could then set up working groups or committees at the national level and collaborate at the international level, in the form of a network run by the AILA international commission. For LSP the network already exists in our UNESCO ALSED LSP NETWORK. A national working group on LSP exists in Sweden, where LSP is a major item in the lamuar2e programme of the Ministry of Education. Our UNESCO KSED LSP NETWORK will promote any move by interested parties to form a national working group or committee on LSP and will serve as their liaison centre.

COPENHAGEN, CIUTI, MAY 1978

On the 11th and 12th of May 1978, the annual conference of the CIUTI was held under the presidency of Professor Jens Rasmussen at the Copenhagen School of Economics and Business Administration. This was the 19th session since the foundation of the organisation in 1961.

The purpose of CIUTI (Conf6rence Internationale Permanente des Directeurs d'lnstituts Universitaires pour la Formation de Traducteurs et d'Interpretes) is to promote and improve the education at university level of translators and interpreters.

At present, the organisation comprises Schools of Translation and Interpreting in Geneva, Paris, Heidelberg, Germersheim, Saarbriicken, Vienna, Triest, Antwerp, Mons, Bath, Edinburgh, Copenhagen, Montreal and Washington. New members are admitted by co-optation, and the number of member Institutes is increasing gradually.

The annual conferences have been designed to exchange information on the development of the member Institutes. Mutual problems are discussed and the coming year’s work is planned.

So far, the co-operation has concentrated on the following items:

1. Discussion of teaching/learning methods, curricula, and education reforms.
2. Exchange of students and teachers.
3. Contact with international organisations employing translators and interpreters (in particular the linguistic services of the EEC, the Council of Europe and WSCO).

In recent years, the teaching of the terminology of special languages has been a regular topic for debate, and co-operation has been initiated with the EEC Terminology Bureau in Luxembourg.

Next year’s CIUTI-Conference will be held in Heidelberg on the 25th and 26th May.

RECENT BOOKS

J.M. Ulijn:

French as a foreign language in engineering education - an investigation into reading comprehension. (Journal of Research in Reading, Eindhoven, 1978)

Summary

What happens if a scientific researcher has to cope with a text written in a language that he doesn't understand too well?

We have tried to find an answer to this question, in this experimental study taking French reading by Dutch (future) engineers as an example. Of the three modern languages traditionally taught in secondary schools in the Netherlands: French, German and English, French gives the Dutch (future) engineer the most problems in reading a text in his field of study.

This study provides a model based on the psychology of language and of skills which covers the range of difficulties encountered. Various hypotheses are tested in three experiments, the results of which are examined as to their applicability to education.

In chapter I, the comprehension problems in reading French are compared to those which arise in reading other foreign languages found
necessary or useful in scientific and technical research. We may conclude that French, in particular, is underread, when we look at the amount of foreign language reading that Dutch engineers and engineering students do, for instance those at the Eindhoven University of Technology and when we compare these figures with the numbers of publications available which give this order: 1. English, 2. Russian, 3. and 4. French and German ex aequo.

This phenomenon can be explained in part by the specific difficulties which French poses to the Dutch reader who depends on the kind of French he has been taught. What is the effect of such training on the reading comprehension of technical French at the university level? A foreign language reading comprehension model has been developed (chapter 2) to study the causes of these difficulties. One hypothesis on which the functioning of the model depends is that conceptually guided analysis has priority over syntactically guided analysis (hypothesis I). Second and first language reading comprehension can not be separated and the role of the first in the second had to be examined (chapter 3).

In fact, the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis makes a prediction as to the nature of this role. To what extent is it valid for foreign language reading comprehension? In attempt to answer this question an inventory of contrasts has been made for French as a second and Dutch as a first language. This inventory enables us to define the role of the Dutch language in reading French. When conceptual analysis is preferred to syntactic analysis, contrasts leading to conceptual confusions, for instance on the lexical level, are very detrimental to comprehension, the syntactic contrasts often remaining unnoticed (hypothesis II). Applying these contrasts to scientific and technical French (chapter 4), the following lexical characteristics are found: technical terms, nominalisations, a number of function words, and the following syntactic ones: passive, pronominal and impersonal constructions making the agent secondary to the action. Participial and infinitive constructions expressing important notions in a scientific register, were also found, for example: tense, cause, condition, means, concession, purpose and consequence.

In particular, lexical features which differ from the scientific and technical Dutch terms, such as the "false friends": French: interrupteur and Dutch/English interruptor/interrupter and again the specific French term, for example voyant, make comprehension more difficult than syntactic ones do, even when they are contrastive to Dutch, for instance participial and infinitive constructions or function words closely related to syntactic structures. There is some experimental evidence about one striking exception: syntactic structures which put the reader on the wrong conceptual track, for instance constructions with à moins de/à moins que. The Dutch reader associates them with the concept of quantity instead of condition (from moins = less). The Dutch equivalent of à moins que is tenzij and has no connection with the Dutch equivalent of moins (minder), unlike the English unless.
In chapter 5 the model which is described in the preceding chapters is illustrated with data derived from experiments conducted by the author. They are concerned with mathemagenic factors and factors such as technical knowledge and French knowledge, the latter supposedly organized at these levels, lexical, syntactic and textual. This test, which has been checked for reliability and validity, enables us also to verify the foregoing hypothesis (I and II) about the functioning of the model.

These hypotheses once confirmed, make it possible to reconstruct the process of reading comprehension of a scientific and technical foreign language (chapter 6). The two factors' technical and French knowledge are found to be independent and compensate one another only in part. The reader of a foreign scientific and technical text is hampered more by various kinds of content words required for conceptual analysis, such as technical terms and nominalisations, than by function words, which are experienced as difficult only if syntactic analysis is necessary. Ambiguous words are more difficult to understand than unambiguous ones. Only conceptual contrasts were found to be really difficult, the syntactic ones playing only a minor role. In fact, the latter result shows that conceptual analysis takes priority over syntactic analysis.

Possible conclusions are drawn as to the organisation and the content matter of Dutch pre-university and university teaching both in technical sciences and in first and second language reading comprehension. In teaching French it seems to be important to impart simple technical terms and nominalisations which are absent in VGOS, especially if they don't have an international form. It is also worth-while considering how they are derived from and contrast with the first language. Without neglecting them, syntactic structures, function words and their contrasts with the first language will be entitled to only a modest amount of attention in teaching the reading of French as a foreign language.

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ERRATUM
J. M. Ulijn's 'French as a Foreign Language in Engineering Education' is a doctoral thesis for the University of Nijmegen, and not a special issue of the journal mentioned (vol. 2, no 1).