources Department; PHILIPS IBÉRICA, SA, M^a. Luz de Miguel, Language Consultant; PORSCHE ESPAÑA, SA, Peter Schwarzenbauer, General Director; PRICE WATERHOUSE & COOPERS, Lucía Jiménez, Training Department.
Linguistic training of university graduates and second language needs in multinational companies.
- 11.30 Debate
- 11.55 Report from ALDEASA:

Language needs in a company offering services to travellers and tourists in the Spanish context.

- 12:00 M^a. Manuela García, Profesora Titular, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid; Karina Vidal, Language Teacher in the Citius Program: professional training of postgraduate students; Isidro Almendárez, Profesor, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
Second language training of undergraduate and postgraduate university students in several educational institutions in Madrid: links between training and needs.
- 12.40 Debate
- 13.15 Buffet, Pabellón B, Campus
- 15.30 Jose Luis Lamas, Trade Commissioner, Spanish Administration. Linguistic and cultural skills in international trade: Spanish businessmen in non-Spanish speaking countries and other Europeans in Spanish speaking countries.
- 15.50 Debate
- 16.00 Non-Governmental Organizations: Iván Parra Fernández, Com. de S. Egidio.
Discourse skills in peace building processes and in the setting up of services in developing countries.
- 16.15 Debate
- 16.30 Coffee-break
- 17:00 Mr. Anton, Cultural Attaché, German Embassy; Mr. J. Cropper, Vicedirector of Projects, British Council; Mr.Grassin/Ms McLorin, Cultural Department, French Embassy; Mr. J. Vital Morgado, Director, Portuguese Commercial Department, Portuguese Embassy; Dr. J. Llisterri, Subdirector of Academic Programs, Instituto Cervantes.
The role of non-native languages and cultures in commercial relations.
- 17.45 Debate
- 18.15 Professor T. Fraser: Closing Words.