The British Association for Applied Linguistics

No. 15 NEWSLETTER Summer 1982

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL and NEWSLETTER PROSPECT

My first duty is to thank Cambridge University Press who have generously allowed the Newsletter to reproduce Dick HUDSON's paper 'Some issues on which linguists can agree' from the Journal of Linguistics. Along with the Press, we have to thank Erik Fudge, the Editor of the Journal, who enthusiastically supported the request for permission to reproduce the paper. And finally we have to thank Dick himself, who was equally ungrudging.

The paper is reproduced by photo-copier with the full page-format of the Journal including the page-numbers. Attention is drawn to the statement of copyright at the foot of the first page.

This issue is shorn, or short, of some of the documentation it should have. We have to catch up with the Organisers' Report of the Language and Ethnicity seminar held in January last and treated at length in N/L14, and also with the one seminar held since then, on Information and Discourse, at Aston in April. The CLIE seminar on Teachers' Assumptions, also intended for April, was not held. Mike RIDDLE, one of LAGB's representatives on CLIE, and its Chairman since its inception, explains why the seminar was cancelled and also brings us up-to-date on CLIE (formerly the Language Steering Committee), in pp. 15-18.

Mike's account of CLIE, however, does not relate principally to a cancelled seminar (a new thing in BAAL's history?) but to a very positive product of CLIE's existence --Dick HUDSON's paper, which was compiled at CLIE's instigation. Dick has been another of LAGB's representatives from the beginning; his paper speaks for itself. But it is worth recalling the aim of the cancelled seminar — 'to bring together teachers, linguists and educationalists interested in teachers' assumptions about language, and their relation to the beliefs of linguists'.

The first of the two articles, then, is not sectional but concerns the Association as a whole. And the same is true of the second article, 'AILA, sexism and racism' by Robert PHILLIPSON & Tove SKUTNABB-KANGAS. Neither article will appeal to everyone; but both may well concern the very people they don't appeal to!

The discriminatory underlining of names in this issue has no prejudicial basis: underlined are those names which appear in the recent list of members. I hope I've done it consistently; my apologies if I haven't, both to members and non-members (it's rather hard on Mike RIDDLE who has actually paid his sub., but didn't make the list!).

Copy-date for N/L16 will be Saturday 9th October next. That issue will contain Ron BERESFORD's review of Pam GRUNWELL's The nature of phonological disability in children and notes of new books from CILT (both already received) and, I hope, more in the way of Notices, Notes, Letters, etc.

John Mountford
Editor

Please see my standing invitation on the last page!

I ARTICLES

1. The following paper by Richard HUDSON is reproduced from the Journal of Linguistics 17 (1981) pp.333-343, with the kind permission of the Cambridge University Press (see p.ii).

J. Linguistics 17 (1981) 179–392 Printed in Great Britain

Some issues on which linguists can agree

RICHARD HUDSON

Department of Phonetics and Linguistics, University College London.

(Received 25 June 1980)

At a time when linguistic theory is becoming increasingly fragmented and decreasingly dominated by a single orthodoxy, it has been an encouraging exercise to compile a list of statements about language which are likely to be accepted by virtually all linguists, irrespective of what they think about all the many issues on which linguists disagree. The following list contains no fewer than 83 claims which have been accepted by a wide range of British linguists, and there is no reason to believe that the sample of linguists who have helped me in compiling the list is particularly biased. It seems reasonable to claim that other linguists are LIKELY to accept these statements, although I certainly cannot claim that every linguist accepts every one of them. So far as I know, no attempt has ever been made before to find out what linguists at large actually believe, although any writer of an introductory text-book hopes that he is expounding a widely held set of views. Considered as a piece of research, this investigation seems to me to have produced at least one interesting result: linguistics really is making some progress, in a cumulative way, and we are not just lurching from one 'paradigm' to another, as some of us sometimes suspect in our gloomier moments. Moreover, it raises the interesting question what other statements could be added to the list given here, which certainly is not meant to be exhaustive. I hope that other linguists with more imagination than me can bring the list into the hundreds, as should surely be possible.

I should explain the background to the compilation of the list. It has a fairly practical origin, having been suggested by the Committee for Linguistics in Education as a discussion document for two seminars concerned with the relevance of linguistics to schools.[1] Because of this I have concentrated in my selection of statements on those which seem to have some potential relevance for language teaching in schools, and in particular for first-language teaching. However, many of them are also relevant to other activities, notably second-language teaching, the treatment of speech pathology and language

[1] The Committee for Linguistics in Education was set up by the British Association for Applied Linguistics and the Linguistics Association of Great Britain, with the purpose of preparing for joint seminars on linguistics and schools. It has been enlarged by the addition of representatives of the National Association for the Teaching of English and of the National Association for Advisers and Inspectors of English, and a number of Inspectors and Advisors also belong to it. Further information may be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, John Rudd, 22 Ritherdon Road, London SW17 8QD.

0022-2267/81/0017-0032$02.00

*** For the present membership of CLIE and for further information, see pp.15-18.

planning. Moreover, many linguists who have seen earlier versions of the list have expressed an interest in using it as a teaching aid in their linguistics courses. It is all too easy for students to be discouraged by the seemingly unlimited ability of linguists to disagree with one another, and by the very short life of the average linguistic theory; it may raise their spirits to be given a list like the following as a set of anchor points. I hope, then, that the list will be useful to a lot of people.

The list in its present form is the result of many revisions, going back to a very short list of about twenty points which I composed with the help of another member of the committee, Mike Riddle. The most radical changes occurred in the production of the antepenultimate version, which I circulated to all the linguistics departments in British universities, plus a few in polytechnics, making a total of 29 departments. I had replies from just half of them (15), and in many cases the document had been circulated widely in the department for comment so the number of linguists whose views were sounded out is higher (about 30). It would be unwise to guess at the reasons why this particular sample replied, and the remaining departments and linguists approached did not, but there is no reason to think that the non-repliers would have had more reservations about the list than those who did reply. After taking account of all the comments received at this stage, I sent the revised (penultimate) version to all those who had already commented, including those who commented at earlier stages but not at the antepenultimate, and received 18 sets of comments (all minor) on the penultimate version. I have now taken all these comments into account in revising the penultimate version, so I think I can claim that at least these 18 linguists would accept all the 83 points in the list. (The one reservation I must make is about statement 2.5i, which was not in the penultimate list; however, this seems unlikely to provoke objections from most linguists.) At one stage or another in the development of the list I received comments from 46 linguists,[2] and I have been able to meet all the criticisms they made by revising the version they were commenting on. It thus seems likely that most of the 83 statements would be acceptable to all of these 46 linguists.

Finally, a note on the presentation of these statements. I have tried hard to make them comprehensible to the layman, by avoiding technical terminology, and where one statement may help the reader to understand another I have

---

[2] I should like to express my deep gratitude to all the colleagues who have helped me with the list, with suggestions for additions as well as deletions and rewordings.

In the following list I have not tried to distinguish between those who commented on earlier versions only and those who gave their blessing to the final version: J. Aitchison, R. Allwright, R. Asher, M. Breen, A. Brookes, G. Brown, K. Brown, C. Brumfit, C. Candlin, N. Collinge, G. Corbett, A. Cruse, A. Cruttenden, L. Davidson, M. Deuchar, N. Fairclough, D. Ferris, A. Fox, M. French, P. Gannon, G. Gazdar, M. Harris, R. Hartmann, R. Hogg, J. Hurford, G. Knowles, R. Le Page, J. Lyons, J. Mountford, W. O'Donnell, K. Perera, G. Pullum, S. Pulman, M. Riddle, R. Robins, S. Romaine, G. Sampson, D. Sharp, M. Short, N. Smith, M. Stubbs, G. Thornton, L. Trask, G. Wells, M. Wheeler, D. Wilson, J. Windsor Lewis.

given a cross-reference. If the wording sometimes seems pedantic and long, this is because I have had so many helpful comments from colleagues who have spotted potential ambiguities or misunderstandings; several of the readers of the more recent versions have complained that it reads like the outcome of a committee meeting, which in a sense it is. I regret the effects of this on the style, but I think it may be inevitable. I regard the document in its present form as a reference work, rather than as an attractive description of the state of the art in linguistics. Nor have I tried to draw any practical implications from these statements, for a variety of reasons. I am convinced that every one of the 83 statements has implications for some area of practical life, and I hope that it will be possible for these implications to be developed and presented in a way which will show the world that linguistics does after all have something to say of practical importance.

SOME ISSUES ON WHICH LINGUISTS CAN AGREE

1. THE LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE

(a) Linguists describe language empirically – that is, they try to make statements which are testable, and they take language as it is, rather than saying how it should be. (In other words, linguistics is descriptive, not prescriptive or normative.) (see 2.1a, 2.3a, 2.4b, 3.2e).

(b) The primary object of description for linguists is the structure of language, but many linguists study this in relation to its function (notably, that of conveying meaning) and in relation to other psychological and cultural systems (see 2.1b, 2.7a).

(c) Linguists construct theories of language, in order to explain why particular languages have some of the properties that they do have. Linguists differ in the relative emphasis they put on general theory and on description of particular languages (see 2.1d).

(d) An essential tool of linguistics (both descriptive and theoretical) is a metalanguage containing technical terms denoting analytical categories and constructs. None of the traditional or everyday metalanguage is sacrosanct, though much of it is the result of earlier linguistic scholarship, but many traditional terms have in fact been adopted by linguists with approximately their established meanings (see 3.2a, 3.3e, 3.4a).

(e) The first aim of linguists is to understand the nature of language and of particular languages. Some linguists, however, are motivated by the belief that such understanding is likely to have practical social benefits, e.g. for those concerned professionally with the teaching of the mother-tongue or of second languages, or with the treatment of language disorders.

2. Language, society and the individual

2.1. *Language*

(a) Language is amenable to objective study, with regard both to its structure and to its functions and external relations (see 1a, 3.2c).

(b) We learn our language from other individuals, so language is a property both of the individual and of the community from which he learns it. Consequently, both social and psychological approaches to its study are necessary.

(c) A language consists partly of a set of interacting general constraints, or rules, and partly of a vocabulary of lexical items. (Some linguists prefer to take a language as a set of sentences, and would apply the preceding description to the grammar of a language, rather than to the language itself.) (See 2.3d, f, 2.5a, 2.6e, 3.)

(d) There are features common to all languages (linguistic universals) which involve the organization of their grammars and also the types of patterning found in sentences (see 1c, 2.2d, 2.4a, 2.6e, f, 3).

(e) Although all speakers know at least one language, and use this knowledge ('competence') in speaking and understanding, very little of their knowledge is conscious. Knowledge of structural properties (e.g. rules of syntax) is particularly hard to report in an organized way (see 2.5).

2.2 *Languages*

(a) There is no clear or qualitative difference between so-called 'language-boundaries' and 'dialect-boundaries' (see 2.3c, d, i).

(b) There are between 4000 and 5000 languages (though no precise figure is possible because of the uncertainty referred to in (a) above). They differ widely in their number of speakers, ranging from a few individuals to hundreds of millions; and nations differ widely in the number of languages spoken natively in them, ranging from one to many hundreds.

(c) In many communities it is normal for every speaker to command two or more languages more or less fluently. Such communities exist in Britain, both in the traditional Celtic areas and in areas of high immigration (see 2.3b).

(d) There is no evidence that normal human languages differ greatly in the complexity of their rules, or that there are any languages that are 'primitive' in the size of their vocabulary (or any other part of their language), however 'primitive' their speakers may be from a cultural point of view. (The term 'normal human language' is meant to exclude on the one hand artificial languages such as Esperanto or computer languages, and on the other hand languages which are not used as the primary means of communication within any community, notably pidgin languages. Such languages may be simpler than normal human languages, though this is not necessarily so.) (See 2.1d, 3.3i.)

(e) Only a minority of languages are written, and an even smaller minority

are standardized (i.e. include a variety which is codified and widely accepted as the variety most suitable for formal writing and speech). English belongs to this small minority (see 2.3a, h, 2.4c, 3.2).

(f) The present position of English as a world language is due to historical accidents rather than to inherent superiority of the language's structure. (Similar remarks apply to other world languages, notably French, Spanish and Russian, and to the 'Classical' languages such as Greek, Latin, Arabic and Sanskrit.) (See 2.3e, 3.5e.)

2.3. *Varieties of language*

(a) Spoken language developed before written language in the history of mankind, and it also develops first in the individual speaker; moreover, many languages are never written. These factors lead most linguists to believe that in linguistic theory priority should be given to spoken language, and many linguists give further priority to the most casual varieties of spoken language, those which are least influenced by normative grammar (see 1a, 2.2a, 2.2e, 2.4e).

(b) Every society requires its members to use different varieties of language in different situations (see 2.2c, 2.3h, 3.1d).

(c) The different 'varieties' referred to in (b) may be so-called 'languages', 'dialects' or 'registers' (i.e. roughly, 'styles') (see 2.2a, 3.4c).

(d) All varieties (including the most casual speech) are 'languages', in that they have their own rules and vocabulary, and they are all subject to rules controlling their use (see 2.1c, 2.2a).

(e) The prestige of a variety derives from its social functions (i.e. from the people and situations with which it is associated) rather than from its structural properties (see 2.2f, 2.7b, 3.4b).

(f) All normal speakers are able to use more than one variety of language (see 2.2c, 2.5f).

(g) Different varieties are often associated with different social statuses, whether these are the result of birth (e.g. sex, region of origin, race) or of later experience (e.g. occupation, religion, education) (see 2.5g, 2.7b).

(h) There is no reason for considering the variety called 'Standard English' the best for use in all situations (see 2.2e).

(i) Standard English subsumes a wide range of varieties, and has no clear boundaries *vis à vis* non-standard varieties (see 2.2a).

(j) In particular, there are many different ways of pronouncing Standard English (i.e. different 'accents'), one of which is particularly prestigious in England and Wales, namely 'Received Pronunciation' ('RP') (see 3.1a, 3.2f).

2.4. *Change*

(a) The only parts of a language which are immune to change are those which it shares with all other human languages (see 2.1d, 2.6b, 3.5d).

(b) Change in a language is normally a matter of becoming different, rather than better or worse (see 1a, 2.4d).

(c) It is normal for language to change from generation to generation even when subject to the conservative influence of a standardized variety (see 2.2e, 2.6c, 3.2e).

(d) Change in the language may reflect the influence of non-standard varieties on the standard one as well as vice versa (see 2.4b, 2.6a).

(e) Language changes for different types of reason: sociolinguistic, as when one variety influences another, or communicative needs change, or institutions such as schools intervene; psycholinguistic, as when one group misperceives or misanalyses the speech of another; structural, as when disrupted patterns are restored (see 2.3a, 2.5a, 2.6a, 2.7a, 3.5c).

2.5. *Acquisition*

(a) When children learn to speak, they learn a language (in the sense of rules plus vocabulary) which is an increasingly good approximation to the language of their models; however, direct repetition of model utterances plays only a minor part in their speech (see 2.1c, 3, 2.4e, 3.1b, c, 3.2).

(b) In learning their language, children's main source of information about the model is the speech of older people. No explicit instruction by the latter is needed, though parents often simplify their speech when talking to children, and correct some of the children's mistakes in a haphazard way (see 2.4f).

(c) By primary school age, children are commonly taking their peers rather than their parents as their dominant linguistic models (see 2.5g, h).

(d) There are considerable differences between children in the speed at which they acquire active use of specific parts of language. Such differences may be in part due to differences in their experience of language used by older people (see 2.7a, c).

(e) A child's poor performance in formal, threatening or unfamiliar situations can not be taken as evidence of impoverished linguistic competence, but may be due to other factors such as low motivation for speaking in that situation, or unfamiliarity with the conventions for use of language in such situations (see 2.7c, 3.4c).

(f) By primary school age children already command a range of different varieties for use in different situations (see 2.3f).

(g) Some parts of the language of children are indicators of the status of being a child, and will be abandoned by the time the child reaches adulthood. Some such features are learned almost exclusively from peers, and may have been handed on in this way for many centuries (see 2.3g, 2.5c).

(h) Mere exposure to a model different from that of his peers or his parents will not in itself lead a child to change his own speech; the child must also want to accept the model as the standard for his own behaviour. Many people go on using varieties which they know are low in prestige, and which they believe are

deficient, because these varieties are the only ones which they can accept (see 2.5c, 2.6a, 2.7b).

(i) The amount of knowledge involved in mastering a language is very great, although its extent is masked from ordinary adult speakers for various reasons, such as the unconscious nature of much of the knowledge. Children normally acquire a high proportion of this knowledge before they reach school age (see 2.2d, 3.3d).

2.6. *Relations between languages and dialects*

(a) Whenever speakers of two languages or dialects are in contact with one another, the languages or dialects concerned may be expected to influence each other in proportion to the extent of the contact, the social relations between the speakers, and the practical benefits of such influence for the recipients (see 2.4c, d, 2.5h).

(b) Such influence may be profound, going well beyond the borrowing of individual lexical items (see 2.4a, 2.6g).

(c) Since languages and dialects are indicators of group membership, it is common for a community to resist and criticize such influence, and to pick out particular aspects of it for explicit complaint (see 2.4c, 2.7b).

(d) Some aspects of language are more susceptible to external influence than others. Possibly certain areas of vocabulary are the most susceptible, and the least susceptible may be inflectional morphology (i.e. variation in the form of a word to reflect its number, tense, case. etc.) (see 3.3c, 3.4a, b).

(e) Alongside the similarities among languages, there are many gross differences. Such differences are most obvious in the arbitrary relations between the pronunciation of a word and its meaning and/or its syntactic properties, which are covered partly by the vocabulary and partly by the rules of morphology (see 2.1c, d, 3.3a, 3.4d).

(f) Apparent similarities between languages may turn out on thorough investigation to conceal significant differences, and vice versa (see 2.1d).

(g) If two languages are similar in their structures this need not be because they developed historically from the same earlier language, nor need historically related languages be similar in their structures (see 2.4a, 2.6b).

2.7. *Speech as behaviour*

(a) There are many possible reasons for speaking, only one of which is the desire to communicate ideas to an addressee. Other purposes include the establishing or maintaining of relations with the addressees, and the sorting out of the speaker's own thoughts (see 1b, 2.4e, 2.5d, 3.5a).

(b) The variety of language which a speaker uses on a particular occasion serves as an indicator of the speaker's group-membership and also of the speaker's perception of the type of situation in which the speech is taking place. A speaker's choice of variety is not wholly determined, by social factors

beyond his control, but may be manipulated by him to suit his purposes (see 2.3e, g, 2.5c, h, 3.1a, c).

(c) No speaker uses speech equally fluently or effectively for all functions (i.e. for all purposes and in all situations). Skill in speaking depends in part on having the opportunity to practise speech in quite specific functions, rather than on general linguistic ability (see 2.5d, 3.2b).

(d) When people comprehend speech, they may actually need to perceive only a proportion of the total utterance, since they can fill in the gaps with what they expect to hear.

3. THE STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE (see 2.1c, d)

3.1. *Pronunciation*

(a) Pronunciation differences are especially closely associated with social group membership differences, and consequently they are especially value-loaded (see 2.3j, 2.7b).

(b) Pronunciations which deviate from the prestige variety are generally learned from other speakers, and are not the result of 'slovenly speech habits' (see 2.5a, 3.1d).

(c) The precision with which speakers unconsciously conform to the linguistic models which they have adopted in pronunciation (as in other areas of language) goes beyond what is required for efficient communcation (e.g. for the avoidance of ambiguity) (see 2.5a, 2.7b).

(d) All speakers, in all varieties, use pronunciations in fast speech which differ considerably from those used in slow, careful speech, and other aspects of the situation, such as its formality, may have similar effects. Rapid casual speech is skilled rather than 'slovenly' (see 2.3b, 2.7d, 3.1b).

(e) The analysis of pronunciation takes account of at least the following: phonetic features of vowels and consonants, the order in which these occur, and the larger patterns which they form (syllables, words, intonation patterns, etc.).

(f) Intonation does not only reflect the speaker's attitude, but is a particularly important indicator in spoken language of an utterance's structure, and also of its contribution to the discourse (see 3.2b).

(g) Intonation is regulated by norms which vary from variety to variety. Children start to learn the intonation patterns of their community's variety in the first year of life.

3.2. *Writing*

(a) Written language reflects a linguistic analysis in terms of categories (e.g. sentence, letter) some of which are not related simply or directly to categories needed for spoken language (see 1d).

(b) The skills needed for successful reading and writing are partly distinct from those needed for speaking and listening, and the relevant linguistic

patterns are also partly different. Such skills and patterns have to be learned as part of the acquisition of literacy, so the latter involves much more than learning to spell and to recognize single words (see 2.7c, d).

(c) The English writing system is only one of many such systems, each of which is amenable to objective and systematic study. Not all writing systems are alphabetic, and not all alphabetic systems are like English in the way they relate writing to other parts of language structure (see 2.1a).

(d) Spelling is only one part of the English writing system, which also includes, e.g., punctuation, handwriting and the numerals (see 3.3c).

(e) Spelling is probably the most immutable part of English, and the part where prescriptivism is most easily accepted by linguists (see 1a, 2 4c).

(f) English spelling does not reflect RP any more directly than it does other accents, so it is no easier for RP speakers to learn (see 2.3j).

3.3. *Vocabulary*

(a) The relation between the meaning of a word and the pronunciation (or spelling) of its root is usually arbitrary (see 2.6e, 3.4d).

(b) Items of vocabulary ('lexical items') include not only single words but also idioms (combinations of words whose meaning cannot be derived from the meanings of the individual words) and other longer structures such as clichés (see 3.5b).

(c) The specification of a lexical item must refer to at least the following types of information: its pronunciation (and its spelling, if the language is a written one), its meaning, the syntactic and semantic contexts in which it may occur, and how inflectional morphology affects its form (at least if it is irregular in this respect) (see 2.6d, 3.2d).

(d) There is no known limit to the amount of detailed information of all such types which may be associated with a lexical item. Existing dictionaries, even large ones, only specify lexical items incompletely.

(e) The syntactic information about a lexical item may be partially given in terms of word-classes, some of which correspond closely to traditional parts of speech. However, a complete syntactic specification of a lexical item needs much more information than can be given in terms of a small set of mutually exclusive word-classes like the parts of speech (see 1d).

(f) Many of the boundaries between word-classes are unclear even when defined by linguists.

(g) Many lexical items have meanings which cannot be defined without reference to the culture of the language's speakers. Such items are an important source of information for children in learning the culture of their community.

(h) Individuals may vary greatly in the extent to which their vocabulary covers particular areas of experience, and also in the overall size of their vocabulary.

(i) It is very difficult to measure a person's vocabulary meaningfully, partly

because of the difference between active and passive vocabulary, partly because it is possible to know different amounts of detail about any given item, and partly because it is possible to know more vocabulary relevant to one area of experience than to another, so that measures based on just one kind of vocabulary do not give a sound basis for estimating the total vocabulary (see 2.2d, 3.3d, h).

3.4. *Syntax*

(a) The analysis of syntactic structure takes account of at least the following factors: the order in which words occur, how they combine to form larger units (phrases, clauses, sentences, etc), the syntactic classes to which the words belong (including those marked by inflectional morphology), and the specifically syntactic relations among the words or other units, such as the relations referred to by the labels 'subject' and 'modifier' (see 1d, 2.6d, 3.5b).

(b) Although English has little inflectional morphology, it has a complex syntax (i.e. it is not true that 'English has no grammar'). This is true of all dialects (see 2.3e, 2.6d).

(c) Syntax is particularly sensitive to register differences, so a child's use of syntactic constructions in the classroom may reflect only part of the total range of constructions that the child knows, and uses under other circumstances (see 2.3c, 2.5e).

(d) The relations between meanings and syntactic structures are less arbitrary than those between the meanings and pronunciations of single words. However, even this limited arbitrariness allows very different syntactic structures to be associated (either by different languages, or within the same language) with similar meanings, and vice versa (see 2.6e, 3.3a).

(e) Syntactic complexity is only one source of difficulty in understanding spoken or written language (see 2.7e, 3.2b).

3.5. *Meaning*

(a) The information conveyed by an utterance of a sentence on a particular occasion may cover many different types of 'meaning', relating to the conditions for the sentence's being true, the assumptions made by the speaker, the utterance's social function as a statement, a suggestion, a request, etc., and other factors (see 2.7a).

(b) Part of this information is the literal meaning of the sentence uttered, which reflects the meanings of the lexical items in it and the syntactic relations between them. Part of it, however, derives from the context in which the sentence is used (see 3.3b, 3.4a).

(c) To a greater extent than other parts of language structure, meaning may be negotiated by speakers and addressees, e.g. by defining terms or by modifying established meanings to suit special circumstances (see 2.4e).

(d) The meanings of lexical items, like other parts of language structure, change with time, and there is no reason to take the etymological meaning of a word as its true one, or indeed as part of its meaning at all (see 2.4a, f).

(e) There is no evidence that any language is any more 'logical' than any other (see 2.2f).

Richard Hudson
U.C.L.

2. Robert Phillipson & Tove Skutnabb-Kangas

AILA, sexism and racism

AILA is of course no more sexist or racist than society at large, but the AILA Congress at Lund (August 1981), despite impeccable Swedish organization, showed a lack of sensitivity on both these issues. It is therefore important to report back to the national associations, and to decide what policies can be evolved to combat sexist and racist problems which affect us all.

* * *

First, applied linguists and sexism. All 13 office-holders of AILA for 1981-1984, all thirteen of them, are male. Elected from among 1200 participants attending a conference with the theme 'Language and Society'! One proximate, but scarcely mitigating, cause for this imbalance is that if representatives of both halves of society, female and male, wish to be voted into office at the international level, they have in the first place to be elected nationally. This means that each national association needs to monitor carefully the relative proportion of members of either sex on the national committee. 3 females out of 10 on the British association is under-representation for females.

We assume that it is not necessary here to quote all the arguments in favour of greater equality between the sexes, but we can provide a Scandinavian-eye's-view. In several Scandinavian countries political parties have discussed measures to promote greater parity within the party: some major parties have adopted a policy which ensures that in all decision-making bodies the proportion of members of each sex should be equal (at least 40% of either sex). Several universities have discussed what measures can be taken to counteract male domination among university teaching staff, and some have instituted a policy of positive discrimination in favour of females in relation to new appointments. Jan Svartvik, the new president of AILA, is aware of the problem, and has written to the AILA Commission on Language and Sex as follows:

> I am concerned about the sex ratio of the new Bureau. (....) I believe the Swedish association has adopted a change of its statutes to the effect that there should be a regular man-woman variation among its presidents. If other national affiliates adopt a similar stand the new bureau will look very different. I will certainly do my best to work for more female participation.

How about BAAL? We suggest:-

—that the BAAL Executive Committee should discuss and adopt specific measures (such as those mentioned above) in order to ensure more equal participation by both sexes at the executive level, and that policy on this issue should be clarified by the time of the next AGM;

—that BAAL takes positive steps within AILA to further the same goal at the level of the international executive in good time before the AILA Congress at Brussels in 1984.

Secondly, on race. At Lund this issue came to a head because some African and other delegates objected to the presence of whites from South Africa at the Congress. They reacted strongly against a list in the programme in which the number of participants per country was published under the heading 'Countries represented at the conference'. The conference organizing committee announced that all participants attend as individuals and not as national representatives. The President and Secretary General of AILA issued the following statement:

> In compliance with resolutions passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations, the International Committee of AILA refused associate membership status, in 1979, to a South African institution concerned with applied linguistics. No application has ever been received from any national association of applied linguistics in South Africa.
>
> According to the Helsinki Agreement all persons have the basic human right to participate in or to withdraw from national and international meetings. AILA, while recognising this right of withdrawal, would regret very much the personal and social disruption such withdrawal might cause.

This statement did not however satisfy the Tanzanian delegates (sorry, individuals) and they left the conference. The majority of Africans remained, and the one white South African giving a paper was able to do so without disturbance. However, the confrontation raises important points of principle, and over

100 participants at the conference signed a petition requesting the organizing committee to send an official apology to the Tanzanians.

The vital question is what action BAAL and AILA can take in future.

Many BAAL members have worked in third world countries. It is fair to assume that virtually all are disgusted by apartheid. Is this then an opportunity for moral and political sympathy to be given teeth?

A succession of United Nations General Assembly resolutions over the past 20 years has called for a total embargo of South Africa, including cultural and scientific contacts. It is small comfort to realize that when it comes to crucial supplies of oil and armaments the South Africans (and until recently the Rhodesians) have been able to look after themselves. This has always been with the connivance of Western countries.

There is no doubt that whenever a South African is allowed to participate in international conferences, this provides a boost to the régime in Pretoria. Capital is made out of the event in a publication called 'South African Digest', which is distributed for propagandist purposes, and which notes with approval whenever South African individuals are accepted internationally.

For BAAL members the issue is whether scientific cooperation, such as world congresses, should be covered by the United Nations embargo. It is clearly AILA policy to enforce it so far as institutional allegiance is concerned. What about individuals? AILA cannot get entangled into any kind of assessment of whether any individual is for or against apartheid. That would be manifestly unworkable. A logical conclusion should therefore be a clear decision to extend the embargo to cover any individuals working in South Africa. The point must be to make a specific manifestation of policy vis-à-vis the South African government.

There is no risk of such a policy damaging blacks. The vast majority of black intellectuals and academics are unable to operate in South Africa and are in exile. Nor would it prevent determined whites who hold British or German passports from attending AILA congresses. But the policy would be much more than merely a gesture. It could have a significant symbolic

value for AILA members and South Africans.

A possible counter-argument is, South Africa yes, but what about Chile, Iran, Turkey, Israel? Where does one draw the line?

Fair enough, or rather foul enough, but that does not absolve us from acting when we can. There will be conflicting differences of opinion in relation to many countries, but there is a clear legal and moral case for implementing the United Nations embargo on South Africa.

It is ironical that the issue of race came to the forefront at the AILA congress in Lund, Sweden, because the Scandinavian governments have in fact tried to put the screws on South Africa. In 1978 they agreed on a joint programme of action to bring sporting and cultural contact with South Africa to a halt. To implement this, the Danish Foreign Ministry, for instance, has issued a directive to the effect that there should be no support from public funds for anyone employed by the state (e.g. university staff) for any kind of collaboration with South Africa, including the exchange of research information. As the purpose of the policy is to combat apartheid, the following are not covered by the ban: black, coloured and Asian organizations and institutions, the Rand Daily Mail and the Institute for Race Relations of Witwatersrand University. Danish experts insist that contact with South Africa is in no way protected by the Helsinki agreements. South Africa is a special case requiring a special policy. The Danish Universities Vice-Chancellors' Committee has expressed concern at the implications of this for individual researchers' academic freedom, but are basically in agreement with the principles and goals of this policy.

* * *

We call on the BAAL committee to act on this issue.

We suggest:-

— That the Executive Committee work for the exclusion from the next AILA conference (Brussels, 1984) of any individuals working in South Africa;

— That the Committee adopt a policy of not accepting as members of BAAL any individuals with academic links with South

Please turn to p.22

II NOTICES, NOTES, LETTERS, ETC.

NOTICES

Committee for Linguistics in Education

Mike RIDDLE, Chairman of CLIE, writes:

As many of you already know, John Rudd had to resign last year as Secretary of CLIE. He had been Secretary since the inception of the Committee and had also served one year as an elected member of BAAL's Executive Committee. Members of CLIE owe a debt of thanks to John for his initiative in organising the 1978 Seminar at his College at Bromsgrove and working so assiduously to establish the Committee. He organised the 1980 Seminar again at Bromsgrove and was, like the rest of us, looking forward to a continuation of our work at this April's Seminar.

Unfortunately, the April Seminar had to be cancelled because our numbers fell short of the break-even point. We were sorry to disappoint those members of BAAL who had shown so much interest in the issues to be discussed. One of the casualties of the cancellation has been CLIE's bank-balance. Up to now we have been self-financing to a very large extent, but now BAAL's Executive Committee has agreed to help us out by supporting, for a limited time, its three representatives on the Committee, in line with the support given by the other participating organisations.

We are obviously keen to re-launch the cancelled seminar and want to put together a programme that will meet current needs in linguistics in education. At our committee meetings in June and November this will be one of our main items of agenda.

We would welcome suggestions from readers of the Newsletter for themes and tasks for lectures and working-group sessions, as well as any contribution to the elaboration of the central issue, teachers' linguistic assumptions.

Perhaps I could take further advantage of the Editor's invitation to me to update readers on CLIE, by making an appeal to any members of BAAL who share CLIE's aims to participate in its activities. Included in this issue are two announcements about the development of linguistics-based language courses. We are keen to promote co-operation among teachers involved in these initiatives, and between them and your friendly neighbourhood linguist. Perhaps some readers would like to take up either or both of these invitations. These announcements (p.16) are followed by a list of the Committee's members and by a potted history of CLIE. These two items, like the announcements, can be reproduced to provide handouts for notice-boards and/or interested colleagues, which would help to make us better known.

One last point: CLIE's reply to the Draft National Criteria for English at O-level and CSE has been sent to the appropriate bodies, and copies are available from me (a 2nd class stamp would be a nice gesture). Our grading for the English Working Party's labours: A for Effort; E for Ability!

British Association for Applied Linguistics
Linguistics Association of Great Britain

Committee for Linguistics in Education

Two announcements

a) DEVELOPING LOCAL CONTACTS IN LINGUISTICS AND TEACHING

An increasing number of teachers in schools and colleges are providing language courses based on modern linguistics. It seems likely that some of these teachers, and others who are keen to include some linguistics in their teaching, might appreciate help from linguists in planning their courses. (CLIE is currently compiling a register of such teachers, with the aim of promoting co-operation between them.)

If any linguist is willing to offer help to teachers in this way, CLIE would be prepared to make the contacts by passing on names of teachers seeking advice and help. Please send your name etc. and any information about special interests to Mike Riddle, address below.

b) DEVELOPING CONTACTS IN LINGUISTICS AND TEACHING

Increasingly, teachers in schools and colleges are developing courses in language based on modern linguistics. CLIE is currently compiling a register of such courses with the aim of promoting co-operation and self-help amongst the teachers involved in them.

At the same time, CLIE is compiling a register of linguists who are willing to help teachers keen to enlarge the linguistics basis of their language courses.

Any teachers who are developing such courses (in reading, language development, modern languages, English or communication) are invited to send their names to CLIE, giving a brief description of their courses and adding whether they would like to be put in touch with a linguist. Please send your name etc. to Mike Riddle, address below, who will send you, if you wish, additional information about CLIE and its activities.

Chairman:
Mike Riddle
Senior Lecturer in Linguistics
Middlesex Polytechnic
Trent Park, Cockfosters
Herts EN4 0PT
Telephone 01 449 9691

Secretary:
Bill Littlewood
Department of Education
University College of Swansea
Hendrefoilan
Swansea SA2 7NP
Telephone 0792 201231

Members of the Committee for Linguistics in Education

Representatives of the British Association for Applied Linguistics.

1. John Mountford, 69 Glen Eyre Road, Southampton SO2 3LP.
2. W. Littlewood (secretary of CLIE), Dept. of Education, University College, Swansea SA2 7NB.
3. Mary Willes (Dr.), West Midlands College of HE, Gorway, Walsall, W.

Representatives of the Linguistics Association of Great Britain.

4. Connie Cullen, Dept. of Linguistics, University of Hull, Hull, HU6 7RX.
5. Richard Hudson (Dr.), Dept. of Phonetics and Linguistics, University College, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.
6. Mike Riddle (Chairman of CLIE), Faculty of Humanities, Middlesex Polytechnic, Trent Park, Barnet, Herts EN4 OPT.
   * Member of the CLIE Working Party on the DNCE.

Representatives of the Department of Education and Science.

7. Ron Arnold, Staff HMI-Teacher Training (Curriculum), Department of Education and Science, York Road, London SE1 7PH.
8. Peter Gannon, HMI, Dept. of Education and Science, New London House, London Road, Chelmsford.
   * Member of the CLIE Working Party on the DNCE.
9. Sally Twite, HMI, Department of Education and Science, 8 Marshall Street, London W1.

Representatives of the National Association for the Teaching of Englis

10. Arthur Brookes, School of Education, Durham University, Durham City DH1 1SZ.
11. Derrick Sharp, Dept. of Education, University College of Swansea, Hendrefoilan, Swansea SA2 7NB.

Representative of the National Association of Advisers and Inspectors of English.

12. David Hoffman, Senior Adviser, Bolton Metropolitan Borough, Education Dept., Civic Centre, Bolton BL1 1JW.

Co-options.

13. John Rudd (formerly secretary of CLIE), 22 Ritherden Road, London, SW17.
14. Geoffrey Thornton, English Inspector, ILEA, County Hall, London
    * Member of the CLIE Working Party in the DNCE.

Minutes Secretary: Marilyn Rowland, Dept. of English Studies, Hendon College, London NW4.

Appendix B

Committee for Linguistics in Education

The Origin of C.L.I.E. At the final session of the 1978 Bromsgrove Seminar on 'Linguistics in Schools' organised jointly by BAAL and LAGB, members were keen that the progress made should not be allowed to lapse. A recommendation that a 'language steering committee' should be set up was sent to BAAL and LAGB, who gave it their support, and the present committee, CLIE, came into being.

Membership Three members from each of the two sponsoring associations form the nucleus of CLIE. From the outset, the DES has been represented by two members of HM Inspectorate, and the National Association for the teaching of English by two of its committee members. The National Association of Advisers and Inspectors of English is represented by one member. Additional co-options are envisaged, and special invitations to meetings are allowed for.

Purposes The central aim of CLIE, as expressed at Bromsgrove 1978 and clarified at Bromsgrove 1980, is to foster an active interest in linguistics in schools, both as a subject in its own right and as a resource for teachers in other subject areas, such as reading, language development, English and modern languages. It is accepted that this aim has implications for the development of courses for teacher training, where CLIE wishes to make a contribution.

Activities Much of the Committee's time has been devoted to the organisation of Seminars, which bring together teachers, linguists and educationalists who share CLIE's aims. However, other activities have been initiated by CLIE: the preparation for an A level syllabus in Linguistics; the publication of articles on linguistics and teaching; the compilation of registers of linguists, teachers and advisers seeking to co-operate on a local basis; the re-iteration, in the field of public debate, of a linguistics approach to language education.

Publicity Announcements of CLIE's activities are carried in the newsletters of BAAL, LAGB and NATE, and in the British Linguistics Newsletter. Contacts are also maintained with the United Kingdom Reading Association, the National Council for Languages in Education, the Association for Teachers of the Social Sciences, the Schools Council and with the Centre for Information in Language Teaching and Research. Occasional papers and reports are held by CLIE and are available from Mike Riddle at the address given in Appendix A.

NOTES

Association for French Language Studies (AFLS) Carol SANDERS (Chairman) writes: The Association was formed just over a year ago, and is open to all those with pedagogic or research interests in French language-teaching and French linguistics in higher education. It operates through regional groups, national workshops and conferences, and a newsletter (three times a year). Forthcoming conference:-

'L'enseignement du français et les média'

Tues.21 - Thurs.23 September at the University of Lancaster.

AFLS would like to collaborate with BAAL, e.g. on a seminar of mutual interest, perhaps one weekend. The BAAL/AFLS link-person is Joan BUTTERWORTH (Manchester Poly).

The Membership Secretary is Dr Gertrud AUB-BUSCHER (Univ. of Hull Language Teaching Centre, Hull, HU6 7RX). Annual subscription (incl. newsletter): Individuals £2.00; Institutions £10.00.

*** I believe Carol is being modest about the part she played in the formation of AFLS, and I have slipped in the word 'Chairman', I hope correctly. (See also under Members' Activities)
— JDM

LAGB Employment Information Exchange I have received Employment Information Sheet no.2 (April 1982) from Marion Owen (see N/L14 p.42). In it she gives some feedback about adult education schemes and courses (arising from Inf. Sheet no.1) and reprints a short passage under the heading 'Linguistics for everyone' (from Adult Education, March 1982) which, in view of the contents of this issue of the Newsletter, should give us food for thought. There is also an informal 'Employment Registration form', and, among other useful items, a bit about the NCILT (National Centre for Industrial Language Training, Southall) where the European Science Foundation is sponsoring a project on immigrant language acquisition (see N/L14 p.24) and a bit more about Pat WRIGHT and the applicability of linguistics in the design of forms and other administrative and instructional materials (see N/L14 p.43).

I am sure there is room for collaboration here between LAGB and BAAL. I don't know how many members of BAAL are unemployed, or no longer 'linguistically employed',—but I would do if they would all write to me or ring me! This would be a valuable first step. I do know that both John RUDD (see p.15 for a tribute to John as Secretary of CLIE) and I were made redundant as a result of contraction in teacher-training. John is employed again, but not 'linguistically'. That starts the list off with two names! Please let me know of any others --in confidence, of course.

For Marion Owen's address, see Robin Fawcett's letter, p.20.
— JDM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir, In a letter in the last issue I wrote to make the point --which I was surprised to find still needed making-- that any list of linguistics courses in higher education that was confined to the universities was incomplete; many polytechnics have such courses, and so do a significant number of institutes and colleges of higher education.

It is a pleasure, therefore, to welcome the 'Directory of Courses in Applied Linguistics in British Universities and British Institutions of Higher Education', compiled by the Association's Secretary, John Roberts, and distributed in the BAAL mailing of Autumn 1981, and to see also, from the LAGB mailing just received, that Marion Owen is compiling a list, on behalf of the Linguistics Association, of 'all places where linguistics is taught'.

May I urge that we should ALL --universities, polytechnics, and colleges, in Great Britain/the U.K.-- co-operate in this venture? Marion, who runs the LAGB Employment Information Exchange, requires information particularly on non-university courses. Her address is:-

Dr M.L.Owen, Dept. of Linguistics, Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge, CB3 9DA.

Yours sincerely,

Robin P. Fawcett,
Dept. of Behavioural & Communication Studies
The Polytechnic of Wales

(18.5.82)

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

LACUS Forum 1982 Robin FAWCETT will be giving the Featured Talk at this year's annual Forum of LACUS (the Linguistic Association of Canada and the United States) to be held at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A., 2 - 6 August. His title will be: 'Language as a semiological system: a re-interpretation of Saussure'.

A propos of Saussure, Carol SANDERS (see NOTES) gives as her main publications the following:

Cours de Linguistique Générale de Saussure (Hachette, Collection 'Lire Aujourd'hui', 1979)

Also: (as Editor) Beyond A-level in the teaching of French (CILT, 1981)

and two papers, 'Diglossia in British schools' and 'Foreign language teaching in Britain' in T.Pateman (ed.), Languages for life (Occasional Paper of University of Sussex Education Area, forthcoming Autumn 1982).

Kevin DURKIN (Kent) has kindly sent the Research Overview, of an investigation into children's understanding of spatial terms, which is reproduced on p.21.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Children's Understanding of Everyday Spatial Terms in Mathematical and Musical Contexts: An Experimental and Training Programme.

Project Director:

Dr. Kevin Durkin,
Lecturer in Social Psychology,
Social Psychology Research Unit,
University of Kent at Canterbury.

Research Fellow: Mr. Robert Crowther

Research Assistant: Mrs. Beatrice Shire

Source of funds: The Leverhulme Trust, £54,900.

Additional support: Social Science Research Council: Linked Research Studentship.

Duration: 1982 - 1985

The project, which commenced on January 1st 1982, applies developments in psycholinguistics and social psychological theory to an understanding of children's acquisition of musical and mathematical terminology. In particular, it is concerned with the ways in which children learn (or fail to learn) to use familiar terms such as *up, down, above, below, higher, lower,* etc. in mathematical and musical contexts. An early understanding of these everyday terms in their specialised mathematical and musical applications is fundamental to a child's progress in both of these important areas of education.

Although children are known to be reasonably proficient with these terms in their everyday spatial usage by the end of their infant school years, there is strong evidence that they are associated with learning difficulties in musical (particularly pitch-related) contexts. Recent work in mathematical development has also drawn increasing attention to the importance of language in developing mathematical skills.

This project is an extensive investigation of polysemic development in the spatial-musical-mathematical domains. Aspects of both production and comprehension will be tested, the former in two longitudinal studies of respectively, mathematical and musical language development, and the latter by means of a series of experiments using techniques of developmental psycholinguistics. The contribution of social interaction to the developments is a central interest. The applicability of the findings to problems of mathematical and musical education is a primary consideration.

Continued from p.14

Africa – the "List of members" just published (May 1982) documents that there are BAAL members all over the world, but none in South Africa;

—That, if the Committee cannot agree on adopting the above two suggestions, the issue is discussed at the next AGM.

Robert Phillipson
Tove Skutnabb-Kangas

Skibby, Denmark

My apologies to Robert and Tove for the above over-run!

If the Newsletter pleases, or if it displeases, —if you have contributions, ideas. suggestions, news or views, or questions, do not hesitate to write or ring or call in in on:

John Mountford
Editor

69 Glen Eyre Road
Southampton
SO2 3NP

Tel: 0703-767373

Copydates: N/L16 – Saturday 9.10.82
N/L17 – Saturday 29. 1.83