

ReCALL

Newsletter

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Copy deadline for next issue:
30 September 1997

A Snapshot of CALL in UK Higher Education

In response to a letter to our university contacts, sent out with the last issue of this Newsletter, we were delighted to receive six Case Study articles from a variety of institutions in different parts of the UK. We hope readers will find these interesting, and will be stimulated to send in more case studies for the next issue.

Case Study: Bristol University

Calscribe

CALL activity in Bristol French has centred for two sessions around my application of *Calscribe*, Bristol University's in-house *Toolbook* template, to the teaching of French grammar. *Calscribe* requires no knowledge of any programming language, it fits into a single diskette and is available free from Bristol.

My exercises comprise a number of modules explaining and testing points of French grammar, and are intended for class use in first year and revision

use in all years. For curriculum purposes the files supplement an in-house grammar course known as Language Skills Development, whose written dossier is a series of chapters giving basic instruction in French Grammar: sample topics include the use and formation of basic tenses, types of pronoun and the use of articles. Copies are available from Bristol University French Department. Other, more advanced *Calscribe* files cover incidental points of grammar which have emerged as problematic. Examples include:

(i) the formation of adverbs, as for example *certain - certainement*: this is an area in which mistakes are frequent but the rules relatively simple and exceptions rare;

(ii) the spelling of adjectives ending phonetically in [a] as for example *banal, final* and *ovale*: this is an area of to me inexplicable difficulty for all undergraduates given again the relative simplicity of the underlying rules;

(iii) the more complex area of so-called reflexive verbs - a misnomer applied to those French verbs such as *se laver* and *se lever* which are always used with an object pronoun. The agreement rules for these verbs are sufficiently complex for one to guarantee that even native speakers cannot normally articulate them. However it is fairly easy to separate out the different problems they involve and to present them in sequence to students who can, using the kind of linear learning track which *Calscribe* encourages, gain a clear perspective on the problems confronting them in translating a sentence such, as 'Those are the things they said to one another' as '*Voilà les choses qu'ils se sont dites*'.

These three files are all available on application to Bristol and for demonstration purposes can be installed by anyone possessing a Windows computer, given that it is possible to download Toolbook courseware without the computer needing to have Toolbook itself installed.

The exercises in my applications are of four different types.

The first of these is the FREE RESPONSE QUESTION where the student types in a reply and scores it. The question is of the type: Form an adverb from *goulu*. Paradoxically this is the most complex type of question to program given the wide

range of possible responses and the inevitability of typing errors. Accordingly *Calscribe* permits a degree of flexibility for alternative answers or slight errors. To pre-empt confusion of choice *Calscribe* possesses a hotword facility which allows tips to be given in the form of removable pop-up screens of the type *Goulu = greedy*. Such equivalences are stored in a separate editable text file housed in the same directory as the *Calscribe* files. English keyboards make it awkward to type French accents so the *Calscribe* programmers have added a small accent chart which allows accented vowels to be added by a single click.

The second type of exercise is the PICK-FROM-LIST question which is of the type: Which is the correct adverb? followed by a list of possible answers. Here no typing is done by the student and, for the author, programming is simpler than with the free response question, given that answers are either right or wrong.

Thirdly there is the MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION which is again a right/wrong exercise but appropriate to more sophisticated points which may need instant explanation. For this reason they contain an EXPLANATION button which flashes up a subsidiary screen giving instant clarification of the relevant point once the answer has been scored. Questions here are of the type: The object of the following reflexive verb is direct, followed by four listed examples plus the response buttons T(RUE), F(ALSE) and D(ON'T KNOW). The explanations can be cancelled at will by the student.

Fourthly there is the so-called LATENT MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION which allows several answers and gives an immediate reason for a right or wrong answer. This type of question might be preferred for quite complex grammatical areas where several mistakes can be made even though the reasons why they are wrong are simple to explain. An example is: Which is the correct translated version of the following sentence?

Those are the lies she told herself,

followed again by a list of several possible answers on which the student can click and receive instant feed-back, either congratulating a right answer or explaining an error.

I find that a file of about 60 pages is enough to cover a single topic. To cover too many matters at once is confusing and to ask too many questions related to the same topic is boring. We all have our hobby-horses in the area of grammar teaching; I have not yet found a subject which is not appropriate to one of the several types of exercise I have used and described above. At my current level of expertise a 60-page file takes me two working days to prepare, although programming practice and improvements in the template itself plus increased RAM provision will expedite this still further. I would recommend 16MB as a minimum memory capacity for all users of *Calscribe*.

So far feedback in class, and at university preview days and IT open days, has been positive, and it is important to emphasise that I have no professional training in computers at all. *Calscribe* is thus proven as a courseware tool for the semi-gifted amateur and even that description I would regard as flattering. The keynote is integration. Using files such as I have described, computer-based learning can be integrated flexibly into formal grammar classes, into translation seminars, into private study and into the written dossiers which support all three of these areas of student work.

John Parkin
University of Bristol

Case Study: Newcastle University

Using the web as a resource in French Studies

Newcastle University in general, through its SuperJANET site, its well founded University Computing Centre, its nationally funded units Mailbase and Netskills, and its brand new Self Access Language Centre in particular, is unusually well provided for in terms of networked IT resources. Students have ready access to high-tech PCs with full network capability for email and searching the World Wide Web. The Web has attractions for

language teachers and learners as a new source of authentic materials - a resource that is likely to be attractive and motivating for their increasingly computer-literate students. There are increasing numbers of French language sites available that may be accessed from the UK. The present article describes some learning activities of students in the French Department at Newcastle University, and identifies one or two of the pedagogical considerations involved in resource-based learning, since the author argues that the Web is first and foremost a new resource and must be understood as such in pedagogical terms.

Some pedagogical considerations

Use of the Web within the curriculum is consistent with recent thinking in resource-based learning, distance learning and learning technology. Duffy and Jonassen stress the active role of the learner in acquiring knowledge and constructing personal understanding. Since 'constructivism' implies that the teacher (more a learning facilitator) can only start from the point where the individual student is at, there has been a growing acceptance of both student-centred learning and the use of resource-based learning, as opposed to more traditional teacher-centred, didactic (drill and practice) learning models. Resource-based learning does not necessarily have to be IT-based of course, but it can be successfully delivered through learning technology. In particular the Web is making a huge and varied quantity of new resources (text, data, graphics, sound and video) available to the language student. In France, for example, large organisations like the SNCF, media companies and government agencies have already gone onto the Web, and will inevitably be followed by many of the owners of vast ready-made banks of electronic information hitherto available only on Minitel that are waiting to be transported to the new Web platform.

Resource-based learning sits comfortably within the overall communicative approach to the foreign language curriculum. Access to authentic materials in the form of genuine information about a foreign culture and society, as made available to its own citizens, is an important learning resource in

its own right in a Languages or European Studies curriculum. One of the key pedagogical issues here is of course the guidance that students need in searching for appropriate information, and guidance in how to use it.

Reflection on these matters and action research on using the Web in Modern Languages are in their early stages. While we claim no original insight, we hope to stimulate discussion on relevant issues by describing existing practical uses of the Web as a resource. This article looks at how we have attempted to facilitate access to these new resources for French language students by setting up a structured electronic Information Gateway. The Gateway is intended to cover all the languages taught within the School of Modern Languages, although this article deals only with French, as yet the most extensive of the sets of links. The Newcastle Links to Foreign Web Pages are freely available across the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/~nsm1/links/contents.htm>

All the references to Web sites in this article may be followed up on this site

Transferable or generic learning outcomes:

In the days of TQA and Dearing, the promotion of IT skills within the context of Transferable Personal Skills is almost justification in itself for activities on the Web, provided of course students know what they are learning. IT induction sessions to first-year students give practical hands-on experience, and handouts tell them how to use common features of the Internet browser Netscape Navigator in order to become efficient seekers of information on the Web, and how to save information in various formats including within word processed text.

Subject-specific knowledge and skills

The structure of the French Information Gateway with its 200 or more separate French language links reflects certain staff specialisms and emphases within the Newcastle curriculum, rather than being aimed at the range of national needs in

French Departments across the UK (although the author is seeking support for such a project, similar for example to SOSIG - the Social Science Gateway). Topics in the Newcastle French Gateway range from Broadcasting and the Press, through Society, Politics and History, Literature, Places, Universities, to other Information Gateways, Libraries, and Search Engines, and sites specifically dedicated to Language Teaching and Learning.

To broaden the scope of the listing, the Gateway includes reference to other existing lists of French links. A few other University Departments have individual lists. Some others are constructed more to meet tourist or commercial needs rather than academic requirements. One or two individuals have attempted to set up Information Gateways for French Studies, which are useful starting points, in particular Tennessee Bob's aptly named Famous French Links. Further support to learners is available on the CTI's Internet Resources for Language Teachers list <http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti> and Ohio University Teaching Resources.

Purposes to which Newcastle student Web searches are being put include seeking information for assessed essays, dissertations, oral presentations for *lecteur/lectrice* classes, as well as for preparation for the year abroad in a French university. Links to language learning sites include on-line dictionaries and grammar tests, French Verb Conjugations and essay writing guides (*La dissertation: Feuille d'autoévaluation méthodologique*). The newest resources include Real Audio versions of the day's news via France Info radio, that a PC with a sound card can play back in quite acceptable quality, especially with headphones. And France 3 provides sound and video clips of regional news, again with free software. A large number of regional newspapers and some nationals provide free versions of their news stories. Complete electronic versions of many literary texts are available on the Web. Novels may be tedious to read on screen, but of particular interest are a number of collections of poetry (out of copyright), allowing the more adventurous students to identify various themes or authors more quickly than in the library. Students can consult a number of journals not in our library that have Web versions (INED's *Population et société*), and there are growing numbers

of Web journals with no paper equivalent (see the Web Journal of Modern Language Linguistics, edited from Newcastle).

A word of warning regarding student use of Web-based information: it is so easy to download into a word processor and into student essays that students need training and counselling about not only what constitutes plagiarism, but also how learning takes place. This is perhaps the most difficult issue and is not confined to Web-based learning of course. One most practical hint is to establish how to reference Web sources (see our Gateway's link to Citing Electronic Sources).

Geoff Hare
University of Newcastle

Reference

Duffy T and Jonassen D (1992), *The Design of Constructive Learning Environments: Implications for Instructional Design and the Use of Technology* Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag.

Case Study: Aston University

Computers in Languages & European Studies

The Department of L&ES has an IT strategy which reflects Aston's status as a technological university and is integrated into the department's mission and academic plan.

A suite of IT laboratories is dedicated to departmental users and supported by a team of technical and computer staff with a combined experience of 50 years in supporting language learning technology. The labs are all 'open access' with integrated networked computing and audio-visual facilities, including satellite broadcasts, which are linked via the campus network to all offices and teaching accommodation. Small labs are timetabled for language classes using IT. Additional central are networked and facilities are balanced between the

labs are also available with secure 24 hour access.

All students are automatically registered for library, login, filestore and email as they are enrolled by the university and trained in IT by the department. The department aims to integrate IT at the course design stage into all taught and distance learning courses in Modern Languages, European Studies and TEFL/TESL.

The department makes extensive use of the Internet (and intranet) for teaching, research and support, as well as showing its face to the rest of the world:

<http://www.les.aston.ac.uk/>

Course handbooks and learning resources are all available to departmental students in printed or electronic (HTML or word processed) format as appropriate. CALL programs and CDROMs are networked and facilities are balanced between the department's specific needs and central Library and Information Services (LIS) for more widely licensed facilities. Email is regularly used for communication between staff and groups of students.

Tim Hooton
Aston University

Case Study: University of Wales Swansea

CALL at the Department of German

The use of computers in language learning in our Department falls basically into two categories: use of the CALL lab and use of the Internet.

1. Use of the CALL lab

Our CALL lab is equipped with 20 Pentium computers with CD-ROM and Sound cards and capable of interactive monitoring by the tutor. It also offers Internet access. Software for all the languages taught in the School of European Languages

(French, German, Italian, Spanish, Catalan, Russian, Welsh) is available both for class teaching and for individual study.

For German we mainly use the TELL products *GramEx* and *GramDef* as well as *Translt-TIGER* and *Translt-TIGER Authoring Shell*. Additionally, we have four more Free- or Shareware programs for self-study use only.

Most of our language classes (i.e. Grammar, Prose and Translation classes of all levels) are taken early in the year to the CALL lab and given a basic introduction which should enable them to go back for self-study purposes. Some tutors teach classes in the lab on a regular basis. Some tutors now send individual students with particular problems in certain areas to the CALL lab. They advise these students about the software they might find most useful in order to improve their weak spots.

Generally, the feedback we get from students is very positive, but there are a few problems which we will need to address in the near future:

- there is no comprehensive departmental policy that ALL tutors have to take their classes to the CALL lab and provide an introduction;
- academic tutors seem more keen on going to the CALL lab than language assistants;
- we haven't yet a programme in place which allows monitoring of students' progress, both in class and in self-study sessions, which would allow us to integrate the lab much more efficiently into our teaching programme;
- we don't have an effective monitoring system whereby we could see whether the students are in fact using the lab for self-study.

2. Use of the Internet

At the beginning of each academic year we provide induction sessions for all our students, specifically geared towards German and the Internet. Additionally, we try to raise awareness of our home page and our extensive external links page, which provides access to a wealth of information from all areas related to German language learning and German studies, by demonstrating the use of the Web in tutorials. For a variety of courses (currently 8 academic courses) we have put together so-called course specific pages, which we show to the

students taking these courses and expect them to use during the year. Some feedback indicates that they actually do so.

The department has also created websites for MA modules taught by members of the department. Feedback again indicates that the post-graduates are using this resource.

There is one first year course which is taught entirely by using the Internet as a means of accessing news quickly and comprehensively. After two years' experience the feedback can be summed up as follows:

- the positive aspects are that it is easy to do searches, set up the home page with new links for each topic, and of course that the news is up-to-date and often very comprehensive.
- there are some drawbacks, however: the tutors have to spend a lot of time training the students early in the year, and even then some don't seem to do much of their own independent research, preferring to rely on what we spoonfeed them.
- they sometimes access texts which they can't really understand because their German is not good enough.
- they also tend to be diverted from traditional news media such as newspapers and magazines. On balance, however, we couldn't do the course without the Internet and some students become very adept and critical in its use as a source of information.

The one Internet resource that is most frequently used (especially for accessing news, newspapers and magazines) is our external links page.

Summary

Even though we are only in the first stages of developing CAL in our department, we already have a number of courses which benefit considerably from both the CALL lab and the integration of the Internet into the curriculum. The areas we need to develop are monitoring systems and evaluation of further software, particularly language learning software that has different levels of difficulty.

Dr Rolf Jucker
University of Wales Swansea

Case Study: Manchester Metropolitan University

The use of computers in language learning at the Manchester Metropolitan University

Course teams at MMU are committed to ensuring that students receive appropriate training in the uses of stand-alone and networked computer systems. Familiarity with these systems has become vital for students as patterns of assessment can now expect students to present work as a computer file or even to complete examined work during supervised sessions in a computer laboratory.

Languages students are no exception to these new developments and members of staff in the Department of Languages have taken many steps to ensure that students become computer literate as part of their portfolio of transferable skills, and also so that they can benefit from the computer assisted language learning materials available to them.

The main foreign languages which are taught at MMU are French, German, Italian and Spanish. These languages are available to students enrolled on courses located in the Department of Languages but also to students of other departments and faculties either through the University Wide Languages Programme (UNIWIDE) or through their inclusion on other degrees where the study of a foreign language can lead to a joint qualification or where it forms part of a menu of options. Additionally, Dutch and Japanese can be studied as part of the UNIWIDE programme.

Given this broad range of provision it has been a challenging task to assemble suitable CALL materials to serve the needs of so many different students. Consideration must be given to the level of the students, the foreign language being taught, and in some cases the main degree programme of the students in question. These criteria have made it important to distinguish between general language software and subject specific software.

For the most part the general language software which the Department has purchased falls into the category of grammar learning software, such as

Tuco II for German, as it is in the area of grammar that most students need at least some opportunity for self study and revision. Given the special commitments of the Department of Languages to teaching on various programmes of the Faculty of Management & Business, it is no surprise that most of the subject specific software purchases have been in the field of Languages for Business, such as *Linguawrite*.

However, not all the software which could enhance the teaching and learning experience is available off the shelf, and this has given rise to initiatives from the Department of Languages which have resulted in materials being produced specifically for certain courses. The largest of these initiatives has been the production of *Gertie*, a multimedia learning tool developed in conjunction with Educational Services and the Department of Computing. This was designed for the UNIWIDE scheme and allows students to acquire new vocabulary in French, German, Italian and Spanish. A project on a far more modest scale was undertaken to supplement the range of self-study materials for languages students on business-related programmes. This involved using *The Poetry Shell* to produce hypertexts of commercial correspondence.

The most recent development in the Department of Languages has been the arrival of the CALL products from the TELL Consortium. It will be important to ensure that these materials are fully integrated into the teaching and learning programme for the 1997/1998 academic year. However with the purchase of the *Translt-TIGER Authoring Shell* it may well be that by September the ready to run software, such as *GramDef* and *GramEx*, will be joined by materials which staff have prepared themselves.

Dr Christopher Jones
Manchester Metropolitan University

Case Study: Leicester University

CALL and TELL at Leicester University

CALL at Leicester University started in **Italian**, the smallest of the three Modern Languages departments, with the development of Prof. Harry McWilliam's *Luigi* (Leicester University Italian Grammar Interlocutor) software in the early 1980s. This program ran on a single BBC machine in the Italian Department and was used mainly by first- and second-year students alongside their intensive Italian language courses. The program ceased to be used with the advent of the IBM and was replaced by the *Luisa* program, developed at Leeds by Prof. Brian Richardson. *Luisa* is now networked at Leicester and is intensively used by second- and final-year students as an optional language learning and revision tool. There were plans in 1996 to make *Luisa* part of the core first-year Italian language course, but these had to be postponed because of lack of funds and staff time.

Another project, designed to accompany the second-year *Renaissance Civiltà* course, was written using the *Che Aggiungo?* authoring package and runs on a stand-alone IBM in the department. A further package used in the department is the software accompanying the first-year textbook *In italiano* (by A. Chiuchiù *et al.*). All of these packages have been optional rather than core elements of the course.

The use of CALL in **German** started in 1992 with two projects funded by the Enterprise Learning Initiative. The projects both employed the *mcBOOKmaster* authoring software (from McMaster University, Canada). This is a DOS-based package which runs on any IBM compatible from 286 upwards and has also proved itself completely reliable on the university network. The projects were concerned with developing software to accompany books which were already being used in the department's teaching and have led to the publication of two sets of CALL exercises: *Eindrücke-Einblicke* (by C. Hall, Langenscheidt 1996) and *Swedish Exercises* (by P. Holmes, I.

Hinchliffe and C. Hall, Hull Swedish Press 1995).

CALL is now fully integrated into the teaching of the department:

1. *Eindrücke-Einblicke* is an integral part of first-year German language teaching. A series of German grammar lectures is accompanied by weekly CALL sessions in the computer lab. The *mcBOOKmaster* software automatically stores the results of each session every time the student logs off and builds up a profile of the student's performance over a period of time. The students are required to email their results to the course tutor twice a term and are then provided with a printout of their performance so far. The mark achieved in the CALL exercises counts towards the overall first-year mark.

2. The *Swedish Exercises* are integrated into the finalist Introductory Swedish option in a similar way.

In **French** there has not been any use of CALL software as yet, mainly because of pressure of work on teaching staff and the lack of a member of staff with a passion for IT. However, some of the recently published TELL Consortium material has been acquired, and there are concrete plans to develop a package for first- and second-year students using the *TransIt-TIGER Authoring Shell* in the 1997 summer vacation.

CALL has recently been introduced in the Language Centre for **English as a Foreign Language**. Four stand-alone PCs have been purchased for the self-access area and various packages installed. Nothing has been networked because of the additional cost of network licences. The material used includes dedicated packages and material developed by Language Centre staff using *Storyboard*, *Gapmaster*, etc.

In the School of Education, there is a strong CALL element in the taught MA in Applied Linguistics with TESOL. One of the modules of the MA is the University's Basic Certificate in IT Skills, and there is an additional optional module on CALL and TELL which includes sessions on concordancing and the use of the Internet in language teaching.

In all language subjects, students are encouraged to use word-processing for their essays and other written assignments, or even required to do a certain percentage of their work in this way. A real

improvement in this area could be achieved by using foreign-language versions of word-processing packages, which would give students access to French, German and Italian spell checkers, thesauri and other word-processing tools, but as yet the University has not been willing to make the funds available to purchase these packages.*

The use of the Internet as a teaching tool is increasing in all foreign languages taught at Leicester, mostly as an optional element, but in Italian also as an integrated part of the finalist Sicily course, for which students are given an introduction to searches on the Internet by Library staff. CD-ROM tools (e.g. dictionaries, Dante's *Inferno*) are also used on stand-alone machines in the Language Centre and the Library, but they have not yet been networked because of lack of funds.

The development at Leicester has been a steady increase in the use of CALL, and the results have been extremely positive. In German the integration of obligatory CALL elements into two courses has resulted in considerable time saved in the routine marking of language work. The student reaction has been encouraging: there are undoubtedly some computerphobes among the students, but they are a small minority, and most appreciate the element of variety that the computer involves and also see computer literacy as an important skill for their later careers.

It would be senseless to pretend that there have been no problems with the increasing use of CALL. The main one has been access to computers. The School of Modern Languages does not have a computer lab of its own for student use, but has to rely on the university's general provision. There is no problem with the timetabled CALL sessions in German, but there is considerable pressure on resources for use beyond this weekly two hour slot.

There are great differences in the use of CALL in the languages taught at Leicester University. The lesson from our experience is that the use and development of CALL material depends mainly on the staff which departments happen to have at a particular time. The main requirements are: an enthusiasm for the use of IT as a part of a modern university course and a willingness to invest a not inconsiderable amount of time on the development of course materials. There is a pay-off later in a

reduced marking load, but this saving can only be made after a substantial initial investment, which realistically only the enthusiast will be prepared to make.

Christopher Hall
Leicester University

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Editor's note: It may not be necessary to purchase the foreign language word processors to have access to these tools, which can be purchased as add-ons for some word processors.

CTI Modern Languages Open Days and Workshops 1997 - 1998

Open Days

Wednesday 25 June 1997

Wednesday 23 July 1997

Wednesday 3 September 1997

This is the first series of Open Days offered by CTI Modern Languages. They are designed to enable you to visit the Centre and obtain hands-on experience of relevant CALL software. Staff will be available to offer advice.

There is no charge for attending the open days but the number of participants we can accommodate at any one time is limited. Please contact Jo Porritt at CTICML to reserve a place. Visitors may attend at any time between 1000am and 1600pm. Lunch and refreshments are not provided, but may be purchased on campus.

CALL Workshops

Saturday 18 October 1997

Wednesday 28 January 1998

Further information will be available shortly. Contact Jo Porritt at CTICML. Email: j.v.porritt@langc.hull.ac.uk

TELL Consortium News: Availability of materials

Anyone who has ordered materials from Batch 1 should now have received them.

Batch 1 materials consist of French and Spanish *Encounters*, *GramExFrench* and German, *GramDef* French and German, all the *TransIT-TIGER* programs and all the *Medialogue* programs.

Batch 2 materials are currently in production, and are expected to be sent out during July. They comprise Italian and Portuguese *Encounters*, *GramEx Italian*, *French and German Online Dictionaries*, *French Periodicals Database* and *InterprIT*.

Batch 2 programs can be downloaded from the ftp server at Hull by people who have ordered them and who do not wish to wait until July for the packaged versions. Please note that *Italian Encounters*, which was not available when the rest of Batch 2 was mounted for ftp, is now mounted for ftp download.

The third and final batch of TELL programs consists of *German Encounters*, *GramEx Spanish* and *Ça sonne français*. These programs are in the final stages of checking and if all goes according to plan, they should be published in October, with the software being made available for ftp download in advance of publication.

Requests for ftp access should be addressed to

Tell-support@langc.hull.ac.uk

TELL Consortium News: TELLuser@mailbase.ac.uk

This recently established list provides a forum for users of TELL materials to exchange ideas and discuss ways of integrating the materials into their teaching programmes. In addition, it provides a route for up-to-date information to be disseminated by the TELL consortium - about bugfixes, upgrades, new developments, workshops and any other useful information gleaned by the consortium during its task of producing and supporting the TELL materials.

It is hoped that the developers of the materials will become members of the list and contribute to the discussions. It is also possible that the list might become a means for exchanging authored materials between institutions.

Technical support queries should not be sent to this list, but should be sent to the email address

tell-support@langc.hull.ac.uk

To join the list, send a message to

mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk

with the message

**join telluser yourfirstname yourlastname
stop**

TELL Consortium News: *GramEx German* - network bug

The current version of *GramEx German*, v2.3, which is being distributed by Hodder and Stoughton and which until recently was mounted on our ftp server at Hull, has been shown to malfunction when mounted on a read only network. When a

student completes the number of exercises s/he has chosen to attempt, the program tries to write a log file, which it fails to do when mounted on a read only network, giving rise to an error message.

The developer of the program has provided a new version of the program's .exe file which, when it replaces the existing .exe file, removes the problem and amends the version number of the program to v2.3a.

The new .exe file, german.exe, dated 13.4.97, is available via anonymous ftp. It should be copied into the existing gramex_g directory, where it will overwrite the old .exe file. The german.exe file is not sufficient to run the program on its own. It requires all the files in the gramex_g directory of the original installation.

The details for download via anonymous ftp are as follows:

Host name: ftp.cti.hull.ac.uk

Location: directory patches/gramex

In case of difficulties with download, please contact Fred Riley at

F.H.Riley@langc.hull.ac.uk

TELL Consortium News: Availability of TLTP36 materials

Newly available at the CTI ftp site are two items of Macintosh software developed by the French for Scientists and Engineers project supported by Nuffield with TELL consortium funding. They are

***Lire* Texts for CQFD**

Lire is a program exploring strategies to help the student understand unseen texts. It is being made

available with the *Travaux Pratiques* texts from Level 1 of *CQFD: le français des sciences et des techniques*.

Students should attempt the *Lire* task before going into the classroom in which the text is to be discussed. The exercise is designed to help students by taking them progressively in a series of logical steps from understanding the gist to understanding the detail. It is hoped that the exercise will help not only in the understanding of these particular texts but will also provide a method for the study of texts in general.

Ecrire

Ecrire is a writing tool consisting of two parts: *Ecrire un exposé* and *Stratégies linguistiques*. Within the framework of *Ecrire un exposé*, the student can generate a well-structured document, whilst accessing the online linguistic help given in *Stratégies linguistiques*.

The program can be used with reference to the texts in *En fin de compte*, which are listed within the program, or with any other texts.

To download these materials send a message to

tell-support@langc.hull.ac.uk

and you will be given details of the necessary login and password.

Two other Macintosh programs from the French for Scientist and Engineers project will be made available shortly. These are *Informat* and the *Lire Shell* - the latter allows teachers to exploit the *Lire* program using texts of their own choice.

Other TLTP36 materials now available from the ftp site are the authoring packages *Apicale & Lacuna* and *Oyez & Fermin*, and the multimedia program *Cines* for students of Spanish who have partially completed a beginners course. These programs are for IBM PC or compatible machines.

MetaText, *MCQ* and *TAP* (for Macintosh) and the *Language Handling Workstation* Macros for Word for Windows (IBM PC) should be available before the next academic year.

Conference Report

IWLP gets even wider

The sixth annual conference of representatives of HEIs running institution-wide language programmes (IWLPs) was held in the post-modern surroundings of University College Stockton from March 24th - 26th. Seventy or so delegates from across the higher education spectrum were present, though the majority of them were from the 'new' university sector, where IWLPs are often big business in terms of student numbers (over 1,000 in some institutions), but not in terms of funding. The main issues covered were logistical (the huge and rapid expansion of IWLPs; the obligation to deliver a viable skill in perhaps 1.5 - 2.5 hours per week plus self-access; the precarious funding situation), methodological (a practical approach based on communicative principles - with a deprecatory sideways glance at current language-teaching practice on mainstream BA programmes; the organisation of self-access), assessment-related (portfolio-based assessment; accreditation using the NVQ framework and the criteria published by the Languages Lead Body) and of course the use of new technologies.

Technology-mediated learning is a crucial part of the self-access element of IWLP programmes. Several of the inputs were specifically related to one or more of the wide range of language-learning activities which can be delivered electronically. Gilles Couzin and Vita Falbo-Ellis gave a comprehensive introduction to the use of the Web in general and to selected sites of interest to linguists in particular. Unfortunately the local network had intermittent problems coping with twenty or more keen novices all trying to gain access at the same time! Philippa Wright of CILT introduced us to the burgeoning Lingu@NET site

<http://www.ncet.org.uk/projects/linguanet/index.html> aimed at providing a wide range of information of interest to teachers of languages at all levels and managed in conjunction with the NCET. Regular visits to this site are rapidly becoming a must for

those who wish to keep abreast of developments in language teaching. Further Web-oriented sessions included those led by Carlos Vargas and Colin Beaven.

June Thompson promoted the new HEVOCAL network, and she and Jo Porritt of the CTI Centre for Modern Languages at Hull ran a workshop based on the software produced by the TELL Consortium. Many of the packages have now been officially published, with the remaining ones following very soon. (Please see page 10 for up-to-date details.) Kathy Courtney presented the work of the ASTCOVEA project which promotes a deductive approach to the study of grammar. Further sessions on the role and organisation of self-study in IWLPs were given by Cécile Tschirhart (the integration of self-study in IWLPs), Stella Hurd (OU language materials) and Myrna Hawkin (use of a variety of media for learner support).

An enjoyably stimulating time was had by all, stimulating enough to lead many members to abandon themselves to a wild party spirit on a blues band-accompanied riverboat trip up the Tees, to say nothing of the few adventurous souls who later sampled the delights of the over-25s night at the Millenium Club in Stockton. But further information on that event is beyond the scope of this report...

Paul Hickman
LSU College of HE

◆ Recent software donations

Chinese - English Dictionary (*Silverom Multimedia*)
Dyner Demo disk (*Dyner*)
Il Dizionario Italiano in CD-ROM (*La Repubblica*)
Medi8or (*ABLAC*)
Triple Play Plus Demo (*Syracuse*)
Wida's Authoring Suite update (*Wida Software Ltd*)

◆ Recent book donations

Levy M (1997) *Computer-assisted Language Learning: Context and Conceptualization*, Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-823631-X
Korsvold A-K and Rüschoff B (1997) *New Technologies in language learning and teaching*, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 92-871-3254-2

Software Review

Cobuild English Collocations

HarperCollins Publishers 1995

Editor-in-Chief: John Sinclair; Editorial Director: Gwyneth Fox

Price: £40.00 plus VAT

Minimum systems requirement: IBM or compatible PC with 80386 or faster microprocessor; minimum 2Mb RAM (4Mb recommended); Microsoft Windows 3.1; 512Kb free for hard disk storage; CD-ROM drive with 150 Kbps transfer rate or better.

Cobuild English Collocations is essentially a database of text excerpts, indexed so that the user can call up examples of selected words co-occurring with their most common collocates. Accessing a collocation is extremely easy: the user selects from a scrolling list of node words ("node" = the keyword in a collocation), and then from a further list of up to twenty collocates of the chosen node. The program then provides a screen of concordance lines in which node and collocate co-occur within four words of each other. If further detail is required, clicking on a highlighted concordance line calls up a slightly longer context, with a note about the spoken or written genre of the source text.

Cobuild English Collocations comes boxed with a small (CD-ROM sized) manual containing instructions for its installation, suggestions for use, and details of Cobuild services and technical support. The manual also contains a brief description of the *Bank of English*, the 200 million word corpus of spoken and written text which provides the data for all Cobuild publications. In a section entitled "Exploring *Cobuild English Collocations*" the manual draws attention to the fact that the commonest collocates of many words are not those supplied by intuition. It points out that, contrary to what one might expect, blue and brown are not significant collocates of eye; instead *Cobuild English Collocations* reveals that eye co-occurs most commonly with keep, and also forms compounds (with black, contact, private, public) and idioms (turning a blind eye). Although the amount of data on disk is very limited compared to the total resources of the *Bank*

of English, the intention seems to be that users should make their own deductions about lexical patterns on the basis of the evidence provided. It is certainly the case that, when they are properly scrutinised, the concordance lines are often more informative than a dictionary entry regarding not only the frequency of collocates for a node word, but also the relative positions of node and collocate in the clause, the degree of variation permissible within a lexical phrase, and the genres in which the collocation is likely to occur.

The search process for *Cobuild English Collocations* can be learnt in a matter of minutes, but making sense of the data is a more complex matter, and searches may also be frustrated by the limitations of the node and collocate lists. The greatest of these limitations is that there are only 10,000 node words; users who want to search for the collocates of a particular term may well find that they cannot proceed because the term is not included as a node. Node words were apparently selected by computer on the basis of frequency and distribution, and the consequence of this mechanical selection process is that it is impossible to predict which words the node list will contain. For practical reasons technical words and proper names have been excluded, as are the hundred or so most common English words (which have a vast collocational range), but the words that are included are spread across all frequency bands, the most frequent occurring more than 500,000 times in the *Bank of English* (said) and the least frequent occurring less than 500 times (conferred). My first query for *Cobuild English Collocations* - 'Is it possible to prorogue anything other than a parliament?' - was a non-starter because prorogue is not a node word, but much commoner words are also missing from the node list, for example the cooking terms braise, knead, marinate, poach and stew, although they seem suitable candidates for inclusion because they are collocationally restricted and largely depend for their meaning on the nouns with which they collocate.

The Collocates

The pool of collocates is far larger than the list of nodes, as up to twenty collocates are listed for

each node word. Naturally enough some collocates also function as nodes, but this does not necessarily mean that the two words that pair in a collocation each include the other on their collocate list. In most cases one of the two words will be more frequent than the other, and this usually means that it will collocate with a greater number of words. As only the twenty most statistically significant collocates for the node are given, a relatively frequent collocate of a common word often remains unlisted, whilst the collocation may be acknowledged in the list provided for the less common word of the pair, which has fewer collocates.

Although the limited number of collocates for each node may seem a minor defect in the design of *Cobuild English Collocations*, it does have serious consequences for the user who comes to the program with a specific language production query. In such cases it is most likely that the search will begin with a common word in an attempt to identify its less common collocate, for example a language learner looking up a noun/verb collocation such as 'repeal a law', 'violate a law', or 'obey the law' is likely to start with 'law' rather than 'repeal', 'violate' or 'obey'. Unfortunately 'law' has such a wide collocational range that the only verbs listed among its twenty most statistically significant collocates are 'says' and 'passed'; in order to access examples of further verb collocations the collocationally restricted 'repeal', 'violate' and 'obey' must be specified as nodes. An even more serious defect of *Cobuild English Collocations* is that it does not acknowledge the existence of a number of very obvious collocations. 'Break the law', for example, is not listed with either 'break' or 'law' as node, because both words collocate more significantly with at least twenty other words.

The *Cobuild English Collocations* manual warns the user that its automatically selected examples may contain anomalies and errors:

In corpus work you quickly learn that there are some odd and unusual occurrences in natural language. Sometimes the context is not sufficiently long to explain why a word sequence has arisen, and sometimes there are mistakes, misprints, and peculiar usages.

While I accept as inevitable that some of the

concordance lines will be obscure, there is scope for a considerable amount of editing of the *Cobuild English Collocations* examples. We can afford to be tolerant when a large selection of concordance lines is at our disposal, but *Cobuild English Collocations* provides only twenty for each collocational pair, so it is irritating to find that some do not really seem to exemplify the collocation at all (a particularly frequent finding when both node and collocate are relatively common words). Future versions of *Cobuild English Collocations* might also consider the issue of distributional range as well as frequency when selecting collocates and concordance lines. The collocation of 'cow' with 'coo', for example, was sufficiently frequent in the Bank of English to merit statistical significance, but every example in *Cobuild English Collocations* seems to come from a single source (apparently a phonetics seminar) in which the pronunciation of cow as coo was under discussion. To avoid odd collocations such as these, entirely dependent on an unusual choice of topic, only collocates which occur in more than one source document should be selected.

Linguists and learners with serious queries about collocational behaviour will probably prefer direct access to a large corpus, such as that provided by *CobuildDirect*. The kind of data-driven learning activities proposed by Tim Johns (<http://sun1.bham.ac.uk/johnstf>) work far better when access is not restricted to twenty examples for each of twenty frequent collocates. *Cobuild English Collocations*, however, has the advantage of being relatively cheap and extremely easy to use, and it does provide the linguistically sophisticated browser with a wealth of collocational information beyond the reach of native-speaker intuition.

Hilary Nesi
CELTE, University of Warwick

Addendum

In *ReCALL Newsletter* Number 10, March 1997 in the software review for *PROF* ('Practical Revision of French') the program was entitled 'a new Apple Macintosh computer program for the revision of French grammar'. This software is in fact only available for the PC, and not the Apple Macintosh.

The EUROCALL Directory of Courseware Development Projects

What is the EUROCALL Directory?

A database of ongoing projects which involve the development of language learning courseware employing computer-based technologies

How is it funded?

The project is funded by the European Commission, DG XXII - Education, Training and Youth, for the calendar year 1997.

What is the purpose of the Directory?

The aim is to provide language teachers in higher education with up-to-date information on current courseware development activities, funded from European Union and other sources. By utilising the expertise available within EUROCALL, the project will also endeavour to identify good practice and attempt to minimise the duplication of effort which currently exists in this field.

How does it work?

Developers are invited to submit information about their project in a specific format, **before the end of June 1997**. The EUROCALL Directory will be searchable under a variety of relevant fields (e.g. country, target languages, technological and pedagogical focus, etc.) Information extracted from the database will be supplied to teachers, potential developers and researchers electronically or in printed form and it is hoped that the Directory will eventually become searchable online.

How to submit information

The submission form for Directory entries is now available on the Web (URL shown below). Your completed entry will then be automatically transmitted to Jo Porritt in the EUROCALL office, who is managing the database. If you would prefer to fax or email your entry, a plain text file is available from the Web, or the EUROCALL office.

Project Co-ordination

The EUROCALL Directory project is being co-ordinated from the EUROCALL office in Hull, and the two other partners are Françoise Blin, Dublin City University and Nicole Chénik, Université Paris Dauphine.

Project Correspondence:

June Thompson, Project Co-ordinator
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473816

<http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/direct.htm>
or
<http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/eurocall.htm>

Forthcoming Events

18 June 1997, Loughborough, UK: Ist Annual Computer Assisted Assessment Conference

Information: Janine Mascia, Project Officer, CAA Support, Flexible Learning Initiative, Loughborough University, Loughborough LE11 3TU, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1509 223765, Email: caa@lboro.ac.uk

23-28 June 1997, USA: CALICO'97

Information: CALICO, Tel 919 660 3180, Fax 919 660 3183, Email calico@acpub.duke.edu

7-9 July 1997, Hull, UK: The Language Adviser: A new type of teacher

Information: Marina Mozzon-McPherson, Language Institute, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1482 465862, Fax +44 (0)1482 466180
Email: M.Mozzon-McPherson@langc.hull.ac.uk

7-9 July 1997, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: The South African Association for Language Teaching 25th Annual Conference

Information: Prof D Z van der Berg, SAALT Conference, Dept of Afrikaans, Private Bag X01, Scottsville 3209, South Africa

Tel (0331) 2605562, Fax (0331) 2605576,
Email: secret@afrik.unp.ac.za

16 July 1997, London, UK: Desktop Video conferencing Workshop

Information: UKERNA, The Atlas Centre, Chilton, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 0QS, UK
Email: workshop@ukerna.ac.uk

12-16 August 1997, Canada: FLEAT III at UVIC
Information: The University of Victoria

Tel (604) 721 8291, Fax (604) 721 8778
Email: FLEATIII@CALL.UVIC.CA

11-13 September 1997, Dublin, Ireland: EUROCALL 97

Information: Françoise Blin or Jane Fahy, SALIS, Dublin City University, Dublin 9, Tel +353 1 704 5809, Fax +353 1 704 5527, Email: eurocall@dcu.ie

15-17 September 1997, Telford, UK: ALT-C 97: Virtual Campus, Real Learning

Information: Rhonda Riachi, ALT, University of Oxford, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JA, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1865 270290, Fax: +44 (0)1865 280364,
Email: alt@conted.ox.ac.uk

15-17 September 1997, Antwerp, Belgium: CALL and cultural studies in the language curriculum

Information: Licia Calvi, Dept of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Antwerp, Universiteitsplein, 1, B-2610 Antwerp, Belgium
Tel: +32 3 820 28 18, Fax: +32 3 820 28 23, Email: calvi@uia.ua.ac.be

18-19 September 1997, Brighton, UK: Writing the future

Information: Lyn Pemberton, Writing and Computers 10, School of Information Management, University of

Brighton, Lewes Road, Brighton, BN1 4GJ, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1273 642916, Fax: +44 (0)1273 642405,
Email: WandC10@brighton.ac.uk, WWW: <http://www.itri.brighton.ac.uk/events/WandC97/WandC97.html>

21-23 September 1997, Exeter, UK: CALL'97 Theory and Practice of Multimedia in CALL

Information: Mrs Daphne Morton, CALL'97 Conference, Dept of French, The University, Exeter EX4 4QH, UK

Tel/Fax +44 (0)1392 264222

6-8 November 1997, London, UK: London Language Show

Information: Brintex, 32 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, SW1V 2SS, UK

Tel +44 (0)171 973 6401, Fax +44 (0)171 233 5054

15 November 1997, ALL French Day, London, UK:

Information: ALL, 150 Railway Terrace, Rugby, CV21 3HN, UK, Tel:+44 (0)1788 546443, Fax: +44 (0)1788 544149

14-17 January 1998, BETT 98, London, UK:

Information: EMAP Education, Greater London House, Hampstead Road, London, NW1 7QZ, UK, Tel: +44 (0)171 388 2430, Fax: +44 (0)171 388 2578, WWW: <http://www.emap.com/bett>

3-5 April 1998, ALL Language World, Brighton, UK:

Information: ALL, 150 Railway Terrace, Rugby, CV21 3HN, UK, Tel:+44 (0)1788 546443, Fax: +44 (0)1788 544149

13-17 July 1998, Melbourne, Australia: WORLDCALL Conference

Information: June Gassin, Horwood Language Centre, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia

Email: June_Gassin@muwayF.unimelb.edu.au

10-12 September 1998, Leuven, Belgium:

EUROCALL 98

Information: CTI Centre for Modern Languages, University of Hull (address on front cover),
Email: EUROCALL@hull.ac.uk

17-19 September 1998, Italy: 5th CercleS International Conference

Information: CercleS Secretariat, Centre for Modern Languages, University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AA, UK, Tel/Fax +44 1752 232249,
Email: cercles@plym.ac.uk,
URL <http://www.cml.plym.ac.uk/CERCLES/CERCINTRO.HTML>

16-18 September 1999, Besançon, France:

EUROCALL 99

Information: CTI Centre for Modern Languages, University of Hull (address on front cover),
Email: EUROCALL@hull.ac.uk