

ReCALL

Newsletter

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*Copy deadline for next issue:
30 April 1998*

Case Study: University of Stirling

Use of Web Forms to Develop Student Profiles in Languages

Project Varsetile¹ (TLTP Project number 53) has been involved with a number of Web activities within the University of Stirling. Examples include HyperNews and WebBoard-based discussion groups, development support (education and technical issues) for staff converting courses to Web-based presentation, the development of course-based Web pages and maintenance of the student home page. One of the most interesting uses we have made of the Web has been to exploit the forms mechanism to deliver tests based on multiple choice questions (forms can also be used to deliver other types of question).

Background

In partnership with the French department, for the last three years we have been profiling their first year cohort. The purpose of this profiling has been to examine each student's ability in eleven aspects of French grammar. In particular,

- Verb - use of tenses, the passive, past participles
- Verb - use of the subjunctive
- Verb - syntax
- Negation
- Word Order
- Articles
- The Adjective
- Demonstrative, Indefinite, Relative, Interrogative

- Use of preposition
- Expressions of degree
- Vocabulary

The profiling information is obtained by the students taking an eighty-question test at the start of their first semester. Each question is on one of the categories of grammar given above. The distribution of the grammatical categories is random. Each question is multiple choice, with four choices.

The form

The test starts by getting the student to enter their name. They then click on a link to get to the questions. The student then sees the first question below:

no mechanism to go back and review answers before final submission.

To answer a question the student clicks on the appropriate radio button; to reveal the next question the form is simply scrolled. If a student wishes to change an answer, they simply select another of the radio buttons. The students have fifty minutes to complete the test.

When the student is happy with his or her answers s/he clicks on the submit button (at the bottom of the form). In response, a Perl script runs which 'marks' the test and the student then instantly receives an overall score and a score in each of the eleven grammatical categories. The same Perl script ensures:

Netscape - [French Test]

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Options Directory Window Help

Back Forward Home Reload Images Open Print Find Stop

Location: http://www.students.stir.ac.uk/test/ftp.htm#Question1

What's New? What's Cool? Destinations Net Search People Software

Which ONE of the expressions listed fits the context given?

1. Voici quatre livres. veux-tu?

Quel

Quoi

Lequel

Que

Which ONE of the expressions listed fits the context given?

2. J'en ai vu

d'autres.

des autres.

autrui.

les autres.

Which ONE of the expressions listed fits the context given?

Document: Done

Initially this questionnaire was in HyperCard on the Macintosh. We changed to the Web-based format to gain platform independence. This means that we can run the test in any of the university's computing faculties, not just the Macintosh ones. We also, as a simple by-product of this change, gained the useful function that, by scrolling up, the students can review their answers before submission. The HyperCard version, also produced by Varsetile, had

- that students can only submit answers once - no using the back button and then very carefully reviewing the given answers!
- there is at least one answer.

In both instances above, appropriate error messages are issued.

The Results

Each student's results are also stored in a file (on a server). When all the students have taken the test a class profile is produced from the file on the server. A Perl script also does this. A few days after the test, students receive a printout of their scores. They then use this information in conjunction with their tutor to build a personalised workplan for the *GramEx* software².

At the end of the first semester the students take the same test again to determine their improvement over the semester. The department was very keen to have this second running of the test to investigate how the students' performance had changed during their first semester at Stirling. For the three years that we have complete data, the class scores have shown a statistically significant improvement. The departments of German and Spanish have used the same technology to profile their students. They also ran the test at the end of the semester, again showing significant performance improvements.

Testing

Diagnostic testing in this form is by no means perfect. It only provides a snapshot of a particular student and class, and guessing should allow students with no knowledge of French grammar to score 25%. To discourage this, it is made clear before the test commences that the main purpose of the test is for the students themselves to discover any grammatical weaknesses. It is also made clear that the score they obtain will in no way contribute to their final course mark. This still does not make this a precise instrument for profiling the students but nevertheless the information obtained is used by both the students and the departments involved.

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Author's Note

Varsetile has published two volumes of case studies; a third is currently in production. Download these from the Web in either Adobe's Portable Document Format (PDF) or postscript. Varsetile's Web site is at

<http://annick.stir.ac.uk>

Paper copies are available directly from the Project at a cost of £10.00.

¹ Value Added Re-use at Stirling of Existing Technology in the Learning Experience

² *GramEx* is available from the TELL Consortium, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX Tel: 01482 465872, Fax: 01482 473816, <http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/tell.htm>

FDTL News

The Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning aims to develop and disseminate good practice in teaching and learning throughout the higher education sector, as identified in the quality assessment programme. The Phase Two Projects share funding of £4.3 million over the next three years. A list of the 19 successful projects may be found at:

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/initiat/current/fdtl/ph2proj.htm>

Optimising Student Learning Through Residence Abroad

The HEFCE Quality Assessments identified residence abroad as a key experience for all language students, but one where practice nationally is very uneven. The consortium led by Jim Coleman at Portsmouth University will identify and disseminate best practice in every aspect of residence abroad, from preparation (linguistic, cultural, practical, psychological) through support and monitoring to curriculum integration and assessment. The project will explore the use of communication and information technologies in support of residence abroad - internet-based preparation projects or email links, for example - and will also use new technologies to ensure maximum dissemination and take-up. A project Web site, linked to HEFCE and to other FDTL projects, and with an associated discussion group, will in year one provide analysis of TQA reports and

a database of current practice, and by year three will offer on-line practical guidance for students and a checklist of best practice for consultation by departments, students and assessors.

Jim Coleman
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The CIEL (Curriculum and Independence for the Learner) Project: South Bank, Leeds Metropolitan and Southampton Universities

Promoting learner independence

Over the last few years there has been a steady increase in the provision of well-resourced university language centres and multi-media laboratories; the general aim being to extend and enhance the learning experience of language students, many of whom may well have only two or three class contact hours per week. It is argued that variety of materials and medium will cater for learners with individual needs (including disabilities), interests and learning styles, while variety of task will develop the transferable skills and language learning strategies which lead to learner autonomy.

In practice, however, many language centres (if learners and teachers are lucky enough to have access to one) are under-used and the learning resources available are not fully exploited. This is an issue identified by the 1995/1996 Quality Assessment Overview Reports for French, German and Iberian languages and they call for independent study to be more fully integrated into teaching and learning programmes.

The CIEL Language Support Network, one of ten language projects funded under the second phase of FDTL will address this issue through three regional support centres based around the project partners. The project, which started in October 1997, focuses on six key areas relating to independent learning:

- policy making
- management

- staff development and support
- learner training and support
- curriculum design
- self-access learning resources.

CIEL will work closely with SMILE, another FDTL project based at the University of Hull, which is focusing on the role of the language learning advisor. A joint questionnaire was sent out in November to all institutions with HE language provision, to try to establish current practices and the status of independent learning *vis à vis* the curriculum. Results from the questionnaire will be sent out to all respondents.

CIEL Support Network services

Each of the three regional project managers - Jeremy Bradford at Leeds Metropolitan, Martina Wilson at South Bank and Vicky Wright (Project Director) at Southampton - is available to arrange staff-development and advice for language teachers working in the HE sector in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We will organise free on-site staff seminars or workshops on any of the six key areas covered by the project and work shadowing and training attachments. A programme of regional meetings is being drawn up to provide a local forum for discussion and exchange of ideas. The first of these events will be held in Spring.

The project is setting up a telephone/email Help Line to provide answers to practical questions ranging from copyright to selection of materials. We are also investigating the copyright implications of a Swapshop, or a central resource which will allow us to share, at a national level, some of those in-house materials which are being developed in language departments around the country.

We will be contacting colleges and universities in each area over the next few months but if you would like to arrange a visit, either to visit us or for one of us to visit you - or if you would simply like to discuss an issue relating to independent learning - please contact Sue Nash, the CIEL project secretary on 01703 593979 or email us at ciel@lang.soton.ac.uk.

Profile of the three project partners

To finish this article and to give a flavour of the variety of ways departments promote and support

independent learning, thumb-nail sketches of each of the project partners follow. Over the next three years of the project we hope to give more details of the many different approaches to open and independent language learning.

South Bank University

South Bank University has invested in a large multimedia Language Centre that is located in the recently built Learning Resources Centre. Offering audio, video, satellite TV, CD-ROM and CALL, as well as conventional paper based materials, the Language Centre is open and staffed throughout the week. It is a venue for individual independent learning as well as tutor supported learning. There is free open-access for all the university's students, who work there at their own pace on a number of languages.

For the 266 MA students and the 936 undergraduate students - whose course pathway includes one or more language components - the Language Centre offers additional and supporting learning materials as well as access to news media in French, German and Spanish. In addition, students can study a range of other languages on their own initiative. Overseas students use the Language Centre's facilities to improve their English language skills.

The Language Centre also offers part-time evening classes and tailor-made courses. Access to the Language Centre and language courses is available to the local community and commercial clients.

The South Bank Language Centre played a major role in the development of multimedia software for the TELL Consortium.

Leeds Metropolitan University

At LMU, the Centre for Language Study is the main unit for the delivery of modern languages throughout the University. At present it is engaged in the strategic implementation of its own Open and Distance Learning Policy which addresses the six key areas identified by the CIEL project. Activities undertaken to date include:

- The appointment of an Independent Learning Co-ordinator and a full-time Language Advisor to the Centre.

- The refurbishment of the Open Access Centre.
- The strategic resourcing of the Open Access Centre. The full-time Language Advisor is based here and oversees the purchase of and evaluation of new resources. This includes the installation of new multimedia stations and the new CD-ROM purchasing and evaluation strategy.
- An Open Access Centre interactive induction programme for tutors run by the Language Advisor. This is followed by the same programme for students with tutors in attendance as facilitators.
- A pilot scheme to integrate assessed Open Learning for language students into the curriculum.
- The establishment of an Open Learning Forum which meets every two months to discuss ODL related issues.
- Ongoing Open and Distance Learning course development.

Throughout this process of translating policy into implementation there is a focus on the close monitoring and recording of progress. Evaluation of processes and of outcomes is crucial to the successful development of templates for potential use across the language provision and to staff and learner development.

University of Southampton

The Language Centre is an integral part of the School of Modern Languages and provides language teaching across the university to non-specialist linguists. It also provides language facilities for all language students and for anyone else in the university who wants to learn a language.

A large number of resources have been built up over the years, many to support topic-based teaching. Collections of laminated texts (many with associated exercises), audio tapes and videos are stored in easily portable 'topic boxes' and relate to work done in the classroom. Assessed work which normally follows each topic or course module encourages wider research, these days very often using the Web, and may demand either written or oral presentations and collaborative as much as individual

work.

The Language Resources Centre also provides access to a number of computer-based materials which are tied into language teaching programmes. Grammar practice programs are used particularly heavily. The Language Centre has developed its own hypermedia resource base, using MICRO-COSM, which mirrors the topic boxes in concept but is able to link to other local on-line resources such as electronic dictionaries and encyclopedias as well as to relevant web sites.

All of the computer resources can be accessed from the satellite resource centres on other campuses and in individual language resource rooms which are staffed by the language assistants. A number of programs, such as foreign language word-processing, dictionaries and TLTP programs are made available on general campus workstations so that students can have access during the unsocial hours when the resources rooms are not staffed.

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Introduction to SMILE (Strategies for Managing an Independent Learning Environment)

Project aims

SMILE (Strategies for Managing an Independent Learning Environment) seeks to implement independent language learning strategies and foster an independent learning ethos inside and outside the classroom. It targets staff and learners, with particular focus on language advising and learner training. The introduction of an Open Learning Adviser in the Language Institute four years ago put the University of Hull at the forefront of these innovative developments. It was this aspect of the provision in modern languages which impressed all TQA visiting teams.

SMILE draws on the extensive experience gained at Hull in identifying best practices. In the first stage these will be implemented at the two partner institutions, Nottingham Trent and Ulster, whilst additional institutions will be venues for workshops to intro-

duce, discuss and evaluate the concept of independent learning and language advising and gather/ implement examples of good practice. A key concept in these workshops will be learner and staff training, the need for which was highlighted in many of the TQA reports, to support effective integration of teaching, learning and resources.

Further activities which will consolidate and support the core project in the course of the three years include: the creation of an electronic learner support network; the expansion of the language advisers' network with the creation of a database of information for language advisers and a detailed survey on language advising in the UK; a series of awaydays; five newsletters; regional centres; a manual of good practice in independent learning applications; the establishment and development of a Diploma in Language Advising.

The project started in September 1997 and has already visited several institutions. Visits can range from introductory workshops about the concept of SMILE, to focused action plans with selected members of staff, to shadowing sessions followed by detailed plans of action, to support of already existing activities in the area of language advising and independent learning.

We have been working closely with staff involved in supporting language learning outside the classroom environment mainly based in self-access centres or language centres, and with teaching staff interested in the implementation of independent learning and language advising in and out of their classroom situation.

Workshop on Advising for Language Learning 2-3 July 1998, Language Institute, University of Hull

A two-day workshop, which is intended to highlight key issues in language advising in relation to language learning and learner autonomy. It will focus on this emerging profession and its functions both in a practical and theoretical framework.

If you would like:

- to receive further details of the July workshop;
- to receive further information about SMILE;
- to discuss your needs and the possibility of a

- workshop;
- to receive a preliminary informal SMILE visit to assess what effective and practical contribution SMILE can bring to your institution and your self-access centre;
- to meet a member of the SMILE team;

contact the SMILE Project Leader Marina Mozzon-McPherson (M.Mozzon-McPherson@selc.hull.ac.uk)
<http://www.hull.ac.uk/langinst/smile>

Software Review

Multiconcord: the Lingua Multilingual Parallel Concordancer for Windows

Author/Developer: David Woolls, CFL Software Development

Distributor: CFL Software Development, 12 St Paul's Square, Birmingham B3 1RB, Tel +44 (0)121 707 6106

Email: 100343.2362@compuserve.com,

<http://sun1.bham.ac.uk/johnstf/lingua.htm>

System requirements: IBM-compatible PC 486, with hard disk and 4MB RAM; Windows 3.11 or Windows 95

Price: Single user licence £40, 4 users £100, 10 users £200, 25 users £400

Introduction

Concordancers have aroused considerable interest over the last decade within second language teaching. They are being used more and more as a valuable tool by both teachers and learners of languages to carry out lexical analysis, i.e. a concordancer enables the user to find all the occurrences of a given word, part of a word or combinations of words, together with their contexts, within a corpus text. The end product is a 'concordance' of the search word.

The *Lingua Multilingual Parallel Concordancer* (Romary *et al.*, 1995) is designed to work with parallel texts, i.e. texts in two languages that are translations and are aligned in some way. This review is based on a case study using the *Lingua Multilingual Parallel Concordancer* to investigate lexical, syn-

tactic and semantic patterns in English and German.

The use of the program involves searching for the forms within one language that convey the meaning that the user wants to express or investigate in a second language. The user specifies a word or phrase (search term) and the program then finds and displays all the instances of the search term in the search and target languages. The search term is displayed along with a context, i.e. the preceding and following words within a sentence or paragraph. The target text that contains the meaning associated with the search term can either be displayed parallel or interleaved together with the search text.

Description

Texts

A concordancer is of little use without electronic texts to search, and two corpus collections are available with the concordancer. Zipped versions of three one-day debates in the European Parliament in English, French and Italian are available with the Multilingual Concordancer and unzipped versions of the tourism section of those debates in the same languages. All one has to do is to choose a pair of languages one wants to work with and the files one wishes to search. The program accepts a query in one of the languages and returns the sentences in which that query appears in both the search language and the chosen target language. For the above-mentioned case study the German/English INTERSECT Corpus (Salkie, 1995) was used and all it needed was to run through the automated mark up process (Minmark) which is supplied with the concordancer. This only takes a few seconds.

Searching

Once the opening screen is presented, the user defines the search and target languages, sets the key word or phrase (search word) into the box and if required a context word is added. The context selection is made in the same way as for the search word and this can take the form of one word or a list of words or phrases. It can narrow down the amount of hits and if the Left or Right button is clicked, the search can be even more precise. Output can be controlled further by the facility to position a word or

phrase in the context of the search item. The context is defined as: "From one to six words to the right of the search words and/or from one to six words to the left of the search words. Being in the same sentence as the search word or in the same paragraph as the search word".

Wildcards can be searched by entering an asterisk before, in the middle or after a chosen word or letter.

The current directory with all its filenames is also part of the opening screen. The selection of files can be made any time before the Start Search button is clicked, and the language to be searched is noted by the file extension .en or .de, for English and German respectively. The user must specify a search language and a target language. Ten languages are currently supported: Danish, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. Each language has its own file extension.

Once all the search parameters have been established the search itself can begin. The interface is simple and intuitive: the program automatically identifies and displays each file, in the order selected, with the respective number of hits for each one. There is no limit to the amount of text that can be searched. However, the maximum number of 250 hits is rarely needed anyway. Up to ten files can be chosen from a list offered.

Examining and sorting the results

The sorting window comes up automatically once all the files have been searched. The Sort Dialogue Box contains the search words with their individual reference numbers. Citations may be inspected either by double clicking on the reference or by highlighting it and clicking the Sentence button to bring it up on the screen together with the paragraph in which it occurs. The search word/s only are highlighted and underlined. The references can be classified by up to four user-defined categories (filtering system) and they may also be sorted by left context, right context, and search item. The hits came up on screen within seconds and the already mentioned filtering system (C1, C2, C3, C4) made the choice of final data much more selective by eliminating the information which was not required. Obtaining accented characters in the output was

straightforward because the texts which appeared on the screen were transferred unaltered (except for the highlighting and underlining of search words) to the floppy disk from which the output could be copied to a word processor. Where there was an accented character on the screen, it was reproduced via the disk into a Word document.

Tests

The program may now become very useful for the teacher.

Once the results have been sorted, the sorting window must be closed in order to open the Test window. The chosen sentences/paragraphs are now displayed in the Test window. These sentences/paragraphs could be easily manipulated into a preferred order, for example, Parallel and Interleaved. Interleaved was particularly useful when it was preferable to read the English and German texts in tandem. Also useful was the choice of German or English as the search/target language as this gave a good cross-referencing tool.

The Search words can also be blanked out for use in classroom testing by clicking Blank Search Words. Other options were First Letter Only and C-Test. More comprehensive word selection can be made when the buttons Words More Than or Words Less Than are clicked. The default word length for this section is four. The test can be reverted back to the original text by clicking the Plain Text button.

Saving the results

Transferring the completed tests to floppy disk was straightforward. The Save Test button produced a dialogue box with File Save As and then the type of file and the directory can be selected. Although the search words did not transfer highlighted and underlined to the word processor, it was easy to re-highlight and manipulate them further using the facilities available in a word processing program. The *Lingua Multilingual Parallel Concordancer* allows the user to save both the search language lines and target language equivalents to a text file which is easily converted into a word processing file.

Activities

Activities which were based on the German/English

corpus ranged from translations of lexical items to investigations of syntactic and semantic patterns. It is possible to search for a simple modal particle in German and examine the translation. The *Lingua Multilingual Parallel Concordancer* can also be used as a contextualized thesaurus. For example, searching for the pronoun *man* in German revealed that in most cases the equivalent is 'one', however, the nouns 'people', 'nobody' and the pronoun 'we' are also used in some sentences. A similar exercise involves searching for a simple German word such as *nein* or *nicht* and examining how it is translated in the second language in different contexts. In the light of the data evidence, both a top-down and a bottom-up approach are possible. The learner can analyse and question existing grammatical rules or induce his/her own grammatical rules.

Conclusion

Our impression is very favourable. In our view, it is easy for teachers and students to use and at the same time enables language researchers to undertake searches of large texts.

The strengths of *Multilingual Concordancer* are a combination of its straightforward program architecture and a well-designed, transparent Windows interface. All program functions and parameter settings are accessible through pull-down menus and well-designed, intelligible dialogue boxes.

We believe the system is an invaluable addition to standard teaching methods. Learner and teacher found that the *Concordancer* encourages autonomous learning. In addition to this, it also provides texts which have equivalent translations in each language as opposed to literal translations which sometimes occur in the classroom or text book, e.g. *ja oder nein* translating as 'whether or not' instead of 'yes or no'.

The program is very user-friendly. Help screens provide comprehensive support for the user. During the course of the project the Help Menu was not consulted by the learner because there was no need, but it was reassuring to know it was there if needed.

Among the already existing six main avenues for language learning, i.e. Teacher/Classroom, Text-books, Audio tapes, Video tapes, Tandem learning

and Interactive programs, the *Concordancer* is an excellent option which provides a link between the other six in that the student can consult the corpora to reinforce something which was learned from one of the other sources.

References

Romary L., Mehl N. and Woolls D., (1995), *The Lingua Parallel Concordancing Project: managing multilingual texts for educational purposes*, *Text Technology* 5 (3).

Salkie R. (1995), 'INTERSECT: a parallel corpus project at Brighton University', *Computers & Texts* 9, May 1995, 4-5.

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Recent software donations to CTICML

- *English for Business International Sales; Organising Change; An Introduction to a Company* (Philips)
- *Lexique Demande d'Emploi* (Sebastian Abbo)
- *Havo/VWO; Nedercom Formulieren 1; Nedercom Lezen 1; Nedercom Spelling 1* (Nedercom Eduware)
- *Tele Con Textos* (OUP)

CTICML Software Database Online

A downloadable database in Access 2 format is available from the CTICML Home Page. This downloadable version has been compiled from the extensive main CTICML software database maintained at the University of Hull. Teachers from the UK higher education sector and EUROCALL members may contact CTICML for the latest information on language software. It is expected that a fully searchable online database will be available by July 1998. The focus of the software database is on materials for 18+ learners, and the software suppliers listed are predominantly UK based.

<http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/search.htm>

REAL: Reading and Listening Strategies for 18+ Language Learners

The deliverables from Year 1 of this Socrates-funded project are

1. A working prototype of a computer-based learning package REAL Reading in Dutch for Intermediate Level Learners with draft student workbook. This package provides a set of reading materials for 18+ learners of Dutch wishing to study Dutch in the Netherlands.
2. A working prototype of a computer-based learning package REAL Reading in English for Students of Business and Management with draft student workbook. This package provides a set of reading materials for 18+ learners of English at intermediate level wishing to study Business and Management in the UK.
3. A prototype REAL Authoring Shell to enable teachers to input their own texts and questions.
4. An initial prototype of the audio component.

Funding has been secured for a second year, during which the audio component will be integrated and the above packages will be further tested prior to being made available via the TELL Consortium. During 1998, similar packs will be prepared for learners of Greek and Swedish, with further packs for English for Specific Purposes.

Further information from June Thompson at the address on page 1.

Upgrade: GramDef French

An upgrade of *GramDef French* has been prepared and will shortly be available free of charge to any purchaser of the program. Changes to the program are minor, but include a bug fix for a reported bug and some slight content changes in response to feedback. A copy can be obtained by emailing

tell-support@langc.hull.ac.uk

and ensuring that you have sent in your registration card for *GramDef French*. A password allowing you to download the upgrade by ftp will then be sent to you.

TELL User Group

If your institution has purchased any of the TELL materials and you haven't yet joined the Tell User Group email discussion list, you are invited to do so by emailing

mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk

with the message

join telluser firstname lastname

The list is designed for the exchange of information about exploitation of the materials. There are also periodic announcements about the availability of upgraded materials and bug fixes.

TELL Seminar

'Integration of TELL materials into language learning programmes'

08 April 1998
University of Hull
0930 - 1630hrs

The seminar aims to:

- present the findings of the Summative Evaluation of the TELL materials, focusing on their use in higher education institutions in a variety of contexts;
- provide Case Study accounts from current users of the materials, with an opportunity for participants to discuss a variety of issues arising from their implementation and integration;
- allow 'hands on' practice with the full range of TELL materials, and also with the non-commercialised products which were produced by the TELL Consortium under TLTP project 36;
- introduce new TELL products, with an opportunity for 'hands on' practice.

The TELL Evaluation Programme was co-ordinated by Dr Diana Laurillard of the Open University, and was one of the largest research studies into the evaluation of teaching materials ever to be conducted. The evaluation tools developed as part of the Formative Evaluation phase have found widespread use outside the TELL Consortium.

The Summative Evaluation phase has been co-ordinated by Sue Hewer, who has extensive experience in both the HE and secondary sectors relating to the introduction and implementation of CALL. Sue Hewer will present the main results of the Summative Evaluation at the seminar. Other presenters are being selected from current users of *Encounters*, *TransIt-TIGER*, *GramEx* and *GramDef*, and expressions of interest in presenting a case study account are welcome.

Further details available on the TELL Web site or contact Jo Porritt (j.v.porritt@selc.hull.ac.uk)

<http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/tell.htm>

CTICML Events 1998

Open Days

Wednesday 17 June 1998
Wednesday 15 July 1998
Wednesday 19 August 1998

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

There is no charge to teachers from the UK HE sector for attending the Open Days and visitors may attend at any time between 1000 and 1600 hrs.

Please note that the number of participants that we can accommodate at any one time is limited and that places MUST be reserved in advance. Bookings may be made by contacting Jo Porritt at the CTICML address on the front cover (j.v.porritt@selc.hull.ac.uk)

Open Day visitors wishing to view the CTICML CALL library may do so by prior arrangement.

There is a charge of 40 pounds (EUROCALL members 20 pounds) for teachers outside the UK HE sector wishing to attend an Open Day. Lunch and refreshments are not provided, but may be purchased on campus.

CALL Workshop

24 October 1998
The Language Institute
University of Hull
1000 - 1630hrs

Please contact Jo Porritt at the address on the front cover for further details.

(j.v.porritt@selc.hull.ac.uk)

Conference Report

ETLL8: Language Learning and the Internet

In 1943 the President of IBM is reported to have declared that he thought there was a world market for maybe five computers. In November 1997 Toshiba manufactured its ten billionth portable computer (12 years after their first one). Radio technology and Low Earth Orbit satellite systems may make it very cheap to associate mobile phone links and personal computers to allow everyone soon to have a personal connection to the Web. Convergence of technologies (television, radio, telecommunications, and computers all using digital compression technology) means that the Web can deliver a range of multimedia facilities: text, data, graphics, still pictures, video, and sound. The Internet is here to stay, and British Universities, through JANET and SuperJANET, already have privileged access to the Internet. More and more of us are getting used to the idea of a seamless desktop between local and distributed files, between Windows and Web documents. Students too are demanding access to resources and to training. HEFCE (through TQA) is encouraging this, and the national units such as Mailbase and Netskills offer the British University system training facilities and an infrastructure for making best use of mailing/discussion lists and Internet. However, as teachers, what we must avoid is simply jumping into the new technology using out-moded pedagogical thinking. It is all too easy to use the Net to put up drill and practice exercises that, if they still have a use, might be more easily accessible in paper form.

The Internet, or its best known and most user friendly sub-set, the World Wide Web (using HyperText technology), is a new resource, a mode of delivery of information, and a mode of communication. Its use in teaching and learning needs to be thought through in these terms. A recent forum for such thinking was the eighth CTICML Expert Semi-

nar on Educational Technology in Language Learning (ETLL8), which took place at the University of Newcastle on 3-4 December 1997, and was devoted to Language Learning and the Internet. The seminar, organised by the CTI Centre for Modern Languages (University of Hull), was hosted by Dr Geoff Hare in the brand new Netskills/Newcastle University Computing Service Training Suite with access to 40 high specification networked PCs that allowed workshop sessions as well as demonstrations and presentations.

The Seminar brought together 20 or so experts from as far apart as Plymouth and Dundee, not forgetting a visitor from the USA and representatives of CILT and the French Cultural Services as well as the private sector, to debate the rapidly growing use of the Internet in language learning. CTICML also provided information on projects funded by HEFCE under the banner of the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning. Those relevant to the Seminar topic included SMILE (Strategies for Managing an Independent learning Environment) (see p.6) looking at the gap between provision of facilities and students' use of them. The WELL project (Web Enhanced Language Learning), another FDTL-funded project, aims to disseminate good practice in the use of Web-based resources and is directed by the Seminar's first contributor, William Haworth of Liverpool John Moores University (W.J.Haworth@livjm.ac.uk), whose topic was 'Multimedia and interactivity over the World Wide Web for language teaching'. He emphasised the rapid growth of computing power and numbers of sites, and went on to present a number of language sites of interest to teachers - see LJMU home page list <http://www.livjm.ac.uk/language/>. After looking at what is technically feasible, he illustrated different levels of interactivity and how this meshes with pedagogical considerations.

Debra Marsh (University of Hull) (d.a.marsh@selc.hull.ac.uk) presented 'Merlin - supporting language learning over the Internet'. EFL

has consistently been ahead of foreign language learning methodology in Britain and Debra, Head of the Merlin Development Unit at Hull, showed another example of this phenomenon. Initially financed by BT, Merlin retains telephone line connection with distance learning students, but integrates it into an Internet-based learning environment, that replicates the relationships of students to teacher and student to materials that a campus based course would generally have. The interface is elegantly designed, with on-line and off-line communication between students and unit tutor. It contained large numbers of innovative aspects that should enable it to sell well if used as a shell for delivery of foreign language learning materials developed specifically for it.

Teresa Orange (Marketing Director of CDLive) (cdlive@compuserve.com), demonstrated 'The Electronic News stand for language students'. At £250 sterling annual subscription CDLive seems not an expensive way of making available in the classroom or in the self access language centre (off-line) today's or yesterday's news. A CD and a modem allow one-touch downloading of a daily selection of news articles from the French press stored on the CDLive site. The pre-selection has been done by CDLive and some articles are pre-edited for classroom use, with additional exercises provided by experienced teachers. Teachers can also edit them further since they are downloading the texts onto their PC. The growing database of articles is searchable by subject or grammar topic. There are a number of related digitised TV and audio clips (plus transcripts), not updated daily in this case, playable on appropriate software. An on-disk copy of the *Oxford/Hachette French Dictionary* may be consulted while working on the texts. This is certainly a time-saving device, and for those institutions that cannot give their students live search time on the Web, or that wish to control where they surf, then this system may be the answer. All that is needed is a modem and telephone line to download the text onto disk.

Gilles Couzin and Vita Falbo-Ellis (University of Bristol) (edgcc@ssa.bristol.ac.uk & edvfe@ssa.bristol.ac.uk) (directed a workshop session on 'The Internet: a new source for the teaching of French as a Foreign Language'. Participants

explored existing French sites and then presented learning activities that could be set up for students, showing how brainstorming among teachers can lead to some valuable insights on use of the Web. In the course of the workshop they demonstrated the value of a user-friendly and well structured Web interface or information gateway, such as the one they have developed at Bristol. See the Bristol Language Centre site: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/LangCent> for French and other resources.

Relevant to the above issues, other information on a useful language learning site was sent to the seminar from the French Embassy Cultural Services in London, on their new *France à la Carte* pages, intended to be much more than an information gateway. See:

<http://www.campus.bt.com/CampusWorld/pub/FranceALC/index.html>

Douglas Kibbee (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) (dkibbee@uiuc.edu) talked about 'Training teachers to integrate the Web into their classrooms'. Reporting on current research in Illinois on how best to integrate Web resources into classroom activities, he stressed not only the importance of giving students very precise objectives and instructions in their exploration of Web sites, but also the need to think through learning outcomes for any activity. Particularly interesting was the template for evaluating 'guide-sites' (information gateways) devoted to France, of which he listed a number in North America. He has several detailed lesson plans elaborated by his trainee teachers which themselves illustrate the benefits of getting students to do all the work (see: <http://france.lang.uiuc.edu/web-teaching/default.html>).

Tony McNeill and Charlie Mansfield (University of Sunderland) (tony.mcneill@sunderland.ac.uk & us0cma@orac.sunderland.ac.uk) discussed 'Developing discrimination: encouraging critical Web users'. Sunderland's Learning Development Service has been helping the University's language lecturers to develop distance learning and open learning, and Tony and Charlie talked us through the evolution of their thinking in terms of how to use HTML technology to provide learning activities, in this case in cultural and literary studies. Consultation of their learning materials will be instructive as they are

models of the genre. They have attempted to help students develop critical skills to make the most of Web materials. This has included the provision of explicit web-skills training, including some very helpful print-based reference support, a stable information gateway to home-based and external resources, and the integration of Web materials into major elements of the teaching programmes. See: <http://www.sunderland.ac.uk/~us0cma/comm.html>

General issues emerging over the course of the Seminar were to do with how to think through the use of the Internet and its associated Web sites (of which a myriad are available as 'authentic' foreign language materials) as a resource, and how to use it as a means of delivery. Regarding resources, we need to become more familiar with ideas on the pedagogy of resource based learning, ensuring that our students know how to learn and know what they are supposed to be learning or know how to define what they want to learn. Such metacognitive awareness is at the heart of constructivist learning methodologies which stress the active role of the learner in acquiring knowledge and constructing personal understanding. Definition of learning outcomes is therefore important when letting students loose on authentic foreign language Web resources. The Illinois approach of building reflection on Web pedagogy into teacher training and in stressing the active participation of learners is surely right.

In terms of using the Internet as a mode of communication and delivery of materials, the Merlin distance learning shell is an example of best practice which we should look at before trying to reinvent the wheel ourselves. The Sunderland experience shows how materials can be developed locally, not only to enhance students' personal transferable skills, but also to get them to learn in new ways, for example within the traditional literary domains. If we are not at the cutting edge in terms of technology (or even if we are) and need relatively cheap and time-saving access to a wide range of foreign press we can look at CDLive's approach to downloading pre-edited materials. Information gateways like those at Bristol (or Newcastle or on *France à la Carte*) will save students time in searching for resources. The WELL project (Liverpool John Moores), along with the CTICML and CILT, will valuably identify and

widely disseminate existing expertise and good practice.

More specific questions that were raised and not necessarily resolved were: In what versions of software do we present materials/sites, taking into account that not all potential users are using the most advanced versions? Is there a minimum level of professional page design needed to give credibility to materials? How do we encourage other colleagues to use the Internet? What is the role of the private sector in the world of teaching and learning at HE level? Is our role being transformed (or should it be moving towards) simply helping students learn how to learn? What is a site (or a set of materials) doing - teaching, testing, helping to learn, or being a resource for reference? What learning model lies behind a given set of materials or activities on the Internet? What level of interactivity is important or appropriate for a given learning objective? What is the advantage of using the Internet over paper (or any other traditional medium) for a given activity? Is staff input going to be less when using Internet-based teaching? Does the institution's management think the same as the teachers on this latter issue?

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Internet News.

Digital Equipment Corporation has announced that it has broken the Internet language barrier, with the first European language translation service for Web content. For the first time, non-English speaking Web users can translate information on the predominantly English speaking Web in real time. A test version of the new technology is now available on the Alta Vista Search site

<http://altavista.digital.com>

The new technology allows users to search, retrieve and translate Web search results in and out of English to French, Italian, German, Portuguese and Italian.



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Forthcoming Events

06-08 March 1998, Dublin Ireland: (IRAAL) Languages for Specific Purposes & Academic Purposes - Integrating Theory and Practice

Information: Applied Language Centre, Daedalus Building, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland, Tel: +353 1 706 7900, Email: IRALL@ucd.ie

25-27 March 1998, Maastricht, The Netherlands: BITE: Bringing Information Technology to Education

Information: Conference Secretariat, Universiteit Maastricht, Dept of Educational Development and Research, P.O.Box 616, 6200 MD Maastricht, The Netherlands, Email: h.spronck@educ.unimaas.nl, <http://www.unimaas.nl/~electra/conference>

29-31 March 1998, Leeds, UK: DULC: Taking Languages to Market

Information: DULC Conference Office, The Language Centre, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK, Tel: +44 113 2333250, Fax: +44 113 2333252, Email: Langc@leeds.ac.uk, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/languages/dulc98.html>

03-05 April 1998, Brighton, UK: Language World. The way ahead: language strategies for the millennium

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

30 April 1998, Milton Keynes, UK: OU Workshop: New technologies for language teaching in open and distance learning

Information: Brenda Parish, The Open University, IET, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, UK, Tel: +44 1908 653055, Email: b.m.parish@open.ac.uk, <http://www-iet.open.ac.uk/PDET/workshops.html>

09 May 1998, Manchester, UK: Natural Language Processing in Computer-Assisted Language Learning

Information: Marie-Josée Hamel, Dept of Language Engineering, UMIST, PO Box 88, Manchester M60 1QD, UK, Tel: +44 161 200 3100, Email: mjhamel@ccl.umist.ac.uk, <http://www.ccl.umist.ac.uk/whatsnew/nlprep.html>

25-27 May 1998, Stockholm, Sweden: ESCA Workshop on Speech Technology in Language Learning

Information: Workshop Secretariat, STILL, KTH (Royal Institute of Technology), Tel: +46 8 790 7854, Fax: +46 8 790 7854, Email: still@speech.kth.se, <http://www.speech.kth.se/still>

7-9 June 1998, Varna, Bulgaria: Multimedia and Foreign

Language Training

Information: Dr Milko Todorov Marinov, Dept of Computer Systems, University of Rousse, 8 Studentska Str, 7017 Rousse, Bulgaria, Tel: +359 82 44 507 356, Fax: +359 82 486 379, Email: mtm@ait.ru.acad.bg

13-17 July 1998, Melbourne, Australia: WORLDCALL

Information: June Gassin, Horwood Language Centre, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia, Email: June_Gassin@muwayF.unimelb.edu.au

24-27 July 1998, Oxford, UK: TALC 98: Teaching and Language Corpora

Information: Email: talc98@oucs.ox.ac.uk, <http://users.ox.ac.uk/talc98>

04-06 September 1998, Norwich, UK: AFLS 98

Information: Dr Marie-Madeleine Kenning, School of Modern Languages and European Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ, UK, Tel: +44 1603 592152, Email: m.kenning@uea.ac.uk

10-12 September 1998, Leuven, Belgium: EUROCALL 98: From Classroom Teaching to Worldwide Learning (see p15 for details)

17-19 September 1998, Bergamo, Italy: 5th CercleS International Conference: Integration through Innovation.

Information: Maurizio Gotti, Centro Linguistico d'Ateneo, Università di Bergamo, Via Slavecchio 19, 24129 Bergamo, Tel: +39 35 27 72 16, Fax: +39 35 27 72 27, Email: Club@mediacom.it

21-12 September 1998, Oxford, UK: ALT-C 98

Information: ALT, Dept of Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA, Tel: +44 1865 270360, Email: altC98@conted.ox.ac.uk, <http://www.tall.ox.ac.uk/alt/alt-c98>

14-17 October 1998, Beijing, China: ICCE98: Global Education on the Net

Information: ICCE98 Secretariat, Computer Center, Northern Jiaotong University, 100044 Beijing, P.R.China, Email: icce98@center.njtu.edu.cn, <http://www.njtu.edu.cn/icce98/>

16-18 September 1999, Besançon, France:

EUROCALL 99

Information: Thierry Chanier, Laboratoire d'Informatique de Besançon, Université de Franche-Comté, France, Tel: +33 3 81 58 84 70, Fax: +33 3 81 66 64 50, Email: thierry.chanier@univ-fcomte.fr, <http://lib.univ-fcomte.fr/RECHERCHE/P7/EUROCALL/EUROCALLE.html>