

National report on curriculum innovation¹

Norway

Chantal Lyche, University of Oslo
22nd December 2001

1. Introduction

There are three official languages in Norway: *bokmål*, *nynorsk*, and *sami*. Sami is a minority language used by a small group of people living in the north of the country. It is used as an administrative language in 6 municipalities alongside *bokmål* and *nynorsk*, which are the written standard forms of Norwegian. Public administration is neutral as regards language policy but favours a balance in the use of the two forms. Official documents can be published in either form or in both, and all public employees must therefore master both forms. The municipality decides the written language used at school for the first seven years of instruction. However, if at least ten pupils request it, a separate class can be created for instruction in the other language form. In grades eight through ten, pupils decide which written form they will use, but they are expected to use both forms during the last three years of their curriculum.

The first foreign language taught at school is English, which is compulsory from grade 1. A second foreign language is offered as an elective from grade 8 through 10. German and French are the most commonly taught languages. A second foreign language is compulsory for pupils in the general academic branches from grades 11 to 13, but optional for the others.

In higher education there are four universities in Norway (Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø), six specialised university institutions and twenty-six university colleges. The four universities and a number of the university colleges have foreign language programs. The universities and most of the colleges are state-run, but they maintain considerable administrative autonomy. Higher education institutions admit students who have fulfilled upper secondary education.

The Norwegian education budget is equal to 6.8 per cent of the gross domestic product. Of a population of 4.5 million, more than 900 000 are currently undergoing education. In addition, approximately one million people participate annually in adult education courses. During the school year 1999-2000, universities and colleges counted approximately 170 000 students. The number of students has increased by about 70 per cent from 1988 to 1998. In addition, about 15 000 students study abroad. Tuition in universities and colleges is very low and does not discriminate foreign students. Students rely on the State Educational Loan Fund to finance

¹ ¹ This report owes much to the help and assistance of a number of colleagues who provided the necessary information and agreed to read and comment the successive versions. I would like to acknowledge here the following: Signe Bøhn, Glenn Ole Hellekjær, Turid Henriksen, Frøydis Hertzberg, Svein Johansen, Aud Marit Simensen. They cannot however be held responsible for any remaining errors.,

their studies. The Fund was created in 1947 and provides all students (whether they study in Norway or abroad) with loans and grants. Financial support is given regardless of the economic background.

1.1. The system of higher education

The Norwegian system of higher education comprises a first degree called *Cand.Mag.* (4 years of studies in the humanities), a second degree called *cand. philol.* in the humanities (2 years and a thesis requirement), and a doctorate (3 years). The system is described in more detail in the Sigma report (see also section 2.1.3 below). Among the foreign languages taught in Norway, English enjoys by far the strongest position since it is a compulsory first foreign language taught from grade 1 (age 6). At university level, in a large number of disciplines, the only available textbooks are written in English. In addition foreign staff, and staff in certain programs, conduct their classes in English.

1.1.1 Recent changes in the system of higher education.

The Network Norway Council, an advisory body to the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs in matters relating to the long-term development of Norwegian higher education was appointed by the government in April 1998. It has thirteen members from universities, colleges and society in general, including two student representatives. In addition to preparing matters for discussion in the council, the secretariat prepares reports and carries out various tasks directly for the Ministry. Its duties include giving advice on the recognition of degrees and diplomas from abroad, as well as organising continuing education courses for teachers from all levels of the education system (see <http://www.nnr.no>)

1.1.2 The impact of the Bologna convention.

See section 1.2 below

1.2. Identification of relevant changes in the social, political, cultural, professional and economic developments.

Norway is not part of the European Union, but part of the European Economic Area, which entails complete worker mobility between EU countries and Norway. Internationalisation has been a priority of successive Norwegian governments during the past fifteen years in order to keep abreast with the globalisation process. Norway takes part in most of the Union research programs; it is a member of ESA, and in many international research programs.

In the wake of the internationalisation process, the Ministry of Education in April 1998 appointed a national committee. The committee's mandate was to examine the system of higher education after year 2000. The committee handed out its report in May 2000. It is assumed that a number of the committee's recommendations will have an impact on the present system. To give an example, the committee encourages contract research and proposes to finance the universities in proportion to the number of credits they produce. The following two recommendations are of direct relevance here.

Norway has a long tradition of sending students abroad towards a first or second degree. The committee recommends that emphasis should now be put on shorter stays of one semester to

one year and that it should affect a much larger proportion of students. It also encourages staff mobility.

The report proposes a new degree system in line with the Bologna convention. The total length of studies for degree 2 (master) is fixed to 5 years. It is proposed that degree 1 (bachelor) could take 3 or 3.5 years. The possible combinations would then for a master comprise 3 +2 years of study or 3.5 +1.5 years.

LANGUAGE DEGREE PROGRAMMES

2. Innovations in language degree programmes offered by universities

The four universities and a number of the twenty-six regional colleges offer language studies. This report will concentrate on programmes offered by universities since the regional colleges adopt the same structure and content.

All credits referred to below are ECTS credits (one Norwegian credit is equivalent to three ECTS credits).

2.1. Traditional language programmes

2.1.1 Content, objectives, and structures of programmes

Prerequisite: any student who intends to study a language at the university must take a 15-credit course in general linguistics and phonetics, This, however, is not always a requirement at the regional college level.

Language programs are designed by each language department and aim at developing the four skills (reading, writing, comprehension and oral expression). They all include the study of grammar, literature and the civilisation of the country. In most foreign language programs translation to and from the target language has a central place. Lesser-taught languages offer an introductory course of one semester, which is part of the lower degree and accounts for 30 credits. French, English and German, which are offered by all four universities, do not offer such courses. As these languages are taught in secondary schools (two or three years), the students are supposed to have acquired a certain mastery of the language and all lectures are usually given in the foreign language. There is no institutionalised requirement to spend time abroad although it is highly recommended. Each department offers organised stays abroad (about four weeks), usually in the middle of a semester.

The University of Oslo offers courses in a wide range of languages including Eastern European and Asian languages. The other universities have more modest language programs including English, German, French, but specialising in at least one non Indo-European language such as Arabic in Bergen, Swahili in Trondheim, and Sami and Finnish in Tromsø.

Evaluation is quite formal and its cost has been a recurrent topic of discussion. Each exam involves the presence of at least two examiners, one of whom must be external. The length of the written examinations has also been debated. Some last up to 8 hours although there has been a recent tendency to shorten the written examinations to five or four hours.

2.1.2 Career prospects for graduates

Unemployment in Norway is quite low and language graduates can easily find a job. (See the Sigma report).

2.1.3 Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structure of programs

As the impact of the ministerial committee has still to be felt, we will present the changes that have affected higher education system during the last 5 years. The first degree (*Cand.Mag.*) remains unaltered; but within the degree there has been a number of modifications due to modularization. The *Cand.Mag.* is obtained after four years of studies in which the first semester is identical for all prospective language majors. This comprises two courses (15 ECTS credits each): (i) philosophy, (ii) general linguistics. The students can then combine different subjects grouped in units. The possible units are the following:

Semesteremne: 30 credits

(Semester course)

Grunnfag (minor): 60 credits (can also be a *semesteremne* + 2 15 credits topics)

(Foundation course)

Mellomfag (major): a *grunnfag* + one semester, 90 credits (Extension course)

Storfag (major): a *mellomfag* + one semester, 120 credits (Comprehensive course)

At least one *mellomfag* (extension course) and one *grunnfag* (foundation course) are required for the first degree. This system is still in place, but as a result of modularization, each unit has been split up into smaller units of 30 or 15 credits each. There is no national standard; each department offers its own system as is shown in the example below, taken from the University of Oslo. There, German proposes a one-semester unit as a prerequisite for further studies. The French department on the other hand has not completed its modularization of the *grunnfag* and still operates with the old system of three written exams at the end of a year of study. In the latter, one failing grade implies a failing grade for the entire *grunnfag*.

In the table below is an example of a *Cand.Mag.* degree comprising 240 ECTS credits: (Each cell is worth 15 credits)

8 semester	<i>Grunnfag</i> Philosophy Exam	<i>Grunnfag</i> Philosophy Exam
7 semester	<i>Grunnfag</i> Philosophy Exam	<i>Grunnfag</i> Philosophy Exam
6 semester	<i>Grunnfag</i> French	<i>Grunnfag</i> French 3 Exams (60 credits)
5 semester	<i>Grunnfag</i> French	<i>Grunnfag</i> French
4 semester	<i>Mellomfag</i> German Exam	<i>Mellomfag</i> German Exam
3 semester	<i>Grunnfag</i> German Exam	<i>Grunnfag</i> German Exam
2 semester	<i>Semesteremne</i> German	<i>Semesteremne</i> German Exam (30 credits)
1 semester	Philosophy Exam	General linguistics Exam

This one example goes to show the complexity of the system. A student in philosophy must study for one year to get his *grunnfag*, which is divided into four areas and each semester is devoted to the study of one area only. At the end of each semester, the student will take an examination and the final grade will be an average of the four grades. In French, the student will also study one year, but will follow lectures on the different subjects in parallel and will take three written examinations at the end of that year. In German on the other hand, the student can study for one semester only (*semesteremne*) at the end of which he will take one examination. A passing grade is required to continue on to the second semester that is divided into two independent units. The objective is that the German case should become the norm. This modularization process is nearly completed in Bergen, Trondheim, Tromsø, but slower in Oslo.

This new system has led to increased flexibility. Each course (corresponding to a unit of either 15 or 30 credits) is now totally independent of other courses. It also makes it easier for part time students to study towards a degree. The modular system is still under development in the humanities although it has been in place for decades in sciences. The years to come will inevitably further the modularization process, although at this point the universities maintain a lower limit of 15 credits for their courses (6 credits for sciences). It can be expected that students will be offered a wider range of options with increased mobility between departments.

2.1.4 Examples of good practice

Foreign language teaching at university level remains traditional. New programs have however been developed in distance teaching (see report on New environments) and in the combination of languages and information technology (see 2.2.4).

2.1.5 Reasons underlying these changes

It is expected that within the next few years all programmes in the colleges of arts and humanities will be modularised. The next step to meet the needs for a larger number of skills required by the work market will be to use the modular system to increase flexibility within the existing degrees. In addition, the Norwegian Government gives high priority to the use of new technologies within the classroom and this will have an important impact at the university level too.

2.1.6 Identifications of needs

2.1.6.1 Seen in relation to the development of language studies

It has long been pointed out that university graduates lack training in writing and in oral expression since it is only the final exam alone determines the final grade. In order to counter this tendency, Norwegian universities are now considering introducing some aspects of the portfolio in their assessment procedures. (See quality assessment report)

2.1.6.2 Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

A variety of studies conducted in Norway show a pressing need to improve language graduates' basic lack of proficiency in oral and writing skills. In addition to the mastery of the

special language of his/her field, any professional user of a foreign language needs to attain a high level of communicative competence together with the ability to write advanced texts in different genres and registers. The current language programs do not satisfy this objective.

2.1.7 Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national, and European level to meet the needs identified

2.1.7.1 At first-degree level

2.1.7.2 At postgraduate level

At both levels, compulsory oral presentations and written assignments should be institutionalised. Traditional written examinations can be replaced with student portfolios. The English Department at the Østfold Regional College introduced such a system a year ago for teacher education. The results are overwhelmingly positive but would entail a number of reforms such as obligatory student attendance and possibly restructuring certain courses.

2.2. ‘Alternative’ programmes (Applied language Studies, Cultural Studies, etc.)

2.2.1 Content, objectives, and structure of programmes

The University of Oslo alone offers a wide spectrum of ‘alternative programs’, for example, Mediterranean studies, German speaking countries, Middle Eastern and North African studies, Norwegian abroad, Western European Studies. The other universities do not have the necessary resources for more ambitious programmes and the University of Bergen offers Middle Eastern language and cultures while NTNU (in Trondheim) specialises in African studies. The smallest unit is Mediterranean studies which gives 15 credits, the others are semester units (30 credits) with a possibility sometimes to continue towards a *grunnfag* (2 semesters, 60 credits) or *mellomfag* (3 semesters, 90 credits).

2.2.2 Career prospects for graduates

2.2.3 Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structure of programmes

The programmes are regularly revised to reflect the fluctuating economic and political situation. Their importance is apparent from the fact that they have not been affected by recurrent budget cuts.

2.2.4 Examples of good practice

All four Norwegian universities offer a programme in Liberal Arts and computer science. As an example we will briefly describe the Oslo programme, which is also the most complete one.

In Oslo the programme is entitled *Language, logic and information* (LLI) and allows a student to take all levels of studies from a semester unit (*semesteremne*) to a Master or a Ph.D. In our example above in 2.1.3, the last subject, namely philosophy, could be replaced with LLI. In that case, the student takes four courses, two 15-credit courses per semester and an examination at the end of each course. Two courses are required (Logic and Symbolic programming), while the other two can be chosen from a selection of courses. A student who

decides to take a semester unit can choose freely two courses (e.g. Language, information and recognition, Cultural aspects of new technologies, Hypermedia). There is no prerequisite in mathematics to register for those courses.

The aim of the programme is to gain a better understanding of the relationship between humanities and information technology. Language is the key element in communication in general and our communication with machines is also possible through the medium of language. In addition to a study of natural and formal language, it provides the students with a better understanding of what kind of information can be formalised and how information can be treated. It creates a necessary link between pure computer science and humanities and allows Arts students to be more than plain users of IT. A deeper understanding of IT can also result in the elaboration of an increased number of user friendly systems.

An English description of the courses can be found at <http://www.uio.no/english/ects/hf/linguistics/sli>

2.2.5 Reasons for underlying these changes

None of the programmes mentioned above are 'new'. The LLI programme in Oslo was started in 1986. From a modest programme with a few courses, it is now an important part of the linguistics department. The different departments have thus adjusted to the needs of the marketplace and will continue to do so.

2.2.6 Identification of needs

2.2.6.1 Seen in relation to the development of language studies

(see 2.1.6.1)

2.2.6.2 Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

(see 2.1.6.2)

2.2.7. Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national, and European level to meet the needs identified.

2.2.7.1. At first-degree level

2.2.7.2. At postgraduate level

PROGRAMMES FOR LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE RELATED PROFESSIONS

3. Innovations in the training of language teachers

3.1. Language teaching and learning in primary and secondary school education

In Norway the schooling system underwent a major reform in 1997. Children now enter first grade at the age of 6 and are taught English as an obligatory subject throughout the whole compulsory school system, i.e. through grade 10. A second foreign language is offered as an elective from grade 8 through 10. German and French are the most common languages offered at that level.

Pupils who study beyond compulsory schooling will continue their study of English independently of the type of programme they attend (general academic or vocational). When they graduate from the three years of upper secondary schooling they have achieved an A competence level in English, which is the level required for pursuing English studies at the university. It is currently being investigated whether this level is adequate.

In the upper secondary school system, a second foreign language is required in the general academics programs, but not in all vocational programs. Pupils, who took French or German in grade 8, will usually continue with that language, which is then labelled a B-language. If they have no prior competence in a second foreign language, they can choose from a wider spectrum of languages, French, German, Spanish, etc. (depending on what language the school can offer), the language is now called a C-language. The progression in a C-language is somewhat faster than that of a B-language in grades 8 and 9 as the pupils have reached a higher level of maturity. Students who intend to major in French or German at the university are expected to have studied the language for three years minimum as a B or C language.

The language situation in schools has however taken a turn for the worse. Norwegian youth have a good degree of fluency in English, but as the competence in English progresses, the competence in French and German diminishes. In upper secondary schools, the number of pupils who take German as a B language with specialisation as decreased by 47% between 1996 and 1999. French is not hit as hard, but a decrease of 15% is observed for the same period. In 1998, 55% only of the Norwegian pupils (grades 8 through 10) fulfilled 3 years of language electives. This situation affects the number of students at the four universities, and the Ministry of Education is considering different measures to reverse the trend.

3.2. Initial teacher training

The minimum requirement for primary or secondary teachers is either a completed four year programme of a teacher-training college, or an academic degree supplemented with one year of teacher education studies.

3.2.1. Institutions responsible for training

Both universities and regional colleges are involved in teacher training.

Many regional colleges include a teacher training division. They train primary school teachers and lower secondary school teachers through a four year programme. The first three years include compulsory subjects only (Didactics, Mathematics, Norwegian, Religion, Art, Natural Science). During the fourth year, the student can choose between two options: either 60 ECTS credits in one subject or 30 ECTS credits in a subject and the remaining 30 credits in English. In all cases, there is a requirement of 15% didactics.

There is no foreign language requirement, Norwegian being the only compulsory language. The immediate consequence in the view of the recent reform is that many elementary school teachers do not have a formal competence in English, which is now taught from grade 1. This situation raises deep concern among language professionals. English and German are taught as electives, but not French. English is taught in most colleges, German in 5 of them.

In addition to an academic degree from the university a prospective secondary school teacher needs to fulfill a didactics requirement comprising a theoretical and a practical component. In foreign languages, the theoretical component includes the following areas:

- general education theory
- foreign language didactics, which in turn, includes the following components:
 - academic subject and school subject
 - the pupil and the subject matter
 - the teacher, the subject matter and the school
 - planning and organising teaching
 - evaluation

The practical component, student teaching, lasts for about 12 weeks and is done before applying for a teaching position.

The theoretical component is assessed by a written and an oral examination. For his year's study, the student is credited with 60 ECTS credits, 30 of which can be included into the university degree.

3.2.3 Career prospects for graduates

Language teaching jobs are available throughout the country, although graduates might find it difficult to get permanent positions in some urban areas. Teachers' salaries were significantly raised last year in order to make the profession more attractive, it remains to be seen whether this will improve the situation. National newspapers have recently focussed on the lack of German teachers, and the Ministry has now started an advertising campaign to recruit more teachers.

3.2.4 Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structures of programmes

The Framework Plan of 1998 modified the possible choices available to the teacher training college student by imposing a 15% didactics requirement. A university study (foundation course) can only be accepted if it meets that requirement.

3.2.5. Examples of good practice

The country's larger regional colleges (Oslo, Bergen, Stavanger), as does the Institute of Teacher Education and School Development at the University of Oslo, give high priority to the use of information technology as a tool for teaching as well as learning. A web page is available for each course, which students are required to consult for hand-outs and information. (see report on New Learning Environments).

3.2.6 Reasons underlying these changes

3.2.7 Identification of needs

3.2.7.1 Seen in relation to the development of language studies

There exists to this date no clear specification of needs in connection with language teacher education. There is a serious mismatch between what is offered and what is needed, in

particular for the language proficiency of the teachers and the skills needed to teach such proficiency to the pupils.

3.2.7.2 Seen in relation to non-academic requirements

3.2.8 Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national, and European level to meet the needs identified.

3.2.8.1 At first-degree level

3.2.8.2 At post graduate level

3.3. Continuing teacher education (in service)

3.3.1. Institutions responsible for training

In service courses are organised and offered by the different universities, either by the different departments or by teacher education departments. The Institute for In-service Courses (*Statens lærerkurs*), a unit of the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, has a coordinating function and grants financial support to universities or colleges to organise courses.

3.3.2 Content, objectives and structures of programmes

The different language departments do not offer courses on a regular basis. The Institute for In-service courses supports for example language programmes abroad organised in collaboration with a language department from a university. It is thus possible to take a foundation course (*grunnfag*) in English at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in French at the University of Caen (the programme has been stopped for 2001), or in German at the University of Trier. The programmes incorporate a didactics component (in 1999-2000, the students in Caen worked on an evaluation of the European portfolio at the university level), and are offered as in service course or as an elective for the fourth year in teacher training education.

3.3.3 Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structures of programmes

The 1997 school reform introduced a compulsory foreign language (Finnish, French or German) in grades 8 through 10. Every school is expected to offer one of the three languages although only schools in the northern part of the country are expected to teach Finnish. French is not taught at regional colleges, only a few offer German, and Finnish is only taught in Alta. The Network Norway Council, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, has elaborated a framework plan (February 2000) to educate teachers to meet the new needs.

The plan elaborated by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs states four major objectives:

- Initiation to the language through oral and written usage
- Language use
- Knowledge of the language and of its cultural implications
- Learner's reflection on his own language acquisition

The framework plan from 2000 intends to meet the objectives by developing courses and by creating national networks. The plan proposes two types of courses: short courses (from one

to 7 days) or long courses. The short courses are not intended to give credits. The long courses are intended as more comprehensive modules giving a minimum of three ECTS credits. The acquired credits cannot be part of a university degree, but provides the teacher with a documented competence that will speed his promotion. In order to save costs, some courses are designed as common for French and German teachers, some have a joint component while some are language specific. The following are examples of suggested courses: use of ICT in German or French language teaching, grammar and language acquisition, music as a tool for language teaching and language variation. The courses are meant to be held by the different universities and are mostly financed by the Institute for In-service courses. The French, Finnish German sections of the University of Tromsø in the northern part of the country has further developed a program taught by their own academic staff. Lecturers travel throughout the province and offer the courses during weekends. In addition the Framework Plan proposes to create an extensive electronic network of teachers of German and French and Finnish.

3.3.4 Examples of good practice

An example of good practice is the possibility for teachers to pursue their language education in the UK, Germany or France. The programme in France is described below and it was started in 1992. It is unfortunate that its funding was not renewed in 2001, but it will hopefully be resumed in 2003. It has not been interrupted in the United Kingdom and Germany. The programme is aimed at teachers desirous to acquire or further their qualifications in one of the three languages. It is accredited with 60 ECTS credits by one of the Norwegian universities. It is also advertised throughout the teacher colleges and can be taken as the fourth year.

While a standard foundation course is usually composed of 30 ECTS credits of Linguistics, 15 credits of Literature and 15 credits Civilisation, the French course in Caen incorporates a didactics component of 12 credits reducing the other components accordingly (literature 12 credits, civilisation 12 credits, Linguistics 24 credits). The didactics component is assessed by a term paper. In 1999, the students participated in an ELC transnational project whose main objective was to evaluate whether the European Language Portfolio was a valid tool at university level (see: http://www.fu-berlin.de/elc/elp_pel/elpinten.htm- for the final report). The didactics course focused on the different aspects of the portfolio and out of 17 students, 5 chose to write their term papers on the portfolio and covered topics like: Comment utiliser le portfolio en Norvège?, Le processus d'apprentissage en utilisant le portfolio à l'université. After this experience, it was decided to incorporate the dossier into the final oral examination. The number of students in the programme does not exceed 25 (usually around 20), and the learning conditions are optimal. In addition school visits are organised and the French staff does its utmost to integrate the students in the local society. The teaching staff is both French and Norwegian. The French instructors either have a first hand knowledge of Norwegian or have a good grasp of the structure and phonetics of the language and can do contrastive analysis. The Norwegian instructor is a secondary school teacher on a two year contract who is fluent in French and has a long experience teaching French in Norway. The programme is described at <http://www.unicaen.fr/unicaen/service/ofnec/indofnec.htm>

The cost of the programme is mainly covered by the Institute for In-service courses (*Satens Lærekurs*), but it can be prohibitive for countries with limited resources.

4. Innovations in the training of translators and interpreters²

4.1 Description and analysis of the current spectrum of professional activities

Norwegian translators work within both the public and private sectors. Many are employed by translation agencies. Some agencies cover a broad range of subject areas, while others concentrate on translations within certain fields, for instance information technology. There is also a market for freelance translators. Some translation agencies have large networks of freelance translators.

4.2 Institutions responsible for training

Agder University College is the only institution of higher education in Norway to offer a full study programme that prepares students for work as professional translators.

4.3 Content, objectives, and structure of programmes

4.3.1 At first-degree level

The four-year Translation Studies Programme is primarily designed to provide vocational training targeted at jobs within both the private and public sectors. It also provides qualifications appropriate for different types of work within the area of public relations, etc. The course will also be of help for those students who may wish to take the qualifying exams leading to the title Government Authorized Translator. The Translation Studies Programme also counts towards the Norwegian *Cand.Mag.* degree.

Students may choose either English, French or German as their foreign language. During the first year of the programme, students take a *grunnfag* (foundation course, 60 credits) in the foreign language chosen. The foundation course is similar to what is offered by the universities and includes grammar, phonetics, literature, history, culture, contemporary society, etc. From the second year, the programme focuses on translation. The third year is spent abroad in a country whose language the student has opted to study, while the students return to Agder University College for their final year.

The main part of the programme (second to fourth year) includes a foreign language component (40%), Norwegian (35%) and translation background subjects (25%). The foreign language component comprises grammar and usage in addition to translation of general language texts and technical/business/legal texts from Norwegian into the foreign language chosen by the student. The Norwegian component includes Norwegian language and usage, and translation of general language texts and technical/business/legal texts into Norwegian. This unit also includes translation theory. The background components comprise information technology, including the use of translation tools, economics, law and EU studies. The study of these subjects will enable students to perform better as translators and give them the best possible qualifications in preparation for their profession.

² This section was written by Sissel Rike, chair, Department of French, German and translation studies, Agder University College.

The overriding goal of the course is to qualify students for translation work. The emphasis is placed on the acquisition of translation techniques and language communication skills. The programme differs from the traditional, academically oriented university language studies in that its primary objective is to train and develop practical language skills, both in the foreign language as well as in the Norwegian mother tongue. In addition, the background courses are intended to provide insights into a number of relevant subject areas.

4.3.2 At postgraduate level

Agder University College has drawn up plans for a postgraduate programme in translation studies, but the plans have not yet been implemented due to lack of resources.

4.3.3 At the level of continuing education

At present, the college offers no continuing education programme in translation studies.

4.4 Career prospects for graduates

With increasing internationalisation, the demand for highly qualified translators will probably continue to rise. Most of the graduates from the Translation Studies Programme at Agder University College who have a reasonably good academic record and who seriously look for positions within their field, normally find appropriate work. The main bulk of translations in Norway are between Norwegian and English, so graduates who have chosen German or French find it advantageous to also be able to handle English texts.

4.5 Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structure of programmes

4.5.1 At first-degree level

The one-year foundation course has now been included as the first year of the translation studies programme. Earlier, the foundation course was a prerequisite for students who chose to follow the translation programme with French or German as foreign languages. A foundation course in English, French or German provides students with a good basis for translation studies with respect to both linguistic competence and general insight into the language and culture of the relevant countries.

Electronic translation tools are used to an increasing extent.

4.5.2 See 4.3.2.

4.5.3 See 4.3.3.

4.6 Examples of good practice

Students spend their third year in a country whose language they have chosen to study. An important aspect of the year abroad is the opportunity it provides for students to gain first-hand knowledge of the host country and its culture and at the same time extend their theoretical skills while immersed in the foreign language of their choice.

The details of the year abroad, including the place of study, and the subjects chosen must be approved by the teacher responsible for placing students abroad, and students are bound by these arrangements. Agder University College has entered into agreements with universities and other institutions of higher education in France, Germany/Austria and Great Britain/the

US. In exceptional circumstances students may be allowed to study in locations other than those Agder University College has entered into agreements with.

In order to meet the requirements relating to the year abroad, students must have attended lectures and classes in their chosen subjects and have sat the relevant exams. They must also be able to provide evidence that they have taken these exams. Where there are no final exams (this particularly applies in the case of France) the students in question are required to verify that they have presented themselves for the tests (the *contrôles continus*) that are held at various times during the academic year. In addition, every student must write, and submit, a written report in the foreign language containing a detailed account of their year abroad.

<http://www.hia.no/studier/fagomraader.htm>

4.7 Reasons underlying these changes

The foundation course has been included in the programme in order to provide students with a good basis for following the Translation Studies Programme. The inclusion of the foundation course in the programme itself is also related to the process of application and admission to colleges and universities in Norway.

4.8 Identification of needs

4.8.1 At first-degree level

The use of information technology and translation tools is becoming increasingly important in translation work. Agder University College aims to develop further its courses within this area. However, the amount of resources available for software is a limiting factor.

The recent proposal on the national level to change the degree structure of colleges and universities (following the Bologna convention) has resulted in a need to review the entire Translation Studies Programme at Agder University College.

4.8.2 At postgraduate level

In order to provide students with translating skills at a high level and to meet the demand in the market for highly qualified translators, Agder University College has seen the need for higher-level translation studies and has drawn up plans for a postgraduate programme.

Agder University College believes that it is essential to offer high quality language training to strengthen Norwegian business and industry in the face of the challenges posed by increasing internationalisation and intensified competition in the international markets. International negotiations and professional marketing require something far more than a sound command of language. The contemporary world requires people with a specialised training in translation at an advanced level and a mastery of technical registers. The overriding aim of the postgraduate programme is to train candidates of that calibre.

4.9 Measures to be taken at institutional, regional, national, and European level to meet the needs identified

4.9.1 The first-level programme will be reviewed on the basis of the proposed new degree structure in Norway.

4.9.2 At postgraduate level

Agder University College aims to implement a postgraduate programme in translation studies.

4.9.3 At the level of continuing education

Measures will be considered when the need has been properly identified and defined.

PROVISION FOR STUDENTS OF OTHER DISCIPLINES³

5. *Innovations in language provision for students of other disciplines*

5.1 Language studies integrated into non-language programmes

There is at present no degree programme where a language component is integrated as a compulsory element.

5.2 General and subject-oriented language courses accompanying non-language programmes

5.2.1 Content, objectives, and structures of programmes

Norwegian universities offer few language courses for non-specialists with the exception of the Law School in Oslo which proposes to its students 15 ECTS credits courses in English, French and German. The courses are designed for students with a prior knowledge of the language (at least two years at secondary school) and their objectives are twofold: they aim at improving language competence through the study of the legal system in the UK, France or Germany. The courses are taught jointly by academic staff from the language departments and by law specialists.

University colleges on the other hand, have developed an array of language courses in connection with business studies. The languages taught remain limited to English, French and German.

5.2.2 Recent changes in content, objectives, and/or structure of programmes

The Norwegian situation is somewhat paradoxical, as instead of increasing the number and the scope of language programmes for non-specialists in the view of an increasing demand for foreign language competence, some popular and well established programmes have been terminated. In 1984, the Universities of Oslo and Bergen offered a 15 ECTS credits course in French to science students. The objective of that course was to prepare the students for a year of studies in France. German was then offered in Oslo followed by English and Italian and Spanish. The courses were financed by the colleges of sciences but the scientific responsibility lay in the various language departments. Italian and Spanish were the first to suffer from budget cuts and as of year 2000, both colleges of sciences ended all language courses. The administration of the French course is now taken over temporarily by the Centre for University Collaboration with France, a unit directly financed by the Ministry of Education.

³ A large part of this section is due to Glenn Ole Hellekjær.

The University of Trondheim and the University of Tromsø maintain courses in French and German, courses offered to all non-specialists and not exclusively to students in sciences. The University of Oslo is making an attempt to work in that direction.

5.2.3 Examples of good practice

As mentioned in 5.2.1, university colleges are the most innovative institutions in programmes for non-specialists. The work done at Østfold University College at Halden is of particular interest. Østfold University College offers programmes in business English, French and German. Common to the programmes is a compulsory stay in the foreign country where the student either works for a private company (French, German) or study at the university (English). In the first year there are a large number of obligatory oral and written tasks and term papers and strong emphasis on language development.

Assessment makes ample use of a portfolio. For example, in a course entitled *Written Market Communication* a component is devoted to functional translation while the other part of the course concentrates on analysing and producing various text genres. Assessment in that course is an individual portfolio comprising functional translations into English and a number of other texts of different genres within market communication. The texts should be based on research done in one particular company. <http://olaf.hiof.no/~sf/englishindex.html>

5.3 Language provision and support for mobile students

5.3.2 For incoming students

Language courses are offered to all exchange programmes students before the beginning of the semester. Each university also offers more comprehensive language courses to all foreign students and staff.

5.3.3 For outgoing students

In 1984, the creation of language courses for science students aimed at increasing the number of students taking a year in France and Germany. The courses had two components: a 15 ECTS credits course in Norway and another 15 ECTS credits course at the University of Caen and at the University of Kiel. The courses abroad were intensive and were taught before the semester start at the respective Norwegian- French/German Study Centres. The courses are no longer financed by the Colleges of Sciences, but partly by the students themselves through grants from the State Educational Loan Fund. They are now offered to all students planning to study in France/Germany. The course in Caen is for example a 7 weeks intensive course (24 hours a week) and is credited with 15 ECTS credits by the home university. The course emphasises oral comprehension and expression, trains students in taking notes and prepares them to their studies at a French university through specialised assignments, oral presentations in their specialities, project reports.

5.4. Non-language programmes or parts of programmes taught through one or several other languages

5.4.1 Disciplines involved

All Norwegian universities and many of the colleges have courses in non-language subjects taught in English. Some even offer a complete program taught in English as is the case for the Agricultural University of Norway. There is great variation in the subjects, ranging from an International Business line at Østfold University College, International Masters programs at the Norwegian School of Management and Norwegian School of Business and Administration, from Norwegian Medieval History to Odontology at the University of Oslo, to for instance Physics and Fisheries in Tromsø.

5.4.2 Levels at which (parts of) programmes are taught

Although a large number of courses at the undergraduate level are taught in English, for instance Engineering topics in Stavanger and various subjects at the Norwegian School of Management, such as Intercultural Communication, the great majority are International Masters programs where everything is taught in English.

5.4.3 Languages used

English seems to be used almost exclusively

5.4.4 Target groups (mobile students, home students et cetera)

The target groups for these programs are first and foremost international (mobile) students, almost invariably as part of exchange programs. Several university departments offer their graduate courses in English if a foreign exchange student is registered for the course. This can be a source of conflicts, as the home students would prefer the course taught in Norwegian. In some cases courses are taught in English to domestic students when the lecturer does not master Norwegian. In addition, a student who so desires can always ask to have the text of a final examination in English. This is the case regardless of whether the course was taught in English or not.

5.4.5 Policies and objectives underlying the practice described

There does not seem to exist a clear policy or clearly stated objectives apart from meeting the needs of international students- although the Norwegian School of Management and the Norwegian School of Business and administration have the goal of creating an international milieu. At the University of Oslo there is at present growing interest for such programs. One reason is the desire to increase the number of students from abroad. A more tentative one is that these programs often become quite innovative, with positive spin-offs effects into other courses. A third is that there is a certain recognition that students need advanced English skills and that traditional courses are either unsuitable, or too comprehensive.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

6. Innovations in language studies in continuing education (excluding language specialists)

There are more than one million participants in adult education in Norway every year. Training takes place in the public educational system (where there is no special provision for non-specialists), adult education associations, folk high schools and other private institutions in the workplace.

Adult education associations are run by voluntary organisations, such as the Folkeuniversitetet Adult Education Association and the Workers' Educational Association of Norway which receive state support. They hold a wide variety of courses from non credit courses to a full university *grunnfag* (foundation course, 60 ECTS credits).

There are about 80 folk high schools in Norway owned and operated by different types of groups and bodies, ranging from Christian organisations to local councils. They offer a wide variety of courses but there are no formal examinations.

Distance education is widespread in Norway and will increase as more ICT is taken in use. The University of Tromsø develops programmes in English, French and German. A *grunnfag* (foundation course, 60 ECTS credits) is offered over two years. The students meet in Tromsø about two week-ends per semester and many cover long distances (mostly by plane) to get there. A number of adults are eager to increase their foreign language competence but it is uncertain that a typical university foundation course provides the appropriate answer. Universities face a high challenge in this domain.