

Student Centred Legal Language Study

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ABSTRACT:

The article introduces parts of a self-study programme for LLB (Europe) German students¹, which include the use of satellite TV and CALL. The whole self-study programme was tested for two years at the Nottingham Trent University. This paper focuses on the rationale of the study programme, pedagogical objectives and theoretical considerations within the context of language learning as well as the students' evaluation. The evaluation shows that overall the package was seen as a positive learning experience. CALL can be a solution to the problem of limited materials for languages for specific purposes. The use of mixed media is possible for language teaching for specific purposes without having to be combined in

multimedia computer-based programmes. CALL can also be a solution to the problems caused by reduced contact time.

INTRODUCTION:

Traditional language teaching works on the postulate that language is learned best through a high number of contact hours between a teacher and the students in the familiar class room setting. If a relaxed and “natural” atmosphere could be created, learning would further be enhanced. This understanding is also reflected in the common belief that once a student is exposed to the language in the country where it is spoken, s/he will “pick it up.”² There is no doubt that the conditions mentioned above can contribute positively to language learning, but to create these conditions is becoming increasingly difficult, especially in foreign language classes for specific purposes. Firstly, it would require a teacher who is not only a linguist but also a subject specialist.³ Secondly, in the present climate of financial restraint there is rarely scope for many contact hours. Thirdly, it would require experience abroad which is set within the context of the specialist language the student wishes to acquire, in this case a solicitor’s office.⁴

Having these obvious difficulties in mind, teachers need to look at new concepts of language teaching. CALL and the use of satellite television in the form of video recordings is one way forward.

The independent learning package to be discussed was designed for students studying LLB (Europe) German at Nottingham Trent University. The package accompanies the course ‘Introduction to German Legal Language’ and is aimed at students in their second year of study.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

The Nottingham Trent University introduced the LLB (Europe) German course in 1994/5. Pre-requisite to it is a good A-Level grade in German. Students study law for four years.

During the second year they study four modules of German: two are general language study, two are an introduction to German legal language. The third year of study takes place at the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, Erlangen-Nuremberg.

When I started teaching on this degree course I had to find appropriate material for the legal language modules, which was suitable for a course with two hours contact time per week and approximately two hours per week independent/directed learning time. For German as a foreign language there was very little law-related material on the market.

Gisela Shaw's *Deutsche Juristen im Gespräch* had already been published but the accompanying workbook had not. The material consists of two aural cassettes with interviews with lawyers, judges, prosecutors and other law-related professionals, as well as an accompanying textbook of dialogue (or rather monologue) transcripts. A glossary of relevant vocabulary in German - English - French - Spanish is included. The material proved well suited for listening comprehension exercises, lecture simulations and note-taking exercises.

The Law Society's publication *Recht sprechen German for Lawyers* consists of three audio cassettes and a workbook, but at a price of £85 seemed too expensive to ask students to buy.

Fachsprache Deutsch: Rechtswissenschaft, a text- and workbook by Lothar Jung is a good coursebook which is aimed at professionals in the law field with a good knowledge of German, but is based on more contact than our time frame allowed.

Various other law-related materials which were accessible through the German Embassy like *InterNationes special reports* as well as other monolingual textbooks for the German market (e.g. PINTER, 1993) were partially used for class teaching.⁵

THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The self-study pack was designed for the second semester of the second year of study. The students spend the following year in Germany, where they participate in lectures which are primarily given to German native speakers studying German law. Good listening comprehension skills are therefore essential. Abroad, students also engage in projects which require a high degree of independent work, including research for specific topics.

Secondary texts in German tend to show some common features, which are difficult for foreign language learners to master. Sentences are very long and sometimes a sentence can comprise of a whole paragraph, as so vividly described by Mark Twain (1983, p. 204):

[... She] started one of those horizonless transcontinental sentences of hers, [...] whatever was in her mind to be delivered, whether a mere remark, or a sermon, or a cyclopaedia, or the history of a war, she would get it into a single sentence or die. Whenever the literary German dives into a sentence, that is the last you are going to see of him till he emerges on the other side of his Atlantic with his verb in his mouth.

Other common features of German secondary texts are the frequent use of the passive voice, frequent use of noun structures (including compound nouns and change of verbs and adjectives to nouns etc.) and, especially in the context of press releases, the frequent use of indirect speech.

In order to prepare students for these various demanding tasks suitable directed learning exercises had to be developed. Emphasis was placed on activities which do not require contact time in class, and are primarily based on listening and reading skills. Law students need to refer to different laws and master the related vocabulary. Hypertext seems to offer an ideal solution for these requirements. From the original text of for instance a press

release, the student is given the opportunity to access further levels of vocabulary and law references instantly, without having to open separate dictionaries or law compilations.

The above points will be looked at in more depth in the theoretical part of this article.

THE NATURE OF THE MATERIALS

In collaboration with a colleague in the law department, some topics were chosen which are dealt with in his lecture on German law (given in English) and in the German module as independent learning material. This dual approach supplies the legal concepts without which the language work would be difficult, although the Law School had stipulated that law as such should not be taught during the language classes. This method also allowed the student to practise working with difficult authentic material (e.g. court press releases) in preparation for the study year abroad. Dickinson (1993) supports this approach when he states:

The tutor's role in using authentic documents is *not* to attempt to acquire the learner's specialised knowledge [...], but to aim to help the learners to develop study techniques which can be applied to any document. This is an elegant solution to a problem which has troubled teachers of language for specific purposes for a long time - [...]. The acceptance that the learner possesses the specialist knowledge of the content while the tutor has the specialist knowledge of language study techniques can lead to a collaborative approach to learning and help to accelerate the trend towards autonomy.⁶

Furthermore, the collaborative approach between the lecture and the language tasks enabled the students to deal with the subject angle during the law lecture, while their self-study could focus on specific language elements as well as additional and in-depth information on the subject matter. The background knowledge through the lecture could facilitate top-down

processes like conceptualizing. Furthermore, the direct link between the law lecture and the independent language study was designed to maintain, or possibly even enhance, students' motivation. At the same time the students could gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Nevertheless not all exercises were linked to the syllabus of the Law School. Several "pencil and paper" exercises were developed as well as three CALL programmes which practise and test comprehension of written texts as well as comprehension of video material; exercises on the passive; analysis of German sentence structure; vocabulary acquisition etc.

The students were given maximum autonomy⁷ regarding the sequence of study and time-frame. To enhance motivation to finish the exercises, elements of the independent learning pack were linked to assessments which took a written form (summaries, interpretation, answering specific questions etc.) and an oral form (role-plays).

To facilitate student autonomy, maximum freedom for the type of role-play and interpretation was given. During the whole semester tutor support was available on request on a weekly basis.

CALL

For two of the programmes designed the Toolbook authoring pack was used. One programme was implemented on the Internet and can be accessed through the address only - it is not linked to other sites.

It should be pointed out that there were very few financial resources available for the development of the material, which limited the options. While satellite TV was used for the syllabus, this could not be incorporated into a multimedia CALL package, since the technical

requirements would have been too expensive. Brett (1996) describes how positively his study group received a multimedia computer-based package for language learning purposes. Even though only some institutions are able to finance those larger projects, individuals should not feel discouraged from developing materials for their specific needs which incorporate mixed media and technology.

CALL 1 “BGH - Time-Sharing mit Überrumpelungseffekt”

This programme is based on a difficult authentic text, a court press release ⁸. During the students’ studies abroad they will be expected to read and process similar texts. Typically for a scenario like that created in the programme “BGH - Time-Sharing mit Überrumpelungseffekt”, the learner initially reads the primary text. A paper version was given to the students in advance to allow preparatory reading as well as to alleviate the strain on the eyes, should the need for scrolling arise too often. The students are encouraged to keep the paper version of the original text with them, while working on the CALL programme, in order to be able to view the whole text at a glance. Once working with the programme, students are able to access help (i.e., vocabulary) or additional information at their own pace. Hypertext allows learners to use references according to their personal needs, which might vary considerably. Within the original text vocabulary may be accessed or the primary texts of law (Gesetzestext), as referred to within the primary reading passage. Once the student has accessed the text(s) of law, further access to vocabulary may be gained.

This approach fulfils several functions:

- The learner may access vocabulary instantaneously, without having to use (specialist) dictionaries.

- Each time only a limited amount of the relevant vocabulary needs to be shown, which enhances the accessibility of the screen display.
- The learner may choose to access the law text during the first reading to gain a full picture immediately or can do this later after comprehension of the original reading passage is achieved.

In other words, different learner abilities and learning styles can be accommodated.

Once general text comprehension is achieved, students can embark on the specific language work. The programme “BGH - Time-Sharing mit Überrumpelungseffekt” focuses on

⇒ finding synonyms

⇒ breaking up compound nouns into their constituent parts

⇒ rewriting long sentences with many dependent clauses as short main clause sentences

⇒ joining two main clause sentences by using a relative clause

⇒ an exercise on indirect speech.

The purpose of these exercises is, of course, to help students towards a methodology of analysing structures in complex texts in order to achieve in-depth comprehension.

CALL 2 “Der Kampf ums Recht V. Von Gottes Gnaden? In Volkes Namen! Das Öffentliche Recht”

Prior to work with this programme students watched a video with the same title in the language laboratory. This is the fifth part of a series introducing the development of German law through the centuries, recorded from satellite TV. Students answer specific comprehension questions which are investigated further in the CALL programme.

The programme is designed around the documentary and based on a summary of it.⁹ Starting with the summary, key words are explained with the help of verbal explanations, graphic representations, legal texts, philosophical excursions (Thomas Hobbes, Montesquieu) and vocabulary. There are four interactive true/false exercises.

This dual approach practises listening as well as reading comprehension and primarily serves the function of acquiring factual subject-specific knowledge¹⁰ through the target language, rather than practising specific language phenomena, while still exploiting the advantages of hypertext. It may be argued that a computer-based programme is not necessarily a better medium than traditional methods based on books, paper and pencil. In this particular case many different source materials would be needed to give the same amount of information. For the user, hypertext allows immediate access to the required information, which can be limited to the essential minimum, as explained above.

The use of video material and hypertext, which incorporate texts as well as graphics and interactive elements can offer a different language learning opportunity and thus function as an additional learning tool catering for various learning styles (Chun & Plass, 1997). I do not want to imply that computers could do a better job than humans per se and would not wish to follow the route described by Brett (1996) which led to a reduction of teaching time.

Nevertheless, CALL has its legitimate place alongside the use of other media.

CALL 3 Das Kruzifix-Urteil (4)

This programme is designed following a very similar pattern to that already introduced for CALL 1 (see above). Prior to the work with CALL 3, the learners did other more traditional paper and pencil exercises with a progressing degree of difficulty, which familiarised them

with the subject matter. The starting point in the computer programme is a text taken from a law journal which shows all the characteristics of German secondary texts as described above.¹¹ Initially, the learner may access vocabulary or the texts of law as referred to in the main reading passage. Exercises concentrate on:

- ⇒ forming composite nouns
- ⇒ the analysis of sentence structures
- ⇒ changing active into passive sentences.

Extensive help in the form of grammatical explanations and conjugation patterns may be called up.¹²

TV: Court room drama: Ein Richter in Angst

This television production provides a lot of specific language material which is delivered in a thriller story containing several court scenes. It provides the students with an interesting insight into a German court with very different formal settings from British courts. Students work on specific comprehension questions which are designed to encourage the use of the subject-specific vocabulary. The learners develop a role-play of their choice centred around a court setting. The role-play is videotaped and formally assessed. The link to an assessment is intended to encourage students to finish the task.¹³

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

In general *second language acquisition research* attempts to explain *how, what, when* and *why* language is learned.¹⁴ Based on the answers to these questions, a teaching methodology

can be developed. When designing a self-study package, one of the following three assumptions, regarding the student's degree of autonomy¹⁵ or awareness about her or his individual way of learning, also needs to be made. Either (a) students are already able to take full responsibility for their personal learning needs, or (b) they need some guidance to become more aware how each individual learner can learn best, or (c) they need to be guided closely through the tasks. The target group for this package consists of already very advanced and successful second language learners who have achieved a high degree of proficiency in the target language. The Department of Modern Languages at Nottingham Trent University has an established independent/directed learning culture to which students in the second year are accustomed. For these reasons a fair understanding on the students' part about their personal learning strategies was assumed from the outset, although complete student autonomy with a strong sense of responsibility for personal learning is still only evident in a minority of cases.¹⁶

What are the requirements for language acquisition to take place? According to Brumfit, there are three non-negotiable elements of language learning: the exposure to language, the practice through interaction, and motivation. All the rest is fashion and negotiable.¹⁷ As a minimalist expression of constituent elements of language learning Brumfit's definition can be helpful to focus the mind, even though other factors do not seem to be represented.¹⁸ The following will apply Brumfit's definition and will show how it was adhered to within the self-study pack.

Exposure to the language:

Students using the material were exposed to the language in its written and spoken form.

Students watched a court drama and parts of a documentary about the development of German law, working in groups or on their own. Tasks related to the video work concentrated on gist as well as detailed comprehension (both videos) and included concentration on specific dialogue elements.¹⁹

Students read authentic texts of different registers ranging from letters through newspaper editorials to complex case summaries. Reading comprehension research points towards the necessity to facilitate both, top-down and bottom-up processing for language learning.²⁰ Swaffar suggests “in view of the evidence that reader L1 strategies are often not applied in L2 reading, [...] reading of authentic texts from the start of language instruction for the sole purpose of training in gist comprehension or top-down processing.”²¹ Equally, bottom-up processes are important for L2 beginners as well as advanced learners, since a lack of vocabulary or grammar competence “may well interfere with reader conceptualizing”.²²

Both approaches were used for the materials discussed. Macro-operational tasks pointing to gist as well as detailed comprehension and specific language work tasks were incorporated.²³

Glosses:

Full comprehension of some of the primary reading texts (court press releases) would probably even be difficult for educated native speakers since a lot of specific background knowledge, i.e., primary law texts, would be required. A layperson (native speaker), as opposed to a solicitor, would need to look up the primary law texts and possibly additional explanations. The foreign language learner has also to deal with the problem of unknown vocabulary. The learner is in danger of overload with all its detrimental effects on learning as well as motivation. (The latter will be discussed below.) In this context, hypertext offers a

solution to immediate overload, since it allows annotations and glosses to be 'hidden' and thus allows the user to work at his/her personal speed and to choose different paths.

Current research is still divided regarding the usefulness of glossing for reading comprehension in general.²⁴ In the case of the materials discussed, annotations, glosses and additional texts (including graphical representations) imitate interested native speaker behaviour which helps the learner to form mental models²⁵ and to reach for deeper levels of comprehension. The possibility of having "immediate access is not as intrusive [or disruptive] as the steps required in looking up words in the dictionary [or law compilations].²⁶ It could be argued that vocabulary retention is hindered with such an approach since immediate access to vocabulary does not require the need for long-term retention. The tasks related to the different programmes approach this problem in two ways: firstly, specific comprehension questions needed to be answered (in written form or true/false) which were repeating or practising essential ideas. The concepts are carried within the specialist's language. Therefore vocabulary needs to be identified correctly or to be actively reproduced.

Secondly, the vocabulary which was considered to be essential for active use was related to specific oral exercises (see below).

Practice through interaction

Some of the tasks were designed with a view to transferring the acquired knowledge and the language material into other fictitious situations for specific use (role-plays created by student groups). Only a time-frame regarding the performance in front of the class was given. The different groups chose very different topics and had to discuss their individual parts

within the role-play amongst themselves. They also developed their lines in negotiation with each other.

Teamwork on the programmes was encouraged, but not specifically prescribed. Interaction between students doing the work together was envisaged, but rarely took place. Since the whole package was designed for self-study, a teamwork approach could only be advised. Students' individual work patterns seems to have prevented closer co-operation in most cases.

Motivation

Programmes with such a high level of complexity regarding content as well as language (structure and vocabulary) would not normally be expected to be welcomed by second language learners were they not highly committed and motivated. Where could motivational factors for this target group lie?

Motivation is a key variable and a notoriously difficult concept to define, since there are many factors contributing to it, which may change as the learner's perceived need for the acquisition of a language develops (Oxford, R., Shearin, J., 1994).²⁷ Some motivational factors like instrumental and integrative motivation are generally recognised concepts in second language acquisition.²⁸ Instrumental orientation refers to a drive dominated by the wish to use the language as an enabling instrument, for example for work or education-related purposes.²⁹ Integrative motivation expresses the primary wish to use the language as a tool for integration into the L2 environment and society.

It can probably safely be assumed that students going abroad for a whole academic year in order to study are influenced by both motivational orientations, instrumental and integrative, though not necessarily equally. Coleman (1996, p. 97) observed a slight shift

from instrumental to integrative motivation among students in year four, after their return from the year abroad. Nevertheless it is worth noting that students' cultural background and country of origin seem to impact on their predominant motivational orientation. For advanced learners of foreign languages at Nottingham Trent University, the author (Leahy, 1997) found pronounced differences of motivational orientation depending on the language studied. Some evidence is also pointing towards different motivational orientation depending on whether the target language is studied as a foreign or second language.

The admittedly limited experience with the LLB (Europe) course at the Nottingham Trent University shows that each student cohort included some students with very close family ties to the L2 community. It can be assumed that integrative motivation did play a role for at least some of the students. Not surprisingly, all students of the LLB (Europe) German course did express a strong interest in language study material related to their main degree course³⁰, an instrumental orientation as also observed by Coleman (1996) in his study regarding language learners before their year abroad. Instrumental motivational factors are also confirmed by student's comments in their evaluations.

Any motivational factor has its legitimate place and should be exploited to its maximum to enhance learning. CALL programmes seem to generate motivation at least for some students as can be seen in the student evaluation. It could be misleading to dismiss the use of IT as a fashionable factor.³¹ The three non-negotiable requirements for language acquisition as stated by Brumfit have been fulfilled. What are the pedagogical objectives?

PEDAGOGICAL OBJECTIVES OF THE MATERIALS DEVELOPED

The analysis of the students' needs (see above: The Rationale of the Study Programme)

points at two main areas of language work: the practice of listening and reading comprehension and the practice of structures and vocabulary introduced in the primary material. Furthermore, the students' needs on a psychosocial level³² point to the need for a close law-related setting.³³

Students can familiarise themselves with the primary material in their own time in a non-threatening environment (language laboratory) and then start to work with the texts. The simple and user -friendly interface contributes to a positive learning experience. The combined top-down and bottom-up approaches allow learners to deal with the material on the level of gist comprehension first, and to work through to deeper or detailed levels of understanding. The freedom to choose different paths through the individual CALL programmes according to personal needs and the freedom largely to choose the order of dealing with the different tasks facilitates semi-autonomous use.

EVALUATION

The CALL programmes discussed will be evaluated on three levels:

the suitability of the authoring package "Toolbook", the CALL researcher's perspective, and the student evaluation.

The suitability of the authoring package:

Hémard and White (1995) describe the suitability of hypermedia environments such as Toolbook as a "student-centred interactive learning platform". Even though Toolbook is not a hypertext programme as such, it exhibits very similar qualities for the user, i.e., easy reference from key words to separate pages with additional text or graphic information. As for all computer assisted language work, the scope for exercises with the Toolbook authoring package is limited: in more complex answers which go beyond true / false responses the

given correct version should ideally anticipate all possible correct answers and list them. For the responses requiring a sentence this could mean a long list of options which are not given. The author decided against this procedure, since the comparison with the answer key could involve more work for the learner than fulfilling the original task.³⁴

Secondly, the programme did not easily lend itself to some characteristics of German spelling, like the 'Umlaut' and the use of upper case for all nouns. Instead of listing all possible correct options, students were asked to compare their answers carefully with the key and to pay attention to words with capital letters. It was pointed out to students that not all possibly correct answers were listed: a definite article instead of an indefinite one (assuming it was the correct gender) would still be a correct answer. Some learners felt this to be a shortcoming of the work with CALL. This is a valid comment, but it is disputable whether this feature also has a significant effect on the learner's output. It would require more detailed comparative studies to establish whether students whose work is corrected in a traditional manner by the teacher would pay more attention to the teacher's corrections and not repeat mistakes.

Thirdly, the CALL programmes were designed to facilitate learner autonomy and cater for individual learning paths, but did not build in any features advising or guiding students on different learning strategies.³⁵ Since the target group consists of advanced successful second language learners it was assumed that students had at least an intuitive understanding of how they learned best. This assumption proved to be right in several cases, but not all. In the future, more guidance will be given in written instructions accompanying the programmes as well as in classroom work, in order to make choosing an individual learning strategy a more conscious process.³⁶

The CALL researcher's perspective:

Chapelle (1997) argues that the evaluation of CALL programmes should be measured according to the answers to two key questions, which are usually applied to other activities regarding second language acquisition, namely the “kind of language” of the CALL activity and the “language experience in CALL” regarding L2 learning.³⁷

In the CALL programmes discussed here, learners were exposed to very difficult language of a high register and were firstly asked to analyse given structures and then actively to reproduce similar structures, in other words to produce a modified output. Transferred language skills were tested in the form of oral contributions in class time, particularly a role-play. Chapelle argues that, as has already been established for classroom language learning settings, “the nature of linguistic exchanges that learners participate in” (Chapelle, 1997, p 22) should also be analysed for CALL in order to measure the value of the programme. In this case a full analysis has not been done as yet. The role-play, which is based on vocabulary and structures derived from the work with the TV drama “Ein Richter in Angst”, produced very varied and creative student responses which were video-taped. The active language production for the CALL activities themselves is in some cases relatively minimal, since emphasis is put on comprehension and analytical skills.

Student evaluation 1996/7

Student groups were small in both years 1995/6 and 1996/7, in which the student centred study package was tested. During the first year six students took the module, during the second year eleven students. Not all learners returned all the evaluation forms, and thus reliable statistical data is not available. This evaluation represents therefore individual responses.

CALL 1: The positive and negative comments are roughly in balance. The programme was perceived as difficult, but useful. The CALL exercises were not linked to credit points or assessments, which was experienced as a shortcoming. As already mentioned above, the limitations of the programme were seen as an obstacle. Students commented positively on the variety of exercises, which made the work interesting and the accessibility of additional text (e.g. primary law text: BGB). Six of seven students answered they found the additional information, vocabulary as well as text, helpful to very helpful.

CALL 2 was also unconnected with gaining credit points, which was perceived as a disadvantage. Overall the exercises were relatively easy and trouble-free, which was pointed out as an advantage, a “nice hassle free task”. The programme was seen as “user-friendly”, the format and information as easy to use. The connection between the main degree course, the video and the CALL programme was pointed out as very positive. Again, the additional information (especially the diagram) were named as positive features.

CALL 3 mainly deals with grammar and seems to be pitched at the right level. Comments included “good idea to have it on the internet”, “I enjoyed doing assessments on the computer”, “great help, especially with passive and subjunctive”, “very useful”, “good grammar revision”, “useful computer skills learnt”, “the change of having a computer exercise”. A very constructive suggestion was made by one student: to do the programme through pair work in the future. The communicative function seems to sometimes get neglected in CALL if the programme itself is not already set up interactively. An independent learning package should not be too prescriptive and in this case a maximum of personal freedom on the user’s part was intended. The learner could usually decide on the sequence of the different tasks and once in the CALL programme could choose different working paths. Some evaluation

comments suggest that not all students were either aware of their autonomy or did not know how to use it most effectively. Future introductions to the programmes will need to elaborate more on possible student options and point to different learning strategies.

TV: Court Room Drama: This film was perceived as being too long and the related exercises as being difficult for some. In the future, feature-length films will probably be edited and viewed in sections. Two students considered the plot uninteresting, two students explicitly point out their interest in the film. Positive comments included: “liked the way the questions were divided up, so it was easy to tell which part of the film they referred to”, “liked the entire exercise, it stretched me and was entertaining and interesting”, “good exercises gave ‘1st’ hand insight into courts”, “ liked the fact that it had a legal theme to it - i.e., got particular vocab.”. The connection to the main course of study was repeatedly pointed out as a particular positive feature of this exercise. To watch a video as part of an assessment was also seen positively. This task was related to assessed work: students were asked to transfer their knowledge about German court proceedings and the acquired vocabulary into a role-play. The different groups developed fictitious cases which were convincing in their approach and language.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the ‘Student centred legal language study’ show that the approach described can be a successful means of acquiring content as well as language. All students passed the assessments and many with good and some with very good results. It should be noted that the applied marking system takes both content and language into account. Students therefore proved to have understood the concepts they had studied and they were able to express this in the target language. How and when learning occurred was not investigated. Students mainly

undertook the learning process in their own time, it was not systematically monitored. This point will be addressed in the coming year, but will have consequences for the framework of the study mode. The package will still be mainly studied in directed learning time, but vocabulary and recall tests will be incorporated into class time. Therefore specific weeks will need to be allocated to study certain tasks in order to be able to test the material.

Reactions of the returning students regarding the usefulness of the self-study package during the study period abroad will be gathered. It is unlikely that it will be possible to establish a direct link between the materials and vocabulary retention. Too many variables will have come into play in the meantime (one and a half to two years). Nevertheless, the reactions could be useful for future developmental work.

The students' evaluation explicitly names the usefulness of glosses (vocabulary and additional materials including graphic representations). Chun and Plass (1997) show how picture comprehension can aid text comprehension "by establishing an analogy between the visual information and the corresponding mental model [... and thus] supporting the processes of selecting information, organizing the present information into a coherent structure, and integrating these new ideas into the existing mental model" (p. 65). The question of the influence of glosses (especially regarding visual information and vocabulary) on comprehension and long-term retention will need to be researched further.

SUMMARY

Although the sample is currently small the student evaluation shows that positive comments about the CALL programme outweigh the negative ones. CALL activities can fulfil the criteria Brumfit suggested for language learning and can exceed them. CALL, through its

play-like property which is experienced by learners as fun, may prove to carry an inherent motivational factor beyond its initial novelty which can enhance language learning.

The interactive element may either be supported by activities as part of or outside CALL, or by setting a framework within which several students can work together.

As shown here, CALL can be a solution to the problem of limited materials for languages for specific purposes and the production of the materials does not need to be too cost intensive.

The use of mixed media is possible for language teaching for specific purposes without having to be combined in multimedia computer-based programmes, which are cost intensive in hard- as well as software.

CALL can also be a solution to the problems caused by reduced contact time, which is already a fact in many British universities. Furthermore it does not need to be a threat to language teaching in the traditional sense, but can be a valuable additional activity, which deserves a place in the curriculum.

References / Endnotes

¹ I would like to thank Roger Sexton for his continuous support in supplying me with relevant short articles dealing with current court decisions, Jim Jordan and Anny Jones for proof-reading this article before submission and the anonymous reader for his/her useful suggestions. I would also like to express my thanks to Trevor Pull who implemented all three CALL programmes. Without his expertise this project would not have flourished.

² This view is shared by many students, as anecdotal evidence shows. Compare with LEAHY, C., 1997. 'Teaching Higher Levels: Motivation, Language and Content' (p. 24), paper given at the CiLT conference 'Encouraging Uptake of Modern Languages Courses' at the Leicester Comenius Centre, De Montfort University, 29/11/97. The written report can be found in the CiLT library.

³ Samely (1995, p.58) conducted a survey on ‘foreign language needs for future legal practitioners’ in 1991/2. Out of a total of 300 questionnaires she received 151 replies of which there were 40 legal practitioners, 33 lecturers in law or languages and 78 students.

The survey found the following result: “Most respondents (90%) [...] thought that training in the foreign language in general terms should deal with the foreign legal system and that the terminology of the foreign system (89%) as well as certain areas of the law (83%) , should be taught while conveying the differences between the foreign and the English system (79%). Foreign language training should make reference to the English legal system according to the views of 54%, but 26% held that it should not.”

⁴ Samely (1995, p.59) “Eighty-eight per cent of the respondents consented to the view [...] that the period abroad should be used equally to consolidate general communicative skills and communicative skills required for the legal profession. Knowledge of the foreign legal system should also be acquired abroad, according to 84%. [...] Seventy-two per cent favoured work experience in a law firm and 50% recommended the study of law subjects at university.”

⁵ Excerpts from other materials were used including the *Grundgesetz* (basic law) and other law texts usually used by native speakers.

⁶ Dickinson, 1993, p. 69; - Students were familiar with this idea through the introduction to the Legal Language course (module handbooks, 1994-8) which explains to students that the course “is designed as a seminar based on close co-operation between you, the future professionals in law, and the language teacher. It is very important to view it with a sense of responsibility for the outcome and not as a lecture which provides facts on a continuous basis. The independent / directed learning forms an integral part of the course [...]”

⁷ Subsequent problems for some individual students who found it difficult to assume responsibility for their own learning will be looked at in the section about student evaluation.

⁸ see appendix for graphic representation

⁹ see appendix for graphic representation

¹⁰ This refers to state philosophy and the historical development of law rather than the explanation or

interpretation of law.

¹¹ see appendix for graphic representation

¹² Dickson (1995) found some evidence that the “immersion technique” (p.115), in which grammar was taught through L2 and additional supervised CALL with L2 instructions, appeared to produce better results in L2-tests compared with the group which was taught through English (‘contrastive technique’). He could not find evidence for significant performance improvement through CALL (p.116). For the CALL 3 programme discussed, the chosen approach is predominantly L2 based with some linking sentences in English.

¹³ On the evaluation forms some students pointed out that they wanted to be marked for their work as, if it was not assessed, it would be “pointless” to do. Obviously more efforts need to be made to help students to take personal responsibility for their learning and progress.

¹⁴ For the purpose of this paper second language acquisition and second language learning are used as interchangeable terms. A distinction between *acquisition* referring to learning in a ‘natural’ L2 environment and *learning* referring to a class room setting was not made.

¹⁵ compare with Dickinson (1993 and 1996)

¹⁶ The section on student evaluation will show that most of the target group were able to use the package well and achieved good marks for the assessed work.

¹⁷ This slightly provocative statement was made by Brumfit (University of Southampton) during his summing up at the CiLT conference *Information Technology: the pedagogical implications for language teaching and learning* (Cambridge, 7/1/1998). He implied that the application of IT can be seen as belonging to the category of fashion.

¹⁸ One obvious example is aptitude. Ellis (1985, p. 293) defines aptitude as referring “to the specific ability a learner has for learning a second language. This is hypothesized to be separate from the general ability to master academic skills, which is referred to as ‘intelligence’.”

¹⁹ compare Swaffar & Vlatten, 1997, p. 182/3

²⁰ Swaffar (1988) reports on many different research projects which investigate individual reading comprehension elements, e.g. reader processing, processing styles and language background, new

vocabulary retention in short versus long text studies etc..

²¹ Swaffar, 1988, p 139-40

²² Swaffar, 1988, p 129

²³ In this context the student work was only semi-autonomous, in the sense that students were not bound by specific paths through the programmes or a rigid time-frame, but the tasks themselves were usually quite specific.

²⁴ compare Swaffar, 1988, p. 132/3, and Lomicka, 1998

²⁵ compare Chun & Plass, 1997

²⁶ Lomicka, 1998, p. 43

²⁷ This was also observed by Coleman (1996, p.96/7). Although students initially expressed their career as a strong motivational factor, after their year abroad this was replaced by 'liking the language'.

²⁸ Gardner and Lambert distinguished between instrumental and integrative motivation first (1959).

²⁹ It should be noted that *motivational orientation* is not a synonym for *motivation*. Motivation has a stronger quality than motivational orientation. In the words of Oxford and Shearin (1994, p.14) the "distinction between motivational orientation and motivation might explain the difference between registering to take a language course and then actually working hard to learn the L2 when in the course."

³⁰ Compare also with Samely, 1995.

³¹ The author is presently working on a study investigating motivational factors which might be inherent in the use of computers (including CALL) or computer mediated communication (CMC). The project looks at a possible link between successful language acquisition via CMC (e-mail project between students of the same main degree course in GB and Germany) and motivational factors influencing the learners.

³² See Seedhouse, 1996.

³³ Seedhouse (1996, p.66) bases his article on Brindley's definition of "a 'process-oriented' needs analysis 'trying to identify and take into account a multiplicity of affective and cognitive variables which affect learning, such as learners' attitudes, motivation, awareness, personality, wants,

expectations and learning styles.’ ”

³⁴ See also Levy (1997, p. 48): “While a CALL author may accept the need for immediate feedback, the reduction of learning into a set of clearly defined steps may be rejected.”

³⁵ Bull (1997) promotes effective learning strategy use in CALL in her article with the same title.

³⁶ Different learner strategies can already be applied by combining the programmes with other activities which could work in parallel. On one evaluation form a student suggests improving the programme work by asking students to work in pairs. Compare student evaluation, CALL 3.

³⁷ Chapelle, 1997, p 22.

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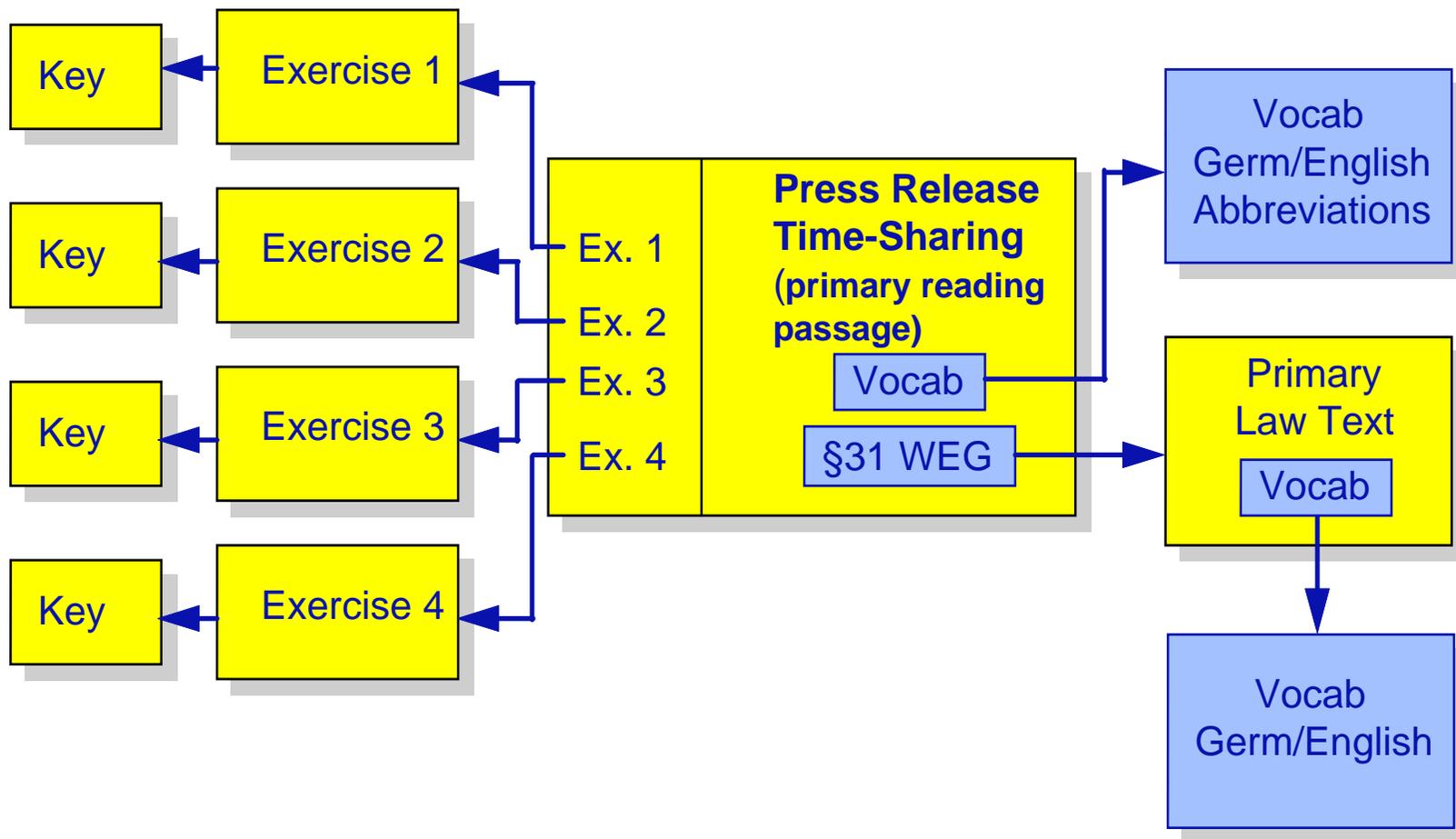
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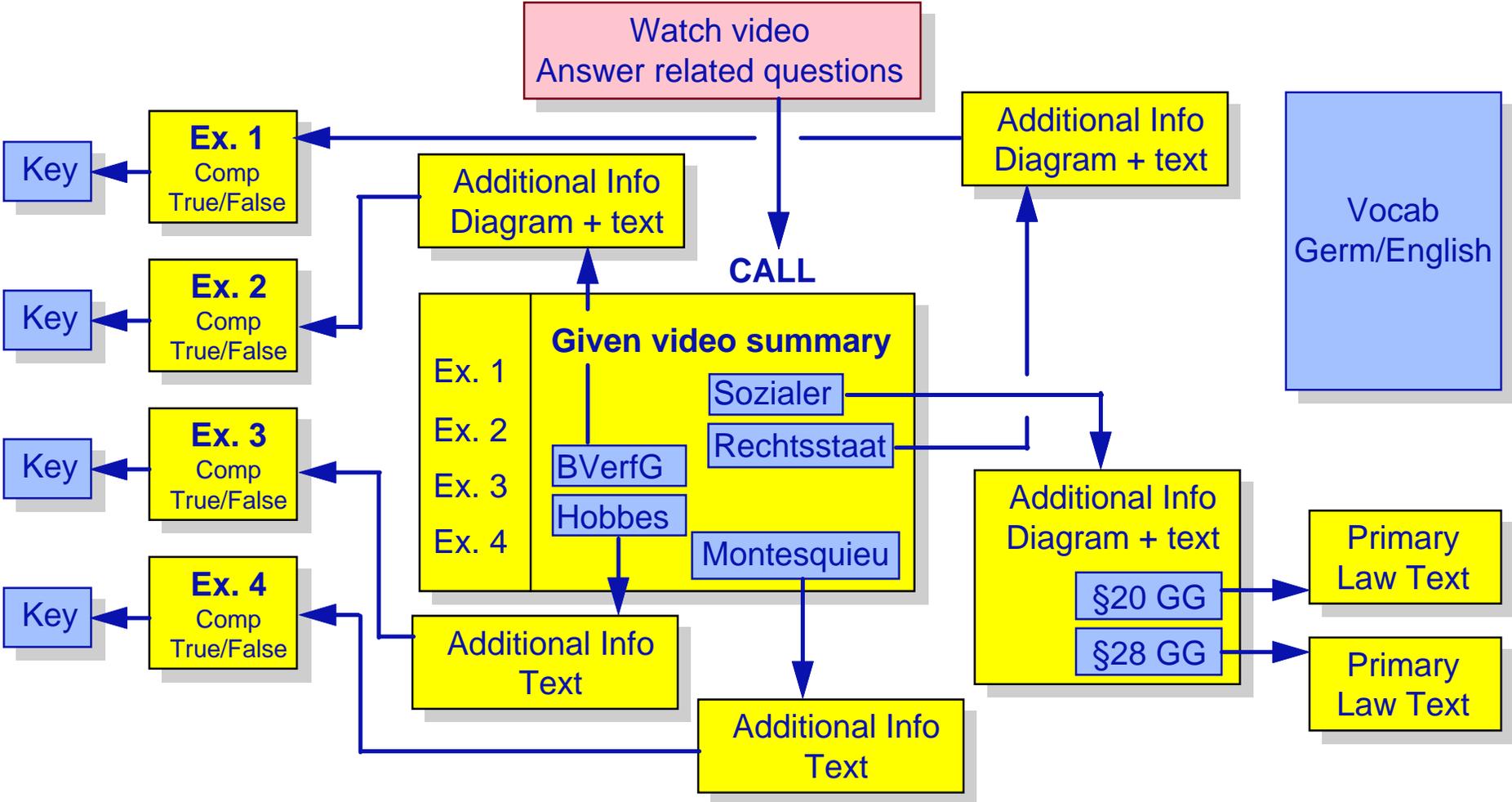
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CALL 1



CALL 2



CALL 3

