Teaching linguistics to students of modern languages
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Six aims:
1. Relevant features of my own background
2. Salford event
3. Background: benchmark statements
4. Student trends
5. Linguistics and MFL students
6. Linguistics and MFL at Salford
Conclusion

1. My background
– A levels in French, German and maths.
– broad-based, non-literary BA Modern Languages (French/German), with specialisation in politics, and first- and final-year courses in (French) linguistics.
– MA linguistics.
– DPhil theoretical French syntax.
– Fourteen years teaching French and linguistics in a non-literary department of modern languages, initially to students on BA Modern Languages, more recently to students on named ML + linguistics programmes.

2. LLAS workshop: *Teaching linguistics to students of foreign languages* (Salford, December 2001)
(Report available at:
http://www.lang.ltsn.ac.uk/events/llaseventarchiveitem.aspx?resourceid=470)
– Plenary presentations: Paul Rowlett, Florence Myles, Jeanine Treffers-Daller (Treffers-Daller 2003); four case studies, including David Hornsby (Hornsby 2003).
– Hartley (1982), Paul (1993), Ball (2002).

3. Background: benchmark statements
Linguistics (QAA 2002b)
2. . . . the teaching and learning of particular languages, the study of translation between languages.
3.1. . . . the systematic study of the structure and use of one language; . . . the learning, teaching and assessment of first, second and foreign languages.
3.3. translation and interpretation.
Languages and related studies (QAA 2002a)
1.3. Languages are . . . an object of study in their own right, described here as the explicit knowledge of language.
1.7. The study of language as an object in its own right comprises knowledge and understanding both of the structure of the language itself and of the social, historical and cultural contexts in which it has been and/or is currently used.
2.7. It may draw upon disciplines such as linguistics, in order to deepen understanding of the language.
3.2. [L]anguage study may involve the detailed consideration of synchronic and diachronic dimensions of language linked to a variety of linguistic theories as illustrated by different languages.
4.2. Students of LRS will have developed appropriate linguistic tools and metalanguage to

describe and analyse the main features of the language(s) studied. They will thus be able to make effective use of language reference materials, such as grammars, standard and specialised dictionaries and corpora, to refine knowledge and understanding of register, nuances of meaning and language use.

4.5.1. . . . capacity for critical reflection and judgement in the light of <u>evidence and argument</u>

6.2.2. . . . demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the <u>structures</u>, <u>registers</u> and, as appropriate, <u>varieties</u> of the target language(s); . . . demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the <u>linguistic principles required to analyse the target language</u>.

4. What students are doing

– Going down: MFL GCSE, MFL A level; single-honours MFL; joint-honours MFLx2; HE student numbers recruited to MFLs down on average 32%.

– Going up: English language A level; MFL on joint-honours programmes with another discipline; student numbers recruited to linguistics up 32% 1994–2001.

– 2001 workshop: 645 programmes with linguistics, of which only 19 are single honours and over 200 were linguistics with one or more MFL.

– Linguistics mostly taught by isolated staff outside linguistics departments to students following programmes other than single-honours linguistics.

– MFL students like linguistics.

5. Linguistics and MFL students (Rowlett 2002)

What's specifically good about linguistics for MFL students?

– A principled approach to understanding how languages work: hypothesis, testing, revision.

– Awareness of linguistic structure.

– A sociolinguistic framework within which to understand variation.

– Skills in dictionary use.

– Confidence in handling syntactic structure sufficiently well to go on to careers in language teaching. Familiarity with presenting syntactic structure for others.

– Linguistic awareness of variation, register and texttype.

– Pragmatic sensitivity to the purposes of communicative acts, awareness that communication can sometimes fail: especially useful in the context of SLA.

– Appreciation of linguistic structure of English (NB the *English grammar for students of . . .* series).

– Classificatory framework within which to identify phonetic/phonological differences between English and the MFL(s).

– Appreciation that languages vary in some unexpected ways and ability to apply that sensitivity to SLA.

– General framework within which to conceptualise their acquisition of an L2.

– Appreciation that there isn't always a single right answer.

What's specifically good about MFL students for linguistics?

– MFL students are interested in languages, likely to familiar with some aspects of linguistics and to do well in linguistics.

– MFL students have spent time abroad, and have experience of their MFL in real contexts.

– MFL students have an inherent motivation for understanding how languages work.

– MFL students have been made explicitly aware — albeit possibly in a very informal way — of how a language works.

– MFL students' own performance/competence in MFLs can be used as a source for data sets to be used for their linguistic work: linguistics thus has an immediate relevance.

– MFL students are at an immediate advantage when it comes to linguistic project work since they have access to more than one language.
– MFL students have already had their linguistic horizons and sensitivities opened up and are ideal for courses which take them even further.

A continuum (Treffers-Daller 2003)*:*
a. Linguistics with an IWLP
b. Major linguistics with minor MFL
c. Joint linguistics and MFL
d. Major MFL with minor linguistics
e. MFL with options, including linguistics

Considerations:
– Linguistics that complements/supports MFL study, rather than linguistics for its own sake.
– Linguistics courses may be optional, especially after the first year; an appropriately designed first-year linguistics course may be compulsory.
– Vocational language programmes may offer applied, rather than pure, linguistics courses.
– Sociolinguistics courses can exploit the year abroad fully, with additional possibilities for double-language students going to two different countries.
– MFL students doing TEFL during their year abroad can be prepared for this with suitable applied linguistics courses.
– Linguistics courses can exploit students' own SLA.
– Modularisation: making modules fit everyone. Possible? Solution via module content or module selection?

6. Linguistics and MFL at Salford
Three programmes:
b. one MFL (40 credits per year) and 'double' linguistics (80 credits per year);
d. two MFLs (2 x 40 credits per year) and 'single' linguistics (40 credits per year);
e. two general MFL programmes: one or two MFLs and 'related studies' with free range of options in linguistics.
Level 1
– all students follow English grammar (Börjars and Burridge 2000) and Investigating language (Cook 1997) in sem 1; followed by Introduction to phonetics and phonology (Carr 1999) and Morphology and syntax (Tallerman 1998) in sem 2.
– 'double' linguistics students are, in addition, forced to follow an introductory module in an 'exotic' language from the IWLP, either Japanese of Chinese.
– the non-specialists are obliged to take English grammar, only.
Level 2
– all students follow Language, meaning and mind (innateness, Genie, Nicaraguan Sign Language, structure dependence, U-shaped language learning, predicate logic) and Topics in sociolinguistics (language variation, bi- and multilingualism).
– 'double' students also follow Language and communication (an introduction to pragmatic theory) and Introduction to language change.
– the non-specialists follow any or none of these courses.
Level 3
– all students follow Syntactic theory (Radford 2004) and write a 20-credit dissertation.
– 'double' students follow Topics in psycholinguistics (acquisition, bi- and multilingual processing) and Understanding discourse.
– the non-specialists follow any or none of these courses.

New developments
Level-1 linguistics courses offered within BA English literature;
Linguistics courses at all levels offered within BA English literature with English language and new BA English language and linguistics.

Conclusion
– Linguistics is increasingly popular.
– MFL and linguistics go well together.
– Linguistics provision needs to be tailored to the needs of the students following the courses: one size does not fit all.

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