The Pit Corder Colloquium, 7th September 2007
Transcribed and edited by Keith Mitchell

Caroline Heycock: As you will know, Stephen Pit Corder was director and then Professor of Applied Linguistics in this University from 1964 to 1983 and is regarded by many as the father of applied linguistics in Edinburgh and even in the UK. BAAL recognises his contribution by its annual Pit Corder lecture, but this year to mark the 50th anniversary of applied linguistics in Edinburgh a colloquium is replacing the lecture. We welcome to this colloquium two of the most prominent figures from the early days of applied linguistics in Edinburgh, Professors Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, who are joining us by videolink from Sydney. The colloquium will be chaired by John Joseph, Professor of Applied Linguistics here at the university and currently a Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellow.

John Joseph: Good morning. The first question will come from Albert Weidemann of the University of Pretoria.

Albert Weidemann: Good morning. I was wondering whether we shouldn't start on a personal and professional note, and to ask both of you whether there are any particular memories that you have of Pit Corder - any particular incident or event that might place the second part of this colloquium in perspective for an audience that will not have known Pit Corder personally.

Michael Halliday: Yes, good morning by the way. Very nice to greet you all. I'm not very much help here because of course I knew Pit Corder's work but I had very little personal contact with him, so I'll have to pass that one on. Let me pass it to Ruqaiya to see whether she can do any better on it.

Ruqaiya Hasan: Good morning and thank you for giving us this opportunity to talk to you. Well, in fact I too left Edinburgh at about the end of 1963 and so I didn't overlap with him in Edinburgh at all; but I do remember one occasion when we had met. I can't quite remember exactly where it was – either Leeds, where I was working then, or Edinburgh; and Pit said to me, "Well of course when you write a grammar you're actually doing applied linguistics." Now that was very interesting to me because that put in front of me the picture of linguistics as pure theory – simply what Basil Bernstein would have described as the syntax of the theory, and the language of description for theoretical concepts, but nothing else. The other thing that I remember – and of course that is something he is very well known for – is the concept of interlanguage. I found that concept interesting and though it could have been used to refer to language stages in children learning their mother tongue. But other than that, I really don't know much about Pit.

Alan Davies: Good morning, Michael and Ruqaiya, and thank you both for being with us today. My first question concerns the name. Can you comment on the name given to the School of Applied Linguistics when it was set up? Over the years has the term 'applied linguistics' been helpful or not? Would a more neutral term, such as 'applied language studies' perhaps, have been more appropriate?

MH: Yes, I've been able to think about this – since you very kindly sent us these questions in advance, which was very helpful. And I was trying to reflect first of all whether the term 'applied linguistics' had first been used by C.C. Fries and Robert Lado in the United States. We didn't have much contact with them at the time, so on that one I just don't know. But on the European side of it, I first came across the term 'applied linguistics' sometime in the mid-fifties – in the context of the collaboration between the British and the French in the development of ideas about second language teaching. This was the time when the distinction began to be made between second language and foreign language, and the demand for ideas, practices, suggestions, theories in the field of second language teaching came out of the history of decolonisation, essentially, after the Second World War. In other words, there were a large number of countries which had been British colonies, or which had been French colonies, that were now independent and were developing their own national languages but were very keen to ensure maintaining standards in English and French and spreading the ability in these languages much more widely in the population. And on the British side, of course the leaders there that I was familiar with were Ian Catford and Peter Strevens. And it was actually in their company that I went over once or twice to the Ecole Normale Superieure de Saint-Cloud, where the French group were located. And they were the authors of the original Francais Elémentaire or Francais Fondamental as it later came to be known - Gougenheim, Rivenc, Sauvageot - so there was a lot of contact between the two and that was the context in which the term applied linguistics first became familiar to me and came into, I think, quite common usage. By the time of the first congress in 1964, the first AILA Congress in Nancy, the term was well established – obviously, as you can see in the name there. And I can't see any harm with it. We'll take that up later if you like, the question of: What's the nature of applied linguistics? Is it a discipline or not? I'd give it some other characterization, but I don't feel myself that there's any great advantage in trying to deconstruct the term and replace it with something like applied language studies. Let me ask Ruqaiya about that.

RH: Now, I've been thinking about this too – and thank you for sending the questions ahead of time. Because really, when you come to think of it, language study is a wide term and it can apply to anything, so for example, literary criticism of any kind is also language study. You could not possibly say that when people are talking about imagery and simile and so on, they are not doing language study. Similarly, the grammar book that I had the good or bad fortune of being taught from
AD: Thank you very much. You're quite right, I'm sure, that names take on a life of their own really. The chair of English literature here is still called the chair of Rhetoric, and somehow it still seems to work .. And Michael I think is right in saying that Fries and Lado used the term before it was used here (and I see Diane Larsen-Freeman, from Michigan, in the audience here nodding her head). And the journal of Language Learning was called in fact - and that began in the early fifties - that was called 'Language Learning – A Journal of Applied Linguistics'. So the term was in use already. I'll hand over to John Joseph here...

JJ: In its earliest years the applied linguistics programme at Edinburgh included a component on educational psychology, which ceased to be a formal part of the course by the mid 1960s. At that time the work of Basil Bernstein was widely seen as linked with your own approach to the social psychology of language, including its educational dimension. Since the 1960s the social has continued to feature prominently in your work but psychology less so, at least on the surface. My question to the two of you is: What place has psychology played in your work since the 1960s? Has it been narrowed down to the semiological and the functional? Has it been dispensed with? Or does it continue to play a key role in your approach to language and applied linguistics?

RH: Do you want to go first?

MH: No. (Laughter)

RH: Well, yes. It would be right to say that systemic functional linguistics in general and my own work in particular is influenced by Basil Bernstein's thinking, though it doesn't mean that I follow every single thing and replicate it in my work. To me Basil Bernstein was an interesting sociologist because the basic question that he asked was really a question of psychology: How does the outside become the inside? And how does the inside reveal itself? This is a question that reaches out of sociology into psychology; it is one that perhaps psychology could have asked quite usefully. But there is a lot of psychology which in the light of today's neorolinguistics and neurological studies would turn out to perhaps need a little bit more attention to the social. But in so far as my own work is concerned I have gained from the work of George Herbert Reid, and I have certainly used the work of Vygotsky quite extensively. If you look at the psychologists I have used, they have always been people who, using my own classification, could be described as having exotropic theories - theories that locate their object of study where it actually develops, where it changes, where it grows, rather than looking inside the object itself and trying to answer the question by looking simply inside that object, be it language or human mind. As someone once remarked, Vygotsky actually turned Piaget on his head – this was in connection with the relation between the internal and external language, or the egocentric and the sociocentric language. He was able to do this because he looked outside psychology, so he showed convincingly, that egocentric language could not develop unless sociocentric language had already taken shape. So it's really a question of which psychologists you use and why you find them usable: it is a question of how it links with your conception of language. Primarily I think of myself as a linguist, and so if I look at a psychologist I would be looking to see what that psychologist tells me about language that I would not learn anywhere else and how it makes me understand language better.

MH: Yes, I think one thing that happened was the emergence of psycholinguistics, in other words a new discipline or inter-discipline under the name of psycholinguistics, which was prominent from the late sixties onwards into the seventies, eighties. I myself made very little contact with that mainstream psycholinguistics as it was. I couldn't really make very much connection between what was going on there and my own work. As Ruqaiya says, it was much more with the development of modern neuroscience - we're talking about the late eighties, the nineties onwards - work on the structure, the evolution of the brain, how the brain develops in infancy and so on, starting with, say, Gerald Edelman and then coming through Terrence Deacon and now a number of others because of the immense advance in imaging technology. All that has totally changed the picture as far as I am concerned, because that seems to me to resonate so beautifully with the views of language which I have held and which I've tried to develop, both in terms of language development in early infancy, and also with the social dimension of language. I like Susan Greenfield's term 'mind as personalised brain'. In other words, it is the personal history of the individual that shapes that individual's mind, but that is something that happens in the course of that child's interaction with its environment, as we saw in a programme by Robert Winston, a BBC programme we were watching last night, on the mind. It's now totally possible and indeed very necessary to make contact with this work, which has emerged under the general heading of neuroscience, much more so than it was in the time when the main source of contact with psychology was through psycholinguistics.

AW: I'd like to turn to your own work too now with my second question. And I ask this question simply
because I'm interested in what happens to people at historical turning points. To me, your own work created a bridge between theoretical linguistics and social perspectives on language at a time when the discipline was badly in need of it. My question is this: At that time, did you see its importance for the historical development of the discipline? Did you have any inklings of how influential it would be? Or did you simply do it out of sheer conviction? Or, if I could phrase the question just a little bit differently - if say in fifty years' time or even in a shorter period there was to be a similar commemorative colloquium on the work of Halliday and Hasan, which questions would be asked - or would you hope to be asked - of your intellectual heirs?

MH: Oh, the second half I'm going to pass to Ruqaiya (laughter). She can think about that while I answer the first part. I just would like to put together four components. One was simply personal conviction. One can look into background reasons for that. It could be connected with all sorts of things like my father being a dialect specialist in Yorkshire. But secondly and most importantly, there's my background as a student of Firth, because of course for J.R. Firth the link between theoretical linguistics and social perspectives was central. You couldn't do linguistics unless you put it in that sort of context, and I took on that view from Firth. Thirdly was my own background as a Marxist and work with our little linguistics group in the Communist Party in the fifties. We were searching for a Marxist linguistics and that obviously had to be grounded in a social context. And then, fourthly, in the sixties, when I came to work with Basil Bernstein, not so closely as Ruqaiya did, but still interacting with him quite a lot especially during that decade in London, sharing many of his ideas and greatly admiring his work, as I continue to do. So I think there are all those four components at least in my own personal history.

AW: And are you going to keep on avoiding the second part of my question (laughs)? Or are you passing it on to Ruqaiya for a bit?

MH: Well, I could really, I don't know ... (laughter)

AW: I'm not going to force you to answer it (more general laughter)

RH: I suppose if it came to the question of what I hope people who have worked with me might be able to say about my work, I would hope they might perhaps think that I seriously tried to understand the nature of language; and where I took that understanding, both in developing such understanding further and in using that understanding for solving some problems. Because indeed there are so many problems in our life which can only be solved by looking into what people are doing with the language and how. You can do this provided your linguistics is not so narrow that it has lost touch with human life. Now I do not believe in doing a linguistics that does not have anything to tell me about human beings as semiotic actors in society – about the way that they use language both for exploiting it for good reasons and for bad ones. Both of those have to be understood. So I hope people might think that perhaps the kind of linguistics I have pursued was of this kind!

AW: Thank you.

MH: Let me just round that off with the term that I've started to use in the last five years or so for what we do – I like to call it 'appliable linguistics'. It always bothers editors because they want to change it to 'applicable', but I don't mean that because 'applicable' is 'targeted'. I mean 'appliable', in other words a theory which is problem-based, which is essentially a way of solving problems. And I've always said that the sort of questions that we ask about language tend to be not so much questions from inside linguistics as questions that other people have, people who are in some way or other connected with language. So I would like to see what has happened to that sort of notion.

And while we're on this topic, we hope that somebody might come to the conferences at our new centre in Hong Kong, starting this year with the conference in December on 'Becoming a World Language'. That's the commercial!

AW: Thank you (laughter).

AD: Can I take you on then from 'appliable linguistics' and take you back again to the beginnings of applied linguistics here in Edinburgh. In those early days teaching in the School of Applied Linguistics was carried out by people from discrete disciplines. There was no discipline of applied linguistics. But with the growth of qualifications in the field, such as PhDs in applied linguistics, a discipline has emerged. Now some critics speak wistfully of the need to return to what Rampton has called the 'open field' of applied linguistics, in which everyone is a specialist in their own discipline – psychology, linguistics, education, and so on, thereby perhaps avoiding the issue, the problem of what applied linguistics means. In your view, is there a 'discipline' of applied linguistics?

MH: I prefer to think of it as a 'theme'. This is what I was saying in a paper to AILA in Singapore in 2002, arguing that applied linguistics was not a discipline so much as a theme, in the sense that it was a way of exploring certain questions - in the sense in which one might say mathematics is a theme rather than a discipline. It's a way of exploring certain questions - in the case of applied linguistics, questions where language plays a major part, but is, so to speak, being addressed by professionals from many other fields. And it seems to me that the difference is not that great between the two views that you mention. Because, yes, certain things have happened, branches growing up within applied linguistics, such as bilingualism, theory of translation, and so on, so that these are, if you like, coming from inside rather than from outside. But surely in the views from outside, the professionals are still very much partners in the enterprise. If you are interested in educational aspects, for example, teaching
second languages, or teaching of science, you're inevitably going to be involved with other specialists. It's not so much that they're not still there, as that the way of organising the discipline has changed. And I think another thing that has changed is that there has been a very great increase in people's awareness of how central language is to so many different aspects of human life, as Ruqaiya was saying just now, and how important that is if you want to intervene. In other words, if you want actually to take part in these processes – educational, clinical, forensic, whatever they are – you've got to take language seriously. So that has led to perhaps a greater focus on language itself than was the case in the early years of the discipline. But when I went to Sydney and started up this new degree, we called it 'Applied Linguistics' and then in brackets 'Language in Education' to show that that was at least one point of emphasis. But applied linguistics was recognized as a professional qualification for teachers, so we needed the term for that reason.

RH: Now, may I come in at this point? When I was at the School for Applied Linguistics as a student, we did have a psychologist, Beth Ingram, who lectured to us, and true, she would probably not have called herself an applied linguist, but then I suppose Catford would not have called himself an applied linguist either. He would most likely have identified himself as a phonetician. And this seems interesting for two reasons. One is that almost any field in which you apply the understanding of language which comes from a discipline - call it linguistics - almost any such field of application abuts on other fields. So, one perspective is that if you are teaching the language of law, you can't really say that it is only lawyers and legislators who should be responsible for helping with the teaching of the language of law; a lawyer, as lawyer, may not be even interested in that enterprise. Take the comparable case of psychology in the teaching of language: psychology is just as wide a field as law; and so a psychologist who comes into applied linguistics would need to be particularly interested in aspects of psychology relevant to the teaching and learning of language; they will not be teaching psychology, per se. The second issue that comes to my mind is that perhaps we do not need to think in terms of totally separate disciplines. We probably attach too much importance to the autonomy of a discipline. I believe this faith in the autonomy of a discipline might be rather misplaced - certainly misplaced in the case of the social and the human sciences, because in these disciplines, there is the heart of the problem – their object of enquiry – which each particular discipline must address, but it cannot do that without paying attention to something that is outside the central problem: in these disciplines theories have to be exotropic. Taking language as an example, I would have said that by putting it in society one understands more about language than by simply looking exclusively inside language as a way of understanding its nature. Take what used to be thought of as language being autonomous. Now you cannot really do a lot with language if you look at it as an autonomous object. You can't say why we're able to use it for so many different purposes, how come it manages to do this job under changing circumstances, and all of those questions. It seems to me that there is not one discipline of applied linguistics – I agree with Michael there – but there certainly is something that is at the core of every single application of linguistics and that something is the understanding of language – the understanding of language to the best of one's methods of approach, which goes without saying.

AD: Thanks very much. I suppose behind my question is the following. When Elisabeth Ingram – Beth Ingram, whom you mentioned – was teaching here, if you'd asked her what is it you teach, she would have said psychology, or the psychology of language perhaps. And Ian Catford would have said it's phonetics, and if Michael had been teaching here, he might have said I teach linguistics. (...) Now today, when I ask people what is it you do, they say I teach applied linguistics. That's the dilemma I'm presenting: what is it they mean when they say that? Because it suggests that there is something which they see as an area – whether it is a theme, or an area, or a discipline, or a subject – that they belong to.

MH: I think it has become institutionalised under that name. There are programmes, there are departments, there are degrees and so on. But secondly, I'd just like to make my point that it has ramified so much – there are so many courses, so many topics now, that it's become an integration of a number of different sub-parts, and I think the sense is that they are now more integrated than they were when everyone was contributing simply from some outside discipline. That would be my view.

RH: Yes, it has certainly exploded.

JJ: I want to ask you about critical applied linguistics. Reading a book like Alastair Pennycook's introduction to this subject, one gets the impression that politically engaged textual analysis, together with all the issues of applied linguistics and language teaching that are now routinely treated in terms of their political dimensions, owe their principal debt to Foucault and other continental theoreticians. Yet historically, there would appear to be a direct line from your work, through that of Roger Fowler to Kress and Hodge to Fairclough and the Lancaster school and beyond. Now, casting any modesty aside, would you dispute my assertion that the two of you are actually the principal sources of the critical-political strand within applied linguistics?

MH: Well, I wouldn't like to say 'principal sources!' I think that in the work of Roger Fowler, his linguistic criticism or critical linguistics, literature as social discourse, and similarly that of Kress and Hodge on language and ideology, these things from the late seventies and early eighties were really fundamental in this total effort. Now to the extent that we had some background in this, yes, I think we played some part. I certainly don't think of us as being principal sources. But the point is that I would put this kind of work squarely within linguistics. I think part of the problem perhaps in the way that Alastair Pennycook looks at it –
I'm not sure about this, but it could be that it's treating discourse analysis as if it's something either outside language or a kind of secondary application of linguistics, whereas to me discourse analysis is and always has been a central concern of linguistics itself. And it may be that there are two different strands coming together here and he has focused on one of them rather than the other.

RH: My take on this is ... maybe rather unusual. If you think of CDA as a discipline, or as a theory, then it is a bit unfortunate to call it critical discourse analysis. 'Critical' is an attitude; discourse analysis is the issue. Once you have the means for discourse analysis, you can do discourse analysis, and you can read the meanings in it, then you can be critical, or you can appraise, you can agree or disagree, judge its social effect – you can make your own choices about which direction you want to go. So from this perspective, to say that there is a theory of critical discourse analysis is, well, ... unless it is a theory of how to be critical in a way that has to be logically acceptable generally ... there does seem to be a problem, because 'critical' in the sense of CDA is just one perspective. I'm not saying it's unimportant.; on the contrary, Fairclough's work has raised awareness of problems that was not there before and a lot of people use it with understanding and gain a lot out of doing so. A critical analysis of discourse I can understand, but a theory called Critical Discourse Analysis I find questionable.

JJ: It's a very good point – very interesting, and a critical point, if I may say. But let me turn to Albert for the last question.

AW: I'm going to take you a little away from the potential polemics of this for the moment. But we may return to that after this question, when we open it to the floor and when we let other people apart from the panel ask you questions. My final question is – it follows on really from my previous one, which makes something of the division that there was between what Ruqaiya has called autonomous linguistics and the other kind of linguistics, the more human kind of linguistics. Linguistics in the 1980s divided quite distinctly into a theoretical and sociolinguistic part, I thought. What would your reaction be to a division within applied linguistics today – whether it be a theme or a discipline or whatever – between modernist and post-modernist paradigms and approaches? ... I'm asking what would your opinion be about such a division.

MH: Yes, yes. I feel that the whole opposition between the modernist and the post-modernist has been exaggerated, not just in linguistics but in many other areas as well. Now, I think it was Chris Brumfit, in that book edited by Mauranen and Sajavaara, who talked about “the post-modern project”. And that seems to me fine – that is a project within a general field, as there is within many fields, but I don't see this really as a division in any sense of splitting the field into two. And indeed I would be very unhappy if it was treated like that or if that's how it seemed to end up.

AW: Thank you. And Ruqaiya?

RH: Well, no, I was just thinking. I would say computational linguistics as an application of linguistics is a kind of applied linguistics. The mind boggles how it could be post-modernist, but maybe it can. Maybe it can – nothing is impossible.

AW: (Laughs) Every time I try to protect you from polemics you go ahead and elicit them again. (Laughter)

RH: Maybe I'm just polemical.

JJ: All right, thank you. Well we're now going to open it up to the audience to ask questions, so if you raise your hand, we've got assistants with hand-held microphones who will come to you. Professors Halliday and Hasan won't be able to see you but I hope they'll be able to hear you.

DLF: Hello, my name's Diane Larsen-Freeman, from the University of Michigan. (...) I was interested in your comments about disciplines and areas of knowledge. I was a student of Kenneth Pike, by the way, who taught us what you must do is always come with your questions when you have an opportunity to pose them, so I have several. But the one I wanted to pose now [and give other people the chance to do so as well] has to do with the nature of the discipline – or is it a discipline? I was intrigued, Michael, by your comments in 2001, which I believe was a reprise of an earlier paper you had given at an AILA Congress, where you talked about applied linguistics as transdisciplinary – not interdisciplinary but transdisciplinary. That is, you start with a problem, with a problem-space, and you bring to it what other disciplines have to offer. And that's what I just heard you say now. But I didn't hear you use the word 'transdisciplinary' and I wondered if that was still your thinking.

MH: Yes, thank you. I would certainly maintain that term. Let me just give a brief context to it. We have been hearing for a couple of decades now about the importance of interdisciplinary work in our teaching and in our research. And the first attempts to achieve something along these lines tended to take the form of what Basil Bernstein used to call a collection code - that is to say, bits and pieces from the different disciplines cobbled together for a particular project. Now I'm sounding scathing about it – I don't mean to do that: it can be very useful. But what worried me was that that seemed to ignore what was really happening around, which was a kind of restructuring of knowledge – something that was happening where universities and departments ought to be leading the way. And so I said, really what we're looking for is not something interdisciplinary but something transdisciplinary, and by that I mean something that would really reconfigure knowledge in important areas. And this is my notion of applicable linguistics – I saw this as an important move in that direction, it was creating a new structure of knowledge. I would like to rescue the term semiotic, which got kind of co-opted in the last part of the post-
modern project. I want to say: we are concerned with the essential nature of semiotic systems, of which language is the prototype. Semiotic systems are not like physical systems in many ways, but they have to be studied by an underlying conception of what science is, and what scientific knowledge is about. I see applied linguistics as playing a big part in that move towards recognising, and indeed furthering, the restructuring of knowledge which I think we need in the present age.

RH: I would like to go back to a point I was making earlier about psychology in applied linguistics. It really is not just psychology; it is psychology that has reconfigured itself to meet linguistics half way in solving a problem; and linguistics, in turn, has reconfigured itself to meet teaching; and teaching, to the understanding of language. So in this sense it is transdisciplinary.

Sinfree Makoni: I just have one very simple question. The trajectory of your ideas about language in society is conventionally traced back to the work of Malinowski and Firth as well as to the Marxist intellectual tradition, but you also spent a considerable amount of your time in China. How did your knowledge of the Chinese language, the ways meaning is articulated in it, and your reading of Chinese grammarians whom you refer to quite frequently shape your views about language?. This dimension of your work has not been written about extensively because there are few people in applied linguistics who can read Chinese grammars as well as having a working knowledge of Systemic Functional Grammars so perhaps your response will help to fill this gap.

MH: Yes. Thank you. I suppose my initiation into linguistics came in China, through the Chinese tradition of linguistics. Two of my great Chinese teachers, Luo Changpei and Wang Li, were both specialists in this, so they taught me the history of linguistics as it evolved in China, and many features of that certainly went into my own thinking. On the Marxist side, the interesting thing was – well of course there was the fascinating controversy that took place in the Soviet Union in 'Pravda' in 1951. That would be a big side issue – I won't go into that. There was work like Marcel Cohen on Marxism and language, but this tended rather to take a Marxist view of traditional ideas about language, whereas to me what was needed was new ideas about language. And that meant particularly, however, not so much new theories as new descriptions. The Marxist component was one which focused obviously on language in its social context - socio-economic context, but was what I referred to earlier as a problem-driven theory. It was a theory that had to evolve - and I never saw myself as a theoretician, but as somebody faced with problems which had to be solved, and these were attempts to think about these problems. So my own background wasn't in the Anglo-American field; it was originally much more in Chinese. I studied historical linguistics through Sino-Tibetan, not through Indo-European and so on.
where the speaker is coming from and where they are heading, and who are the people who are implicated in the consequence of this. Today this kind of understanding, particularly in countries that pride themselves on having democracy, is very important. If the majority can't understand the implications of a particular political speech, simply skimming on the surface of discourse, then there isn't much true democracy. The second issue that is very dear to my heart is to extend literacy education to reading literature. Actually it's an old concern of mine: I entered linguistics because I wanted to change my part of the world by teaching literature in a way that was different from the way that literature has always been taught, which is to say, mainly emoting about it – expressing evaluation, saying simply you like or dislike it, or that it sends a thrill down your spine. You master conventional phrases, you learn which epithets to apply to whose style. I did a little work in this area, and developed an approach to the study of literature within the framework of systemic-functional linguistics, which actually depends on language analysis to see how verbal art has been created by the patterning of meanings in the work; and how the essentially metaphorical nature of language is revealed. With the help of that kind of approach, you can make statements about a work of literature, which it is possible to argue about, because the evidence for your claims lies in the patterning of worded meaning. Usually we are not able to teach how to read literature by making systematic use of linguistics to probe into its metaphorical essence, so that the study of literature becomes more like handing down opinions. The approach I am suggesting is in fact simply an extension of reflection literacy.

MH: Can I just add a little component to that? You see, I was thinking particularly of the work of Geoff Williams, who is now working in British Columbia and who was a PhD student of Ruqaiya's, who is very keen on the role of – now we call this 'grammatics', that is the theory and description of grammar – in the educational process, to the extent that he has been exploring with primary teachers, actually teaching functional grammar in the early years of primary school - Year 2 and then I think Year 6. Now this links up with my feeling that what we have lacked in the educational work is a real impact on teacher education, where the work has to be done if there is to be any change in moving towards a clearer sense of the role of language in learning in general. And I think that, you know, in order to get anywhere with new ideas like those of Geoff Williams, somehow or other there has to be an impact on the basic processes of teacher education. Now we know there's also a problem there in the sense that those like, for example, Joan Rothery in Sydney, who did try to build in some very good work on language in pre-service teacher education, find that the problem there is that at that stage, when they have not yet actually spent time in the classroom, the learners are not really convinced that it's worth looking at language at all, whereas the success really comes when you get in-service workshops, where those in the profession have now had experience in the problems of language – problems OF language essentially – and are very keen to explore it. I've always been amazed at the extent to which teachers will give up their spare time after they've been teaching for two, three, five years and so on, and say 'Right, now we want to find out something about language.' So there is this problem of what's your context for doing this kind of thing. Nevertheless, I don't think it's an insoluble problem, somehow or other to bring a much deeper awareness of language into the basic teacher education programmes.

AG: I'm Ardeshr Geranpayeh from the University of Cambridge. I want to go back to that disciplinary question that Alan Davies raised earlier on. I share Alan's concern about the identity problem, not because he used to be my supervisor but because we're dealing in language testing. I see that applied linguistics is in a way similar to another discipline, psychometrics. In psychometrics you've got psychology and you've got mathematics, basically statistics. But if you talk to a psychometrician, they don't call themselves either a psychologist or a mathematician, they call themselves psychometricians. It's easier for them because they're applying certain applied statistics to a particular field. But it's more difficult for applied linguistics because the moment you use the term linguistics people think that you are a linguist, and this is the identity problem. If people ask me what I am, I say I am a language tester. Then they say: which discipline do you come from? And I say I'm an applied linguist. I can't consider myself a linguist because I haven't been trained as a linguist and the problem, as far as I can see, with applied linguistics is that it covers a wide area of mini-disciplines. So linguistics is just an element in that. The question is: linguistics is part... as far as it is related to language, it is relevant to applied linguistics, but I don't really see the initial discussion that we've been told as, when we started the applied linguistics course, that in a way applied linguistics was linguistics applied to teaching or whatever that follows that. So in a way the identity problem is: How do we separate ourselves from ... or do we want to separate ourselves from linguistics?

MH: Well, I hope not. I mean, why should you? Yes, the problem is a real one in the sense that because of the immense resources that are going into exploring new fields we're getting many more subdivisions within the existing disciplines. There has to be some kind of rethinking, reorganisation, but at the same time I also think there is a unity defined in terms not so much of what it is you're looking at – that's the traditional kind of disciplinary boundaries – but rather the kinds of question you're asking. So you're asking questions about language, I don't see why you don't call yourself a linguist in that sense, the point being that there are all kinds of people now in and around linguistics who have this very specialised view—they have to have, because knowledge has advanced and you can't be everything. I belong to the dinosaur generation of those who try to be generalists. And well we ARE dinosaurs now because the subject has got too big for us. I'm glad I'm retired because I'd never be able to keep up. I myself have never drawn a line between linguistics (in brackets 'theoretical', if you like) and applied linguistics.
Essentially it is a discipline that is concerned with exploring questions about language. What those questions are will depend on whether you're coming from outside or whether you're specialising more from inside. But the fact that you're not covering the whole field does not to me suggest that you shouldn't say what you're doing is linguistics or call yourself a linguist.

**RH:** I'm Ruby Rennie from the University of Edinburgh. I'm curious about ... my question is I suppose about language and context. We're sitting here in a lecture theatre - I wondered how you would describe where you are and what language you're using right now.

**MH (to RH):** It's context, so you go. (Both laugh) It's your kind of question.

**RH:** Yeah, but maybe I'm not actually getting the point of your question because it seems to me that the framework for the description of context should be such that it ought to encompass the description of a context of this kind, in which there is eye contact with some but not with all and in which there is near immediacy of give and take. Also I can see some of the people - I can see them smile or look bewildered or look dismayed, which gives me some idea of how my sayings are being received. So maybe I haven't quite understood your question because I don't really see that there is a problem ... so I probably didn't get your question.

**RR:** What I find interesting is that the panel we have in front of us look rather formal, whereas you are very informal and I feel I can almost chat to you, which is really quite odd. (Laughter)

**MH:** Well at the last minute I decided that I needed to have a tie on - that's something I never wear here in Sydney. But I put it on because I thought it'll show a little bit brighter.

**RH:** Yes, well, maybe when you are convening a conference you have to be formal. We, Michael and I, are sitting here quite relaxed; we're not worried about anything; but I think that the conveners of the conference are thinking of a hundred and fifty things – may be worrying if the session is going well – whereas we are just enjoying ourselves and very happy to be able to talk to you.

**MH:** Yes. We would I think see this, I would, in terms of our usual basic way of structuring anything in a context in which some encounter is taking place. I won't go into this in detail except to note that when you talk of the field of discourse or the mode of discourse you have to recognise on the one hand that there's often more than one level going on at the same time, and on the other hand that the view from one participant may well be quite different from the view from the other participant.

**JJ:** We have time for one more question.

**LI:** Good morning, my name is Linda Taylor from the University of Cambridge. You mentioned the notion that the role of applied linguistics is a means of solving problems, and I wonder what you consider to be the urgent or the emerging questions or problems to which applied linguistics can help provide an answer. Are they more or less the same as they've always been? Or do you think there are new ones that are characteristic of our particular age?

**MH:** One way of looking at this, it seems to me, is to see what are the fields in which linguistics is being applied. Obviously, education – that's been there all along. But more recently, clinical linguistics, which took much longer to get off the ground but where now there's a lot of action. Some of Ruqaiya's students are leaders in this field in Australia. So those are new problems, or at least the problems have always been there, but it's new to recognise that linguistics has a role in solving them. Another one of course is forensic linguistics, the language of law – these are areas where what we've seen in recent decades is a recognition that, yes, there is a role for linguistics in addressing these problems. So you've had terminological changes - for example, from the 'legal' to the 'forensic', from the 'medical' to the 'clinical', all of which say that there is a linguistic component in addressing these things. That's one way of looking at it, I think, to see what are the areas in which new problems are being defined. (To Ruqaiya) I don't know if you want to have a last word on that.

**RH:** No, I don't. I totally agree with you. The only thing that I would say is that there have been remarkable semantic changes over the last couple of decades or so since globalisation picked up speed. And I feel that reflection literacy, the deep learning of the kind that, for example, Geoff Williams' work through the teaching of grammatics to very young children shows that, if taught to read with understanding, even young children can actually give a perfect interpretation of the text in front of them. And we do need to understand the ways in which terms like democracy, freedom, free trade and so on are being used and what they mean for one participant as opposed to another participant in the real contexts of situation. Today's 'glib speak' does need to be de-glibbed.

**JJ:** Professor Hasan, Professor Halliday, I want to thank you very much on behalf of everyone on the panel, everyone in the audience, really in celebrating 50 years of applied linguistics in the UK and 40 years of BAAL. There's no one else we could have turned to who could both link us to the beginnings and point us straight the way into the future but the two of you. This event would have been empty without the two of you. It was not possible for you to be here but we're so delighted and so grateful to you for taking all the trouble for this arrangement. It's not an easy arrangement to make on either end, but particularly on your end. You've given us a lot of your time, a lot of your knowledge, you've enriched us greatly, more than we can say, and we thank you very very much indeed.