

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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NEWSLETTER

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## EDITORIAL

Recent events in the Middle East have demonstrated once again the vulnerability of teachers of English overseas. Many BAAL members practise applied linguistics primarily through teaching, advising and designing syllabuses and materials for the enormous, but volatile EFL market outside Europe. Their value in educational and commercial terms is tacitly admitted by the support which is offered for such teachers in initial training courses, as well as M.A. and higher level work, at universities in Britain. Yet it is paradoxical that as teachers emerge more and more professionally committed to a high level of expertise in their work, the conditions under which they are expected to operate are increasingly unsatisfactory.

In matters such as pension rights, transfer of incremental status, salary levels, degree of professional training expected for responsible posts, and conditions for recruitment, teachers overseas suffer in comparison with those working at home. The argument that they do not have to work overseas may have some relevance to teachers of other subjects, but teachers of EFL are a quite separate category: they have been trained specifically to do that, primarily because both the English-speaking and the non-English-speaking worlds need - and sometimes need desperately - acquaintance with each other through English. But, if a government falls, such teachers must compete, on unequal terms in an educational system exclusively weighted towards people who stay at home and occasionally get seconded overseas with all privileges intact.

This problem is not of course directly BAAL's problem, but it is one which affects many BAAL members both directly and indirectly. Just as we have an interest as an association in high standards of professional service in fields relating to applied linguistics, so we have an interest in just conditions of service to prevent the laws of the market-place undermining such standards. At the moment too many people are being bought cheap and sold expensive.

## In defence of creative writing: an essay in interpretation

In the 400 section of our library, by a historical accident, the linguistics books and the English methodology books are all mixed up: "Readings in Applied Transformational Grammar" and "Generative Phonology" jostle "The Joy of Writing" and "The Creative Experiment". The different vibrations set up by the titles are but a faint reflection of the differences in theories, experience and intentions of the two kinds of books.

This gap was reflected in the B.A.A.L. seminar on mother tongue teaching at North Worcester College in July. Few applied linguists seem to have any substantial experience of actual classroom teaching of English in English schools. And without personal experience the textbooks on, for instance, creative writing are pretty meaningless, since they leave huge theoretical and technical gaps to be filled in by the experienced teacher's intuitive knowledge of his task.

On the other hand, I seem to be one of only a handful of experienced mother tongue ("English") teachers who has any training in linguistics. This article is an attempt to define what actually goes on in creative writing classes in terms the applied linguist is familiar with. I shall argue that creative writing has a validity which its practitioners sense intuitively and which can be expressed in terms of linguistic theory.

One of the premises of the creative writing books is so obvious that it doesn't occur to anyone to say it: schools exist to teach children to read and write. Illiterate societies don't have schools. It is the major task of the primary school teacher and the English teacher in the secondary school to train children in these skills. Creative writing is one approach to teaching children to become fluent, accurate and confident in writing.

Of course, in learning to use the written language, one gets more than a useful craft which secretaries need so that their bosses shan't have the trouble of learning to spell. Writing is a primary instrument of learning itself, which changes our consciousness in ways which, as far as I know, have not been systematically examined - and is too large a matter to go into now.

The early practitioners of creative writing (in the fifties) were reacting against the traditional belief that writing is best taught by being broken down into sub-skills, each of which is learnt separately through exercises (letter-formation, spelling, punctuation, paragraph structure etc.). Only when these are mastered may the learner put the sub-skills together and write a continuous and coherent piece of prose. However, most children left school (at 14) before this desirable goal was achieved. Teachers' experience, as well as research, suggested that skills learned in exercises were not rapidly transferred to the act of writing as a meaningful activity.

This state of affairs should be familiar to applied linguists, since it is parallel to the disappointments in the results of the audio-lingual approach to foreign language teaching twenty years later. The old English teacher and the audio-lingual foreign language teacher believed in breaking down the whole task into small manageable components so that the learner did not make mistakes but formed correct habits by constant practice. He was not encouraged to express what he meant until the necessary tools were polished and under perfect control. The results were not dissimilar: the English child could perform well in exercises but couldn't write, the foreign language learner could repeat what he had learned but couldn't speak.

Creative writing starts from the premise that one learns to write by writing. However, writing, unlike talking, is not a natural activity. Outside school few children feel any need to communicate through the written word. Hence, the teacher must set up a situation in which the children are motivated to write - and to write a lot. And if they do they will make mistakes - of spelling and punctuation, in particular. Ideally, these are corrected by the teacher in a selective individualised way appropriate to the child's stage of development. Some errors are developmental and correct themselves (e.g. the "and then ....and then .... and then" stage of story-writing).

The urge to communicate comes from having something to say, preferably something which the interlocutor does not know. What can the child write for the teacher that he does not already know? The nature of writing makes it possible to express a personal point of view and personal experience - in which we are all equal. Consequently, much creative writing is a record of personal experience.

The forms of discourse accessible to the young child are limited - the diary, the autobiography, the story, the poem, the recording of experiments. Of these only the story and the poem are widely available in written models - hence, among other reasons, the emphasis on literary forms.

Some teachers are enthusiastic about the "creative" aspect of creative writing. Since writing, unlike talking, is entirely under the control of the writer and since some children are talented in handling words, as some are talented in handling paint or clay, some children's writing is worth reading as a minor art form. (The early books were misleadingly full of such pieces.) Most children most of the time do well if they communicate through writing bits of their own experiences and fantasies to their teacher and class-mates. Essentially, creative writing has become the way in which children get the extensive practice in the craft of writing, which at a later stage can be turned to other modes of discourse (principally, the writing of exam papers - that, let us be honest, is the target language.)

Again, the theory implicit in creative writing is familiar to applied linguists. If the starting-point is the spoken native language and the target the adult written language, the pieces of writing along the way are examples of successive interlanguages. They are susceptible to error analysis, so that the rules by which the interlanguage is generated can be ascertained. (1) Teachers of creative writing have long accepted that one learns a language by feeling the need to communicate meaningfully in that language, and have ordered the school situation so that the need is felt. They accept too that making errors is a necessary part of the learning process, which with skilful teaching and willing learning are successively replaced by acceptable target forms. Of course, many children leave school (at 16 now) with only an interlanguage capacity in writing.

This unsatisfactory state of affairs, as John Pearce indicated in the final session of the B.A.A.L. seminar, is the chief challenge in our schools. Inadequacy in writing is much more widespread in school and society than the widely publicised inadequacy in reading.

Linguists should have something to offer here. The situation in reading is already being transformed by the work of psycho-linguists (mediated to the teacher largely through the Open University). There is an equal need for linguistic insights into writing. For example, I do not know of a longitudinal analysis of children's writing except the one I have started myself. Also it is high time that one of us went through the old books of exercises to see which are linguistically valuable and at what stage. For example, one held up for ridicule in the Bullock Report ("Turn into the feminine: 'Mr. Parker's father-in-law was a bus-conductor'") is certainly pretty devoid of meaning but it does train awareness of the morpheme structure which is the basis of spelling.

There are many very bright and very dedicated teachers of English at both primary and secondary levels who are only too willing to learn how to do their job better. They can be helped by linguists who know what that job is on the ground. This article is an attempt to interpret the language of the English teacher to the linguist. I hope to rewrite it in an attempt to interpret the language of the linguist to the English teacher.

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NOTE:

1. S. Pit Corder: "Error Analysis" in "The Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics", Volume 3, O.U.P., 1974, pp. 131 - 133.

## BOOK REVIEW

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES ed. Ronald Mackay & Alan Mountford

Applied Linguistics and Language Study Series Longman 1978 227pp PB £2.50

Several years ago, ESPMENA<sup>1</sup> was regretting that there was 'still no book which attempts to give an overview of the discipline [of ESP] or relate it to other branches of language teaching'. It was natural to hope that this new addition to Longman's Applied Linguistics and Language Study series might remove the omission, which was only partially repaired by the publication in 1977 of the identically-titled volume edited by Susan Holden.<sup>2</sup>

The volume under consideration consists of papers by several hands, making it predictably difficult to review adequately or fairly. The papers are grouped into three parts linked by editorial comment. The first of these, The Problem Surveyed, is evidently intended to provide the sought-for overview of the topic, as well as to 'introduce the reader to particular theoretical and practical issues'. Part Two, Approaches to ESP Textbook Design, includes chapters by Swales (Writing Scientific English<sup>3</sup>), Bates (Nucleus<sup>4</sup>) and Allen and Widdowson (the Focus series<sup>5</sup>) describing how these materials were developed and the principles on which each is based. The paper by Allen and Widdowson also lucidly and persuasively outlines what can be considered the theory underlying all the papers in the collection, that is, the view of language which emphasizes its communicative function rather than its structured organization, and - stemming from this - focuses attention on the textual and discoursal features of language in use. The distinction between Part two and Part Three is blurred, although the intention is that the Part Three papers should relate to more specific teaching situations; certainly they tend to include more, and more extended, examples of the materials described. Chapter 10 (Candlin, Kirkwood and Moore) includes analyses of the process of course design, and of the component skills needed for studying in English, the theoretical interest of which ought perhaps to have suggested grouping it together with the Allen and Widdowson paper.

With papers by these and other distinguished practitioners, the book could hardly fail to contain much that is of interest, and if some of the contributions have been available for some time in similar or identical form, we do not complain: not all readers will have easy access to the journals, conference reports etc. where earlier accounts appeared. Presumably the anticipated readership will be principally ESP teachers and, particularly, materials writers. They will be heartened by the evidence throughout of the motivating effect, upon not only the student but also such people as themselves, when English assumes the status of an auxiliary language rather than a mere subject of study: ESP is displayed not as the tedious and difficult discipline which some have considered it, but as an invigorating and innovative one, however demanding.

The editors, however, naturally stress the motivating effects upon the learner rather than the teacher and point out that the essential characteristic of ESP is the priority it assigns to a detailed specification of the learner's needs, together with the collection and analysis of data illustrating the way language is used for the specific purposes in view. Earlier views of ESP as concerned primarily with specialized registers, or specialized lexis, are rejected, along with the notion that the language used for a special purpose is in any definable way a special language. The structure-based approach to language teaching is also rejected in favour of some form of notionally or functionally based syllabus, stressing the communicative nature of language. These views of the editors inform all the papers in the collection; thus a coherent orientation emerges. It is an orientation that may be felt to underlie all good language teaching, making it difficult to define the distinction between ESP and English teaching of other kinds; but this is an issue not raised in the book, rather disappointingly.

A collection of this kind should not, perhaps, be expected to break new ground, especially in view of the time-lag associated with the process of publication. But how far does it supply the need expressed by ESPMENA? It is always unfair to criticize a work for not being what it does not set out to be; yet in this case

the title raises expectations of a wide-ranging survey which are, in the event, not fulfilled. Chapter 1 provides a fair indication of what is to follow: it does introduce the reader to many of the key ideas now current in ESP, but it also shares the limitations of the book as a whole (to be discussed below) and indeed soon explicitly limits itself to EST (English for Science and Technology) alone, in this respect being somewhat narrower than the total collection. The editors are of course entitled to restrict their coverage as they choose, but it would have been helpful if they had indicated their choice by a narrower, less misleading, title. Their intentions are nowhere made explicit, however, and internal evidence suggests that the book may have shaped itself rather than been consciously shaped.

Since variety is the major strength of such a collection of papers, it is the more regrettable that its advantages were not more thoroughly exploited. The present selection represents a fairly narrow range of interests: all the papers deal with EAP (English for Academic Purposes - i.e. as a study tool), and all deal with the tertiary level. Only four British universities, and no other types of institution, are represented; the private sector is completely ignored. More seriously, perhaps, only two papers (Bates, Swales) arise directly from overseas teaching. This exclusion (together no doubt with the time-lag referred to above) results in the unfortunate omission of any reference to the numerous major ESP projects overseas (e.g. KAAU,<sup>6</sup> UMESPP,<sup>7</sup> Los Andes<sup>8</sup>). Of course there is justice in the view that similar principles underlie ESP of any kind, but there are also distinctions - especially between teaching in Britain and teaching overseas - which might be thought to merit consideration.

Hence the book does not make the most of its collective structure; yet at the same time, the disadvantages of such a collection are also apparent: the standard is uneven, there is duplication (e.g. between chapters 1 and 4) and, more seriously, there are omissions and imbalances. One would have liked to see EOP (English for Occupational Purposes, as exemplified e.g. in Jupp and Hodlin<sup>9</sup> or some of the ELTDU<sup>10</sup> materials) treated and differentiated from EAP, if the



distinction can be upheld; but it is referred to only fleetingly. One would have welcomed discussion of the viability of ESP programmes below the tertiary level, and even with children or beginners (e.g. the Singapore Primary Project<sup>11</sup> or the materials prepared for Malaysian science secondary schools<sup>12</sup>), but ESP is treated as if it were concerned with adult faux débutants almost by definition rather than merely by frequent force of circumstance. This may be a valid judgement, but it is not self-evident and deserves discussion, together with the whole issue of the level of language prerequisite to ESP and the place, if any, and nature of remedial language teaching in an ESP course (which seems to raise important philosophical as well as practical questions).

The distinction between means and ends also needs further reflection; in particular, we ought to find out whether the learner's need for a particular skill - typically in ESP the skill of functional reading - implies that instruction should be confined to that skill alone. This controversial issue is raised by Swales in relation to his own materials, but there is no general discussion or documentation of research findings (if any), despite its central importance.

Moreover, the whole question of establishing what the learner needs is treated only patchily. It is dealt with briefly by a number of contributors, but more fully only in the oddly-conceived chapter 2. Here two versions of a sample questionnaire are offered. (A third questionnaire has nothing to do with establishing the needs of one's own students, despite its inclusion in this chapter). Such a questionnaire, which seeks to establish the views of (in this case) teachers and students about the latter's language needs, is a useful preliminary but represents only the first step in an investigation of requirements, even if one does not pursue the procedures advocated by John Munby.<sup>13</sup> There is little mention anywhere (none in chapter 2) of the rigorous on-site investigation and collection of language in use which has been considered necessary by many practitioners (including some of the present contributors<sup>14</sup>), let alone any description or discussion of it.

Nor is there adequate guidance on how to analyse target texts (written or spoken) once these have been obtained, although here there is certainly fuller information. Most contributors stress the need for students to learn to cope with the interactional and discoursal features of extended texts; but only Candlin et al give much indication of how a materials writer should approach a text with this aim in mind (p. 192 ff.) and they explicitly point out that our knowledge in this field remains inchoate. Others (notably the editors in chapters 1 and 7) by not indicating the problems may be thought to imply that there are none. While a book of this kind is not the place for an account of the analysis of either discourse or verbal interaction (even if one were available), a rehearsal of the topic and the research problems involved would have been welcome. As it stands, the book offers only occasional uncoordinated glimpses, mainly in Part Two, of what happens between the formulation of a theoretical framework and the production of classroom materials.

Perhaps this is in essence an inscrutable area; it is certainly one that needs attention, as can be seen from the gap between intention and execution revealed in some of the sample syllabuses and the materials which realize them. Is it simply that most materials intended for the classroom appear in print as not merely skeletal but lifeless, needing to be fleshed out and endowed with vitality by the interpretation of a teacher and the participation of students? Or is there here a matter of greater concern, namely that the theory of ESP has run ahead of the capacity of its classroom methodology?

The editors themselves do not voice doubts in this connection - indeed they allow themselves to make claims for ESP which they do not substantiate, and which do not go well with the ability and experience apparent in other parts of their presentation. But the need for an improved methodology has not escaped some of the contributors to this volume: Straker-Cook (p. 102) explicitly refers to it, and similar doubts are hinted at in other papers. Some who have tussled to good effect with the problem of deciding exactly what the learner

must be able to do, if he is to use English successfully, have had less success in devising materials to achieve their purpose - or so one would guess: it is of course both rash and unjust to make such a comment without having seen the materials in use.

Perhaps it is in the nature of language teaching that new approaches and methods need to be demonstrated rather than described. Nevertheless, the materials offered as examples in this book offer much food for uneasy thought; a couple of illustrations (chosen unfairly at random) must suffice. First, the dialogues in chapter 6 do not seem distinguishably better than many others to be found in published materials (though it is difficult to be sure exactly what claims their author is making for them - see p. 107). However, more critical than the quality of the dialogues is the question of how far it is reasonable to try to develop a learner's communicative competence by getting him to convey other people's words. this central issue of language teaching is tackled neither in chapter 6 nor elsewhere.

A similar issue - perhaps the same one - underlies this reader's doubts about the lists of 'suggested phrases' for use in various stages of argument which are given in chapter 10. The students are expected to use these phrases in their own performance. Such a procedure seems sterile, with an obvious danger that the student will devote more attention to bringing in the phrases than to improving his skill in argument. One suspects that the real use of the terms will continue to elude him for as long as they are studied for their own sake rather than arising naturally from a strongly-felt need. But it is arguable that teaching a language does involve attention to language items for their own sake; and how can a term arise at need if it is not known? The paradox is at the heart of the functional approach to language teaching: how do you teach a learner to function in a language without imposing a persona? How do you give him the capacity to generalize without resorting to the arid drills of the structural approach or the intellectualizing of the grammarian?

The need to develop the ability to communicate is unquestionable, but it does not appear that a satisfactory methodology has yet been devised, or at any rate put on paper, from the evidence of this book.

It is easy to criticize (as the book itself demonstrates, sometimes unfairly) and there is a lot of interesting and ingenious teaching material in these papers; the fact that most of it is analytical - exercising the receptive rather than the productive ability - is no doubt partly due to the fact that in most ESP courses the establishing of this ability is the more important. But it is sad that, in a book containing so much reference to the desirability of learner-centred and problem-solving approaches, there is so little description or exemplification of them. And it is disturbing to feel that the theoretical tail is sometimes in danger of wagging the pedagogical dog, a fear expressed with bleak honesty by Candlin et al (p. 203): 'We are perhaps in danger of producing a course for an audience which does not exist, or if it did, for an audience who would not require this type of course'.

There is a final criticism not of substance but of presentation, relating to the preparation of the papers for publication. A number of them include material (syllabuses, exercises etc.) produced for a different purpose originally; this must often have presented tedious editorial problems of reconciliation between various parts, numbering and so on. Not all these problems have been satisfactorily resolved. The copy-editing, too, has been unusually careless, with many errors uncorrected and several cases of textual obscurity presumably caused by omissions (e.g. p. 129, second complete paragraph). Such deficiencies are irritating, especially to a reader accustomed, as no doubt many will be, to deprecate similar failings in students. If only one could believe that the frequent examples of clumsy expression or downright grammatical error could also be ascribed to the copy-editors!

But it would be unjust to the contributors to end on such a negative note. However much one may regret their choice of title, the editors have done us a

service in bringing together these varied approaches to a similar problem. One of the most valuable features is the collecting of various attempts at communicative course design; if the results are uneven, all contain much that is of interest and the writers deserve our gratitude for making available work that is in some cases not at the final stage of development. The details of syllabuses and the many examples of exercises will provide a quarry for future materials writers. However, it is Part Two, together with chapter 10 of Part Three, which are particularly stimulating, giving an insight both fascinating and useful into the constraints and compromises, as well as the procedures and choices, involved in the preparation of a course. The unassuming frankness of these contributions is as sympathetic as their intellectual calibre is impressive.

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## SHORT REVIEW

C.V. James (ed.) The Older Mother Tongues of the United Kingdom. Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, 1978

As the British become increasingly aware of themselves as a multilingual society, mainly through the impact of immigrant groups, their awareness of the older alternatives to English ought to become more sensitive. Accessible information is not easy to come by, and this recent publication of CILT is greatly to be welcomed. The two main chapters concentrate on Welsh and Scottish Gaelic, with a brief note being provided on Irish. Information is provided on the history, the role in education and the community, and the distribution of speakers of the two main languages, together with discussion of a number of contemporary problems in the maintenance and encouragement of the two. A small book, but one to be recommended to all who are more ignorant than they should be.

CJB

## THE NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE SEMINAR

Linguistics and the teaching of language in schools, - an account of the seminar held under the auspices of the British Association for Applied Linguistics and the Linguistics Association of Great Britain at North Worcestershire College, Bromsgrove, from 8th to 10th July 1970.

"More of a Clapham Junction than a Waterloo" - was one of the judgments made of this seminar, and this account, with its stress on what went before and what is to follow, reflects this. This was the first joint seminar of BAAL and LAGB, in itself an important conjuncture, and it was to be expected that differences in approach would be evident. In the event the anticipated differences proved to be of less significance than a community of outlook which led to the decision to recommend to the sponsoring organizations that a steering committee should be set up to consider the question further and to organize a more widely based seminar in due course.

### Background

In some cases the origins of a seminar are obvious or self-evident and the results can be presented in their own obvious context. The North Worcestershire seminar does not fall into this category, though it can in a sense be seen as a sequel to Languages for Life held at La Sainte Union College in 1976 and hence sequential to if not consequent on the Bullock Report. But it drew also on a number of other sources outside the realm of English and mother-tongue teaching which came together at the time of the Annual Meeting of the British Association for Applied Linguistics at the University of Essex in September 1977.

The BAAL meeting was immediately preceded by a meeting of AILA, the international applied linguistics association, and some members from overseas stayed on for the BAAL meeting. Professor Pit Corder, a former Chairman of BAAL gave a paper on the first day of the meeting in which he drew attention to the crisis of modern language teaching in schools, referring to the relative reduction in numbers taking external examinations, and particularly to the actual decline in numbers taking languages other than French or German. He contrasted this picture with the vast increase in the demand for languages beyond school, and particularly to the striking success of crash courses in languages for special purposes. He also drew attention to the failure of school foreign language teaching to produce speakers of foreign languages, and suggested that in the future it might be more beneficial for pupils to learn something of the structure of language rather than to fail to learn a particular language. An understanding of the structure of language would be far more effective in preparing pupils for any future need to acquire a specific language.

On the last day of the meeting two further papers were delivered which took Professor Pit Corder's argument a stage further. In the first of these Tony Tinkel, who teaches modern languages in a secondary school, suggested the introduction of a course in theoretical linguistics at Sixth form level. In the other, Jean Ure, of Edinburgh University, suggested that there was a need for an alternative to the English Language examination. She pointed out that our system of examinations was still based on assumptions that denied that we now live in a plurilingual society. She suggested that a new A level syllabus might be based on language and linguistic diversity. She said that this would enable pupils whose background was plurilingual to use their experience and knowledge, whereas the present system placed them at a severe disadvantage.

This paper was followed by enthusiastic debate which continued during and after lunch. As chairman of the final session I had suggested that it might properly lead to a seminar. During these discussions the possibilities of such a seminar were pursued, among the suggestions being one of an international seminar centring on the requirements of a plurilingual society, the relationship of theoretical linguistics to school language courses, and the needs of children from non-anglophone homes in England.

In planning the seminar an early need was to define its area of concern. Two early decisions were made. The first was that the time had not yet arrived for an international seminar on linguistics and plurilingualism, though it was thought that this possibility should be borne in mind when the detailed plans for the seminar were made. The second decision was to organize the seminar jointly with the Linguistics Association of Great Britain (LAGB). Dr Richard Hudson of University College, London was appointed as the LAGB's liaison with BAAL's organizer, and it was agreed that an equal number of places at the seminar should be reserved for members of the sponsoring organizations.

It was decided that the seminar should be held at North Worcestershire College, Bromsgrove, on the 8th, 9th and 10th July, immediately following the first meeting of the National Congress of Languages in Education at Durham, and that Professor John Sinclair should be asked to open the seminar with an account of the proceedings of the Congress. The remainder of the time would be divided between the discussion of relevant papers and an attempt to draw up syllabuses for language courses in schools. Two problems emerged: first, the short time available during the seminar; second the need for contact between the working groups to ensure some relationship between their lines of thought. For each group a convenor was to be appointed, who should draw up suggestions which could form the basis of discussion; these papers were to be circulated in advance. The second problem would be met by the insertion of plenary sessions at which progress reports could be given.

Four areas were delineated for the working groups:

- (a) Language in the Primary School, for which John Mountford agreed to produce materials;
- (b) A CSE syllabus for a plurilingual society, for which Jean Ure would produce materials;
- (c) A language course for O level, for which Chris Brumfit, of University of London Institute of Education would produce a draft;
- (d) An English Language course at A level, which Michael Hadley and Roy Lewis, both of North Worcestershire College, would produce a syllabus.

In addition to these papers, participants received copies of the new University of London GCE A level paper, *Varieties of English*, and of Tony Tinkel's *Rationale of his experiment in the teaching of a systematic language study course to Sixth Form pupils*.



### The seminar

The opening contribution to the seminar was by Professor John Sinclair who spoke about the National Congress for Languages in Education, which he had attended immediately prior to the seminar. The proceedings, he reported, had been dominated by the modern language interest.

On the second day Tony Tinkel spoke of the background to his experiment in teaching linguistics in four secondary schools. The experimental teaching had been taking place during the summer term, and it was too early to evaluate it. The next speaker was Peter Strevens, who drew attention to the need for a properly thought out programme of language study in teacher training. On the third morning Jean Ure spoke about the origin of her proposals, and drew attention to the value of language study for children coming from a bilingual or bidialectal background. Professor David Reibel spoke about his experiments in open-ended teaching informed by a knowledge of linguistics.

In discussion two approaches were apparent: the first was the possibility of introducing linguistics as an examinable subject; the second, the contribution that could be made by the application of linguistics to teaching the mother tongue, especially in relation to literacy. It was significant that members of the seminar no longer saw it as being politic to insinuate linguistics into the curriculum under other guises, and from this developed one of the major themes: the importance of introducing linguistics into the training of teachers, and in particular the need for an orientation towards linguistics in in-service training.

Membership of the seminar had covered a wide spectrum: school teachers, teachers of modern languages, teachers of English as a foreign or second language, publishers, applied and pure linguists. It could not be expected that forty eight hours of discussion would resolve the many differences of approach. Yet in the final plenary session, chaired by Mike Riddle, the view that the seminar had been useful and productive emerged strongly. This view recognized that the contact established by the seminar needed to be maintained, and that further seminars should be organized. Further it was recognized that progress could be achieved only if local initiatives could be encouraged and fostered. With these two aims in mind it was agreed that a Language Steering Committee should be set up by BAAL and LAGB, with the participation of the National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE) and of the Department of Education and Science. This committee should have power to co-opt further members.

The two sponsoring organizations having agreed to this recommendation, and NATE and the Department of Education and Science having indicated their wish to participate, the Steering Committee held its first meeting on 17th November 1978. Mike Riddle of Middlesex Polytechnic, representing LAGB, was elected Chairman, and John Rudd of North Worcestershire College, representing BAAL, was elected Secretary.

# NATIONAL CONGRESS ON LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION

First Assembly, Durham 3-6 July 1978

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## Origins and aims of the Congress and Assembly

The National Congress on Languages in Education originated in 1974 from an agreement between representatives of a number of associations and organisations concerned with languages at all levels of education in Britain to establish a national forum for discussion and machinery for studying and reporting on problems of common concern. It was envisaged that the work of the Congress should be continuous, carried on primarily by means of expert working parties which would be asked to study and report on particular problems. Their findings would be presented to a biennial representative Assembly, which in its turn would then identify subjects for new working parties leading up to the next Assembly.

In 1976, two working parties were established to report to the first assembly in 1978. One under the chairmanship of Professor E W Hawkins was to study

The priorities to be accorded to non-native languages at all levels of education in Britain;

another, under the chairmanship of Professor A Spicer would study

The relationship between the acquisition/teaching of the mother tongue and the learning/teaching of other languages.

Each working party had the assistance of representatives of associations and organisations supporting the Congress and finally produced a number of papers for presentation at the first assembly. Administrative and secretarial support for the Congress has hitherto been provided by the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research and it is intended that most of these papers will be published by CILT in the near future.

## PROCEEDINGS AT DURHAM

The first assembly of NCLE at the University of Durham included 83 participants, representing 33 associations and organisations, as well as HMI and other observers. At a series of plenary sessions the following subjects were discussed: the role of English as a mother tongue in secondary schools; the role of mother-tongues other than English; the role of modern foreign languages; the relationship between first and second language acquisition; the assessment of mother-tongue and foreign language teaching; the general linguistic education of children; the implications for higher education and teacher-training.

The assembly was addressed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science on 5 July.

### Continuation of the Congress

Following recommendations made by the associations represented, a standing committee, to be responsible for continuing the organisation of the Congress was elected by the Assembly:

Chairman: J A Robinson  
J M C Davidson  
W Grauberg  
B D Green  
A W Hornsey

D Nott  
D W H Sharp  
A Smalley  
J L M Trim  
Professor A Wilkinson

This committee will have power to co-opt other members to ensure suitable regional representation.

The following arrangements for the next two years were agreed:

- (a) Selected papers and the resolutions of the First Assembly will be published by CILT.
- (b) The resolutions will be followed up by the new Standing Committee which will bring them to the notice of appropriate authorities.
- (c) Membership of NCLE will be 'institutional' and subject to approval by the Standing Committee.
- (d) The Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research will continue to provide the secretariat for the Congress and administrative support for those working parties whose subjects are within CILT's terms of reference.
- (e) The next Assembly will be held in July 1980.
- (f) The function of the Assembly will be to receive reports etc. from working parties and decide on future action.
- (g) Working parties will be directed to study such problems as can be reported on within 18 months (by January 1980). Their reports, made in the first place to the Standing Committee, will then be distributed to constituent associations and organisations by March 1980, who can then brief their representatives to the Assembly.
- (h) The functions of the next Assembly will be
  - (i) to provide 'keynote' addresses;
  - (ii) to report on the implementation of previous recommendations (arising from the earlier assembly);
  - (iii) to receive reports and recommendations from the Standing Committee presenting the findings of working parties;
  - (iv) to arrange for discussion of possible future projects for working parties;
  - (v) to take decisions for future action.

In addition to those 'business' functions, a social programme will be provided.

#### Proposals for future working parties

The following subjects were discussed and recommended to the new Standing Committee as suitable for new working parties:

- (a) The assessment of performance in modern languages in a context of aims, objectives and motivation in secondary and tertiary education. Special attention could be given to the 16-19 age group.
- (b) The in-service training of language teachers (including teachers of mother tongues) and its relationship to the probationary year. Provision for teachers of less commonly taught languages should be included.
- (c) 'Language policies' in schools with special reference to cooperation between teachers of foreign languages and teachers of English.
- (d) The application of experience and knowledge gained in teaching English as a second/foreign language (overseas) to assist teaching both English and foreign languages in Britain.
- (e) The role of foreign languages in relation to industry and commerce. Precise areas of work to be defined in relation to resources available and after a preliminary study of priorities.

## RESOLUTIONS BY THE ASSEMBLY

The following statement was approved by the Assembly:

Preamble

All Resolutions are made in the light of the continuing concern of the Congress and its Assembly with the teaching and learning of both mother-tongues and foreign languages, and the desirability of developing closer working relations between teachers of English as a mother tongue, of English as a foreign languages, and of all other modern foreign languages. Recommendations are presented under three headings.

1. Languages in the curriculum

Within the framework of the curriculum, we recommend that:

- 1.1 A policy of diversification of foreign language provision should be pursued at all levels with the aim of increasing the proportion of students studying languages other than French.
- 1.2 The experience of learning one foreign language should form part of the core curriculum for pupils 11-14 and the opportunity to study another should be generally made available in secondary schools.
- 1.3 In view of the success often achieved in teaching a foreign language to pupils below 11 years, opportunities should be provided for schools to continue to gain experience of an early start: it is stressed that this requires well qualified teachers, suitable materials and effective arrangements for continuity.
- 1.4 Subsidiary or ancillary language study at post 16 level should regularly be provided for in schools, and in tertiary or further education in courses leading to BEC and TEC awards.
- 1.5 Options other than literary studies should be provided for in syllabuses at GCE 'A' level or its equivalent.
- 1.6 The further development of combined degree courses in which a foreign language is a major component throughout should be encouraged.
- 1.7 All schools should be encouraged to pursue an overall policy for language development, embracing the use of English (or any other language) used as a medium throughout the curriculum as well as the study of foreign languages (where applicable).
- 1.8 The expansion of foreign language teaching advocated by this Assembly should not be permitted to prejudice the teaching of Welsh or Gaelic as a first or second language where this is appropriate.

2. Teacher education and training

We consider that improvement of certain aspects of initial and in-service training must have high priority and recommend that:

- 2.1 Sufficient places in initial training courses should be provided to meet the increasing demand for teachers of modern languages and in particular to ensure a supply of teachers for languages other than French.

- 2.2 Local authority and professional associations of teachers and lecturers should be urged to negotiate so that, within the normal conditions of service, in-service training will be required as a matter of right and as a regular commitment, at times outside as well as within the pupils' or students' normal day or academic year; such commitment should be used by both employing authorities and teachers to ensure that regular periods of residence abroad form an integral and essential part of in-service training.
- 2.3 The conditions of service of heads of departments in schools should specify their responsibility for providing in-service training within their own departments; this implies that they themselves may require in-service training and a modified normal teaching load to enable them to fulfil the task.

3. Languages in employment

The place of modern languages in the curriculum should be firmly based on their contribution to a balanced education, but we urge that their value in future employment be more widely recognised. We therefore recommend that:

- 3.1 Employers should recognise and publicise the value of foreign language skills as additional qualifications for a growing range of occupations at craft and technician as well as executive and managerial levels.
- 3.2 Careers advisers should be fully informed of the advantages of possessing foreign language skills when associated with other qualifications and be reminded of the continuing demand for language teachers.
- 3.3 Education authorities and institutions should encourage and support employers in providing opportunities for employees to learn languages.

Professor S Pit Corder, Chairman

George Perren, Secretary NCLE

### Report of the Fifth LACUS Forum

The Fifth Forum of the Linguistics Association of Canada and the United States took place from 9-13 August 1978 at the State University of New York at Buffalo. It was immediately preceded at the same venue by a Symposium on Synchrony and Diachrony in Linguistics.

Several of the six invited papers at the Symposium were unsatisfactory in presentation and in persuasiveness of their argument. The most convincing were those of Henning Andersen ('Variation as a Factor of Change and Stability') and Bernard Comrie ('Marked' Syntactic Relations: Synchrony and Diachrony').

Now in its fifth year, the LACUS Forum is developing a character of its own. LACUS itself has a catholic membership, and there is a pleasant irenicism at the meetings. People from markedly different theoretical persuasions discussed the papers with animation, very rarely with acrimony. Of over 90 enrolled participants, there were fewer TG people than on my last visit in 1975; only one or two of the 56 papers given would claim a TG orientation. A fairly small minority present were SILers, so not surprisingly several of the papers were from a Tagmemic view point. The best represented school - though still a minority, as most people seemed overtly uncommitted - was the Stratificational. Sydney Lamb himself was there, together with Lockwood, Reich and Makkai (the Executive Director of LACUS). Of Systemicists there were none though Halliday received several (respectful) passing mentions.

The theoretical range was wide; the subjects of the papers even wider. We heard about the use of italics in Chapman's translation of Homer, about Algebraic perspectives on Phonological features, about Blissymbolics, and even about the ethnic variables of Wendishness in Texas. The three formal invited lectures concerned Logic and Semantics in a Linguistic framework (Rulon S. Wells), Discourse Analysis (Robert E. Longacre's 'Why we need a vertical revolution in Linguistics') and an impressive overview from Bloomfield onwards by this year's President, Kenneth Pike ('Linguistics: From There to Where?').

The American linguistic scene, on the basis of the papers I have heard, puts a commendable emphasis on substantiating arguments with evidence from a wide range of languages. Data papers were common; several seemed to make important general points (e.g. R. David Paul Zorc's 'Function Analysis: a Method of Quantifying Function Words for Comparing and Classifying Languages').

A personal discovery for me was how long Tagmemics has been working in Discourse Analysis, and how much work they have done in so many languages in this area. Also, I found the relations between the Tagmemic and Stratificational models are being actively probed, to test their compatibility. SIL member Ilah Fleming's paper ('Discourse from the Perspective of Four Strata') interestingly looked at Discourse Analysis from a Tagmemic-cum-Stratificational viewpoint.

In short, a FORUM in the best sense of the word. The next one is in Calgary, August 1979.

Roger H. Flavell

## NOTICES

MAIS JOURNAL - ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

The latest issue of MAIS Journal (Editor Chris Kennedy, University of Birmingham), devoted to English for Specific Purposes, is now available. Eleven articles on syllabus planning, course design, materials, methodology, testing, in ESP by contributors from the Sudan, Chile, Saudi Arabia, Mexico and the U.S.A. as well as from ESP units in Britain.

Please send cheques for £2.00 (including postage and packing), payable to MAIS, to Chris Kennedy, English Language research, University of Birmingham, P O Box 363, Birmingham, B15 2TT.

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C Vaughan James, formerly Deputy Director of the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT) has taken up an appointment as Director of the newly-created Pergamon Institute of English - a division of Pergamon Press Ltd.

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Professor Gerhard Nickel has written asking that BAAL should remind its members about the AILA working commission on Contrastive Linguistics. Circular letters and bibliographic materials can be had from the co-chairman, Professor Sajavaara (Department of English, University of Jyväskylä, SF-40100 Jyväskylä 10 Finland). Anybody who would like to join is welcome to do so.

New Journal

Oxford University Press will shortly be announcing the establishment of a new Journal, to be called APPLIED LINGUISTICS and to be published in association with AAAL and BAAL. The editors would be happy to consider manuscripts of articles in any area of applied linguistics, with preference to those that show the relation between theory and practice, by developing specific links between theoretical linguistic studies, educational research, and the planning or implementation of practical programmes. Four copies of the manuscript, which should follow the style of LANGUAGE, may be sent to any one of the three editors, as convenient. Their names and addresses are: J.P.B. Allen, Modern Language Centre, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Canada M5S 1V6; Bernard Spolsky, Department of Linguistics, The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131 U.S.A., H.G. Widdowson, Department of English as a Foreign Language, University of London, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL, United Kingdom.

BAAL has recently received the following letter:

Re: Job opportunity research project for linguists

Dear colleague,

Our University has funded a man-power study in the field of linguistics.  
The study will concentrate on the following:

- 1) a survey of current and prospective fields requiring full-fledged linguists or which would benefit from persons with a minor in linguistics,
- 2) an inquiry about the demands and perspectives of persons or institutions who employ or intend to employ linguists.

Our research relates to all kinds of linguistics excluding school-teaching and university-lecturing.

We intend to obtain our data by sending out questionnaires to people and institutions who can provide the information needed. Please, let us know, whether we could send you our questionnaire. If you know of other persons and/or institutions we might contact, we would appreciate your bringing them to our attention. We will be glad to provide more details about our study, either by mail or by phone. Needless to say that all information we obtain will be used for the purposes of our study exclusively.

Thank you very much.

address:

University of Bielefeld  
Faculty of Linguistics  
- project for linguists -  
P.O. Box 8640  
D-4800 Bielefeld

Tel. (0521) 1063516



LAST CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND LANGUAGE

University of Bristol, July 16-20, 1979

Co-Organizers: Howard Giles, Philip Smith (Psychology) & W. Peter Robinson (Education), University of Bristol, Berkeley Sq., Bristol, BS8 1HH, England.

Under the auspices of the Social Psychology Section of the British Psychological Society, we are planning the above Residential Conference. It is our view that the well-established fields of sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics and the sociology of language could benefit greatly from the theoretical and methodological perspectives of social psychology. Moreover, social psychological studies of language behaviour and communication seem to retain a peripheral status within social psychology itself, appearing in isolated and widely dispersed locations. With this International Conference, an attempt is being made to provide a forum for the centralization and cross-fertilization of a wide range of ideas and to promote the emergence of a distinctive "social psychology of language".

Together with Invited Guest Speakers (Michael Argyle, Susan Ervin-Tripp, Wallace Lambert, and Walt Wolfram), the following nine symposia are to be Guest Convened by those stated:-

SEX ROLES & LANGUAGE: Cheris Kramer, Speech Communication, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 244 Lincoln Hall, Urbana, Ill. 61801, USA.

ETHNICITY & LANGUAGE: Donald M. Taylor, Psychology, McGill University, PO Box 6070 Station A, Montreal, Que., Canada.

PERSONALITY, EMOTION, PSYCHOPATHOLOGY & LANGUAGE: Klaus Scherer, Fachbereich 06 Psychologie der Justus Liebig Universität Giessen, Otto Behaghel Str. 10, 6300 Giessen, W. Germany.

TEMPORAL ASPECTS OF SPEECH: Aron Siegman & Stanley Feldstein, Psychology, University of Maryland, 5401 Wilkens Ave., Baltimore, Md. 21228, USA.

BI- & MULTILINGUALISM & CODE-SWITCHING: Carol Scotton, Linguistics & Oriental & African Languages, Michigan State University, Wells Hall, East Lansing, Michigan 48824, USA.

CONVERSATION & INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION: Charles Berger, Communication, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill. 60201, USA.

LANGUAGE ATTITUDES: Ellen B. Ryan, Psychology, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556, USA.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: Catherine Snow, Education, Harvard University, Roy E. Larsen Hall, Appian Way, Cambridge, Mass. 02138, USA.

SOCIAL CLASS & LANGUAGE: Norbert Dittmar, Garmanistisches Seminar, Universität-Heidelberg, 69 Heidelberg 1, West Germany.

Symposia on other topics (e.g., second language acquisition) and of individual papers are also being convened. Please send an abstract (approx. 200 words) of your paper from a social psychological perspective to the appropriate Guest Convenor, and a copy to us. Deadline for submission of abstracts is March 15th. 1979, deadline for Registration is 15th. April 1979. The fee, provisionally costed at £66 (to be paid in pounds sterling) includes registration, full board and accommodation, etc. Late registrants will be required to pay a £10 surcharge. The Conference, which is Residential, is restricted to about 250 participants, and given the enormous interest expressed internationally thus far, prospective participants are urged to register early to avoid disappointment.