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Modern Languages

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Ministry of Education
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MODERN LANGUAGES

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FOREWORD

Throughout this pamphlet the term 'modern language' will be used in the sense of 'modern foreign language'.

In order to avoid what might become tedious repetition, masculine pronouns are used when referring to the teacher and the pupil.

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This pamphlet contains a number of quotations, the authors, titles and publishers of the works from which they are taken being recorded in the footnotes. The Ministry is grateful to the publishers and others who gave permission to use those quotations where copyright is involved.

INTRODUCTION

'. . . Euen as a hauke flieth not hie with one wing: euen so a man reacheth not to excellency with one tong'.

In advocating the study of more than one tongue, Ascham, like all Renaissance writers, had in mind the teaching of the classical languages. Modern languages, especially French and Italian, and later German, were, indeed, from the Renaissance onwards—or even earlier in the case of French—frequently part of the Englishman's education but they were for the most part pursued for practical ends and for purposes of travel and 'polite converse'. The attitude of mind which held modern studies to be of inferior value offering little beyond practical advantages and meeting only practical needs dies hard. But their claim to have both practical and educative value was clearly set forth in the *Report on the Position of Modern Languages in the Educational System of Great Britain* which was drawn up by a committee appointed by the Prime Minister in 1918. It was there stated that they subserve the purposes of industry and commerce; they are needed for scientific instruction and information and for the civil, diplomatic and armed services; they alone can give us an intimate knowledge of foreign countries and of the best thought of their citizens. In addition their value as an instrument of culture was stressed and the lines on which the subject should develop were clearly indicated: 'Modern Studies need an ideal such as inspired the highest classical studies'.

The educative value of modern languages in the highest and broadest sense has, in fact, been demonstrated during the last thirty or forty years by men and women who, having received their specialist training in this subject, have passed through our schools and universities. In some of the most responsible posts in all walks of life, both in this country and abroad, they have shown that the acquisition of a wide outlook, balanced judgment and discriminating taste is not limited, as was alleged by Mr. Gladstone, to those who have received their basic education through the study of Latin and Greek. In a report which he wrote in 1861 to the Public Schools Commission Mr. Gladstone vehemently denied the right of natural science, modern languages, modern history 'and

the rest' to be treated as anything more than 'ancillary' subjects. 'Why is the classical training paramount?' he continued.

> 'Because it improves memory, or taste, or gives precision, or develops the faculty of speech? All these are but narrow glimpses of a great and comprehensive truth . . . The materials of what we call classical training were advisedly and providentially prepared in order that it might become the complement of Christianity in its application to the culture of the human being, as a being formed both for this world and for the world to come.'

This point of view prevailed in our universities and many schools long after Mr. Gladstone's time. But in 1938 the head master of one of our largest schools, himself a distinguished product of the old classical tradition, could generously write to his senior modern languages master: 'The work you have done here goes far to convince me that the claim of the classics to unique efficiency in developing clarity of thought and precision of language is based more upon prejudice and our special tradition than upon reason.'

Today public opinion has changed and none would be likely to deny that the study of modern languages, in common with the study of English and the ancient classical languages, has not only a logical and intellectual value: it can also—if it is conceived as broadly and liberally as the traditional study of Latin and Greek—provide the artistic and aesthetic training which mark the truly educated and cultured person. It may, however, be argued that few of our pupils can have the privilege of a full course in modern languages and that, for the majority, language study at school ends at the age of 15 or 16 years. What can be the surrender value of such a course?

Much of what has been said above about the practical advantages is relevant here. But foreign languages, like most other subjects, are not learned at school simply as an end in themselves; if properly taught they will serve to train the pupils in habits of accuracy, and of clarity of thought and expression. In learning to pronounce, speak and write another language, boys and girls will probably for the first time become critically conscious of language and of sound in language. To deny children the opportunity of learning even the elements of another language is to neglect the powerful aid and stimulus which such study can give to the task of mastering their native tongue.

To the practical and intellectual advantages to be gained from learning modern languages there has recently been added the broadening influence which, during the past 20 years or so, has probably helped to make many thousands of our pupils less insular and prejudiced in outlook than they might otherwise have

been. By means of an exchange of correspondence and of visits large numbers of our children have been brought into contact with their fellows in France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Spain; schools and even towns have been linked for this purpose. And the presence in our classrooms of over 500 assistants from France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Saar has helped to bring reality to the teaching of languages in this country. If one aspect of education is the widening of experience, then the part played by modern languages must be considerable.

CHAPTER 1

General Principles

WHATEVER the claims of modern languages to an important place in the curriculum, it must be said at the outset that they cannot be justified unless the course contains intellectual discipline.

It was on this rock that the less skilful exponents of the direct method[1] foundered. Where conditions were favourable and the method was carried out wholeheartedly by a staff of efficient teachers, the course made the sternest demands on the pupils' powers, and results were always impressive. The method failed in many schools because classes were too large and the instruction was seldom concentrated in the hands of specialist teachers. It was, moreover, only imperfectly understood: written work and grammar were neglected and the unskilled teacher could not hold the attention of more than a proportion of the class throughout the lesson by purely oral work.

For these reasons the direct method fell into disrepute; reaction set in and many teachers returned to the disciplined drudgery of the former translational methods based on the traditional technique of teaching Latin and Greek. It must be admitted, too, that the public examinations gave little encouragement to any other methods. Most of the papers were composed purely of passages for translation and they often included a number of disconnected English sentences for translation into the foreign language. Oral tests were optional and marks given for them did not affect the result of the examination. It is not surprising that a contributor to the Modern Language Association's Journal in 1924 claimed that 'the old way is best suited to passing boys through examinations as at present constituted.'

But, in spite of satisfactory examination results with able pupils, the sensitive teacher could not fail to notice the stultifying effect of the constant translation of isolated sentences and the laborious construing of the reading book, which gave the pupil no command of the spoken tongue and effectively stifled any interest that a story or play might have had for him. The teacher knew that even if his better performers reached the standard of a 'credit' in the

[1]The main principle of the direct method was that the teaching of the foreign language and its pronunciation should be purely through the medium of the foreign language.

external examination, most of them would have no desire to continue the subject in the sixth form or after leaving school; and few would wish to visit the country and meet the people whose language they were supposed to have learned. In short, these conscientious teachers knew well that they were not fulfilling their primary task of educating the pupils, whatever the result in terms of examinations might be. And this led them to look once more at the discarded direct method, which did at least recognise that French, German and Spanish were living spoken languages and that to learn to speak and write them could give a sense of achievement and thus help to supply the incentive without which progress in language learning is impossible. If the weaknesses of the direct method could be remedied, it was surely preferable to the sterile and monotonous grammar-translation technique. So came into use the oral method, which aimed at keeping all that was best in the direct method—the thorough training in correct pronunciation, use and comprehension of the spoken foreign tongue—and combining it with the stern mental discipline of accurate written work which demanded a sound knowledge of grammar. Other features of the direct method, such as the preference for guided free composition during the first three years in place of formal translation, and the background study of the foreign country, were to be embodied in the new compromise method—compromise, because the use of the mother tongue was no longer avoided when it was needed to ensure understanding. 'Teach as Frenchly or as Germanly as possible, consistent with clear comprehension'[1] is the advice of one of the principal founders of the modern oral method, and this is now accepted by many successful teachers, most of whom do not hesitate to use English if matters such as intricate grammatical rules or difficult words cannot be adequately explained in the foreign language. The initial thorough training in pronunciation and intonation given by those who used the direct method must be retained, but the ability to read texts printed in phonetic symbols would not be regarded as essential to anyone but the teacher. Vocabulary—active vocabulary—must be built up methodically by hearing or seeing words in a context and using them: the memorising of long lists of isolated words was recognised to be of little value, but the regular committing to memory of carefully selected passages of good idiomatic language previously studied by the pupils was considered to be at the very root of modern language learning.

[1]H. F. Collins: *Year Book of Education*, 1934 (Evans Bros., London and Edinburgh).

Oral work in the foreign language was to be the basis of instruction. From this it followed that the pupil would be taught from the start to carry out the everyday business of the classroom in the foreign language: with very little effort such questions as '*Comment est-ce que ça s'écrit, monsieur?*', ,*Wie heisst das auf deutsch, Frau Doktor?*' or '*¿Quiere Vd prestarme una pluma, señora?*' would come naturally to him, and his stock of words and phrases would grow from term to term.

The reading book would no longer be construed; comprehension could usually be assured by other more profitable means such as the use of contraries, paraphrases or other explanation in the foreign language, using words already known, rapid blackboard sketches or gestures; only exceptionally would a phrase or a passage be translated, unless in the fourth, fifth or sixth forms a passage were selected for careful rendering into English. Intensive study, beginning in the lower forms with the critical examination of a sentence or two, would gradually develop into the *explication de texte*—the method used so effectively by the French to teach their own and foreign languages—until it became an important part of sixth form work in language and literature.

The first skilful exponents of the direct method had realised that the provision of a realistic background to the study of the foreign language by relating it to the people who speak it and to their environment was a valuable source of interest which could be used to break down the water-tight compartments in which modern languages, like many other subjects, were enclosed. The initiators of the oral method saw that this could with great advantage be developed to the point of forging a personal link between their pupils and children in the foreign country through an exchange of correspondence or of visits. In the sixth form the study of background would lead to the integration of modern language studies with English, history, geography, art and music, so that the subject, as an educative medium, might attain to the value and dignity which had hitherto been the monopoly of the classics.

These, then, were the principles and ideals which formed the basis of what is usually referred to in this country and abroad as the 'oral method'. While recognising that it is not the only way of teaching modern languages and that a teacher of outstanding ability and personality may well achieve excellent results by other means, we think it advisable in the restricted space of this pamphlet to attempt to give a more detailed description of this one method which is considered today by many progressive teachers to be one of the most effective methods of instruction in modern languages: a method which makes rigorous demands on the teacher and the

pupil, but which offers its own reward for both and justifies the claim of modern languages to an important place in the curriculum, because of its practical, social and educative value.

Modern Languages for Younger Pupils

A modern foreign language may be taught in any type of school in England. There are at present, however, few grant-earning primary schools in which instruction in any foreign language is given. In this respect there is a marked difference between their curriculum and that which is normally found in the preparatory and other private schools, where there are courses in French and Latin, often beginning at the age of seven or eight years, and in Greek or German starting sometimes at the age of about ten years. There is a body of opinion against such an early start, and it is often held that children are not yet ready to learn a second language, unless it is acquired through natural direct experience as in the bi- and tri-lingual countries (such as Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Wales and Ireland). But there may be one important advantage in learning a modern foreign language before the age of 11 years; this is the comparative ease with which young children can acquire the pronunciation and intonation of a new language and can memorise new patterns of speech. From the eleventh or twelfth year onwards this faculty of imitation usually grows weaker, speech organs become less flexible and habits are formed which are difficult to alter. It is therefore of vital importance that young children learning a modern foreign language be given a teacher whose pronunciation and intonation are correct (not merely 'respectable') and one who is sufficiently fluent in the language to be able to create conditions in the classroom which enable the children to learn through direct and natural experience. Should there be any recourse at this stage to ' grammar-grind ' or methods based on constant translation from and into the foreign language, the child's valuable initial enthusiasm may be lost; a permanent dislike of the subject may be instilled and confident fluency inhibited from the start. It is the very real danger of this that is responsible for the opposition to an early start. If, however, the type of teacher and the methods indicated above are employed, there would seem to be no reason for denying young children the chance of bringing into play the same faculties of imitation and memorisation—so active at this stage of development—which have enabled them to obtain some degree of accuracy and fluency in their mother tongue. But let the aims be first and foremost to initiate good speech habits and secondly to stimulate such interest in the language, the people

and the country that the pupils are willing to accept the more exacting intellectual discipline which must necessarily follow. Three or four quite short periods spaced out in the week may be sufficient for the attainment of these important but limited objectives. Individual practice in pronunciation is essential at this stage; it is not easy to arrange this if numbers in the class exceed 20. Owing to difficulties of staffing it is impossible at present in many schools to provide such a group.

CHAPTER 2

The Choice of Language

THE choice of modern foreign languages to be taught in our schools is an educational problem of great importance. The first detailed examination of this problem was made in 1918 by the Committee which drew up the *Report on the Position of Modern Languages in the Educational System of Great Britain.* Other significant contributions to the discussion of this matter have been the Board of Education's *Memorandum on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Certain Types of Schools* (1930)[1] and the report of the Secondary School Examinations Council, *Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools* (The 'Norwood Report')[2], issued in 1943. Since then the question has been explored in other notable books, such as *New Tongues*, by Professor Allison Peers (1945), and *The Teaching of Modern Languages*, published in 1949 by the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools.

In all of these the educational, cultural, commercial and international aspects of language learning were considered and the essential claims of the five most widely used European languages—French, German, Spanish, Italian and Russian—were set out. Before venturing to comment on the suggestions that were made in these publications or to offer any alternative advice, it is necessary to examine the present position of the languages which are now taught in British schools.

If the statistics included in this pamphlet in Appendix A, relating to the number of entrants for the School and Higher Certificate Examinations in 1939 and the examinations for the General Certificate of Education in 1952 and 1954, are examined, it is possible to form a rough estimate of the relative position of the five principal languages and to note any changes that have occurred between the years mentioned.

The main facts that emerge from these figures are that for pupils below the sixth form French still predominates, but to a slightly lesser extent than in 1939. The total number of pupils

[1] Board of Education Pamphlet No. 82. (H.M.S.O. 1930). Out of print.

[2] *Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools* (Norwood Report) (H.M.S.O. 1943), Price 3s. net.

offering German has increased, yet the proportion of the total entrants taking German is a little less than in 1939. Spanish has nearly trebled its numbers, having improved its position steadily in the last 15 years. Italian, on the other hand, lost ground during the war, which it has not yet fully recovered, and Russian is making slow progress; the numbers remain small in these two languages.

In the sixth form there have been more significant developments. At the advanced level the number of pupils offering French has more than doubled, while the total examined in the other four languages has increased in even greater proportion. Though the gap between French and German is still wide, it is narrower than at the ordinary level. Spanish still holds third place but Russian advanced in 1953 and 1954 and has gone ahead of Italian. The recent increase of entries for Russian at the advanced level may be due to the number of those who offer the subject for examination after leaving school.

The figures for classes in evening institutes and evening classes in major establishments for further education are also given in Appendix A. They indicate an upward trend in French since 1937 until 1952/1953 and subsequently a slight decrease. It will be seen that in 1937/1938 the number of students of German was not far below the number of those studying French. But German lost much ground during the war and although there has been a steady rise in the figures since 1945, they are still far below the pre-war level. There is a striking increase since the war in the number of students learning Italian; there is also a greater demand for the Scandinavian languages. The sharp rise in the figure for Russian at the end of the war has not been maintained.

Apart from statistics given in Appendix A, some recent information is available relating to the number of schools in which Spanish, Italian and Russian are taught and the nature of the courses.

An inquiry in 1952 by the Hispanic Council and the Ministry of Education into the extent to which Spanish was taught in the schools revealed that it formed part of the curriculum in 350 schools (including at least 15 secondary modern schools) and over 50 institutes, an increase of about 100 during the previous 15 years. Sometimes it is started at the age of 11 years, but more often at 13 years, with a course leading to the examination for the General Certificate of Education at the ordinary level. The extent to which it is a sixth form subject can only be estimated from the number (given in the Appendix) of entries for the external examination at the advanced level.

The Ministry of Education also sought information recently

about the position of Italian in the schools' curricula. In September, 1955, the total number of schools in which there was an Italian course was 49. Of these schools, 18 took the language to the ordinary level, 22 to the advanced level and nine had a non-examination course ; 34 were independent or direct grant schools ; another grouping shows that 33 were girls' schools. The number of pupils studying Italian in each of these schools was, however, small ; only 15 of them had more than ten such pupils. The majority of the teachers held university degrees in Italian and another modern language. The supply of text-books for the fifth and sixth forms was fairly good, but the choice of elementary books was not wide.

In 1950, a detailed survey was made of the teaching of Russian in British schools. It was found that there was a course of instruction in the language in 29 secondary schools, of which 15 might be termed 'public schools'; and that it was also taught in 12 evening institutes and 12 commercial colleges. Of the 19 teachers who were interviewed, only three held university honours degrees in Russian, two were *émigrés* and the remaining 14 were self-taught English teachers. Two only of the English teachers had spent any time in Russia.

Five schools started the subject below the sixth form, usually in the second or third year, with a time allowance of from three to five periods a week. In several instances a steady decrease in numbers during the course was reported. In most of the schools offering Russian it appeared as a sixth form subject only, to which from one to four periods weekly were given; in one case only was there a more generous allocation of seven periods a week. But there is every reason to believe that Russian is now beginning to gain some ground as a subject of the curriculum of sixth forms.

THE PREDOMINANCE OF FRENCH AS FIRST LANGUAGE

Broadly speaking, the hope expressed in the Norwood Report[1] of some readjustment which would increase the number of pupils learning languages other than French has not been realised. In the national interest, for many reasons—educational as well as practical and political—it is not desirable that our pupils' studies in foreign language, literature and civilisation should be mainly concentrated on those of one nation. An attempt should therefore be made first to account for the overwhelming predominance of French and then to estimate the possible benefits resulting from the study of other languages.

[1] Norwood Report, p. 114.

It is important to recall that the traditional freedom of governing bodies and head masters and mistresses to decide the curricula of their schools remains unimpaired; no pressure to introduce a particular language is exercised by the Ministry of Education or any examining or other official body.

The most determined attack made recently on the 'French monopoly' is to be found in *New Tongues*. The author there asserts that the pre-eminence of French is based on social prestige or vested interest, and he suggests that 'a third reason, and the most potent, is that British people are the slaves of tradition—too lazy to experiment and very loath to give up anything that "has always been done ".'.[1]

It is the surrender value of the five-year French course ending with the examination for the School Certificate or the General Certificate of Education which is criticised by the author of this book. He states elsewhere that the great majority of pupils derive little benefit from this course and continues: 'Test this view by talking in French to the average young graduate, big-business man, lawyer or clergyman . . . their French has simply vanished; it might almost never have been.'[2] Others, too, have asserted that the British 'Tommy', with no academic knowledge, was better able to communicate with the Frenchman than was the ex-grammar school pupil. But this is a hasty and uninformed judgment. The resourceful 'Tommy' may by gesticulations and monosyllables more quickly make his simple needs understood, but however long he stays in the country, he will rarely be able to speak or write the language correctly. His grammar school brother-in-arms may be more inhibited at first by the fear of grammatical errors, especially in the presence of his fellow countrymen (and it is only in these circumstances that the English can justly be described as 'poor linguists'). But, given the incentive, there is every prospect that he will begin to use the foreign language with confidence and accuracy after a short period of residence in the country. There is no room for complacency—the effort needed to build on school foundations is often greater than it should be—but there is no justification for writing off the present five-year grammar school course as useless.

That French is still the first language in so many English schools is not mainly, if at all, due to social prejudice, vested interest or a slavish adherence to tradition. It cannot be denied that recent wars have slowed down the progress that the teaching of German, Spanish and possibly Italian was making in this country. The

[1] Professor A. Peers: *New Tongues*, p. 24. (Pitman, London 1945).
[2] *Ibid*, pp. 34 and 35.

chief reason for the pre-eminence of French today is that our modern methods of instruction in foreign languages demand that the teacher shall have an intimate knowledge, not only of the language he is teaching but of the foreign country and people; and the teacher is aided in his task if at least some of his pupils have made contact with children in the foreign country or can reasonably look forward to meeting them. It must be accepted that it is at present more practicable for both teachers and pupils to enter into personal relations with the French than with any other nation; for many pupils the heavier expense involved would rule out a visit to most other countries. Moreover, British schools are, as yet, rarely able to enjoy the advantage of having a Spanish or Italian assistant on their staff, because so little English is taught in Spain or Italy; negotiations with these countries for an exchange of assistants are, however, proceeding, and opportunities may lie ahead. No reciprocal arrangement is yet possible with Russia.

WIDENING THE CHOICE

As far as the past and the present are concerned the preference for French as first language can be understood, and the charge that we are lacking in enterprise can be rejected. But what of the future? In view of our improving relations with Germany, Spain and Italy, it should now be possible for enthusiastic and resourceful teachers to overcome existing difficulties and forge links with these countries which will be close enough to enable them to bring to their teaching a realism based on up-to-date personal knowledge of the country and people. It should therefore be the aim of all who are interested in the training of teachers of modern languages, and of education in the broadest sense, to make this possible.

It must, regrettably, be admitted that in present circumstances close relations with Russian teachers and pupils are difficult to establish and an intimate knowledge of life and conditions there is beyond the reach of most people; but this may not always be so.

CLAIMS OF THE FIVE MOST WIDELY USED EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

The observations which follow may offer some guidance in the choice of language.

French

One important reason for the leading position of French has already been given. Others are not hard to find. The Norwood Report, for example, explains the special place occupied by French in English education by referring to 'the historical relation of

France and England, the connexion of French and English cultures . . . and the routine of French teaching that has been set up.'[1]

Although in the early stages it cannot be denied that French grammar, pronunciation and intonation present considerable difficulties for the pupil who has little linguistic aptitude, competent teachers have shown that it is possible for many secondary modern school pupils to surmount them and to gain some facility in using and understanding the simple spoken language and reading elementary texts. For the able linguist and the sixth form modern language specialist the value of French has seldom been challenged. 'Its fine accuracy of expression and its delicate shades of meaning . . . make it an incomparable instrument of education'.[2] And even the author of *New Tongues* is willing to admit that 'in the higher stages the real disciplinary benefits of French occur'; that 'French culture has, over the last thousand years, dominated Europe to a greater extent than the culture of any other nation'; and—referring to French literature—'nowhere will a brilliant adolescent find a richer or vaster intellectual treasury'. But the writer considers French literature to be 'too cerebral to be popular with young people in this country'.[3] Yet in what other language shall we find such a wealth of good short stories, comedies, poems and fables which will be read with pleasure and profit even by the pupil whose French studies do not continue beyond the fifth form? And for the more advanced pupil the whole range of French literature from Rabelais, Montaigne and the *Pléiade*, through Descartes, Pascal, Molière, Racine, Voltaire, Rousseau, and the great poets, novelists, historians and critics of the 19th century, to the vigorous creative writers of today, offers material which will keep the ablest of them extended to the limit of his intellectual capacity. In architecture, sculpture, painting and music, France offers much that will interest and inspire even the pupil of only average sensitivity. The work of the French Impressionist painters in particular—Manet, Monet, Cézanne, Renoir, Van Gogh, Sisley, Pissarro, Gauguin, Matisse, Degas and several others—seldom fails to make a strong and lasting appeal to the older pupils.

German

The Norwood Report draws attention to the close relationship between the English, French and German languages and

[1] Norwood Report, p. 114.

[2] *The Teaching of Modern Languages*, p. 30. (Published by the University of London Press for the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools, 1949).

[3] Professor A. Peers: *New Tongues*, pp. 43-47. (Pitman, London 1945).

literatures: 'a case has yet to be made for regarding any other modern languages and literatures to be in as close a relation to English literature and history as the language and literature of France and Germany'.[1] To this close connexion of the German language with English can be added political and commercial importance and the intellectual training and discipline which must come from the learning of a foreign language so highly inflected and in many respects so different in construction from our own: the benefits resulting from this linguistic discipline may well be compared with those which come to the student of Greek.

Although German pronunciation, intonation and vocabulary present less difficulty in the earlier stages than French, it must not be assumed that it is a language more suitable for the less able pupils. Experience shows that after several years' study and careful teaching many are still prevented by the intricacies of case endings and word-order from using the language with confidence and from reading with enjoyment and profit texts suitable to their stage of development.

German is a language well suited to the grammar school pupil with high or at least average linguistic aptitude and it is best started as first or second language not later than the second year, so that by the time he reaches the sixth form he will have sufficient grasp of grammar and vocabulary to enable him to embark on the rich and varied programme of reading that the advanced course offers. Few adolescents fail to gain joy and inspiration from the music and the heroic idealism of the German lyric and ballad. Admittedly, few German comedies appeal to the English reader as do the French, Spanish or Italian. But the high poetic and human quality combined with the fire and vigour of German drama in its other forms, from Goethe, Schiller, Kleist, Grillparzer and Hebbel to Sudermann, Hauptmann and Hofmannsthal in more modern times, is often more keenly appreciated by English boys and girls than is French drama, with the possible exception of Racine, Rostand and our contemporaries, Claudel and Anouilh. The *Novellen* of Storm, Meyer, Keller and Schnitzler and the prose writings of Carossa, Hesse, Stefan Zweig and Thomas Mann—to quote only a few of the writers of merit whose works are now accessible to the sixth form pupil—give the teacher a wide choice.

There is much that will interest and repay study in the paintings of Dürer and Holbein, in the architecture of Germany's smaller towns and the baroque of many notable buildings, both in Germany and Austria. But the chief contribution of Germany and Austria to the world's culture has been in music. The names of the most

[1] Norwood Report, p. 115.

distinguished composers of orchestral, instrumental and choral music in these two countries are so well known that they need no mention here. And the German *Volkslied* is ever a source of the keenest enjoyment to most English boys and girls.

In the past, English and German youths, when meeting and living together as individuals, have generally felt a natural affinity for each other and a harmony of cultural and other interests, and it should now be possible to develop the closer ties which are essential if we are to understand each other and learn to speak each other's language.

Spanish

Reference is made in the Norwood Report to the language, literature and art of Germany and Spain, which are described as

> 'worthy subjects of study; both have intrinsic claims comparable with those of French, quite apart from their great political and commercial importance; the languages provide the discipline and the emotional appeal which is demanded from the study of a language as a school subject; their practical value in industry and commerce is great, and in the national interest the need of men and women so trained must be satisfied'.[1]

This statement has lost none of its validity to-day. Spanish is used by at least 110 million speakers[2] in many parts of the world and a knowledge of it is a key that opens many doors. The comparative simplicity of its pronunciation and syntax has given Spanish the reputation of being an easy language. But no living languages are easy; it is merely that the difficulties of each are differently distributed. Each has its own disciplinary value and this is true in Spanish as in other languages. It can, however, be agreed that in the early stages it is not difficult for the normally intelligent pupil to make rapid and satisfying progress. The advanced student will find that because of its rich vocabulary and its complexity of expression composition in the language is an exacting and stimulating intellectual exercise. The language has exceptional stability: the Spanish of today is close to that of the 15th Century, and with few differences the Spanish of Madrid is that of Lima, Manila and Tierra del Fuego. With a knowledge of Spanish the student can read the literatures and histories of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela and the eleven other Spanish-speaking countries in the New World.

One of the greatest qualities of Spanish literature is its spontaneous appeal to young people. Less subtle and more picturesque

[1] Norwood Report, p. 114.

[2] The distribution of languages throughout the world today is given in Appendix B.

and heroic than most French books, the works of such eminent writers as Cervantes, Lope de Vega and Calderón, and the ballads of the *Romancero* can be appreciated by the pupil at a relatively early stage. The history of Spain and Latin America also provides an abundance of interesting reading material: the epic stories of Columbus, Cortés, Hernando de Soto and other *Conquistadores* can be read in the original and are irresistibly attractive to youth.

An equally great contribution of the Spanish genius to the world's culture is undoubtedly in the realm of painting. Here the names of El Greco, Zurbarán, Velázquez, Murillo and Goya stand in the first rank. In music, too, Spain's influence in Europe has been considerable and is particularly strong in modern times.

Spanish has been adopted by the United Nations Organisations as one of their four working languages,[1] and its steadily growing importance in international affairs and in the commercial world is so obvious that it requires no underlining here. Travel to Spain or Spanish-speaking countries is more costly than to France or Germany, but it should not be an insuperable difficulty for many teachers and pupils.

Italian

A report published in 1952 by the Society for Italian Studies states the case for the inclusion of Italian in the school curriculum with clarity and justice:

> 'The claim that the Italian language is in itself a suitable subject for study and that it is the key to a cultural heritage of great richness is never disputed. All acknowledge that it is a beautiful language, logical in construction, pronounced as written, easy to learn in its early stages and therefore quickly rewarding, closely akin to Latin, helpful to students of the classics. The vocabulary has changed so little since medieval times that the language of Dante is to a great extent comprehensible to modern Italians whereas Chaucer is difficult to modern Englishmen. The 'Divine Comedy', the greatest and most significant European work of the Middle Ages, is very quickly readable to the student of Italian. It is superfluous to illustrate the importance of Italian to the man of letters, the artist, the musician, the historian, scientist, theologian and philosopher. The very words 'The Italian Renaissance' conjure up visions of delight that have drawn Northerners to Italy for centuries, and continue to do so. The power of Italy to stimulate the imagination and refine the intellect is as great now as ever, and was recently felt by countless members of the British armies who went there with other objects in view.
>
> When these facts are considered and when we remember the stimulus given to English minds by the vitalising Italian influence in the past, it appears a surprising anomaly that Italian is almost entirely neglected in our schools. This omission not only deprives individuals of some-

[1] English, French, Spanish and Russian.

thing of great educational value but is on national grounds undesirable. Italy, as a centre of Western European culture, has an important part to play in modern Europe and she occupies a highly strategic area on the map.'[1]

The suggestion that Italian should be brought into the time-table as a second modern language, an alternative to German or Spanish, was considered by the compilers of this 1952 report to be the most practicable under present conditions. The relative remoteness of Italy and Italian schools from our shores, and the consequent difficulty of exchanging visits, would for non-academic pupils rob the language course of one of its important incentives. But where the means can be found for English and Italian teachers and pupils to make contact from time to time, there is every reason why Italian should be studied either as a first or second language. In the sixth form it is clearly a language which can with great advantage be started by pupils on the arts side; with some knowledge of Latin and French as a foundation, rapid progress should be made.

Russian

In November, 1947, 200 schools, representing all types of secondary schools in different parts of the country, were asked by the Ministry of Education to give their views about Russian as a possible subject in their curriculum, assuming that adequate specialist teaching would be available. Almost without exception the replies received testified to the importance of Russian as a world language and to the need for this country to produce a sufficient number of Russian-speaking persons who could meet and discuss world problems with citizens of the Soviet Union. There was, however, serious doubt as to whether the grammar school was the place to learn Russian. Many felt that its study should be pursued later at the university or the technical college.

Schools which decided against the introduction of Russian anywhere in the school time-table numbered 96. Arguments in support of this view achieved a remarkable unanimity. The language was deemed too difficult and it was found that suitable books were often hard to come by. Russian stood apart from the course of western civilisation and to introduce it into an already overloaded curriculum at the expense of Latin or German or Spanish was inadvisable. Russian isolation, the alleged poverty of contemporary Russian literary output and the fact that what is worth while in past achievement has been made accessible in translations, were cited as reasons for not introducing the subject.

[1] *The Place of Italian in British Education*, p. 1.

Admittedly Russian presents difficulties for the average Englishman, but not more than do the ancient classical languages. For the pupil with some linguistic ability the value of Russian as a discipline is very great, resembling even more closely than German the discipline of Greek. Literary Russian is remarkable both for its subtlety and its flexibility. And although the contemporary output—so far as we are able to judge—may not be of high quality, the nation which produced Pushkin, Turgenev, Dostoievsky, Tolstoy, Chekov and Gorky will surely give birth to other great writers in the future.

Students find much of interest in Russian painting, sculpture and architecture; and few will deny the great value of the contribution to music, and in some cases to ballet, made by Borodin, Moussorgsky, Tschaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Scriabin, Rachmaninov, Stravinsky and many other Russian composers.

The remoteness and isolation of Russia have been responsible for the paucity of text-books; there are at present few really good dictionaries, and course books written on modern lines are scarce. These are difficulties which must be taken into account before the decision is taken to introduce Russian into the curriculum, particularly below the sixth form.

COMBINATIONS OF LANGUAGES

The five languages which have been under consideration divide naturally into the Romance group—French, Spanish and Italian—and the more highly inflected Teutonic and Slav languages—German and Russian.

For boys and girls who have been grounded in Latin the Romance languages will present less difficulty than German or Russian. Any combination of them, apart from that of Spanish and Italian, can be recommended, even for pupils whose linguistic ability is not outstanding. Italian does not run well in harness with Spanish because their many points of similarity are liable to lead the young learner into confusion.

A more exacting and profitable programme for those who clearly have some capacity for languages is the study of a Romance language side by side with either German or Russian. Such study, if conceived liberally and backed by an intimate understanding of the two civilisations, will form the basis of a humanistic education which is both broad and thorough. The combination of French and German is most often preferred by modern language specialists, probably because of their contrasting linguistic disciplines, the intrinsic worth of their literatures and the special opportunity that these two literatures afford for comparative study. But French

and Russian would be another pattern capable of extending the best pupils.

During their last two terms at school, possibly after competing for a university open scholarship, really able linguists may wish to add a third modern language; the choice will usually depend on the teaching power that is available, since few schools can cover the whole range of five modern foreign languages. Experience has proved that pupils who have been trained in German or Greek usually make the most rapid progress in Russian.

COMMENTS ON EARLIER RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of constructive suggestions relating to the choice of language were made in the Norwood Report[1] and the I.A.A.M. treatise on *The Teaching of Modern Languages*,[2] and some of them have clearly borne fruit.

French and German, as was recommended, now appear occasionally as alternative first languages; but the arrangement by which the abler pupils are sometimes allocated to French and the less gifted to German is not usually satisfactory. The Norwood Report advocated that Spanish should become the chief language in some schools, and particularly in areas where commerce has special ties with Spanish-speaking countries. There is evidence that this recommendation has to some extent been implemented. Spanish is reported to be the first language, or on an equal footing with other languages, in about 40 schools.

Commercial considerations do not weigh heavily in the country as a whole in determining which languages should be taught, but it is perhaps significant that Spanish is studied in 44 Lancashire schools, of which 16 are in Liverpool, and that of the 18 schools in Wales offering Spanish, five are in Cardiff and Swansea. The I.A.A.M. Committee made the same proposal in regard to Spanish, adding that, for commercial reasons also, 'North-Eastern areas should specialise or provide extra facilities in . . . Russian and Scandinavian languages'. It is reported that Danish is now taught in a secondary modern school and Russian in a grammar school on the north east coast; otherwise, so far as is known, there has been little response to this proposal.

The I.A.A.M. treatise recommended that 'Spanish should generally be the first foreign language for 'C' pupils, e.g. for many in secondary modern schools'. It was stated above that in the earlier

[1] Norwood Report, pp. 117-119.

[2] *The Teaching of Modern Languages*, pp. 40-41. (Published by the University of London Press for the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools, 1949).

stages of Spanish the normally intelligent pupil can make rapid and satisfying progress. This may also be true in the case of the weaker linguists, but it is even more essential with them to ensure that the teacher is in sufficiently close contact with Spain to be able to stimulate an interest not only in the language but in the Spanish way of life and the country of Spain.

Courses in German, Spanish or Russian, beginning in the sixth form, are now more frequently met than at the time of the Norwood Report; pupils specialising in science often take a two-year course in German, though sometimes with too few periods in the week to make substantial progress. The arguments for including Italian in the curriculum of the sixth form are cogent and deserve wider acceptance than they have had hitherto.

The timing of the start of the second foreign language was discussed by both the Norwood and the I.A.A.M. Committees. The former were of the opinion that 'pupils who show promise should start a second language almost at once; we disapprove'—they continue—'of a simultaneous beginning of two languages, but we are by no means convinced that a whole year need elapse before the second language is begun'. This view can be endorsed in the light of recent experience. The disadvantages of making the second modern language alternative to Latin below the sixth form are serious. In practice the effect of a compulsory choice between those two subjects is to discourage most pupils of university calibre from specialising in modern languages.

There is little sign as yet of any differentiation of curricula between neighbouring secondary schools so as to permit a wider choice of languages. Such differentiation is not recommended only by the I.A.A.M. Committee; it was also strongly urged in the Board of Education's Report on the position of German in 1929; 'The fact that one school omits German from its curriculum is *per se* a reason why a neighbouring school should make provision for that language. It is only by mutual consultation and agreement among school authorities that the secondary schools of a given area can do their part in contributing, severally and collectively, to the national system.'[1]

PLANNED LANGUAGES

Several centuries have passed since Descartes and Leibniz considered the problem of a constructed language which might be used as a means of communication between nations. Of the

[1] *The Position of German in Grant-Aided Secondary Schools in England* (Board of Education Educational Pamphlet No. 77, H.M.S.O. 1929). Out of print.

three planned languages which have some currency today—Esperanto, Ido and Occidental (or Interlingua)—only the first is mentioned in the section of the Ministry of Education's pamphlet[1] which refers to the possibility of a world language. This is because Esperanto is relatively the most widely used.

Whether one of these languages can find an established place in the curriculum of British schools today is a matter of some doubt. If it does, it is almost certain that it will have to displace a national language which, by its very nature, is likely to have greater educational value, in that it is based on centuries of tradition, is often the key to a great literature and may be the means of opening the pupils' eyes to the culture and way of life of another living people. But the schools' curricula in this country are decided by the school authorities and Esperanto is known to be taught in a few schools in different parts of the country.

[1] Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 26, *Language: some suggestions for Teachers of English and others*, page 16. (H.M.S.O. 1954). Price 3s. 6d. net.

CHAPTER 3

Grammar Schools: The First Five Years[1]

Languages taught, Organisation and Aims of Teaching

THE majority of grammar school pupils begin the study of their first modern foreign language when they enter the school at the age of ten or, more often, eleven years. It has been explained in the preceding chapter that this language is usually French, although in a few schools it is German or Spanish. Nearly all schools provide a daily period of teaching (or five periods a week), usually of about 40 minutes' duration, and for most boys and girls the course lasts five years; but some of them go on to do advanced work in the language for two or three more years, probably with a time allowance of from seven to nine weekly periods, depending usually on whether they are studying two or three main subjects in the sixth form; and they will also have several periods of private study. Pupils who show linguistic aptitude often begin a second modern language—normally German or Spanish—in the second year of their course in the grammar school with a view to becoming specialists in two modern languages in the sixth form. When German is started later than in the second year a very generous time allowance will be needed if pupils are to acquire any facility in reading literary texts by the time they reach the sixth form. Future modern linguists generally start Latin also in the early years, as without it they cannot hope to follow a course in modern languages at most of the universities. A few gifted linguists—usually in the larger schools—may add a third modern language in the sixth form: in some cases this is one of those mentioned above, or it could be Russian or Italian.

For those boys and girls who intend to take a modern language to the advanced level it is possible to plan a seven-year course of even progress, uninterrupted by any public examination. But for many pupils it will be a four- or five-year course, ending with the examination for the General Certificate of Education at the ordinary level. It is important that this shorter course should

[1] In Wales questions relating to the teaching and choice of foreign languages should be considered within the bilingual context of the country. Suggestions as to the choice of language in the primary and secondary schools of Wales are made in pamphlet No. 6 of the Welsh Department, *The Curriculum and the Community in Wales*. (H.M.S.O. 1952). Price 3s. 6d. net.

give those who complete it a working knowledge of the language and of the people who speak it. Its aims might therefore be to enable the pupils to understand and use with a fair degree of accuracy the simple spoken language; to read at sight, and with good grasp of meaning, straightforward modern prose in the foreign language; to write a piece of free composition in the language, with some sense of form; to render a piece of simple English correctly into the foreign language, and to give an accurate and even elegant translation from this language into English. Throughout the course the teacher will naturally endeavour to kindle in the pupils' minds a lively interest in the history, geography and customs of the foreign country. If the cultural aims of the subject are kept in view it follows that no pupil who has completed a five-year course at a grammar school will leave without having been introduced to some of the foremost writers, artists and personalities of the foreign country.

METHOD

Pronunciation

In order to speak the foreign tongue correctly it is essential that the pupil who is beginning at the age of about eleven years should concentrate during the first month or two on acquiring a correct pronunciation. A thorough knowledge of the phonetics of the foreign language is essential to the language teacher. It is true that if the incentive is there, many young pupils can learn much of the foreign pronunciation purely by imitation; but the older the pupil, the greater will probably be the need for scientific aid, and in almost every class there will be some pupils who have trouble in making the unaccustomed sounds. To help them the teacher must understand the science of sounds and the mechanism of speech: some physiological explanation is often a valuable aid. He may find the use of the symbols of the *Association Phonétique Internationale* a great help, since they offer him a ready means of writing down sound with exactness and simplicity, and are now used in many modern dictionaries for this purpose. It is not, however, primarily a question of symbols. The pupils must first be taught to make the sounds clearly and confidently and to recognise and distinguish them when they hear them. The symbols are merely a convenient way of writing down the sounds they have learned. Ordinary orthography cannot be satisfactorily used for this purpose in the early stages, because in several languages it does not represent the sounds accurately.

Many teachers prefer not to teach the sounds *in vacuo* but first of all to build up a carefully selected range of words which

can be used in simple dialogue, e.g. in French, *la chaise*, *la règle*, *la banane*, *la poire*, *la pomme*, *la fleur*. The sounds can then be isolated from them for the purposes of phonetic teaching. It should be added that it is important to introduce the new material gradually, a new sound or two at a time. Nothing less than an exact mastery of them should be the aim; and when the sounds can be accurately reproduced, they need to be practised intensively in individual speech and in chorus work until confidence develops and correct, unconscious speech habits are formed. Without this intensive and persistent training both oral and written work will remain diffident and will never develop their full potential value.

Intonation and Stress

From practice in single sounds and words the learner will progress as soon as possible to phrases and sentences, and the matter of correct intonatiön and tonic stress will arise. These are no less important than pronunciation and without them no child or adult can ever speak another language without immediately betraying his foreign origin. Though they may not understand a word of the foreign language, boys and girls who listen frequently to radio programmes can usually decide whether the language spoken is French, Dutch, Italian or Welsh because of their characteristic intonations. It is possible to illustrate graphically the musical rise and fall of the voice: such eminent linguists and phoneticians as Professor Klinghardt, Monsieur Paul Passy and Professor Daniel Jones have evolved their own systems, and teachers will find it useful to study their work, especially when instructing sixth form pupils in the difficult art of reading verse aloud. Many teachers find that intonation practice is more rewarding when pupils have attained some fluency, but the lack of self-consciousness and the comparative flexibility of the young beginner should be exploited. Particularly when learning French, it is vitally important to eradicate, as soon as possible, the English habit of stressing an early syllable and dropping the voice at every comma.

It is pleasing to record that most teachers today speak with a reasonable degree of fluency and accuracy the foreign language that they are teaching. That is the essential foundation for the effective teaching of modern languages; the task is now to build on it. In practice it is found that the majority of beginners are given good instruction in pronunciation during their first term, though sometimes the mistake is made of putting a non-specialist in charge of the youngest pupils and in this case great harm can be done. Results during the first year are usually encouraging,

especially in Spanish and German; but progress frequently slackens after that, and sometimes ceases altogether after the second or third year. Indeed, there is sometimes a noticeable deterioration. The foreign intonation should be taught from the beginning; it is at present too often neglected and the speech of many pupils whose pronunciation is good remains unmistakably English or Welsh.

The progress made during the first year will be maintained and continued if teachers give the first few minutes of each lesson to some form of pronunciation and intonation drill; whatever the time involved, it is wise to insist that a pupil who has been corrected shall repeat the sound, word or phrase until it becomes perfect. The gramophone, the magnetic recorder and the sound film can play an effective part as aids to the teaching of pronunciation and intonation.

Conversation

It may be only a day or two before the learner is brought to realise that the foreign language is a means of communication which he can begin at once to use. This is achieved by teaching him the usual daily greetings and by leading him to understand, ask and answer simple questions in the foreign language. He may next learn to describe actions carried out in the classroom, building up in this way a store of active words and speech patterns. From these it is a natural step to matters of personal and common interest outside, such as the weather, the seasons, the home, the family, domestic animals and so forth.

As with pronunciation, conversation in the schools today begins well but tends to be progressively neglected after the first year. It is often revived again in the fifth form in preparation for the external examination; but in these circumstances standards cannot be high. It is too frequently a separate and artificial lesson. The 'give and take' of spontaneous conversation should arise naturally during every period and especially when texts are read in the foreign language.

In order to give each pupil the maximum amount of practice in speaking, it is necessary sometimes to ask for the repetition in chorus of correct sounds, words or phrases first spoken by the teacher or pupil. The advantages of this method are obvious: the dangers are not, but they are no less real. Unless the teacher trains his ear to detect false notes in the chorus—as would a choir-master—much incorrect and slovenly pronunciation remains uncorrected and bad speech habits are formed. The location of faults is facilitated if the class is divided into sections for chorus

work and the teacher keeps close to the group that is actually speaking.

Background

The present-day teacher of modern languages realises the importance of providing a realistic background for the pupils' linguistic and literary studies. Well-chosen course and reading books will normally introduce the pupil to the life of the foreign people, their habits, customs and institutions, the geography of their country and some of the main features of their national history. But it may be desirable at first to stimulate an interest in the life and country of the foreign people by talking about them in English; nothing helps more to achieve this than the teacher's personal reminiscences, and it is worthy of note that not many modern language teachers today lack direct and recent contact with the people abroad. The lively teaching of the language is greatly helped if the classroom can become a subject room and be given the appropriate foreign atmosphere. This is, in fact, often done in spite of a shortage of classrooms in many schools. It must be remembered that posters, pictures, maps, cuttings and so forth tend to lose their interest unless they are changed from time to time.

Course Book, Exercises and Grammar

The course book is usually introduced after the first half-term. The choice should depend on three main considerations; they are, first, the extent to which the reading matter and illustrations are likely to provide material for lively oral and written work, and the skill with which the introduction of new grammar and vocabulary is controlled; secondly, the nature of the exercises that are usually included; and thirdly, the way in which the course serves as an introduction to the life of the foreign people.

If the oral method is to be followed and the danger of lapsing into 'grammar-grind' to be avoided, it follows that translation exercises are ruled out in the early years. There are many other profitable types of exercise which help to consolidate knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and idiom, and give practice in using the foreign language. Books which contain a large proportion of isolated English sentences for translation into the foreign language are likely to destroy interest and incentive. Translating such sentences does not encourage connected thought in the foreign language; in the past the process for many pupils has not brought a satisfactory return, even in terms of examination results; now that oral and aural proficiency is having an important and

ncreasingly decisive influence on these results, the return is likely to be even more disappointing.

Except where a language is acquired through direct natural experience and in the most favourable environment, it is not possible to speak or write it well without a sound knowledge of its grammar; but grammar is only one of many aspects of language study and it should not be allowed to dominate the course. During the first two years especially, it is advisable that the emphasis should fall not on the learning by heart of rules, together with lists of exceptions, but on memorising speech patterns, or carefully chosen basic examples, and practice in their use by oral and written exercises—preferably, as has been said above, in the foreign language. In many instances pupils will inevitably deduce rules from the basic examples, but this is a natural and logical process and the examples will always remain closely associated with the rules, which they help to fix in the memory. This memorising and practice may well be supplemented by further explanation of the functions of parts of speech and of sentence structure, and occasionally by theoretical explanations of grammatical usage: the latter will doubtless become more frequent after the first two years. Since clear comprehension is essential, most teachers make these explanations in English; but as the course progresses it will be found that they can be based more and more on the texts that are read in class and they can often be made in the foreign language.

Composition, Dictation and Translation

Before the end of the first year or even the first term the average pupil in the grammar school is capable of writing a reasonably correct simple composition, provided that the work is carefully prepared orally and on the blackboard. It will probably consist of nothing more than a few connected sentences, but it will be more rewarding than the translation of a series of sentences which are not inter-related. This type of composition is often called 'free composition'; all experienced teachers know, however, that if it is really 'free' during the first three or four years or so of the course, the result is not rewarding either to the pupil or to the teacher. It is therefore a dangerous misnomer and it is probably advisable to replace it at this stage by the term 'guided composition'. The heavy load of correction which such work sometimes involves can be greatly reduced if the composition is worked out beforehand and the teacher is adamant in forbidding the use of dictionaries and refusing to help, or even allow, pupils to introduce new elements for which they are not equipped. It is usually the weakest linguist

who is the most wildly inventive. There is no hardship in restricting pupils to the tools and the materials which they have been trained to use; it is a necessary discipline.

As the course proceeds the scope of the compositions may be gradually widened, but the necessity for careful preparation and strict control will remain for two or three years. Nevertheless the exercise is most valuable for the following reasons: it encourages consecutive thought in the foreign language and gives pupils an opportunity of converting 'passive' vocabulary into 'active' and of using their growing store of words, phrases and constructions in a manner which promotes a feeling of solid achievement; it is suitable for both the strong and the weak performer since each can produce—if taught not to overstrain his powers—an accurate and complete piece of work; the rich variety of forms enables the teacher to avoid the danger of monotony in written work.

Apart from the guided composition on a familiar topic which, as has been suggested, can begin in a modest way at the very early stage, there is the description of a single picture, to be followed later by a connected series of pictures leading to simple narrative writing. Then there is the reproduction of the short anecdote told to the class, or the story of which the first paragraph only is given and which must be completed by the pupil; or again there is the narrative to be adapted by changing the person, the tense, or the type of speech—direct to indirect and so forth. What better means can be devised for consolidating new grammar, vocabulary and idioms? A capable and resourceful teacher will find many other forms of guided composition to keep his pupils fully extended, while maintaining the interest and enthusiasm with which most boys and girls embark on the learning of a new language. After the third year three or four compositions of varying character each term should be possible. This number can be assured if the class is divided into groups of about ten pupils, and a composition is written by one group only in each week. This system distributes the burden of corrections and ensures sufficient time for the teacher to look over the work individually with the pupils; it also facilitates grading, as the length and nature of the composition can be adapted to the ability and experience of a particular group. The leading strings can gradually be relaxed until, usually in the fifth year of the course, the pupils are capable of writing a really 'free' composition with reasonable accuracy.

Since the learning of a foreign language is not only an end in itself but a means of training the pupil to think and express himself clearly and logically, it is possible quite early to interest him in

such matters as form and construction. The average pupil in the fourth or fifth year is capable of writing a paragraph of introduction and a conclusion to his composition; and this is sound training which will serve him afterwards, whether or not he passes to the sixth form.

It may appear that an undue proportion of the space available in this pamphlet has been given to the subject of 'guided' and 'free' composition. But it has been given of set purpose because of all linguistic written exercises it is the most profitable during the first four years of the course, and yet it is generally the most neglected.

A further suggestion which may help to reduce the exceptional amount of correction which composition of this kind often entails is that boys and girls shall be trained from the start in the habit of careful revision of written work and in self-correction. A very large proportion of the mistakes that are made in written work are due to carelessness rather than ignorance. Few pupils have any natural desire to look over written work when they have come—as they think—to the end of it; but it is vitally important that all teachers in all subjects should train them to do so. It is suggested that the pupil should be encouraged to look over his work at least three times: in the first review he could check verb endings only (this is where careless errors are most rife, especially in French); in the second he might look particularly at the agreement of adjectives and, where appropriate, past participles; and the final review would be a general check-over.

The pupils' ability to see their own careless mistakes improves with practice. But, even so, some of these errors will doubtless escape detection by the pupils, and the latter should be given a further opportunity of finding them when their work is returned; the corrector should give no more help than a signal in the margin to indicate that there is a careless error in a particular line, and that account has been taken of it in assessing the value of the work. To do more than this amounts to 'spoon-feeding' and the blunders persist. There is less likelihood of a careless mistake being repeated if, after it has been discovered and corrected by the pupil, he is required to make up three different examples incorporating the particular construction or verb, or illustrating the relevant rule. In order to achieve a lasting effect, corrections must be constructive. The use by teachers in any one school of a common code of symbols for the correction of written work cannot fail to be an advantage.

After guided composition, the most constructive written exercise during the early and middle years is dictation; this is especially

true of dictation in French. As with composition, it can be started in a modest way after careful preparation, and graded in difficulty throughout the course. It has the advantage of compelling the attention of the whole class, and is a searching test of knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and aural comprehension. Short passages given frequently repay the time involved; they help to inculcate the habit of linking the written with the spoken word, each reinforcing the other in the memory.

An exercise which merits more attention than it usually receives is retranslation. A passage of the foreign language is chosen—probably from a text read in class—because of the interesting or important words, idioms or constructions that it contains. It is then studied more intensively and a careful English translation is made by the pupils and teacher, or perhaps by the teacher alone. The pupils then work from this translation back into the original foreign text. The exercise serves to impress important points upon the memory and to turn passive into active vocabulary; it offers even the least able linguists the chance of attaining a high degree of accuracy. It will often be found profitable and comparatively easy to commit to memory a passage treated in this way. A further recommendation is that the exercise forms a natural introduction to the art of formal translation into the foreign language, usually known as 'prose composition'; and this suggests that it should seldom be practised before the third year of the course.

Formal written translation from and into the foreign language might well be deferred until the fourth year or later. To be successful, translation demands some maturity of mind and a good knowledge of the two languages concerned. Provided that the pupil is steadily building up a fund of experience and knowledge of both languages, the linking of the two for purposes of translation can safely be left until the end of the fourth year, or even the beginning of the fifth year, without lessening the pupils' chances of reaching a reasonable standard of proficiency at the end of the fifth year. If teachers would have faith, and give this policy a fair trial, they would be gratified by the results. With a group or set of pupils who will by-pass the external examination at the ordinary level and pursue an uninterrupted course to the advanced level, there is certainly no need to begin formal translation either way before the fifth year of the course.

Translation both from and into the foreign language is only profitable when adequate time and care are given to it and a high standard of accuracy and style is demanded. Students of modern languages must be taught from the beginning that the 'near enough' rendering is of no value; this cannot, of course, be

achieved if, for instance, pupils are asked to give rapid oral translations of their reading book. Passages for translation should often be so chosen that pupils can accomplish the task by drawing on their own store of knowledge without reference to vocabularies or dictionaries. If they know, even sub-consciously, that reference books will be available whenever they are given an exercise of this kind, some of them will not make the necessary effort to memorise new words and idioms which they meet in their reading or in class. This does not preclude the occasional translation done with the aid of a good dictionary which, if carefully used, gives some help in the selection of the right word or phrase. The bilingual dictionary, which offers many pitfalls to the unwary, may be the book associated with the foreign language which the pupil will use most often if he leaves school from the fifth form, and the boy who goes on to more advanced work will find it an indispensable aid. It is not too soon, therefore, to begin the pupil's training in the intelligent use of a good dictionary in the fifth form.

Although it is conceded that formal translation into the foreign language (often called 'prose composition'), if practised too early, has little value as a linguistic exercise and may even prejudice good methods of teaching, the claim that it should be postponed until the pupil reaches the sixth form or is well on in his university course [1] is difficult to justify. Prose composition is of great value in the last year of the five-year modern language course because it is more exacting intellectually than any other exercise. It is perhaps the only way of making all pupils in the class grapple with the difficulties inherent in learning a foreign language. In other forms of composition the pupil can avoid or circumvent difficulties, but in prose composition he must not only fully understand the meaning and appreciate the style of the English passage, he must also know the foreign language so well that he can render both meaning and style faithfully in the new medium. As a means of testing real knowledge, both of English and of the foreign language, prose composition has no equal. Reference to the last chapter of this pamphlet (p. 90) will show that formal translation both from and into the foreign language begins to play an important part in linguistic training from the beginning of the fourth year in most European countries.

It must here be repeated that modern languages cannot stand with the other main subjects in the curriculum of the grammar schools unless the course not only has a practical, social and

[1] J. G. Weightman: 'A Proposal for the Reform of French Studies'. (Vol. 30, No. 3, *Modern Languages*, September, 1949 (Modern Language Association, London)).

cultural value, but is, in addition, really exacting intellectually, and unless the rigour of the teaching is maintained:

> *'Oui, l'œuvre sort plus belle*
> *D'une forme au travail*
> *Rebelle'.*[1]

Those who wish to replace prose composition altogether by guided or free composition, or by comprehension tests, may unintentionally be asking for a dilution of the subject which would inevitably result in its relegation to a secondary place in the curriculum.

Comprehension Tests

The value of comprehension tests as a teaching device during the first four years of the course is considerable. There are, however, two widely differing types in common use. In the one, the understanding of a passage in the foreign language is tested by means of questions in English to be answered in English; in the other, comprehension of the passage may be checked by questions in the foreign language to be answered in that language. The former is akin to a rough translation from the foreign language into English; the latter is virtually another form of guided composition, and is clearly the more valuable educationally. As a means of gauging proficiency in the practical use of the foreign language, comprehension tests are usually less effective than formal translation from or into the foreign language, because it is difficult to frame the questions in such a way that they cannot be answered by merely re-copying part of the text and adding, perhaps, one or two words.

Vocabulary

Passive vocabulary is built up subconsciously either by reading or by listening and it is sufficient for comprehension: but in order to speak or write in a foreign language active vocabulary is needed. This must be acquired by conscious effort of memory and constant practice, until words come readily when they are needed for expression in speech or writing. The skilful teacher can help the pupil to build up vocabulary steadily and rapidly in a number of ways. He can ensure that the foreign word or phrase is always presented in a context: if it is a context that appeals to more than one of the pupils' senses, the more likely it is that the word or phrase will be retained and made active; hence the value of the blackboard, pictures, gestures and so

[1] Théophile Gautier, *L'Art.*

forth. He can group words around interesting topics and create situations in order to emphasise unfamiliar words. If his pupils are learning Latin he can try to break through water-tight compartments by linking words with their familiar ancestors. Quite early in the course he can explain the connexion between '*payer son écot*' and '*scot-free*' and present such words as '*école*', '*éponge*', '*épine*', '*épouse*', '*écluse*', '*écaille*' and, somewhat later, '*édenté*, '*éhonté*, '*étêté*', '*écimer*', '*effeuillé*', '*effréné*, etc., as groups; and he can explain the function of the German inseparable prefixes and the Spanish suffixes so that the meanings of many words may be correctly deduced. He can encourage the pupil to build up families of words from the same roots and help him to collect and memorise for active use such idiomatic phrases as '*échapper belle*', '*manger à belles dents*', '*dormir à la belle étoile*', '*en conter de belles*', '*avoir beau faire*', '*il y a beau jour que*' and so on. And he can help to make his pupils less dependent on dictionaries by asking what such words as '*parapluie*', '*parachute*', '*portefeuille*', '*casse-noisette*' and '*tournevis*' have in common. But whatever method is used, vocabulary cannot become really active until it is operated by frequent use in speech or writing.

Treatment of Texts

It is essential to distinguish between the intensive textual study, mainly for linguistic purposes, to which reference has already been made, and the more rapid reading of a text, the first objects of which are enjoyment and interest and the acquisition of *Sprachgefühl*—the 'feel' of the language. It is not, however, impossible for the same text to be used for both purposes; if the book is carefully chosen and the teacher exercises good judgment, he can, without serious loss of pace or interest, occasionally direct the attention of the class to a particular word, locution or grammatical point. But normally the reading matter in the course book, with exercises based upon it, is used for more careful study and a separate book is read more quickly. It is encouraging to see that the excellent quality of many of the course books which are now available has not blinded the majority of teachers to the need for supplementing them from the second or third year onwards with well-chosen readers. The selection of reading books should not be left entirely to the teacher of the form or set: some co-ordination by the senior modern languages master, who can see the course as a whole, is essential. It is desirable that, at the start and at intervals subsequently, books which present characters and conditions in the foreign country be chosen, and that no story or play which is not authentically French or

German or Spanish be read in class after the third year of the course; there is now a wealth of suitable material available in all three languages. No pupil should complete five years of study of the language without being introduced to some of the leading writers of prose, drama and poetry. This may well begin in the third or fourth year, and in the fifth it is possible to train pupils in the elements of literary appreciation and criticism. In many schools there is in reading, as in the writing of compositions and essays, a lack of smooth transition from the work of the fifth to that of the sixth form. So frequently it is hoped that a miraculous transformation will take place during the summer holidays before the pupil enters the sixth form, and that the immature fifth form boy who has read no poetry, drama or prose of any consequence in the foreign language, or who has not been asked for even the most rudimentary form of literary criticism, will suddenly become capable of reading with understanding and appreciation the books prescribed for the external examination at the advanced level. If we can help to bridge the gulf which exists in most schools, particularly in modern languages, between the work of the fifth and that of the sixth form we shall render a great service to our pupils.

The habit of rapid reading in the pupils' spare time cannot be started too soon. It is most likely to be of value and to endure if the teacher builds up a store of easy and attractive reading books and magazines which are lent to pupils as a reward for good work done and not as an extra task. The texts should be much simpler than those read in class.

Memorisation

A few words must be added to what was said earlier about the value of learning by heart passages of prose and verse in the foreign language. Many good teachers would claim that if the passages are well selected and if care is taken to ensure that they are thoroughly understood and appreciated by the pupils, they will not be unduly difficult to memorise; and in any case the contribution they will make to the pupils' power of expression in the foreign language will more than repay the trouble involved. Learning by heart is the very root of the study of modern languages: the more richly the memory is stored with good, idiomatic language in the form of connected passages—and particularly of prose passages—the more fluent and correct expression will be. Committing passages to memory should therefore be practised throughout the course; here again some co-ordination by the head of the department is advisable. In schools

where a programme of songs, poems, dialogues and other passages for repetition to cover the whole course has been drawn up after consultation between the colleagues concerned and has been faithfully carried out, it is noticeable that the quality of both oral and written work improves strikingly from term to term. This list might include one, two or three passages a term and would represent a minimum, to which individual teachers could add at their own discretion. Fair copies of good passages which have been translated as prose compositions should occasionally be memorised; and revision of all material learned by heart during the term is essential if full value is to be obtained from this part of the work.

Balance of the Lesson

Experienced teachers consider it very important to ensure that in the early years, and to some extent throughout the five-year course, each lesson should have both variety and balance. This is often achieved by dividing it into four main parts. Part I may be devoted, for example, to pronunciation and intonation—a few minutes' regular practice facilitates progress. Part II —a little longer—may be given to revision, consolidation of grammar, verbs and vocabulary previously learned. Part III, the main core of the lesson (lasting perhaps 25 minutes), is assigned to the course book or the reader, or to dictation or to the preparation of a composition; Part IV—about ten minutes—should be reserved for question and answer in the foreign language on the material studied in Part III or for some form of consolidation in writing, if all the previous parts of the lesson have been oral. There need be, of course, nothing stereotyped about a plan of this sort. Indeed, some teachers find that they can attain the same ends by adopting a different scheme, but few today are satisfied with the results obtained below the fifth form from concentrating on one type of linguistic exercise for a whole period.

CHAPTER 4

Grammar Schools: The Sixth Form

IN this chapter it will be assumed that the pupil is continuing his study of one or two modern languages for at least two years. More than ever it will be necessary for the teacher to keep the true objective in view. Most, if not all, of the spade work is finished, a foundation is laid and the task ahead is to build up the framework of a liberal education. If the construction is to endure the materials must be exacting and the workmanship of high quality:

> '*Statuaire, repousse*
> *L'argile que pétrit*
> *Le pouce*
> *Quand flotte ailleurs l'esprit.*'[1]

The process of building should continue during the remainder of the pupil's life—at home, at the university or abroad in the foreign country. The language is but a key which can be used to unlock the treasures of every aspect of the country's life and civilisation—literature, history, art, music, philosophy. The pupil whose studies enable him to take a comparative view of all these aspects of the life and culture of two great nations in addition to his own is indeed fortunate.

Curriculum

It must not be assumed that the curriculum of the sixth form modern language specialist who concentrates for external examination purposes on his two main languages is unduly narrow. If liberally conceived in the same way as the best classical courses in the sixth form, these subjects will give the breadth and depth which are essential if they are to have their full educational value and the pupils are to be extended to the limit of their intellectual capacity. And there will naturally be supporting subjects such as English, Latin, history, religious instruction, mathematics, general science, and the history of art and of architecture, some of which will, of course, be alternative; but if modern language studies are to be taken seriously, it is unlikely that the supporting subjects would be offered at the advanced level in the external examination. It will be the duty of the form master to

[1] Théophile Gautier, *L'Art*.

look at his pupils' work as a whole and ensure that it is carefully integrated. It was not without some foundation that the President of the Modern Language Association in his address at the opening of the Association's Jubilee Year, 1953, called attention to the prevalent tendency to 'treat each language in a water-tight compartment'. 'There is little evidence'—he said—'that the collateral reading in English is ever the concern of the modern language teacher.'

Organisation

If the sixth form modern languages teacher is to take a broad view of his task—and no other view is worthy of consideration—adequate arrangements must be made when the time-table is drawn up. The deeper study of the language with its literature and its essential historical and cultural background will demand substantially more time in the classroom and for private study than is normally allocated to the subject below the sixth form. In some respects the study of modern languages differs from the study of most other subjects in the sixth form and demands more time in the classroom, as distinct from private reading. The need for constant and individual training and practice in oral work of ever widening scope, in close study of texts and in literary commentary will account for this; these are not skills which can be acquired by a pupil's unaided effort.

When the modern language specialists in the sixth form are sufficiently numerous to be organised into two or sometimes three separate forms or sets there is much to be gained. Unless numbers during the first two years are very small indeed, the first year group should be taught separately. It is generally possible for the second and third year groups to work together for several periods during the week, as they are more mature and will have gained some facility in both intensive and rapid reading. If third year pupils are left too much to their own devices they will lose ground, particularly in their use of the spoken language. A resourceful teacher will often arrange for them to share the work in class with the second year pupils and yet keep both groups fully extended. The upper group can prepare short lectures and literary commentaries which will be of interest and value to the others. It is desirable that each form or group should have its own specialist form master who would take it for at least one half of its modern language periods; if he can also take his form for some other subject, such as religious instruction, so much the better. Even when the numbers are too small to allow these specialists to be grouped into two forms or sets, their modern language teacher

should at least be regarded as a tutor who is responsible for the continuity of the intellectual and, to some extent, the general development of these pupils as they pass through the sixth form. Too often they have little contact with their form master except for administrative purposes.

METHOD

Although in the sixth form it is not possible or desirable to divide the work into different categories—the study of language and literature must be interwoven—it will be convenient for our purposes here to consider them separately.

Study of Language

Sixth form specialists in modern languages will normally possess some aptitude for the subject and a genuine desire to make a success of their study. It will often be found that they are now more eager to listen to criticism of their pronunciation and intonation and to accept what help the teacher can give in improving them. The sixth former is more likely than the first form beginner to take an intelligent interest in phonetics and such characteristic peculiarities of speech as the uvular 'r' in French, the glottal stop in German and the 'sinalefa' in Spanish. The foreign assistant can do much to help in this connexion.

The scope and the standard of the oral work should steadily increase until pupils are able to discuss and debate in the foreign language topics of literary or general interest. Most of these will arise naturally from the reading in class, from a broadcast or from the showing of a language film; but at this stage group discussions preceded by a short talk in the foreign language on a pre-arranged subject give valuable practice. Here again, the help of a foreign assistant can be enlisted to good advantage.

At the sixth form stage the foreign language should be the normal vehicle of instruction for all linguistic and literary exercises except the *version*, which should be worked in and through English, as the ultimate result is a piece of English.

Grammar, Translation and Composition

The teaching of grammar in the sixth form can be based largely on texts read in class and on composition and essays done by the pupil, but the need for both regular revision of grammar already learned and a systematic course in more advanced grammar must be realised; all sixth form specialists should possess a reference grammar which, together with a good

dictionary, should always be ready to hand for intensive language study. The more experienced specialists in the sixth form should be capable of following explanations of grammatical usage given in the foreign language.

Apart from exercises used for the consolidation of special points of grammar, written work in the sixth form is likely to consist mainly of translation from and into the foreign language, and essays in the foreign language.

When pupils have attained some maturity of mind and facility in expressing themselves in the mother tongue and in the foreign language, translation, more than any other linguistic exercise, can be used to inculcate habits of accuracy and exact scholarship. For the English speaking nations, translation from or into another language can never be easy. English has borrowed words freely from many tongues and in the course of time these words have come to have meanings and associations which are peculiarly English; their very resemblance to the original words in the foreign language constitutes a danger and a difficulty. In idiom and in syntax too, there is often an apparent similarity but an elusive difference. The task of rendering not only the exact shade of meaning but also the style and mood of a well-written passage from one language to another cannot fail to have important educative value.

It has been stated above that no part of the pupil's work in modern languages is so exacting intellectually as prose composition. In the sixth form it will test, at one and the same time, his knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of both languages, his literary taste and his feeling for the beauty of language. But if the exercise is to have its maximum value, adequate time is needed. Frequently, however, in school periods and in public examinations there is only sufficient time for a hasty and haphazard rendering. Where the teacher can dispose of seven or more periods weekly in class for the language, it may well be found advantageous to try to arrange for two of them to run on and the double period may then be used for the weekly prose composition: it will allow time for a preliminary discussion by the teacher and class about the general nature and some of the specific difficulties of the passage, and also for revision by the pupil at the end. As the year progresses the class will need less help from the teacher, and compositions written without the aid of a dictionary will become more frequent. What has been said earlier about methods of correction applies with even greater force to sixth form work.

Careful, deliberate translation into English with a view to obtaining as nearly as possible an exact equivalent of the meaning,

diction and style of the foreign passage may demand slightly less frequent practice than prose composition, but it is an academic exercise hardly less beneficial. To translate from a foreign language into French is an important part of language study in the upper forms of French schools and it may help to account for the high standard of prose style reached by most pupils before they leave school. Provided that the English sixth form pupil is encouraged to attain such clarity, precision and elegance in his translation, this exercise can not only reveal to him niceties and shades of meaning in foreign words and idioms, but also improve his power of expression in the mother tongue. A careful translation will often follow a literary commentary. The translation of verse into English prose can begin quite soon—if it has not already been started in the fifth form. After three or four terms in the sixth form able pupils may well try to render a poem from the foreign language into English verse. The exercise is valuable linguistically, and it leads to a deeper understanding of poetry. The study of notably good renderings by well-known translators repays the time involved.

The Essay

The linguistic exercise which habitually falls short of the standard that can reasonably be expected of sixth form pupils is the essay. Examiners even for university open scholarships repeatedly refer to the absence of planning and arrangement in the presentation of matter; to the lack of smooth transition from one paragraph to another; and to monotonous repetition alternating with irrelevance, usually in the form of long and inept quotations.

As a race we English have the reputation of not being precise or logical in expression, though few would deny that we are usually logical in action. When writing an essay or speaking in public we often prefer to digress and to improvise. This tendency is not always appreciated by our friends abroad: it is particularly disagreeable to the French. But even if we prefer the English way when expressing ourselves in English, there is no doubt that when writing an essay in the foreign language English pupils gain by trying to emulate the orderly mental habits of our neighbours, and particularly of the French.

The writing of an essay as it is conceived by most educated Frenchmen is an intellectual exercise of the greatest value; it can help to develop incisive, logical thought, power of selection, analysis and cogent reasoning, and a sense of form. French essayists do not pretend that their ideas have occurred to them

casually; they prefer to plan their essay carefully and logically, with a sense of purpose, intention and design.

Even a purely factual or descriptive essay can have form and logical sequence; but, as soon as possible, pupils in the sixth form should be given subjects which give full scope for logical argument and demand independent thought and judgment.

Many essays will fall naturally into three parts: introduction, exposition and conclusion. Each of these, of course, leads into—or follows from—the others.

The *introductory paragraph* is likely to be a clarification of the subject of the essay, or it may be a historical recapitulation. Other subjects will need a judicious mixture of the two. In either case, it will lead naturally to the main body of the essay—the *exposition.* Here the sequence of ideas must be very close; it will usually be logical; but there are other methods of progression, useful by way of variety, such as a parenthesis, or a paradox. Each step in the argument should have a separate paragraph; repetitions and irrelevancies are very serious blemishes. The pupil has to be taught how to select his material economically and effectively:

'*Le secret d'ennuyer est celui de tout dire.*' [1]

Having established the substance of the case, the discourse must be rounded off with a properly judged *conclusion.* No part of the essay is more important than this; without it the essay loses much of its value. And few Frenchmen would be content with a mere repetition in summary form of what has been said already: they would reach out beyond the strict limits of the subject and touch on some idea not already expressed in the essay, but arising from it. The idea cannot, of course, be developed at length; it is often only suggested.

In a literary essay sixth form pupils can give proof of thoughtful reading of original texts (as opposed to reference books), and to some extent show originality, by supporting their statements and arguments with quotations chosen by themselves. Hackneyed passages should be avoided. Quotations must be strictly relevant: they should, as a rule, be short.

Some sixth form masters find that effective help in training pupils to write an essay on these lines can be given by the foreign assistant. With a group of about ten pupils, and using the medium of the foreign language, a subject, notified well beforehand, is debated in the first weekly lesson. They then draw up their individual plans, which are discussed within the group in the second week; help is given in such matters as form, linking of

[1] Voltaire, 'VIe Discours en vers sur l'Homme'.

paragraphs, vocabulary and so forth. A double period is provided in the third week for the essay to be written (from plans and notes only and without use of dictionary) in class. There are few better ways of employing a foreign assistant in the sixth form.

Written linguistic exercises in the sixth form will not, it is hoped, be confined to translation and essays. Other forms of written work—such as retranslation, précis, dictation or the *critique* of a broadcast, play or film which has been heard or seen—can lend variety to the programme and give useful practice in manipulating the foreign language.

Study of literature

As in earlier years, reading divides naturally into the intensive study of shorter texts and the more rapid and extensive reading of longer works, but in each case the scope is now greatly enlarged. The former becomes what the French call *explication de texte* and we call 'literary commentary'; and the latter, it is hoped, will now embrace an increasingly wide selection of complete plays, poems, stories and novels each year.

There has comparatively recently been a strong and salutary reaction amongst sixth form teachers against the survey method of teaching literature in our schools. It is now emphasised that the study of literature should begin with the reading of real literature —the nation's great books and not criticism or histories of literature; in going straight to the original texts the pupil should, with guidance, develop perception, judgment and taste which will enable him to distinguish between what is first-rate and what is merely superficial or pedestrian. Before the end of two years' study in the sixth form, however, it will probably be found that some knowledge and understanding of the main literary movements is desirable and sometimes even necessary for the full appreciation of individual works.

The method used with conspicuous success by the French for guiding boys and girls in their *lycées* to a true understanding and appreciation of both language and literature is applicable to the mother tongue, and to all other languages. They believe that close, intensive study must precede rapid, extensive reading. Not that a whole play or novel would be subjected to the *explication* process; the pupil's attention would be focused from time to time on several important and revealing passages and the *explication* would embrace every aspect of these passages—setting, theme, plan, main ideas and transitions, vocabulary and syntax, rhythm and harmony, figures of speech, and, if it is a poem, the versification. But literary commentary should not be merely an analysis:

'Cette recherche passionnée de la vérité devient vite passionnante . . . Dans leur tâche ardue, le maître et l'élève sont aidés par un instrument de premier ordre: l'analyse. Mais l'analyse n'est jamais qu'un moyen: elle doit ultérieurement conduire à la synthèse, à la découverte des rapports cachés qui est en définitive l'objet de toute connaissance. Aussi nous efforçons-nous de développer chez nos étudiants l'aptitude à la synthèse. Nous voulons qu'ils sachent voir le détail en fonction de tout.' [1]

As in the essay, one of the most important parts of a literary commentary is the conclusion, and it is here that the synthesis begins. The main points of the commentary are briefly summarised, and the *explicateur*—the teacher at first, but later the pupil—looks at the piece as a whole and gives a genuinely personal appreciation of it. Finally, the wider significance of the passage might be touched upon, possibly by a reference to the whole work or philosophy of the author, his contemporaries or successors. It will be the teacher's aim to train his pupils to write or give orally their own literary commentaries. At the outset the task may be shared between several individuals or groups, each being responsible for a section —introduction, plan and content, language and style, conclusion. A boy or girl approaching scholarship standard should be able to undertake the whole commentary.

The *lectures expliquées* which form part of the B.B.C. programme 'French for Sixth Forms' are, as a rule, perfect models of artistry and lucidity. No sixth form pupil should be denied the opportunity of hearing them.

When some of the rudiments of literary appreciation and criticism have been learned, extensive reading becomes more rewarding. No member of a sixth form can expect to cover whole periods of his own or any other literature; but he should be able to read many of the nation's masterpieces by the end of his second year. The emphasis that has been laid on the necessity for close critical reading must not be taken to imply that wide general reading is not important, especially after the first year in the form. If, for instance, a play is studied *in vacuo*, and the reader is unable to compare it with any other plays by the same or another author, it may lose much of its interest. It is generally wise to leave most of the books prescribed for the external examination until the second year and lead into them by reading at least one shorter, simpler or earlier work by the same author, if such a work exists. His vocabulary and style will then be familiar and the set book will be read with greater ease and understanding. Too often, however, the programme of reading in the sixth form is restricted to a few set books or plays. The reason given is most often shortage

[1] F. Boillot: *Quelques Heures de Français dans une Université Anglaise*. Introduction (Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1923).

of time, but lack of training in rapid reading in the middle school must also often be held responsible.

It is advisable for the sake of those who are genuinely keen and able linguists, but who have not yet developed literary tastes and aptitudes—these may come later—to widen the programme to include occasionally a well-written book, preferably by a modern author, which is not 'literary' in the strict sense of the term.

Private reading in the foreign language at home and during the holidays is often successfully encouraged by school prize-competitions for which pupils may enter voluntarily. Modern language specialists, particularly those who intend to pursue the study of the subject after leaving school, would be well advised to take such opportunities as may arise—prizes, presents, second-hand purchases, etc.—of building up a personal library. They are greatly handicapped if they have no ready access, at school and at home, to a really good dictionary, anthologies, and some standard works.

THE MODERN LANGUAGE SOCIETY

The sixth form teacher of modern languages who sets out to use his subject as a means of giving his pupils a liberal education will find that a modern language society, composed, perhaps, of about eight to fifteen members of the sixth form (not necessarily all modern language specialists), which meets some four or five times a term out of school hours, is a powerful and almost indispensable aid. The right *ambiance* for the meetings of such a society is usually to be found outside the classroom in more comfortable quarters. If the society is to endure and to make its contribution to its members' pleasure and advancement, there is one essential—they must personally contribute at least one half of its activities: these might include readings of plays and of 'papers' written by pupils on any subject that interests them—art, music, history, politics, travel, philosophy or literature, many of which can, of course, be supplemented by visual and aural illustrations. Only occasionally should members of the staff or visitors be asked to lecture, though they may well be invited to read a part in a play or contribute to a concert, debate or symposium. Expeditions to see films or plays performed locally can also be profitable, but the direct participation by pupils in the society's activities has even greater value. Many school language societies have faded out after a short life, because the contribution of their members has been too passive: the sixth form pupil knows whether he is receiving full value for spare time voluntarily given to the society.

The existence of a modern language society often leads to the performance by its members of a French, German or Spanish play before the school. It may be of inestimable benefit not only to the actors; it can be also an inspiration to the younger students of the language who form the audience, provided that the play is well chosen and acted, and that the audience is enabled to read it in school beforehand. Entirely successful public performances of French, German and Spanish plays by pupils in schools ranging from the largest public and grammar schools to the rural one-stream grammar schools have been given recently in various parts of the country; the number is increasing as the rich return for the time and effort involved is realised.

The programme of specialist modern language studies need not be monotonous. The stern day-to-day labour of fashioning the hard white stone—*le paros dur*—must go on; but there are other exacting and enduring media which will give colour and variety to the work:

'*vers, marbre, onyx, émail.*'[1]

MODERN LANGUAGES FOR NON-LANGUAGE SPECIALISTS IN THE SIXTH FORM

A subsidiary course in a modern language may be provided either for those whose stay in the sixth form is limited to one year and who desire a wide curriculum of general subjects (they are often grouped into the 'general sixth'), or for pupils specialising in a subject other than modern languages.

Sixth form pupils whose stay in the form does not extend beyond a year would do well to continue with the language that they have studied hitherto. Other members of the form, who may be specialising in English, classics, mathematics, science or some other main subject but not a modern language, often find it refreshing to the mind to begin a new language of which even a reading knowledge is likely to be of value to them in later life. The new language is usually German or Spanish, but occasionally Russian or Italian is available: science and classics pupils generally take up German as it often proves useful in their later studies. In some schools pupils specialising in classics, mathematics and science are with advantage cross-setted for languages. The adequate treatment of language study by such pupils at this stage calls for a minimum of three periods a week and a period of preparation.

For these sixth form courses it will be found that the main principles of the oral method are still valid, but it must be suitably

[1] Théophile Gautier, *L'Art.*

adapted to the more mature pupils. In teaching pronunciation and intonation, for instance, there would probably be little or no chorus work (except when singing) and there might be a more analytical approach to the learning of grammar.

As to the content of the course, it is suggested that most of the time should be devoted to reading. Contemporary literature usually makes a strong appeal to boys and girls at this stage, and it should be possible to find a suitable play, short novel, collection of short stories or biography which has intrinsic merit and interest and which increases the pupil's knowledge of the contemporary way of life of the people whose language is being learned. Science specialists might occasionally with some slight advantage study more utilitarian passages such as extracts from scientific journals, but not, it is hoped, to the exclusion of other literature such as that described above. Many historians in the sixth form are following the course of reading prescribed by the G.C.E. syllabus, 'History with Foreign Texts.'

Oral work should spring naturally from the book read in class but it might well be supplemented from time to time by more formal exercises such as short *causeries* prepared by the pupils, or conversation based on pictorial matter in a convenient form introduced by the teacher. If the language learned is German, time given to studying, singing and learning by heart German *Lieder* is likely to be well spent.

There is danger of the work remaining flaccid if it is not reinforced from time to time by written exercises. These might profitably take the form of some type of free composition appropriate to more mature pupils, or of retranslation or dictation, unless there is need to prepare for an external examination which requires proof of proficiency in unseen translation into English, in which case some regular practice in this art is advisable.

CHAPTER 5

Other Types of Secondary School

THE SECONDARY MODERN SCHOOL

IN the Ministry's recent pamphlet on *Language*[1] it is stated that:

> 'It is probable that a bigger proportion of the population than at present needs to have some knowledge of at least one other European language, and that a bigger proportion of those who have the knowledge ought to speak the language better then they do. It is improbable that English children have any inborn disability for learning foreign languages (and quite certain that Welsh children have none) by comparison with the children of other nations. French, German or Spanish might therefore find a wider place than they do in our secondary schools of all types, provided that sufficient teachers can be recruited and trained and that the courses of study can be carefully adapted to suit the special needs of pupils in different schools.'

A number of modern schools introduced the study of a modern language into their curriculum soon after they came into being. At the outset only boys and girls in the 'A' stream were permitted to learn a second language; during the last three or four years, however, there has been an increase in the number of schools where it is extended to the 'B' stream also.

In the great majority of schools the language chosen is French but in about 15 schools it is Spanish; a smaller number have introduced a German course. There is also one instance of a Danish course; and in another modern school there are courses in French, German and Spanish running simultaneously. French is generally preferred, chiefly because the supply of teachers is greater and a realistic approach, which is essential in these schools, is easier; most teachers and many pupils are able to visit France, and correspondence by letter between the pupils in the two countries is not difficult to arrange.

There is little hope of a course attaining good results unless it extends over a period of at least four years and it is most desirable that the pupils shall receive a period of instruction daily, lasting not less than 35 minutes. Unless at least four periods a week are made available, it is unwise to include a modern language

[1] Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 26, *Language: some suggestions for Teachers of English and others*, pp. 20 and 21. (H.M.S.O. 1954). Price 3s. 6d. net.

in the curriculum. This applies with full force to the fourth year. There is a regrettable tendency to reduce time in the last year; this makes the later part of the course an anti-climax and destroys much of its value. It is difficult to teach effectively if the number of pupils in the class exceeds 25; an even smaller number is desirable as most of the time will be devoted to oral work, and individual correction and practice are essential. Similar small groups are found to be necessary in many practical subjects.

Although the modern language teacher in the modern school need not necessarily be a graduate, he must possess a thorough knowledge of the foreign language, both spoken and written, and of the people and their country. If he is to maintain the pupils' interest in the subject throughout the four- or five-year course, he will also need some background knowledge of the literature, history, art and music of the foreign country. But equally important for this task are the personal qualities of the teacher, of which the most important will be patience and resourcefulness and enthusiasm; other useful attributes are a sense of humour and some power of dramatisation in the classroom. An increasing number of modern language teachers in modern schools are graduates, but the majority come from training colleges; they have usually extended their knowledge and experience in the foreign country subsequently and the degree of enthusiasm and of linguistic and teaching competence is often high: some of the most skilful teaching in the early stages of a modern language in this country may be seen in modern schools.

Provided that the conditions described above obtain, the pupil should, at the end of the course, be able to carry on a simple conversation in the foreign language on an everyday theme, read and enjoy a fairly simple text and write a reasonably accurate composition or letter, with some help beforehand from the teacher.

It is unlikely that many pupils in the modern schools will wish to offer a modern language in an external examination, and there is usually no question of arranging a special examination course. But if, when a pupil of 14 years or so has decided on the career which he wishes to follow, it is found that a qualification in a modern language in an external examination is an essential preliminary to following that career, it is clearly desirable that he should be given the opportunity of taking it in due course, provided that he has a reasonable chance of success. Care must be taken to ensure that the arrangements made for such pupils do not prejudice the nature of the course in the first three years, or in the fourth year for those pupils not taking the examination.

Method (*General*)

Broadly speaking it can be said that the oral method described in detail in an earlier section is applicable to the modern school pupil, except that as the rate of progress will be slower, the scope of oral and written work and of the reading programme will be more restricted.

But no method can succeed without a great deal of hard work by the pupils as well as the teacher. The skill of the teacher can be measured largely by the extent to which he can exact sustained effort without losing the goodwill and co-operation of the boys and girls in his class. At the outset they should be made aware of the comparatively restricted time available, and even if formal homework is not set, they should be encouraged to think about the language when they leave the classroom, to repeat to themselves words, phrases, songs and passages already learned by heart; many of these should relate to the routine of their daily life. The modern school pupil has great capacity for sustained enthusiasm and this must be exploited to the full.

All that has been said about the training of pupils in pronunciation, intonation and simple conversation is applicable here. The memory of the modern school child, often less retentive, will be helped by more frequent revision of past work, more repetition in class of new words and phrases, and an appeal to both the eye and the ear whenever possible. More use will be made of physical movements accompanied by appropriate speech within the classroom, or simple dramatisations, competitive exercises, games, puzzles and songs, to ensure that as many pupils as possible are actually using the foreign language. Fluency is at first as important as accuracy: it is essential to the promotion of confidence and a sense of achievement.

As the course progresses the topics of conversation can be extended by means of pictures, films, film-strips and well-chosen text-books. In the third or fourth year it should be possible to make good use of the broadcast programme, 'Early Stages in French'; apart from its value as a basis and material for conversation, it can help, perhaps more than anything else, to bring the atmosphere of France into the classroom and to provide a realistic background for the work. For modern school pupils the importance of a realistic setting for the study of the foreign language is even greater than it is for grammar school pupils. To create this setting the teacher must draw mainly on his own knowledge of the country and people, but imagination can also be stimulated by the foreign *décor* of the classroom, and by encouraging pupils to compile scrap-books containing *Realien* which are of interest to them; these can also serve to widen vocabulary.

Vocabulary, grammar and other exercises

The principles enunciated above in regard to the learning of vocabulary are equally valid here but, probably for the first year or two, new words and phrases will be added only as they are needed for active use; and repeated practice in using them will be necessary. Vocabulary is likely to be mainly practical; it can best be built up by relating it to all the actions and circumstances of the pupils' everyday life—at school, at home, and in the holidays. For the modern school pupil, reading texts in the early stages will be regarded less as the means by which new words are learned than as an effective way of consolidating vocabulary and as a source of interest and information.

As few modern language teachers in modern schools are required to prepare their pupils for external examinations or for advanced linguistic and literary study, only the grammar which is needed to acquire the limited range of skills mentioned above need be taught, and it should be taught as unobtrusively as possible. It is advisable to avoid all but the simpler technical terms which are necessary in order to save time. During the first year or two the learning of rules can be almost entirely replaced by the memorising and active use of verbal patterns of everyday speech; these will serve as sentence-building units. At a later stage rules, when they are deduced from patterns, will remain closely linked with them and can be fixed in the memory by frequent reference to the type-phrase, e.g. *la visite que j'ai faite*. Verbs will probably be introduced one at a time, and they should be accurately memorised and constantly practised. For the first year their use will probably be restricted to the present tense and commands. It may be found in the later part of the course that pupils will come to appreciate the aid which grammar can give and will wish to know more about the mechanism of the language. This spirit of enquiry should be fostered.

Many teachers prefer to do without a text-book for the first half-term. The choice of a course book should be governed by the same considerations as those previously mentioned, but particular attention needs to be paid to the rate at which new grammar is introduced—it must be slow—and to the type of oral and written exercises. It is advisable to avoid the translation of English sentences; many other forms of exercise based on the reading matter of the course book are usually available, and these may constitute the chief means of checking and consolidating grammar learned orally. But the same purpose may also be achieved by dictation, guided composition and, later, retranslation.

Dictation and Composition

Even the weakest pupils can achieve reasonably good standards of accuracy in dictation which is adequately prepared. Third and fourth year pupils may be able to take down a passage which has not been previously prepared, but of which the vocabulary and constructions are familiar. Dictation, more than any other written linguistic exercise perhaps, can be used to inculcate habits of accuracy and promote a sense of achievement for the modern school pupil.

Guided composition, however, is scarcely less valuable if the advice given in an earlier section is followed, and strict control is maintained. For the first few terms, it will probably consist of a composite effort by the teacher and pupils on the blackboard, which is subsequently copied by the class and memorised. Although leading strings can gradually be relaxed, it is doubtful whether it can ever become entirely 'free' composition for many modern school pupils; yet it can be thoroughly profitable and satisfying.

Systematic training in revision and self-correction is an important part of the teacher's technique of making pupils more self-reliant detailed suggestions as to how this training can be carried out have already been made (p. 27).

Memorisation and Reading

The pupils' power of expression both in speech and writing will depend chiefly on the store of words and phrases which they have built up in their memory. In addition to the colloquial patterns into which grammatical rules have been crystallised, several connected passages of prose and verse (especially songs) should be learned by heart each term and constantly revised.

Apart from the course book there is great advantage to be gained from the reading of well-chosen and suitably graded short texts; they can help to consolidate the pupils' knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and idiom and also tell them more of the foreign country. Although reading in the foreign language can seldom be rapid for many modern school pupils, third and fourth year pupils should be encouraged to read more extensively on their own, both in and out of school. The task of finding the right material for this purpose, however, is not easy at present; the difficulty is to find texts which, while being within the pupils' limited powers linguistically, are sufficiently mature in content to hold their interest. But suitable readers are beginning to make their appearance and a resourceful teacher will be able to supplement them with extracts from magazines and children's papers in the foreign language: attractive illustrations play a leading

part in stimulating interest. The pupils' understanding of texts read in class can best be checked by a variety of simple comprehension tests.

Balance of the Lesson

With the modern school pupil it will be even more desirable than with grammar school pupils to break up the lesson into three or four parts. A division such as the following is most likely to prevent loss of concentration during the lesson, and to ensure steady progress throughout the course:

(1) Pronunciation and intonation drill (2-3 minutes).
(2) Revision of speech patterns and verbs (5-7 minutes).
(3) New material (about 20 minutes). This could consist of the reading of a text, which might be followed by an exercise, a comprehension test, a dictation or retranslation based on the text; or the time might be devoted to the preparation of a guided composition, or to a new song, poem or short sketch acted in the classroom; alternatively, with older pupils, it might be given to group studies.
(4) Individual conversation—spontaneous question and answer based on the main core of the lesson.

In the later years pupils might sometimes dispense with (2) and (4) if interest in group studies is keen or if a more sustained effort is needed. It is advisable always to begin the lesson with (1).

The Third and Fourth Years

Not many teachers fail to sustain interest in the course for the first two years. After that the task requires a much higher degree of skill, patience, determination and resource.

If enthusiasm is to be maintained, the pupil's sense of fresh achievement must be fostered by every possible means. The teacher therefore must take the long view and not exhaust his stock-in-trade when he is half-way through the course. Variety both in the content of the lessons and in method of presentation will be even more essential than in the early stages; and the pace and scope of the work must steadily increase until it becomes, in the fourth and fifth years, a serious study—within reasonable limits—of the language, the country and its people. At this stage it should be possible in class to read books which have some intrinsic merit, including works—short stories, poems and fables, scenes from good plays—which are characteristic of the nation's literature. And a deeper knowledge of the foreign people may be promoted by organising group studies which could cover a wide field—

history, politics, geography, painting, architecture, costume, fashions, gastronomy, music and so forth. For these the co-operation of other members of staff might well be sought; as few modern schools have to follow a syllabus prescribed by external examiners, correlation between subjects should be comparatively easy to arrange.

Other means of giving the course new interest and fresh impetus might be the initiation of correspondence and the arranging of exchange visits with children in the other country. There is every reason for holding back these powerful incentives until towards the end of the course. If the school enjoys the whole or part-time services of a foreign assistant he can be employed to the greatest advantage in the first and fourth (or fifth) years.

Examination Candidates

Provided that senior pupils have some linguistic ability and have been trained during their first three years to express themselves orally and to write reasonably accurate guided composition and dictations, they should be able to develop sufficient facility in translation both from and into the foreign language for external examination purposes in two years or so. Retranslation exercises might well be used as an introduction to prose composition (v. page 28). These pupils should work apart from those pursuing the regular course, and some individual tuition will be needed. It will be advisable to make provision in their time-table for private study both in and out of school hours; this will, of course, need to be followed up very thoroughly by the teacher.

Conclusion

Many sensible experiments have been carried out in various parts of the country, and they have borne fruit: lively, practical methods have been developed and there are schools where teachers have sometimes succeeded in creating conditions in which pupils can learn much of the foreign language, as a child learns his own language, 'by direct and natural experience'. They have been seen and heard carrying out in the foreign language all the everyday business of the classroom, and such operations as preparing and cooking a meal, dressing a model, nursing a patient, dictating and typing a letter, measuring a room, giving commands in the gymnasium, arranging a football or tennis team, keeping weather reports and diaries and so forth. These reports and diaries have in some instances been continued during the holidays; it is evident that a number of teachers have succeeded in securing the

full co-operation of the pupils' will to learn and even to teach themselves in their own time; and this has sometimes happened in the most unpromising districts, where there is little cultural background in the homes to help the pupils.

But the constant need to consolidate oral work by a limited yet varied range of written exercises must be emphasised; and the desirability of equipping boys and girls to read simple texts for their own profit and pleasure should now be stressed. The quality of both oral and written work will be improved if passages of prose and verse are regularly learned by heart, and if there is systematic training in revision of written work and in self-correction.

Where progress is clearly unsatisfactory, constructive measures should be taken: pupils should not be abandoned in mid-career and their previous efforts written off. It may be possible to improve the teaching arrangements—the basis of selection of pupils for the course, the size and homogeneity of the class, or the timing and length of period; or to strengthen incentive by helping the teacher to arrange exchange visits with children from abroad. And the teacher can be encouraged to improve his own technique by attending a course, or his knowledge of the language by attending an evening class; there may also be the possibility of observing successful teachers at work. All these and other steps should be taken before defeat is accepted.

The teaching of a foreign language in secondary modern schools can no longer be regarded as experimental. It is clearly established that, given adequate conditions in school and the right teacher, the four-year course can provide for many modern school pupils an experience, a particular sense of achievement, such as few other subjects in the curriculum can give. Not only will it make them critically aware of the nature of language and of sound in language, thus contributing to their command of the mother tongue; it should also widen their mental horizon, add to their cultural and recreational resources and make them more useful and better informed citizens of this country and of the world.

SECONDARY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

The present diversity of technical schools leads to wide variation in the length and type of course in modern languages which they provide. In some schools there is an age-range of 11 to 15, 16, 17, or 18 years; in others it is from 13 to 15 years or 16 or later.

The reasons for including the study of a modern language in the schools' curriculum were set out in the opening pages of this pamphlet and in the section on the secondary modern schools.

They apply with equal force to technical school pupils, for whom a broad general education is desirable, at least until they reach the age of 15 years, although it is, of course, inevitable that for many of these the pressure of other subjects will be greater. It is, however, beyond doubt that for many of the abler pupils a pass in a modern language in the examination for the General Certificate of Education at the ordinary level is essential for the full development of a professional career.

In some secondary technical schools there is at present no study of a modern language. In the majority one modern language is taught to all pupils from 11 to 13 years; it is usually French, but in some cases it is German or Spanish. After the age of 13 pupils are often organised in specialised groups, some of which drop their foreign language. There may, however, be one or more groups that not only continue the first foreign language, but add a second one. It is certainly desirable that boys and girls who at the age of 13 years show particular aptitude for languages and are likely to find them of use in their future career should be given the opportunity of learning a second foreign language. Those who enter a sixth form may with advantage begin a third, for example if they are following a commercial course.

The amount of time allocated to the subject varies greatly. In some cases no time in school is provided, but a group of enthusiasts meets after school hours once a week in the hope of gaining useful knowledge. There appears, however, to be a growing realisation of the need in language teaching for regular and frequent lessons; a daily period is now more common, and this arrangement is, of course, necessary if pupils are to be prepared for the external examination without neglect of the more broadly educational aspects of the subject. For other pupils four periods a week spread evenly over the week should be the minimum provision if the course is to have any real value. It is also recognised in many instances that a modern language is a practical subject which cannot be taught successfully to large classes: groups of 15-20 pupils are not uncommon.

Where a language is taught in school hours from the age of 11, there are likely to be some pupils who will continue with it for four years or more and others who will drop it after two. If both groups of pupils have to be taken together, it is suggested that it is most desirable that the first two years should constitute a basic course which is complete in itself—and therefore of some practical value to those who give it up at 13—and which nevertheless can serve as an introductory part of the four- or five-year course. But it must be recognised that no lasting benefit

can be expected from a two-year course, unless it is very carefully planned and unusually favourable conditions are accorded to it in regard to frequency of lessons and the size and grading of classes. At least four years under normal conditions are needed if a course is to be worth while.

Pupils who have had two years' grounding in a modern language in a modern school before they enter a technical school at 13 years are probably in the same position as those who enter at 11 in so far as their language study is concerned. But when on entering the technical school at 13 they have not previously studied a modern language, the decision whether or not to include the subject in their curriculum should depend on the probable length of the course. They would hardly find it profitable to begin a modern language, unless they were able to complete a four-year course, either at the technical school or at a technical college.

The minimum return which should be expected after a four-year course in a technical school is that which is looked for at the end of the secondary modern school course; that is, the ability to carry on a simple conversation with a good accent in the foreign language, on an everyday theme; to read and enjoy a fairly straightforward text and to write a reasonably accurate composition or letter, with some help beforehand from the teacher. At the other end of the scale would be the attainments that are expected from the grammar school pupil (these are set out in detail in an earlier section—page 21). For those who carry the study of one or more foreign languages to the sixth form the aim would be—no less than with the grammar school pupil—a liberal education, although the course might have a slight vocational and a less literary bias. Such pupils might begin, towards the end of their course, to read foreign technical journals; they would aim eventually at being able to converse with foreign technicians in their own language.

In terms of external examinations, it can be said that the objective of the course which begins at 11 years is frequently the examination for the General Certificate of Education taken at the ordinary level at 15 or 16, and for a few pupils the same examination at the advanced level two years later. Some of those who begin a language course at 13 may enter for the external examination at the ordinary level at 17 or transfer to a technical college, where they take it after two or three years' further study.

The types of modern language course in secondary technical schools and the range of ability of the pupils are so varied that it is impossible to generalise about method. Where the pupils' linguistic aptitude approximates to that of the average 'A' stream

pupils in the secondary modern school the teacher would be well advised to follow the lines suggested for teaching the modern school pupil, and to refuse, so far as is possible, to allow the course to be influenced by the requirements of external examinations. The potential value of modern language courses for such pupils in technical schools is often neutralised because the teacher is given the task of preparing them for an external examination, although they have no great gift for languages. The time available is then insufficient for the proper treatment of the subject; this usually results in oral work being reduced to a bare minimum and to no attempt being made to set the study of the language against the background of the foreign country and its people. As in the modern schools, the educational value of a language course with clear but restricted aims, not orientated towards external examinations, can be very considerable.

If, on the other hand, the pupils clearly have some aptitude for languages, all the suggestions relating to the teaching of grammar school pupils are relevant. Nothing is to be gained by giving the course a technical bias too early; the last year is possibly the right time. The main consideration will be to ensure that the pupils have an accurate command of the simple spoken and written language and some knowledge of the foreign people and their country. With this as a foundation the acquisition of a technical vocabulary should present no difficulty; it can be learned from reading newspapers and periodicals, commercial and technical handbooks and trade catalogues; technical terms can be brought into active use in an interesting way by oral and written work based on large pictures or charts of a technical nature. It would be regrettable, however, if such reading were introduced to the exclusion of works which are authentically French, German or Spanish. The boy and girl who complete a five-year course, no less than the grammar school pupil, should be introduced to some of the nation's great writers; quite early on they can enjoy poems, songs and fables; in the fourth and fifth years they will read good short stories or plays, or selected scenes from longer plays, with understanding and appreciation.

Much of what has been said about the treatment of a modern language in the sixth form of a grammar school is relevant to the sixth form course in a technical school if there is a reasonably generous time allowance. The reading programme could with advantage include some articles of a technical nature and occasionally towards the end of the course essays on technical subjects might be set. But the intellectual and cultural value of the linguistic exercises described above—translation, composition, essay and

literary commentary—and of the integration of modern language studies with other subjects can be as great for the future technician as for the arts student.

There may be a group of pupils studying a modern language in the sixth form who can give only a few periods a week to the subject and who may spend one year in the sixth form. Their programme might well resemble that of the non-specialist (or 'general') sixth form (v. page 43), though it would probably be influenced to a certain extent by the pupils' need to acquire some knowledge of technical vocabulary.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

It is hoped that those who are responsible for the curriculum and organisation and for the teaching of modern languages in comprehensive schools will find some guidance in the foregoing chapters.

The various courses will naturally be adjusted to the differing abilities of the pupils, but the likelihood of transfers on a fairly large scale from one part of the school to another must be borne in mind. Steps should be taken—possibly by means of a common basic course—to reduce the disturbance caused by newcomers to a form or set already launched on a course.

CHAPTER 6

Modern Languages in Further Education

TECHNICAL COLLEGES AND COLLEGES OF FURTHER EDUCATION

COURSES in modern languages for those who have left school are available in technical colleges. Students may enter from the age of 15 years onwards and they may attend the college as day students (full-time or part-time) or as evening students. French, Spanish, German and occasionally Italian may be offered in the curriculum, especially to those following a secretarial course. Some technical colleges have language classes in the evenings only; these are dealt with in the next section of this pamphlet.

The aims of the day students are varied. There are full-time secretarial courses for girls (ex-secondary modern schools) from 15 to 16 years old, and for girls (ex-secondary grammar schools) from 16 to 17 years old. The aim of these classes is either to enable pupils to continue the study of a language begun at school, giving it, in the last stages, a slightly commercial bias, or to begin a fresh language and reach a sufficiently high standard to enable students to read foreign commercial letters or documents with the aid of a dictionary. For this latter purpose the need of a thorough grasp of the basic structure of the language is sometimes overlooked.

Many technical colleges organise classes in French and German in preparation for the examinations for the General Certificate of Education. Students in increasing numbers prepare for the examination at both the ordinary and the advanced levels. They are recruited from all types of secondary school, as well as from among foreign students. The age range in any class may be wide, and this disparity of age and background adds to the difficulty of organising the work effectively. Nevertheless, the ambition of the students to obtain a qualification, together with the use of intensive methods of teaching, possible only with full-time students, enables colleges to achieve creditable results both at the ordinary and at the advanced levels.

The volume of language study undertaken in other full-time courses is very small. Only one college in the country provides a full-time course in modern languages for students not aiming at an external university degree. In courses leading to university degrees in science, students usually acquire a sufficient knowledge

of languages to enable them to translate technical passages.

The pre-eminence of English as a world language may account for the neglect of modern languages in technical education in this country. English is so widely used and the foreigner is often so willing to learn it that there seems on the surface little point in our taking the trouble to learn his language. It is questionable whether this argument is sound either on commercial or on educational grounds.

A quarter of a century ago, the Committee on Education for Salesmanship devoted its second interim report to modern languages, and drew attention to the need for their study. It may be appropriate to quote two relevant passages here. In the Introduction, the Report says:

> 'Under modern competitive conditions—when we have to go to the world to sell, instead of the world coming to us to buy—it is essential for the manufacturer at home and his representatives on the spot to study thoroughly and continuously the conditions of each foreign market with which trade is carried on; to get to understand the characteristics of the people of the country and their likes and dislikes; and to have a good grasp not merely of trade conditions and regulations, but also of social and political factors. Again, correspondence should be conducted, and advertisements, catalogues, etc., printed in the customer's language, and weights and measures should be quoted in terms of the national systems. The fact that the metric system is almost universal should never be forgotten. It is obvious that these conditions cannot be fulfilled unless representatives abroad are expert linguists, and unless there is a sound knowledge among the staff and principal at headquarters in this country of the languages of the more important countries with which the firm trades. We have ample evidence to show that many firms and associations fully appreciate this fact, but the evidence that it is often ignored is equally convincing.'[1]

Referring to a survey, undertaken at the request of the Committee, of the place of modern languages in some European countries, the Report points out the importance of English as a world language and goes on to say:

> 'But when all allowance has been made . . . we believe that the main cause of the higher status of modern languages in the countries visited is to be found in the keen appreciation of their intrinsic importance. This is true of Germany as well as of the smaller countries . . . Modern languages are, in a word, regarded not only as having high practical value, but also as effective instruments of education in the broadest sense . . . Public opinion, that is to say, the opinion of the parent, the pupil, and the industrial and commercial interests, is unanimous on this point; that a higher standard of practical attainment is looked for and secured; and that some expertness in foreign languages is the

[1] *Second Interim Report of the Committee on Education for Salesmanship*, p. 2. (H.M.S.O. 1930). Out of print.

mark of an educated person and useful member of the community. For our particular purpose it is very evident that the progressive business man regards the matter as one of immediate concern from the point of view of his own trade and of that of the country as a whole."[1]

The statements are as true today as they were in 1930 when the Report was first published. It would be outside the scope of this pamphlet to speculate on our future relations with the rest of Europe, but at least it can be said that nothing has happened since 1930 to render the learning of their languages less imperative than it was at that date. Yet the rôle of modern languages in technical education has barely changed, and the exhortations of the Report have fallen on deaf ears. Commerce and Industry still make small demands in technical colleges for the services of expert linguists, with the result that serious study of languages in full-time courses continues to languish. From time to time letters appear in the national press protesting against this linguistic apathy and asserting that "British representatives would double or treble their business if only they could give explanations and quote in the language of the country visited." Up till recently things were much the same in the United States, but big changes are now happening there and if we are not careful we shall fall behind in the race.

Quite apart from the practical value of languages to the business community, insufficient attention has been paid to the place modern languages should occupy in the field of liberal studies. It is true that expertness in speaking a foreign tongue has never been the mark of the educated Englishman, as it has of the educated man in the rest of Europe, but, as has been said above, it would be far from true to suggest that we fail to become expert linguists when we try. Given the right conditions and the will to learn, we are as expert as other nations. An adequate allowance of time is the first essential; experience shows that, with the correct oral approach and with intensive methods of study, a foreign language can be learned by British students with results that are often outstandingly good.

MODERN LANGUAGES IN EVENING INSTITUTES

A range of foreign languages may be learned in evening classes in most of our large cities. By far the most popular languages are French, German, Spanish and Italian. Other languages such as Russian, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Dutch, Portuguese and Polish are also to be found.

[1] *Ibid*, p. 9.

In the majority of evening classes lessons are held once a week and normally each lesson is of two hours' duration, but two separate lessons a week are by no means uncommon and are probably far more effective than one weekly lesson. The scope of the work attempted varies considerably according to the size of the establishment. In the larger technical colleges courses in French, German and Spanish normally cover three or more years' work, while one year is the duration for the less common languages, as the number of applicants is too small in the second year to justify the holding of a separate class.

In some of the larger cities, colleges organise lunch-hour classes for the benefit of those who are unable to attend evening classes, or who prefer shorter but more frequent periods of instruction than is usual in evening study. There is much to be said for mid-day courses: students are fresher; they are better able to devote some of their evenings to private reading; and since classes meet normally at least twice a week, more frequent opportunity for oral practice is available.

A few colleges are able to organise special lectures, delivered generally by native speakers, on subjects dealing with the art or literature of the country whose language is studied. These courses attract advanced students, often practising teachers, who have a special interest in cultural developments in modern Europe.

The Teacher

The importance of good teaching in evening language courses cannot be overstressed. The teacher needs a fluent command of the spoken tongue, a good pronunciation, an up-to-date knowledge of the country itself and a love of its literature. But it is the personality of the teacher which is the corner stone of the whole structure. He must possess real qualities of leadership and be able to stimulate his students to work on their own. It is up to him to send the students away, week by week, in an enquiring, vigorous frame of mind. He should gauge both how much they can achieve and how they can best achieve it. He needs to give much forethought and preparation to each lesson; however tired the class may be, he must be fresh and enthusiastic. It is essential that the teacher should establish a bond of confidence between the class and himself if attendance is to be maintained; he can best achieve this by thorough preparation and lively presentation of his own work and careful correction of the students' written work. Students are quick to respond to the teacher who has a clear-cut programme and who is prepared to work hard himself to carry it through.

Apart from the full-time members of college staffs there are, broadly speaking, two types of language teacher in evening classes. The first, who is a national of the foreign country, can certainly speak the language fluently and accurately, but he does not necessarily possess teaching experience or skill. The second type is the day-school teacher, well qualified and experienced in teaching younger pupils, but often tired after a day's teaching in school and not always able to adapt his methods to older students. Yet devoted and admirable work is done by both types, and many highly-skilled teachers who are fully effective in instructing adults are to be found in their ranks.

Technical colleges are more favourably organised for language work than the normal evening institute, in that skilled supervision by the head of department is available. The help and guidance provided by the practised linguist who has had long experience in dealing with adult students can be of the greatest service to the two types of teacher mentioned above.

Method

The greatest handicap confronting the adult student is the lack of time. It is impossible to learn a language by mere attendance once a week at evening class, and before embarking on a language course, students should realise that nothing of real value can be gained without considerable personal effort. There is so little time at their disposal in class, even under the best conditions, that they must be willing to continue their study in some form or other outside the classroom. This study may consist of private reading or writing, or of consolidating the substance of previous lessons. To achieve even this amount of co-operation from the student the teacher must make the work both exacting and interesting. In order to give some encouragement to adult students it is often desirable to lay before them at the beginning of each term the programme of work that the teacher intends to carry out, together with hints on methods of study that the student may adopt. Adults are capable of appreciating the need for constant daily practice in a language and will readily co-operate with the teacher who can show them that, while he understands their difficulties, he expects them to reach a given goal at a steady rate of progress. It is for the teacher to provide what cannot easily be found outside the classroom, e.g. oral work and expert advice on method of study; it is for the student to do for himself what does not need the help of a teacher; this may take the form of reading, writing or revision or of learning passages by heart.

Lessons of two hours' duration can gain considerably by being

divided into several parts to provide as much variation and contrast as possible. Where numbers permit, a preliminary grading of students by means of a simple test is advisable. In each lesson, whether it be elementary or advanced, the students should have an opportunity of hearing the language spoken at a normal rate, and it is advisable for the teacher to conclude his lesson occasionally by giving about ten minutes to a talk by himself on some subject of general interest. Much will be gained if the talk can be devoted to a treatment of some aspect of the history, life and customs of the foreign people, and the students are trained and encouraged to comment and ask questions afterwards in the foreign language.

The reasons which prompt older students to study a foreign language are many. It appears that for the greater number language study is a prelude to a holiday to be spent in the foreign country or it is purely for cultural or intellectual interest. A minority finds a language of value in the commercial world or as a means of gaining some professional qualification. Thus the needs of students can be classified under two broad headings—those who require the language for cultural reasons and those pursuing a course of study leading to an external examination.

Students with Cultural Aims

These students need to devote little or no time to translation as a set exercise, but should be encouraged to attempt well-prepared free composition. Reading should be as extensive as possible and there should be a library which includes periodicals and newspapers as well as books. Directed reading by means of annotated book lists is valuable, and students might be required to furnish at least once a month a simple *critique* of their month's reading. The interest of the average adult in contemporary literature and in the life of the country itself should be brought into play. It is essential that students should contribute actively to the lessons. They might take part in plays read aloud and in debates, or each in turn could prepare in the foreign language a simple talk to be given to the class. Students should be encouraged to memorise and act parts in plays and sketches: sometimes these might take the form of extempore productions dealing with an everyday situation. The bare outline having been given to the class and rôles assigned, the students may be left to play their parts in their own way.

Correct and confident pronunciation and intonation are of first importance, and the teacher cannot hope to effect much improvement with adults unless he possesses a thorough knowledge of phonetics. A few minutes might well be devoted at the beginning

of each lesson to repetitive practice. The use of the gramophone, the magnetic recorder and instructional sound films as aids to improving the students' pronunciation and intonation and providing material for discussion should not be overlooked.

The formation of a language club or circle is a good way of providing opportunity for students to enjoy additional oral practice in the language. The organisation of the programme can normally be left in the hands of the students themselves with some help from the staff in securing the services of suitable speakers. The presence of a few foreign students provides opportunities for spontaneous conversation. Help from outside bodies mentioned later (page 77) is of the greatest value.

Examination Candidates

Students preparing for external examinations need to do more written work than the others, including, probably, translation from and into the foreign language, in addition to free composition. Most of what was said earlier in regard to these exercises in the grammar school course is applicable to the work in evening classes. Some intensive revision and practice of fundamental grammar—basic speech patterns and irregular verbs, for instance—should be a permanent ingredient of all lessons; it should be linked with the texts read in class and with passages translated into the foreign language. The close study of texts in class can yield a good harvest and afford much linguistic practice both written and oral, especially if this study is followed by careful revision in the students' own time. The student should also be encouraged to read in the intervals between the classes; the value of more extensive and rapid reading in building up vocabulary and promoting a more confident use of the language cannot be over-estimated.

Reference has been made above to the contribution that a correct and unhesitating pronunciation can make to the learning of vocabulary. Most examinations in modern languages today include an oral test, but even if this were not so, it is certain that the quality of the other work would suffer if due attention were not paid to training in pronunciation, intonation and simple conversation. The foreign language should be used in class as often as possible by the teacher, the pupils participating in the lessons not only by answering but also by asking questions. Examination candidates could benefit no less than other students by contributing to the activities of a language club.

Future Needs

Future progress depends first upon making better arrangements

for lessons to be frequent. Language teaching, to be effective, should be given regularly at short intervals and extended without serious interruption over a considerable period. The usual arrangement of one weekly two-hour period which is at present made in evening classes is therefore ill-designed to serve the end in view, and strikingly successful results cannot be expected. Progress is also dependent on the ability of the evening institutes to organise smaller and more homogeneous classes and to secure the services of well-trained teachers who understand that, although the principles of language teaching in the secondary school are equally valid for adults, the approach must be different and the atmosphere of the schoolroom must be avoided as far as possible. Textbooks which recognise and provide for the more mature outlook of the evening class student are needed: they are beginning to appear.

Where the time available is inevitably restricted to one lesson a week, the methods adopted for the intensive courses organised for members of the armed services during the late war and subsequently are worthy of study.

CHAPTER 7

Books and Ancillary Aids

THE MODERN LANGUAGES LIBRARY

THE importance of the school library as the heart of the intellectual life of a secondary school is beyond question. The modern language section of this library should therefore be well found, for it must not only meet the immediate and demonstrable needs of specialists, though that may be its chief function, but also aim at attracting as readers those specialising in other subjects as well. To do this it must provide a wide range of material and cover a great variety of interests. For the specialist, standard authors, both classical and modern, must be well represented. Contemporary writers of prose and verse, who are likely to be of interest to specialists and non-specialists alike, merit more generous treatment than is usually meted out to them. Literary history and criticism, too, have their place, but in a school library it should be a small one. If the aim of a sixth form language course is to introduce the would-be student to some of the country's best literature, and by this means to help him to develop judgment and discrimination, then the texts themselves should have pride of place in the library. Works of literary history and criticism are of most use to the more experienced pupil or student who has already read much. To the inexperienced they constitute the temptation to accept uncritically the ideas of others, to reproduce the judgments of others and to become mentally lazy.

To attract the non-specialist reader and to encourage the specialist to broaden his contact with the country whose language he is studying, the library must provide more than 'literature' in the narrow sense. It must include books on travel, on the geography and history of the country represented. Some of that country's own historians, too, should have their place. Nor can we exclude art, architecture or music. In France, Germany and Belgium beautifully illustrated books are produced in great number dealing with the history of churches, castles, and domestic architecture, or illustrating the work of painters and sculptors. It should be remembered also that not all boys and girls choose fiction for their lighter reading. Biography attracts many and should therefore be well represented, the more so as it is likely

to fix the attention of specialists in fields other than modern languages—scientists, mathematicians or those whose love is music. It should be for the modern language master and mistress to decide where the emphasis is to lie and what distribution of the available resources will best meet the various needs of their own school.

Besides such books as these, which would naturally be available on loan, the library will possess many books for reference only: dictionaries (both bilingual and in the foreign language), encyclopaedias, grammatical works of reference, books on the history of the foreign language. Periodicals and newspapers, too, should form a part of the library provision for modern languages just as naturally as they do for English, history or geography.

Many schools do in fact provide admirably, especially in French, for the needs of the sixth form reader. Provision for middle and lower school forms is usually much less thorough. Yet the habit of browsing in the library cannot be formed too early. Illustrated books about the foreign country, such as those mentioned above, are of interest to readers of any age. And children's picture story books from abroad help the young beginner to see the language he is learning as a living tongue used by his contemporaries on the continent of Europe.

The arrangement of the school library frequently gives rise to discussion. Shall all the books be kept together in a central place or is there a case for distributing them, housing some in the library, some in the modern language sixth form teacher's room and some where all can readily handle them in class? Only the circumstances of each individual school can suggest the right answer to this problem. But any deployment of the books which impoverishes the school library and robs it of its representative character is bad. Many reference books should therefore be provided in duplicate and it is then possible for the sixth form modern language teacher to have, ready at hand in his room, copies of those works of reference to which he or his pupils are likely to refer in the course of their work together. This applies especially to dictionaries, both foreign and bilingual, to etymological dictionaries, dictionaries of synonyms, to the larger reference grammars and to certain histories of literature. Some small sets of standard and of contemporary works, especially short modern plays, might well have their place in his room too, for use in class or for dramatic readings in the modern language club. In this way the indispensable instruments of their work are available to those who are being taught and at the same time to those who are engaged on private work in the library.

In most schools it is usual nowadays to find a certain amount of fiction—usually graded books suitable for rapid reading—distributed to masters or mistresses teaching various forms. These small collections are available on loan as class library books. They are useful for reading in class by the more intelligent boy or girl who may have finished some piece of work more quickly than his slower fellows; or they may be taken home by any pupil who is keen enough to read them in his spare time. It is sometimes possible to split collections of short stories or plays for use in this way, giving them temporary bindings.

Whether the modern language books be organised in sections or as a whole, one important duty of the modern language staff should not be overlooked if the library is to give effective support to their teaching. They should make it their business to note how much the library is used by their specialists for private study and, by consulting the list of borrowings, to note how far it is fulfilling its function in relation to their younger pupils. They should also devise means of attracting attention to new acquisitions, as well as to books already in the library, which are likely to interest particular pupils, and they should be frequently seen in the library themselves. The attitude of boys and girls to the school library is a faithful reflection of the value which the staff attach to it as an instrument of education and a source of pleasure.

It is a sad fact that many modern language teachers, anxious to develop their section of the school library, are frustrated by the difficulty of obtaining books they would like to order. Adverse rates of exchange often mean that the library grant, though apparently generous, is meagre when translated into terms of a foreign currency. Those schools are most fortunate which allow the modern language teacher to buy books, new or second-hand, from any source, and which empower him to spend a portion of his grant in foreign book-shops during journeys abroad.

MODERN LANGUAGE TEXT-BOOKS

Reference has already been made to considerations governing the choice of course books and readers, and to the wealth of suitable material which is now available in French, German and Spanish for reading in the grammar schools; for the modern schools the supply is not yet so satisfactory, but it is steadily improving. Although some publishers still feel that they must provide for the teachers whose technique is mainly based on translation even in the early years, it can be said that the majority of text-books and magazines for school use produced in this country since the war take account of the desire of most teachers

to practise the oral method, and give them all possible help by incorporating the essential features of the modern technique. There is emphasis on the importance of early and regular training in pronunciation (though, regrettably, not yet in intonation). The reading matter and illustrations stimulate interest in the foreign country and its people and furnish good material for lively oral work. The vocabulary, although usually not based on a word count, is carefully controlled, and the treatment of grammar is more practical and is closely connected with the reading text. Perhaps the clearest indication of the modern approach is the type of exercises to be found at the end of each chapter. They reflect the belief that a language can be learned only by actively using it, and they are distinguished not only by their variety but often by the skilful way in which they ensure that new material is consolidated by means other than translation during the first three years. The course book will often serve for training pupils in guided composition, but many teachers must have welcomed the recent appearance of several excellent books, intended to be complementary to the main text-book, which, by means of question and answer in the foreign language on a series of pictures, are specially designed to give pupils practice in the active use of the language without translation from the mother tongue.

Editors and publishers realise the need in the reading book for a carefully controlled and graded vocabulary, and for selecting stories and plays which have an authentic French, German or Spanish background. Editions of standard works of literary merit, suitable for reading in the fourth and fifth forms (poems, fables, short stories and plays, the reading of which is a necessary prelude to more serious literary studies in the sixth form), are beginning to appear. It is, however, still difficult to find reading texts for the first two years of the modern school course and the lower streams of the younger grammar school pupils, which, while being within their powers linguistically, are sufficiently mature in content to interest them. There is also a dearth of short rapid readers at all stages below the sixth form. If single plays and short stories, several of which are at present usually bound together in one volume, could be produced separately, they would help the teacher who wishes to build up good reading habits in his younger pupils.

Modern trends in the method of studying literature in the sixth form are also reflected in some recent publications in French, which show by precept and example how pupils may be trained in literary appreciation and commentary; but these are not yet available on the same scale in German and Spanish. The number of carefully edited advanced level texts—plays and novels—

increases steadily. An up-to-date and scholarly background book on France written for sixth form use is now available and some of lesser scope have been published on Germany; similar books are needed for the other countries whose languages and literature are studied in our schools.

In the few years immediately preceding the war there were published in this country French-English and English-French dictionaries so scholarly and so comprehensive that they must rank as landmarks in the history of lexicography: it is doubtful whether any other nation has anything comparable. It is understood that there is reasonable prospect of a similar work being produced in a few years' time to help the English student of German.

But it may be that one of the more striking developments in the last ten years has been the improvement in the appearance and format of the modern text-book. It is no longer thought that a school book must necessarily be drab and displeasing to the eye. These books are now printed on paper of good quality, in attractive type faces and with illustrations which have artistic merit. Their bright bindings stand out in sharp contrast to the covers of pre-war days and are often an ornament on the pupils' bookshelves.

VISUAL AND AURAL AIDS

Many special aids are available to-day to help the teacher to carry out more effectively or economically certain parts of his teaching programme. These aids are a means to an end: the purpose of each must be understood if it is to be used at the right moment. Their employment in no way lessens the responsibility of the teacher or the need for hard work on the part of the pupils.

Several of them are capable of making immediate but lasting impressions on the pupils' memory both through the eye and through the ear; others offer the possibility of unlimited repetition, which is an important factor in all language learning. But apart from technical advantages, they can be of great value psychologically. The importance of personal incentive in learning foreign languages cannot be over-emphasised. A child rapidly learns his own language, chiefly because he has a strong desire to communicate his wishes and thoughts to another person. Most pupils embark on their modern language course with a genuine desire to master the new language for one reason or another; but after the first year or two the subject is too often allowed to lose its freshness and the pupils are expected to settle down to three or four years of routine work with only one clear incentive in mind—the

external examination—an incentive which frequently proves insufficient for many of them.

Stern, exacting work there must be throughout the course; but the pupil will be all the more willing to apply himself with determination to the subject if the routine work is interrupted occasionally by the introduction of some teaching aid which gives point to his academic studies and links them with the real life of the people whose language he is learning. The time needed for their use will be fully justified by the renewed interest and will to work. It will be found, for instance, that many pupils, including senior non-language specialists, will be glad to study intensively, and subsequently to memorise, such songs as '*Heidenröslein*', '*Die Grenadiere*', '*Die Forelle*', or '*Der Erlkönig*', if they have heard a good rendering of them on a gramophone record; and others will eagerly commit to memory idioms or passages from a film, such as '*La Famille Martin*', which they have enjoyed. The words and phrases learned are more likely to be ready for active use than if they had been memorised from a vocabulary or phrase book.

Visual Aids

The simplest and most effective visual aid to teaching is still the blackboard and the skill of the teacher is usually apparent from the use that he makes of it: most teachers can make good use of two normal-sized boards during a lesson, especially with lower forms. Next in importance are maps of the foreign country: if the language is taught as it should be, against the background of the country, there must be many opportunities during the week of relating the reading text or the teacher's own experience to places in that country and thus building up the pupil's knowledge and maybe fostering his desire to visit the country. Pictures, posters, portraits, diagrams and models can serve a variety of useful purposes, but like other *Realien* they should be changed frequently.

There are now several convenient ways of showing a series of pictures which can serve as a basis for oral or written composition or as illustrations for a talk or lecture by the teacher or pupil. As the film-strip has largely replaced the lantern slide for classroom use the epidiascope is no longer necessary, and the film-strip projector needs only to be supplemented by the episcope, by means of which photographs, small pictures or the page of a book can be projected in black and white or in colour on to the screen. The number of serviceable film-strips dealing with foreign countries, their history, literature and art, increases month by month; some teachers produce film-strips from their own photographs. Provided

that the necessary facilities for using the apparatus are readily available, many teachers to-day will be glad to make use of it. The advantages of rear projection, which obviates the need for darkening the classroom, are now clearly established.

Aural Aids

The gramophone has many advantages over other ancillary aids. The cost is comparatively low and the machine is easily transported and manipulated; it is under the control of the teacher, who can use it when and how he wishes, playing over again passages or phrases which need to be repeated in order to ensure comprehension and assimilation. An excellent supply of records for use at all stages can now be purchased. They are particularly effective in the early years for teaching songs and correct intonation. By repeatedly playing the same phrase or passage the melody of the speech groups is fixed in the mind. Various modern inventions, such as repeater devices and remote controls, have increased the effectiveness of the gramophone as an aid to teaching.

Many recordings of poems, prose passages and extracts from plays are made by first-rate native speakers and actors; if these are integrated with the normal work and reading they can, as has been stated above, be of considerable instructional and psychological value. The advantages to be gained by accustoming pupils to listening to the foreign language spoken by different voices are obvious.

Practice in listening to a variety of voices speaking their native language is also given in the Modern Language Broadcasts. The B.B.C. provides four modern language series: 'Early Stages in French', 'Intermediate French', 'Intermediate German' and 'French for Sixth Forms'. The basic principles underlying the present policy, and suggestions for the use of the broadcasts in the classroom, are set out in a B.B.C. pamphlet, 'Modern Languages and School Broadcasting', published in 1952. Their main function in the intermediate stages is described as 'to let the class overhear the French or German language in a French or German setting'. Dealing with the elementary and advanced stages, the pamphlet continues, 'generally speaking, teachers have held the view that at the elementary stage the building up of confidence in the pupil is of more moment than any attempt at a realistic portrayal of French life, while at the Sixth Form stage he is sufficiently mature and linguistically advanced to be addressed as a serious listener—whether to talks, drama, or features—prepared to take the language in his stride'.[1] The sixth form series aims at

[1] B.B.C. Brochure: *Modern Languages and School Broadcasting.*

'giving the listener imaginative and stimulating contact with the spirit and culture of France. Particular attention will be given to subjects which the teacher cannot handle himself'.[1]

The skill with which the majority of these language broadcasts are planned and executed is of a high order. A writer in the *Educational Review* published by the Institute of Education of Birmingham University has given expression to the appreciation which must be felt by most regular users of the broadcasts.

> 'As an aid to our teaching in the pre-certificate years, it would be profitable to us, perhaps, to study the shape and technique of the B.B.C. lesson, to understand how pronunciation, grammar, comprehension, spelling and spontaneous conversation can all be exercised in every lesson.
>
> 'Here, too, the problem of listening fatigue has been carefully worked out. First comes the short warming up period, then the rapid introduction of new material which is to occupy the main part of the lesson, then the offset to fatigue and the close-down. Translated into terms of language teaching it might be the creation of the foreign atmosphere followed by pronunciation drill or oral exercises of some kind preceding the main business of the day and rounded off in a variety of ways such as individual conversation or the singing of a song.'[2]

Tribute has been paid earlier in this pamphlet to the merits of the *lectures expliquées* which regularly form part of the B.B.C. programme, 'French for Sixth Forms'. It can be said that an equally high standard is maintained in the *lectures dramatiques*, the *actualités parisiennes* and the poetry readings which make up most of the remainder of this programme.

Yet in spite of the excellent quality of the broadcasts, it cannot be claimed that, on the average, more than one-third of the schools teaching French and German listen to them. The reasons sometimes given for this are time-tabling difficulties, imperfect reproduction and the lack of suitable accommodation for listening groups; but these are obstacles which, in most instances, can and should be surmounted if the teacher's desire that his class should listen is sufficiently strong. It must be admitted that it is the ephemeral nature of the broadcasts and the difficulty often experienced in preparing the pupils to receive them which have deterred many teachers. The School Broadcasting Council are keenly aware of this and have already taken steps to help teachers by relating the vocabulary and material used in the brochure issued at the beginning of each term more closely to the script which is actually

[1] B.B.C. Brochure: *Broadcasts to Schools* 1954/1955.

[2] N. R. Ewing: 'Trends in Modern Language Teaching': Part 3. *Educational Review of the Institute of Education of the University of Birmingham*, volume 2, No. 2, February, 1950. (Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh and London).

followed in the broadcast lesson. It is hoped that this recent reform will encourage many new listeners. It is, of course, vital to the usefulness of the broadcasts that they should be sufficiently understood by most of the class, and the responsibility must be shared by the teacher as well as by the B.B.C.

The magnetic wire or tape recorder is frequently used in language teaching today as a means of enabling pupils to listen to their own voices. Pupils are thus more easily convinced of imperfections in pronunciation and intonation. If recordings are made periodically progress can be accurately measured. The apparatus can be used also for recording readings, talks, lectures, plays and songs. Some schools regularly make recordings in their own and the foreign language and exchange them for similar recordings made by pupils in the foreign country. From these they may gain some insight into the life of another school and may be enabled to listen to talks and renderings of prose, verse and music in the foreign language, made by their contemporaries abroad, and possibly also to criticisms of their own previous recordings in that language. The machines have been used effectively at the short courses in Paris organised for sixth form pupils at Easter by the *Institut Britannique* and in the summer for teachers by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the *Institut Britannique*. Many teachers and pupils are gratified to hear the progress that they make, especially in intonation, in the course of two weeks. The wire or tape recorder is an adaptable machine which will doubtless play an increasingly active part as an aid to language teaching.

Audio-Visual Aids

The advantages of both the visual and the aural aids to the teaching of modern languages can be combined in the sound film and in television; but it is only comparatively recently that this has been satisfactorily accomplished and so far, in sound films only. The majority of foreign films are of little use to boys and girls learning languages, except as a means of increasing knowledge of background; the pace is usually too fast, the vocabulary too wide and the language often too colloquial.

The first film designed specially for use in the teaching of a modern language, '*La Famille Martin*',[1] was produced in 1948 under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Education and in collaboration with the Modern Language Association. It aimed at giving a vivid picture of French middle class life, using a carefully controlled vocabulary and a choice of idiom well within the

[1] V. footnote to p. 74.

range of most pupils in the fifth form and above. Its success was encouraging and it was soon followed by two similar films in the same series, '*Départ des Grandes Vacances*'[1] and '*Histoire de Poissons.*'[1]

During the past three years several more films have been produced, mainly to help in the teaching of French in the early stages, but there is one, '*Viaje a España*',[1] describing a 2,000 miles tour of Spain made by a party of English schoolboys, which has a commentary in simple Spanish. The full text is usually available in booklet form; this facilitates both preparation and follow-up. Several interesting articles have been written in the quarterly Journal of the Modern Language Association[2] and elsewhere on the technique for making the best use of these sound films.

MODERN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

The nature and value of these supplementary aids to the teaching of modern languages makes it desirable that at least one classroom shall be set aside as a modern language room where the apparatus and material can be stored and prepared for immediate use. As suggested in Chapter 3, such a room can be given the appropriate foreign atmosphere and can help to maintain a lively interest in the subject.

[1] All these films can be hired or purchased from the Educational Foundation for Visual Aids, 33 Queen Anne Street, London, W.1.

[2] '*Modern Languages*,' Vol. 31, No. 2, March, 1950.

CHAPTER 8

Relations with the Foreign Country

PRESENT-DAY conditions in the foreign country are ever a matter of concern and interest to modern language teachers and pupils. Contact with foreign nationals and the acquisition of an up-to-date knowledge of contemporary developments are facilitated by a number of arrangements and organisations, most of which exist mainly for this purpose.

FOREIGN ASSISTANTS

The Assistant Scheme is a reciprocal arrangement now extending to France, Germany, the Saar, Austria and Switzerland for the exchange of students or teachers under 30 years of age who are capable of conducting lessons in conversation in their native tongue and of bringing something of the atmosphere and spirit of their own country and people into the schools of the receiving country. The scheme is not only of value to the schools, but is also a means of giving the intending teacher of a modern language the profitable experience which must come from an unbroken period of at least nine months' residence in the foreign country, and from close contact with a school in that country.

The scheme was first instituted in 1904, when 25 of our students or teachers went to France and one to Prussia as assistants: in exchange five assistants came to us from France. The scheme prospered and by 1910 forty assistants went from us to France and ten to Germany, while France sent us twenty and Germany eight. After the 1914-1918 war the exchange with France was quickly resumed, and from that time until 1951 we have received approximately twice as many assistants from France as we have sent to that country. It was not until 1928 that the exchange with Germany was resumed; in that year they sent us six assistants: we sent 23 to France and received 62 in return. Switzerland came into the scheme in 1936, exchanging one assistant with us annually until the outbreak of the last war. It was in the same year that Spain sent us four assistants; the arrangements we had made to send several to Spain were cancelled on the outbreak of the Spanish civil war. Since 1945 the attempts that have been made to operate a scheme with Spain have failed, probably because

practically no English was taught in their schools or universities until 1951; in that year two degree courses in English were started, at Salamanca and Madrid, and a third one has since started at Barcelona; it is probable that this will lead to an exchange of assistants with this country, and it is hoped that the first exchanges will take place in 1956. It is also hoped to arrange the first exchanges with Italy in 1956. Austria first joined the scheme in 1947 and the Saar in 1950. The number of exchanges with the five countries participating in the last three years is given in Appendix C.

Progress in the administrative arrangements for the assistants has been made year by year. The maintenance allowance that they receive covers the whole period of their engagement; it is adequate for a single person to meet reasonable living and personal expenses. Not more than 12 hours' teaching a week may be required of the assistant; help with his own studies is usually given by the headmaster and staff of the school.

The minimum qualifications which it is desirable that an applicant for an assistantship shall possess are two years' study at a university or training college; or, in the case of applicants from France to this country, the possession of two certificates for their *licence d'anglais*.

INTERCHANGE APPOINTMENTS

For older and fully experienced teachers, usually between the ages of 30 and 45 years, reciprocal arrangements for interchange appointments have been made between this country and France, Austria, Germany and—in 1955/56—Spain. Applicants must be modern language specialists who are competent to teach English language and literature in all classes of the foreign school; they undertake class teaching for a maximum of 16 hours a week and the appointments are for a year.

The scheme is intended to be numerically reciprocal, and opportunities for English teachers to go abroad will therefore depend upon the willingness of English employers to offer interchange appointments to foreign teachers. It is hoped that employers will appreciate the immense value of this scheme, because such interchange must eventually bring considerable benefit both to teachers and pupils. After a spell of maybe 15 or 20 years of continuous teaching, the need to refresh the spirit by renewing contact with the foreign people and their language over a reasonably long period must be very great.

The number of appointments made in recent years will be found in Appendix C.

SHORT COURSES

Short courses for established teachers of modern languages, lasting up to a fortnight, are organised by the Ministry of Education and by local education authorities. These usually take the form of 'refresher courses' and their purpose is to enable teachers to discuss with their colleagues and with other modern language specialists problems of technique and presentation of the foreign language in the English classroom.

Every year since 1947 (except in 1952) a two weeks' course has been held at the Cité Universitaire in Paris during the last part of July for 100 British teachers of French in all types of secondary school. The course includes, in addition to lectures and discussions on teaching method, opportunities of linguistic practice in small groups, conducted by professors and tutors from the University of Paris, the *Institut Britannique* and the leading Paris *lycées*. Lectures in French on modern France are given each morning by eminent French scholars, and *visites—conférences* are arranged in the afternoons and on Sundays to places of interest in and around Paris.

Similar courses in German (for 50 teachers) were run by the Ministry in 1949 at Brunswick, in 1951 and 1952 at Göttingen, and in 1954 in Vienna.

The first Spanish course in Spain, organised by the Ministry in collaboration with the Hispanic Council, was held in Madrid at Easter 1953. It was attended by 49 British teachers of Spanish in secondary schools and 25 other students. A second course was held in Madrid in 1954, at which 19 teachers were present.

These courses, which are held in a university city or town of the country whose language and culture are being studied and taught, provide opportunities for intellectual refreshment which cannot be obtained in the home country.

Some local education authorities organise shorter courses, usually at the week-ends, for teachers of modern languages; separate courses are often run for teachers in secondary modern schools, for teachers in grammar schools and for sixth form masters and mistresses; and conferences and lectures are arranged for modern language teachers by the *Modern Language Association*, which has active branches in different parts of the country.

ASSISTANCE FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Modern language teachers and pupils are given notable help in their work by several organisations which exist to promote the study of modern languages in general, or to offer specific services relating to the countries whose languages are studied

in British schools. Pre-eminent amongst these is the *Modern Language Association*. The aims of this body are, first, to set forth the vital importance of a knowledge of modern languages (in conjunction with English, history, geography and economics) in the interests of general education, international intercourse, industry and commerce; secondly, to raise the standard of efficiency in the teaching of modern languages; and, thirdly, to provide for teachers and students of modern languages channels of communication, by means of journals, meetings, debates and conferences, for the discussion of language, literature and methods of teaching and research. The Association takes an active part in organising exchanges of correspondence and visits for pupils; through several of its 12 branches it arranges verse speaking competitions which act as a valuable stimulus to large numbers of pupils. In addition to the training that these competitions often provide in pronunciation and intonation, they encourage the study of some authentic literature in the lower forms, as well as in the sixth form. The Association also looks after the interests of foreign assistants in this country.

The *French Embassy* (*Services Culturels*) lends photographs and film-strips illustrative of France and the French people, and sends representatives to visit schools and teachers' courses to give talks and lectures relating to French life, literature, art, history and geography, either in French or English. In 1954 they visited 106 grammar and public schools, 23 modern and technical schools and many establishments for further education or teachers' courses. The *Institut Français du Royaume-Uni* is particularly helpful to teachers and students living in or near London, who can take full advantage of the privileges offered to members. Among these are the use of an extensive library, and attendance at evening lectures and courses on French language, literature and civilisation, and at concerts, films, receptions and conversation circles. Some of these privileges may be enjoyed by pupils, but with certain necessary restrictions. The *Franco-British Society* sends lecturers to schools to speak mainly on current events in France, and it organises essay competitions for British pupils and congresses for British and French teachers. It co-operates closely with the *Association France-Grande Bretagne* in Paris and links schools with French organisations, both in this country and in France. Great interest is taken by the schools in the prize competitions organised each year by the *Alliance Française*, who also take a leading part in the organisation of the 'Paris Cultural Holiday' for sixth form pupils at Easter, which has been attended by over 3,000 of our senior boys and girls during the last five years. Other

courses, equally valuable to members of our sixth forms, are also run each year at Easter by the *Institut Britannique de l'Université de Paris.* [1]

No less profitable for teachers and pupils alike are the activities of *G.E.R.* (*German Educational Reconstruction*) and of the *Anglo-German Association.* The former is a society for the promotion of Anglo-German educational relations, which has organised many joint conferences and exchange visits for teachers, students, pupils and others, both in this country and in Germany, during the last nine years. The latter was founded in 1952 to promote friendship between the people of Britain and Germany. The Association gives advice to individuals or parties of German teachers and students who wish to visit this country. It organises lectures and publishes a journal which should appeal to all students of German.

The interests of those who study Spanish and Portuguese are furthered by the Education Department of the *Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Councils.* The activities of this Department are too numerous to describe here in detail but they include holiday courses, lectures and library facilities for teachers and pupils, evening classes in Spanish and Portuguese, a quarterly review and prize competitions for pupils and students and help in the organisation of exchanges of correspondence and visits between schools in this country and Spain. At Canning House [2] the Councils offer hospitality to the *Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.* This body, among its other activities, organises verse and prose speaking competitions, which stimulate interest in the language generally and help to raise the standard of its pronunciation in the schools.

An *Austrian Institute*, with the object of helping to foster Anglo-Austrian cultural relations, was opened in London early in 1956.

A special tribute is due to local education authorities for the generous help and encouragement which they give to teachers and pupils. Not only do many authorities grant financial aid which makes attendance at courses abroad possible, but in numerous instances they have organised courses and conferences locally for sixth form pupils as well as for teachers. To some of these courses French children are invited to live and work with their English contemporaries. The help of local education authorities and several university modern language departments

[1] For more detailed information about these organisations see R. G. Brettell: *A French Teacher's Year Book.* (University of London Press, 1954).

[2] 2, Belgrave Square, London, S.W.1.

in welcoming foreign assistants and in some cases organising a programme of visits and lectures for them on a common free day each week is of the greatest value.

EXCHANGE OF VISITS AND CORRESPONDENCE

In this review of arrangements and organisations which have come into being for the purpose of fostering close relations with the foreign country, reference should be made to the benefit that an increasingly large number of pupils derive from an exchange of correspondence with children in the foreign country and from visits abroad.

Foreign Correspondence

An exchange of letters with pupils abroad can be one of the most successful ways of maintaining interest in language study, especially during the more difficult fourth and fifth years of the course; it should not be started too early and it is not likely to endure unless the teacher takes a genuine but discreet interest in it and care is exercised in the first instance to pair children who are likely to have interests in common and who may later wish to spend holidays together. This can best be done by working with colleagues abroad. If correspondence is undertaken in the foreign language in a modern school below the fourth or fifth form, it is probably best undertaken as a class exercise; and it may be found more profitable at first for each pupil to write in his own language. Machinery to put pupils in the United Kingdom in touch with pupils abroad has been set up by the Ministry of Education (External Relations Branch) for France only, and by the Modern Language Association, the International Scholastic Correspondence Organisation, and the Council for Education in World Citizenship, for France and other countries.

In France the introduction of the study of English into the *Cours Complémentaires* (v. page 90) and the untiring efforts of the *Bureau Français de la Correspondance Scolaire Internationale* brought the number of French children desirous of finding an English pen-friend to over 50,000. In 1952, following the issue of a circular by the Ministry, the number of applicants on our side rose from 24,767 to 34,572 but there is still a wide gap to fill.

Exchange Visits

Visits by pupils to countries abroad usually take place during the school holidays and are organised on a group basis or between individual pupils; visits organised individually are far the more beneficial and they will often develop naturally between pen-

friends. If they do not, they are generally arranged most satisfactorily between teachers in the two countries, who can see personally the families involved and ensure the most suitable pairing.

Teachers and parents will be well advised to send children to families abroad for a period of not less than three weeks; there should then be some gain linguistically, but the chief benefit resulting from short visits is psychological. The boys and girls realise, more vividly than is ever possible at home, that the foreign language is a real and living thing which they can already begin to understand and use; the desire to master it will be greatly strengthened and will give impetus to their studies on their return.

It is the possibility of added incentive which on occasion justifies the group visit or school journey. Expenses can be reduced by applying for collective passports and group fares and accommodating the party at a school or hostel. Children often derive more healthy enjoyment and insight into the real life and character of the foreign people by staying in a provincial town, or seaside fishing town, and avoiding the large cities. Information about the various bodies which undertake the organisation of individual and group exchanges is to be found in the 'Survey of Educational Travel' issued by the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges [1] in 1953. It is interesting to record that at Easter 1953 over 5,000 English children visited Paris, mainly under the auspices of the *Comité d'Accueil* formed by the *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale*; and over 600 exchanges were arranged between English and French children.

The exchange of correspondence and visits is greatly facilitated by the linking of cities, towns and schools. The official scheme for the linking of schools with France was started in 1945 by the Ministry of Education; the operation of the scheme was passed in 1949 to the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges, which was established in 1948 by the United Kingdom UNESCO National Co-operating Body for Education 'to assist authorities, institutions and individuals in introducing into British education a first-hand knowledge of the people of other countries'.[2]

The school-linking scheme with Germany and Austria was started in 1951. In 1954 the total number of schools and colleges successfully linked with France was over 400, while with Germany and Austria it was 154. Six schools are now linked with Spain

[1] Hamilton House, Bidborough Street, London, W.C.1.

[2] *Survey of Educational Travel*, p. 5. (Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges).

and one with Italy. In both of these countries there is an unsatisfied demand for connexions with English schools.

The Western European Union is endeavouring to encourage links between the schools of the signatory powers.

CHAPTER 9

The Training of Modern Language Teachers

IT must be said at the outset that in order to be a successful exponent of the oral method of teaching a modern language it is not necessary to possess exceptional mental and physical qualities or to be a natural actor, though some talent for informal dramatisation is an advantage during the early years of the course. A master who has clear speech, a general aptitude for teaching and a reasonable amount of resource, initiative and staying power can achieve a large measure of success, provided that he is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about his subject and is genuinely convinced of its broad educative value.

There are, in the main, two ways in which teachers of a modern language can qualify academically: at the universities, where they read for a degree in one or more modern languages, or at a teachers' training college.

University Graduates

The university graduate in modern languages may read either for an honours or for a general or pass degree; and he may study one or more modern languages as main or subsidiary subjects. In any case he will study a language intensively for at least a year. For an honours degree he may devote three or four years to one or two languages.

In all degree examinations involving modern languages the passing of an oral test is now compulsory, except that at one university a candidate may still partially qualify himself for the ordinary B.A. degree by passing examinations in modern languages of which an oral test does not form part. In exacting a period of residence in the foreign country, and often of study at a foreign university, most universities have taken an important step forward. In this respect the younger universities and university colleges are giving a useful lead. Three of them require a year to be spent in the foreign country, usually at a university, four require six months and nine one term. The older universities express the hope that as much time as possible during the long vacation will be spent in the country whose language is being studied.

This recognition of the importance attached to a knowledge of the modern foreign language as now spoken, of the people

who speak it and of recent developments in their literature, thought, art, and institutions is also reflected today in the syllabuses of modern language studies at some, but not yet all, universities; modern studies take precedence over the study of philology and medieval literature, and the student who intends to teach the language, not only for practical purposes but also as a means to understanding the foreign culture and civilisation, is better equipped for the task than he was 20 years ago. Tribute has already been paid to the fact that most modern language teachers today speak with fluency and accuracy the language that they are teaching; and this notable advance must be due in some measure to the improved training that they receive at school and at the universities.

Teachers' Training Colleges

Of the 113 teachers' training colleges in England and Wales which offer a two-year course of training, only 37 offer a main course in a modern language. French is normally the language studied but provision has been made for German in one college and for Spanish in another. The quality of the instruction is usually very good indeed, but the lecture time at present allocated to the subject rarely exceeds five periods of 45 to 60 minutes a week; in many colleges it is only one, two or three periods. Some of the students have previously taken French to the advanced level in the examination for the General Certificate of Education, but many have not carried it beyond the ordinary level. The objectives of the course are usually cultural and sometimes linguistic, and the best use is made of the limited time available. In some instances the students are able to use the services of a French assistant and to exchange visits with French teachers in training at an *École Normale*; and the instruction given in class is sometimes supplemented by the activities of a *Cercle Français*. The course is undoubtedly of general educational value, but it cannot in itself be considered as an adequate preparation for teaching the subject in any type of school, even if it is accompanied—as it is in most cases—by lectures on teaching method and some teaching practice. A much more substantial allowance of time and more intensive study would normally be needed to train an efficient teacher of a modern language. Further study and residence abroad should therefore be regarded as a necessary extension of the course in the training college for those students who wish to teach the subject. The Third Year Supplementary French Course in Paris offers facilities for such study and experience abroad. This course in French language, literature and background studies,

which ensures a minimum of nine months' continuous residence in the country and intensive study under professors and tutors from the Sorbonne and the leading Paris *lycées*, is held at the *Institut Britannique de l'Université de Paris*. It should provide adequate training for teachers of French in modern schools: the more proficient can, in addition, qualify for the *Certificat d'Études Françaises de l'Université de Paris*.

It might in some instances be possible for a student who attends the supplementary course to obtain a post in France as an assistant in the following year. The experience which such an appointment affords, when added to that which is gained from the supplementary course, should enable the student to teach with a very good knowledge of his subject on his return to this country.

Professional Training

A course of professional training for the graduate teacher is provided by the university departments of education and also by some teachers' training colleges. The course usually covers three terms, and a Diploma or post-graduate Certificate in Education is awarded to those students who complete the course satisfactorily. No two university departments of education follow exactly the same procedure, but it can be said that students are usually grouped according to their special subjects and are allotted to a tutor who is qualified by knowledge and experience to give expert advice on the subject and the methods of teaching it, to demonstrate these methods and to supervise school teaching practice.

It appears to be customary in certain university departments of education to send a student, unsupervised by the tutor, to a primary or secondary modern school for a few weeks, either just before the university year begins, or for the first three or four weeks of the first term, in order to get a general idea of the work of a teacher. This may or may not be followed by a further short period of supervised teaching practice at a similar type of school. The remainder of the term will probably be devoted to lectures on the general principles and the philosophical background of education, though in several university departments of education lectures on modern language teaching method are given once a week, and are sometimes amplified by a tutorial discussion. The teaching of modern languages is linked with the general lectures on education, educational psychology and the study of teaching methods in other countries.

In some university departments of education a student does teaching practice during most of the year for one or two days a week. In others the whole of the Easter term is spent in a suitable

school where the student can observe and practise the teaching of his particular subject. The school will normally be chosen by the professor or tutor, whose business it is to know intimately both the school and the teachers under whom the student will be working. While it is unlikely that all students will go to a school where the teaching is wholly beyond criticism, it is especially important in modern languages to avoid sending them to work with teachers whose methods are known to be ineffective in teaching pupils to speak as well as to write and read the language.

During the Easter vacation visits to western European countries are organised for students by several university departments of education, so that they may study different methods of teaching. Other departments may require students to use this vacation to consolidate the knowledge and experience gained during the first two terms by writing an 'extended essay' on a subject relating to some aspect of modern language teaching. At the beginning of the summer term there is probably a further series of lectures on the theory of teaching, of even more value now that some practical experience has been gained. Tutorial discussions (or seminars) continue, based in many instances on observation visits to selected schools.

There is no doubt that in most university departments of education a successful effort has been made to redress the balance which was formerly weighted in favour of theoretical and philosophical studies by relating theory more closely to practice, and giving the student more contact with pupils in school and more opportunities for discussion based on practical experience. In so far as modern languages are concerned more help is given to the student of today in learning the special technique which the oral method demands, but further progress in this direction is still possible, especially where methods appropriate to the sixth form are concerned.

The willing co-operation of schools of all types—both maintained and independent—in welcoming students during this period of apprenticeship is largely responsible for the marked progress that has been made in recent years. Most schools are now taking the long view and, if need be, accepting some temporary inconvenience for the sake of future gain; they are rightly taking an active part in the training of their own future staff.

During this post-graduate year of training it is important to ensure that students maintain their oral proficiency in the foreign language. This is sometimes achieved by organising conversation groups, play readings and educational tours abroad.

CHAPTER 10

The Teaching of Modern Languages Abroad

BEFORE this pamphlet is concluded, it may be useful to survey briefly the present position of modern language studies abroad, especially in western Europe.

In the last 20 years or so, and particularly since 1939, there has been a great general increase of interest in modern languages. The reasons for this are diverse. The war of 1939-1945 caused vast movements of population, by no means confined to members of the armed forces of the different countries. Since the war many more people than before have travelled outside their own countries, either for pleasure or for business. Catering for the needs of travellers has become an occupation of importance to the national economies of many countries, and the business of selling abroad in conditions as they now are demands a close study of the habits and traditions of other peoples. More and more people are finding it necessary to have immediate access to the results of scientific and technological research published in the major world languages. The awakened interest in other languages sometimes betokens a reaction against earlier narrow nationalism; sometimes it springs directly from a desire to understand people better and from an appreciation that the best ways of achieving this end are to read what the other people read and to converse with them in their own tongue. It happens that this awakening of interest in other peoples and their languages comes at a time when the development of broadcasting and means of recording speech makes easier than ever before the study of the spoken language of other countries.

Extent of Teaching

The general upsurge of interest in other peoples and their languages has led, or will soon lead, in many countries, to a considerable increase in the number of boys and girls who learn at least one foreign tongue in school. After 1956, all pupils in the German Federal Republic, except the minority who intend to study Latin and Greek in the Classical *Gymnasien*, will begin English at the age of about ten, in either elementary or secondary schools. In Sweden, if experiments now being conducted are successful, a three-year course in a modern language—English—will be compulsory for pupils in all elementary schools from their

fifth school year onwards (i.e. beginning when they are about 11). In Norway a modern language—again English—is already offered, in almost all urban elementary schools and in most rural schools organised on the urban pattern, to pupils aged 12 and above who desire to learn it and are regarded by their teachers as having the necessary aptitude; in 1952, 78 per cent. of the pupils leaving urban elementary schools and 25 per cent. of those leaving rural elementary schools completed the English course. In Luxembourg all children in the elementary schools learn French and German, in addition to their local language. Farther off, in parts of the United States of America, French and Spanish have been introduced into the curriculum of a number of primary schools, for children aged six and upwards. Here, the methods are akin to those advocated earlier in this pamphlet for pupils under the age of ten. The lessons are short and frequent, and the work is entirely oral in the first three years. Reading and writing are introduced when the children are nine years old, and the study of formal grammar begins three years later.

In technical schools one or two modern languages are usually compulsory in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. In Germany and Norway one or two languages are taught in all commercial schools, and one is taught in many other vocational schools, often as a compulsory subject.

In grammar schools there are significant divergencies. Latin competes less often than here with a second modern language, since many pupils start both Latin and a modern language at the beginning of their courses and add a second modern language in their second or third year. Generally speaking, many more pupils in grammar schools abroad have two modern languages than in England and Wales. In France, for example, those who do not learn Greek—and also those who learn neither Latin nor Greek—begin a second modern language in their third year. In Belgium pupils who learn Latin, with or without Greek, begin a second modern language in their third year. In Luxembourg pupils on the modern side learn French, German and English, and classical pupils learn French and German, as well as Latin and Greek; they may also add English. In Germany, if the first foreign language is modern, either the second or the third will be modern, but not both. One of these (generally the second) is always Latin. At the age of ten years most pupils in the Netherlands who are destined for the grammar school begin a two-year French course to which they devote two hours a week. In the grammar schools, which boys and girls enter at the age of 12, French, English and German are compulsory subjects, as they are also in the

advanced elementary schools, where the leaving age is 16 years. The amount of time devoted to modern language study abroad is undoubtedly greater than it is usually in this country.

Aims

In all countries there is full recognition of the practical value of a knowledge of modern languages. In some, especially perhaps France and Belgium, cultural aims are prominent from the beginning and particularly in the later years of courses. In Germany the disciplinary value of concentration and methodical study is stressed, and several countries see in their language courses a way of promoting better international understanding.

Schemes of Work

The decentralisation of our educational system has no parallel in the countries of western Europe or, perhaps, elsewhere. The degree of control exercised by the central authorities abroad varies from country to country; nevertheless, there is far greater uniformity in the work done in schools and probably in the pupils' standards of attainment than in England and Wales. Schemes of work, at any rate in their broad lines, are determined centrally. In the Netherlands, by regulation, only approved text-books may be used, but the regulation is administered in a liberal spirit, and teachers have in practice wide discretion in their selection of books. In Belgium approved text-books only may be used, and the same applies to supplementary reading material, but teachers have a wide choice. In France teachers select their own text-books, but because of the official *programmes* there is not to be found the same variety of manual as here. The French *programmes* indicate the scope of the reading that should be undertaken at the various stages of the course and suggest particular texts, carefully graded, to be read in the higher forms.

Methods

In methods of teaching, too, there is in all likelihood much more uniformity abroad than here. As a rule oral methods are employed from the beginning, and pupils learn the language by constantly hearing it and speaking it. In the early years the mother tongue is generally used only for the treatment of grammar or where it otherwise offers some clear advantage. This is not to say that teachers necessarily discard the foreign tongue because the point at issue is grammatical: practice, indeed, seems to follow closely that recommended in the most recent Belgian *instructions*, where the view is expressed that, although the use of the mother tongue

may be essential for the analysis of grammatical facts, only the grammatical terminology of the language being learned should be used as a rule, and at the very least in revision work.

In the early stages the work consists, as with us, of phonetic practice, oral exercises, choral and individual reading, recitation and singing, extension of vocabulary and idiom, and the reading of easy texts. The most common written exercises are dictations, substitution exercises and answers to questions in the foreign language leading to simple composition. In Belgium translation from the foreign language is practised from the first year on. In Sweden there has always been much translation into the foreign language, but here there is a movement, in the first few years of courses, towards freer writing in the language being learned.

By the end of the third year formal translation from the foreign language is set in some examination papers. Except as noted in the foregoing paragraph, translation into the foreign language does not often appear before the fourth year. It is found in elementary form in the papers set recently in the French examinations for the *Brevet d'Études du Premier Cycle*, which are taken by some French pupils at the end of their fourth year in grammar schools and by those completing their courses in *Cours Complémentaires.*[1] German educational authorities give exact indications to teachers about the amount and type of written work, including dictation, translation from and into German, free composition and summaries. In France much more weight is laid on *lecture expliquée* and on the intensive study of extracts than on the reading of complete texts which is favoured in England and Wales.

Two important features of the technique used abroad are, first, the importance attached to the regular memorisation of prose and other passages (although in Scandinavian countries such work appears to be confined to the early years or when songs are being learned for singing) and, second, the insistence on the careful revision of written work by pupils and on constructive methods of correction by teachers.

Mechanical Aids

In the provision of equipment for supplementary aural and visual aids to the teaching of modern languages we appear to be abreast of other countries with the exception of the United States of America and Sweden, where most secondary schools make

[1] Courses organised in, or attached to, elementary schools, in which the pupils follow the curriculum and schemes of work (excluding Latin) as laid down for the first four years of grammar schools.

constant and effective use of wire or tape recorders. These aids are used not only to further and register progress in the pupils' pronunciation and intonation but also to provide permanent records of broadcasts, sound films and lectures. In Sweden there is often a close connexion between school broadcasts and other linguistic exercises in the classroom; some elementary schools listen regularly to the broadcasts twice a week, but for secondary schools the English programmes are given less frequently—perhaps once in three weeks.

Incentive

Pupils in some of the countries of western Europe, particularly those whose vernacular is not widely spoken abroad, have a specially strong incentive to learn foreign languages. In Germany during the last ten years the presence of troops from other countries has also been an important stimulus to language learning. In some countries, as for example Norway and Sweden, a qualification in English is essential for those who seek to enter universities and most professions; in others a similar qualification is necessary for admission to certain university faculties. Where these incentives exist, the modern language teachers have clearly an advantage which is not enjoyed by their colleagues in other countries. It is an advantage of which they are well aware and which they skilfully exploit.

Training of Teachers

Abroad it is quite exceptional to find persons employed as permanent teachers unless they are qualified nationals of the countries in which they are working. To teach languages in grammar schools, and sometimes in other types of school, a university degree is generally regarded as essential; it can seldom be obtained by three years' study after leaving school as in this country. University courses lasting four or five years are common, and even longer courses are not unknown. For the Danish *skole-embedsexamen* and the Norwegian *lektoreksamen* the normal duration of the course is seven years; for the Swedish *filosofie licentiat* and *filosofie doktor* four years or more devoted to a single language are necessary, following usually four years for the more general degree of *filosofie magister*. In the Netherlands the university course for a modern language teacher lasts six years.

Many countries now insist on a post-graduate course of professional training. In Denmark a year's training and two years' probation are demanded. Until recently Sweden required a year's training (taken later) for permanent establishment, but because

of the shortage of teachers the period of training has been reduced temporarily to five months for those who have practised as teachers for at least two years; in the training colleges which are being planned, however, the period will be 18 months. Norway arranges a six months' training course which includes practical training in Oslo or Bergen under the supervision of trained, experienced teachers. In Germany the intending teacher of modern languages has two *Vorbereitungsjahre* and the secondary school teacher in Luxembourg has two years' professional training following a four-year university course. French graduates who have acquired the *Certificat d'Aptitude au Professorat d'Enseignement Secondaire* now attend a *Centre Pédagogique Régional* for a year, where they receive instruction in teaching their subject and have practice in suitable schools, under the guidance of three different experienced teachers acting as *conseillers pédagogiques*.

In the countries of western Europe foreign residence for teachers of modern languages is strongly recommended and encouraged, but it has not been made compulsory in any of them. In the Netherlands, however, the impossibility of passing the modern language teacher's qualifying examination without thoroughly mastering the spoken foreign tongue makes residence abroad virtually compulsory. So far as is known, no other country organises one-year supplementary training courses or short refresher courses abroad for their modern language teachers; courses are, however, arranged in this country by the British Council for foreign teachers of English, and they are very well attended and highly valued.

CONCLUSION

THE brief survey in the preceding chapter may enable us to take a comparative view of present-day conditions in modern language teaching at home and abroad; and it may point the way to future progress in certain directions.

The success of many teachers in this country in making the foreign language course of considerable educational value to the modern school pupil of not more than average ability, whose command of his own language at the outset may be very limited, encourages the belief that the policy of giving this opportunity to a large proportion of the pupils attending secondary schools, which is now followed in an increasing number of countries abroad, is justified.

The preceding sections on aims and methods indicate that although this country wishes to adhere to its tradition of approaching the study of modern languages 'in a deep and scholarly way through literature as well as language',[1] we have every intention of equipping our pupils with a knowledge of foreign peoples and the ability to understand their spoken language and to use it in conversation with reasonable accuracy and fluency. If this is to be achieved there must clearly be a more frequent and spontaneous use of the foreign tongue in class both by teachers and pupils, and less recourse to translation when reading texts. But it is not suggested that methods and syllabuses should be controlled as they are in many other countries. Provided that the main objectives are attained, the teacher must always feel free to work out the technique best suited to his personality and particular abilities; and he must be able to find time to read books with his pupils and to stimulate interests which are outside the prescribed examination syllabuses.

It has already been said that most of our modern language teachers today speak correctly and fluently the language that they teach. It is probable that this could not have been said with truth 30 years ago. That this increase in the linguistic proficiency of the teachers has to some extent led to a corresponding advance in the pupils' mastery of the spoken foreign tongue cannot be denied. The testimony of Monsieur A. Desclos, late Director of

[1] Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 26, *Language: some suggestions for Teachers of English and others*, p. 21. (H.M.S.O. 1954). Price 3s. 6d. net.

the *Collège Franco-Britannique* in Paris, who has taken a leading part in organising exchanges between French and English teachers, students and pupils since 1918, is convincing. He recently lectured in French to a large group of English sixth form pupils attending a holiday course in Paris and found them a most attentive and understanding audience, quick to appreciate every point that was made. This, he believed, could not have happened even 20 years ago. Questions asked in French by the pupils at the end of the lecture showed that they were beginning to use the language with confidence and accuracy.

It may, however, justifiably be said that there has been in the past a sharp contrast between the oral proficiency of sixth form pupils and that which was reached by the majority of those whose course ended in the fifth form. Lacking many of the incentives to speak foreign languages which are common to most children on the continent and failing to receive recognition for command of the spoken language in the external examinations, the majority of our pupils below the sixth form and their teachers concentrated, perhaps not unnaturally, on other aspects of their work. But now that the ability to use and comprehend the spoken language is receiving more worthy recognition, it is reasonable to hope that teachers will be encouraged to integrate oral work more often with other linguistic exercises throughout the five-year course and that in future the gap between the oral proficiency of the average boy or girl who leaves school from the fifth form and that of the modern language specialist a year later will be narrower. To end in this way the disparity which has existed in many schools between the work and standards of the fifth and sixth forms must be one of the main tasks ahead.

Where in the sixth form there has been failure to make the modern language course the basis of a broad and liberal education, the failure, in some cases, may have been due to lack of vision or ambition on the part of the teacher. In many others, no doubt, it can be attributed to unsatisfactory work in earlier years or to the inadequate arrangements made in the sixth form for the subject, e.g. insufficient time, lack of co-ordination with other subjects, or the teacher's inability to teach his first year pupils as a separate group.

But those who are in close touch with the advanced work of our modern language specialists in all parts of the country know that many sixth form masters and mistresses are inspired by the ideal of humane learning and regard their subject as an instrument of culture which can be used to develop the higher faculties—imagination, a sense of beauty, fine judgment and intellectual

comprehension. By their example they are giving proof that the modern language course in the sixth form can be distinguished not only by its practical value but by its breadth, its scholarliness and its dignity.

APPENDIX A

Extracts from Statistics of Public Education for England and Wales

	School Certificate, 1939		*G.C.E. 'O' Level*			
	Total Candidates in Languages	*Percentage of Total Entries in Languages*	*Total Candidates in Languages*		*Percentage of Total Entries in Languages*	
			1952	1954	1952	1954
French	75,078	83·3	89,024	97,806	84·4	82·7
German	10,630	11·8	11,408	13,863	10·8	11·7
Spanish	1,252	1·4	2,581	3,371	2·4	2·8
Italian	355	0·4	137	209	0·1	0·2
Russian	7	—	55	76	0·1	0·1
Welsh Language ..	2,830	3·1	924	1,134	0·9	1·0
Welsh as a Second Language ..	—	—	—	831	—	0·7
Welsh as a Foreign Language ..	—	—	1,332	994	1·3	0·8

	Higher Certificate, 1939		*G.C.E. Advanced Level*			
	Total Candidates in each Language	*Percentage of Total Entries in Languages*	*Total Candidates in each Language*		*Percentage of Total Entries in Languages*	
			1952	1954	1952	1954
French	4,700	80·6	9,499	10,342	76·6	72·4
German	873	15·0	2,114	2,540	17·1	17·8
Spanish	145	2·5	518	660	4·2	4·6
Italian	12	0·2	47	79	0·4	0·6
Russian	—	—	26	457	0·2	3·2
Welsh	102	1·7	192	199	1·5	1·4

Summary of Class Entries for Modern Languages at Evening Institutes and Evening Classes in Major Establishments for Further Education

	1928/1929	1937/1938	1946/1947	1951/1952	1952/1953	1953/1954
French ..	53,351	44,654	42,695	53,678	50,282	49,440
German ..	10,611	38,367	14,866	19,610	20,241	20,777
Spanish ..	8,114	4,847	4,592	6,756	6,902	6,906
Italian ..	2,191	1,965	988	5,283	5,562	6,631
Russian ..	251	526	1,936	1,144	1,101	934
Dutch ..	71	90	724	637	542	501
Swedish ..	154	152	184	287	292	348
Polish ..	—	19	276	107	107	90
Norwegian ..	11	38	167	265	199	191
Portuguese ..	88	119	119	82	121	91
Danish ..	87	115	99	240	215	229
Welsh ..	1,720	895	950	1,625	1,497	1,261

Complete statistics relating to those day-time courses which include the study of foreign languages in Major Establishments for Further Education are not available.

APPENDIX B

Distribution of the Principal Languages Spoken in the World

1.	Chinese (all dialects)	— 450 million	speakers
2.	English	— 250 ,,	,,
3.	Hindi/Urdu	— 160 ,,	,,
4.	Russian	— 140 ,,	,,
5.	Spanish	— 110 ,,	,,
6.	German	— 100 ,,	,,
7.	Japanese	— 80 ,,	,,
8.	French	— 75 ,,	,,
9.	Malay	— 60 ,,	,,
10.	Bengali	— 60 ,,	,,
11.	Portuguese	— 55 ,,	,,
12.	Italian	— 55 ,,	,,
13.	Arabic	— 50 ,,	,,

Quoted in the Unesco *Courier*, 1954, No. 1, p. 32.

APPENDIX C

(1) *Appointment of Foreign Assistants*

	1952/1953	1953/1954	1954/1955		1952/1953	1953/1954	1954/1955
To France	336	370	346	From France	491	495	494
To Germany	28	49	49	From Germany	44	51	57
To Austria	7	7	7	From Austria	9	8	7
To Switzerland	5	4	2	From Switzerland	13	6	7
To The Saar	2	6	6	From The Saar	9	6	4
Total	378	436	410	*Total*	566	566	569

(2) *Appointment of Interchange Teachers*

1949/50	To France	7	From France	5
	To Austria	5	From Austria	5
1950/51	To France	4	From France	4
	To Austria	1	From Austria	3
1951/52	To France	4	From France	4
	To Austria	1	From Austria	2
			From Germany	1
1952/53	To France	3	From France	3
	To Austria	1	From Austria	3
	To Germany	1		
1953/54	To France	6	From France	6
	To Germany	1	From Germany	1
1954/55	To France	9	From France	9
	To Germany	1	From Germany	1
	To Austria	1	From Austria	1

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