# The British Association for Applied Linguistics

## No. 24 N E W S L E T T E R Autumn 1985

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The main feature in this our 24th Newsletter is a set of responses to the DES document "English from 5 to 16". These are mainly aproprosatory in tone. The need for such a statement seems to have been fairly widely felt. Writers have noted however a number of inconsistencies, ambiguities and points which need further development.

There are in this edition, we regret, no reviews. We hope to remedy this in No. 25. Any suggestions for reviews should be sent to one of the editors at the addresses which appear below.

I would like to offer my thanks to Euan Reid, my co-editor Paul Meara, and above all to Magdalen Meads for all the invaluable help and patience extended to me during the production of this newsletter. Magdalen should be particularly commended for battling with an aililing, if not failing, Brain (our machine not her own).

Copy for our next edition should be sent as early as possible to one of the two editors whose addresses appear below.

I would stress that anything of interest relating to matters Applied Linguistics should be considered as potential material for the Newsletter and should be sent post haste to one of the editors.

John Norrish
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University of London Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way
London WC1B 0AL

Paul Meara
Department of Applied Linguistics
Birkbeck College
University of London
43 Gordon Square
London WC1H OPD

1. FROM BAIL 1985

1.1 Chris Brumfit has now retired from the position of Chairperson. Here is his closing report.

What I propose to do very briefly here is to list the major activities of the last three years, in order to indicate the areas of progress, and where work still remains to be done. I have been lucky during my term of office in having an exceptionally hard-working and pleasant body of people as fellow-officers and committee members. Particularly, I should mention the two secretaries in this period, John Roberts and Euan Reid, who took on the heaviest burden of work the Association offers, and Pam Grunwell, who as Treasurer reformed the finances of the Association.

We decided in 1982 that it would be worthwhile to look systematically at the whole organisation of the Association. It had by then been running for 15 years, and had established many patterns appropriate for smallish associations, but difficult when members exceeded 400.

1. A review of the work being performed by officers made it clear that unrealistic demands were being made on their time. Consequently, some aspects of the routine administration and mailings have been contracted out to CILT, in order to increase efficiency with the more mechanical aspects, and leave the Secretary free to operate more on policy matters. At the same time, an enormous amount of ground-clearing was performed by Euan Reid and Janet Price in establishing exactly who of our members were paying what subscription, and clarifying the mailing list. Much of the administration is now on word-processor, and routines have been established for most operations.

2. Various constitutional amendments have been made or proposed: the gender bias of the constitution has been corrected, the privileges of Associate Membership clarified, and the process of applying for membership simplified.

3. We have begun to address ourselves to relations with AILA. British Academy support for part of our AILA subscription has at last been obtained, and we have tried to establish systematic liaison with each of the AILA scientific commissions. Since I was elected one of the Vice-presidents of AILA last year, I have been chairing committees on relations between the central AILA body and organisers of Congresses, and on the finances of AILA. Both of these are areas where there has been dissatisfaction in the past, and it is hoped that policies will develop to improve matters.

4. The procedure for the Annual Meeting has been formalised somewhat, with abstracts requested in advance to be vetted, scholarships (with partial support from generous grants from the Bell Educational Trust) to students reporting on interesting research, and more varied modes of presentation. The proceedings are also being published from now on. It is also gratifying to note that offers for the Annual Meeting venue are now accepted up to 1989, and we are waiting for offers for 1990.
5. We have had some difficulty replacing John Mountford’s excellent editorship of the Newsletter, but recent issues have nonetheless been of high quality. At present, plans are for groups of people from the same area to take on the editing. John Norris will coordinate for a London-based group for the next few issues, and offers of help for now or in other centres later will be greatly appreciated. Our editorial involvement with Applied Linguistics has increased, and we provide annual, formal feedback to Oxford University Press. And we have started a series of proceedings of Annual Meeting papers, as I mentioned earlier.

6. Other areas of administrative tidying up that we have taken in hand include consultation on establishment of a design policy, organisation of the BAAL archive at Birkbeck College under Paul Meara, clarification of the constitution of the Committee for Professional Development in conjunction with the University’s permanent funding for its activities (this is our joint committee with LAGB), and the establishment of a systematic review of all aspects of BAAL activity in the various committee meetings throughout the year.

7. An important part of BAAL’s activities has been response to official policy papers. The DES received a response to the paper on foreign languages in the school curriculum, and a large dossier of responses on the English 5-16 curriculum pamphlet. Responses have also been sent to NCLE and other documents.

8. We have continued to offer small sums for research support, and to assist publications that would not otherwise be easily produced. The procedure for the former has been formalised.

9. After a slight hiatus in the number of specialist seminars being organised, we are now richly endowed with promises and fixed seminars: there have been two in the 1985 summer vacation, two are arranged for the next academic year, and at least two more are at an early stage of planning. These are the mainstay of BAAL professional activity, and further offers will be very welcome.

10. A general policy of international contact has been pursued. A successful joint seminar was held with the Irish association, and informal talks are exploring possibilities of a joint Annual Meeting. We have tried to maintain funding for a number of overseas visits and visits to us by foreign scholars, and have had generous support from the British Council, the Goethe Institute, the Fergason Institute of English, and others. Nonetheless, we still lack reliable automatic support for the one or two overseas scholars we would like to invite to our Annual Meetings, though in practice we are exchanging with the Germans, and the number of overseas people attending our own meetings has increased.

11. We have tried to maintain close liaison with our membership, even when individuals cannot attend the Annual Meeting. Instead, a questionnaire went out to all members on general policy issues earlier this year, and we circulated all Associate Members past and present to find out their needs before clarifying their constitutional position. However, it is clear that not all are tapping our full membership potential. We tried this year sending application forms to all the major applied linguistic masters courses, and the next few months should show whether this strategy breeds results. If we can increase our membership substantially without losing the intimacy and good atmosphere that is characteristic of our meetings we shall provide a great service to what is now a mature profession.

12. But there are still a number of areas where improvement of service is necessary, and a number of areas where I have failed to persuade other members to accept hobby-horses of my own. I would like to conclude by mentioning some examples of both these categories.

I think we are still unclear about what exactly we mean by being the British Association for Applied Linguistics. Clearly we perform a useful role as an arena for theoretical discussion of language, but many of our members are not primarily interested in that field. The psychosociolinguistic bases of language acquisition, translation, and language therapy are only three other areas which appear in recent or forthcoming seminars. We need to be sure that there is not too heavy a bias towards language teaching simply because of the accidents of early recruitment. And we also need to be sure that we have a constant relationship with linguistics proper, even if we acknowledge that problems of application are complex and difficult to chart precisely. The forthcoming seminar at Exeter may help us to redefine the linguistics part of applied linguistics more clearly. Certainly we should aim, in my view, at being inclusive rather than exclusive, for the only organization in Britain centrally concerned with the theoretical and practical issues arising out of language as a social and personal practice.

I think, too, that we should be more conscious than we have been about the composition of our membership. In a profession with a higher proportion of women than most, our work has still led to a succession of male chairpersons (though I should add that the relative numbers of offices and committees members should be fairly to favourably with most organisations). Further, it is increasingly true that applied linguistic work is being carried out by members of minority language-speaking communities; BAAL must ensure that its membership reflects this fact if it is to speak for the many social and political aspects of language that require current comment. Similarly, with language and ethnicity a major concern of many of our members, we need not the black members. At the same time, of course, it would be much easier for us to recruit in these groups if there were more people appointed to university and college posts with such backgrounds.

Within the field of language teaching specifically, we need to reflect on the language awareness movement. This seems achieving a momentum of its own, but since it is concerned primarily with the development of metalinguistic concepts in school, BAAL should have a unique role to play here. I would like — without I hope prejudicing the policies of my successor — to see the profession increasingly clear about its membership and their activities, in the public as well as the private sphere. For this reason, I regret failing to persuade fellow committee members of the necessity for a BAAL register of...
members with limited "Who's Who"-type entries, similar to those held by other professional associations. Such identification of expertise and background available for public scrutiny seems to me an important part of professional consciousness. I also think that we should increase our international contact-systems, and work to achieve a strong position in the AILA commissions and in its other activities. Here it is apparent that our democratic procedures work against us, for there are many officers in AILA who have held high posts in their national associations for more than a decade, and have had a long time to establish a power-base in AILA. BAAL's policy of sending a new delegate every three years has not been the best way of gaining a major say in AILA's organisation. But there are signs that AILA wants to reform itself, and BAAL should certainly remain committed to the major international applied linguistic organisation. There are other ways also of cementing international contacts. BAAL has many overseas members, probably more than any other AILA affiliate; we also ask foreign scholars to our meetings regularly, and are now beginning to hold more joint seminars with overseas AILA affiliates. I think, though, that we could perhaps consider a more permanent committee on policy, especially overseas policy, to include members (preferably with good Franchi) who will stay with AILA beyond the normal three-year terms of our office-holding.

I think we should give more thought still to our publicity. In all the years of my involvement with BAAL, I have been consistently appalled by the lack of interest in language matters even in the serious academic and educational press. I believe that there are signs of this changing, though, as the Swann Report showed, there is a great need for general education in this area. Perhaps BAAL should consider writing articles for the general serious press - New Society, The Spectator, THES, for example - in order to get across important points on policy matters.

However, there is a risk that too much hopeful prediction will tread on the toes of the next chairperson. What I do have to say is that the people I have worked with as fellow-officers and committee members have been the nicest and most efficient group of people I have ever been on a committee with, and whereas most chairing is an unmitigated chore, holding this position for BAAL has been consistently enjoyable, challenging and rewarding. I wish my successor all the pleasure that I have had.

1.2 Euan Reid reports on the last year from the Secretary's perspective

1. An agreement had been concluded with CILT for them to act as BAAL's agent in the despatch of mailings to members, and in routine matters relating to subscription maintenance and renewal. It was to run in the first place for a two year period which began on 1 June 1985. The cost will be £2.40 per annum per new or amended entry on the list, and £2.00 per unchanged entry carried into a new year.

2. In the course of the year three mailings to members had been despatched, including two BAAL newsletters, the first issue of the new AILA Review, details of BAAL (and other) seminars and Annual Meeting, our 1985 List of Members, offers of discounted subscriptions to various journals, details of other publications, of AILA and so on. The last of these mailings came to members directly from CILT.

3. With the help of the Membership Secretary, a new publicity leaflet and application form had been produced. The information on the new form might form the basis of a Register of Members at a later stage.

4. A BAAL Archive had been set up in Birkbeck College's Department of Applied Linguistics, and would be available to any member, or other interested person, on application to the Secretary.

5. The first award had been made in the course of the year under our new Small Research Grant scheme; it went to Duska Johnson, University of Surrey, to assist publication of the final research report on her project Error Gravity: Communicative Effect of Language Errors in Academic Writing.


7. Design proposals for BAAL papers and publications had been considered by the Executive Committee, but it had been decided not to proceed at the moment.

8. It had been agreed to apply for affiliation to the Association of Learned Societies in the Social Sciences, but not to a proposed new federation of Modern Languages Teachers Associations.

9. Responses to DES Documents English 5-16 have been elicited and forwarded, and to the Swann Report are being prepared, as is a response to the latest proposals on the future of CILT.

10. Thanks were expressed to all fellow Executive Committee members, and especially to the retiring Chairperson, C.J. Brumfit.
2. REPORTS AND NOTES ON TWO SEMINARS AND A CONFERENCE

2.1 Rod Ellis reports on the seminar he organised in Ealing.

Contextual Variability and Second Language Acquisition at Ealing College of Higher Education (10-12 September 1985)

Background

The Seminar was supported by financial grants from Pergamon Institute of English and the British Association for Applied Linguistics (I).

Aims

The aims of the Seminar were to examine:

1. methods for investigating interlanguage variability
2. the linguistic and situational determinants of interlanguage variability
3. the role of variability in second language acquisition
4. the significance of interlanguage variability studies for language teaching and testing.

The concept of contextual variability in second language acquisition was intentionally defined broadly to include both skill aspects of learning (e.g. reading) and input factors.

It was also envisaged that the Seminar would provide a forum for bringing together researchers in the field of second language acquisition and practitioners in the field of language teaching.

Format

The format of the Seminar was as follows:

1. Summaries of written papers presented by the authors of the papers.
2. Oral responses to the papers by invited discussants, to whom the papers had been sent in advance of the Seminar.
3. Plenary discussion of points raised in the papers.

Papers

A total of sixteen papers were presented at the Seminar. These covered the main aims of the Seminar and were organised, as far as possible, to reflect a progression from research to pedagogical issues.

There was one keynote address by an invited speaker, Elaine Tarone, University of Minnesota.

Social Events

There were two social events organised:

1. Wine and snacks on Tuesday 10 September.
2. A buffet meal on Wednesday 11 September.

Accommodation

Accommodation was provided at the Ealing YMCA, which is adjacent to the College. Approximately 20 of the Seminar participants used this accommodation.

Evaluation

1. Attendance

The Seminar was well supported. Attendance at individual sessions varied from a maximum of 60 to a minimum of 30. Most sessions were well attended.

2. Content and Quality of Papers

The content of the papers reflected the broad aims of the Seminar. The papers included reports on empirical research, both quantitative and qualitative, and more theoretical, argumentative papers. It was difficult to assess the quality of the papers from the oral summaries provided at the Seminar, but the initial impression from a reading of many of them was that a fairly high standard was maintained.

3. Format

The chosen format led to a rather dense and demanding programme. In general, the seminar participants appeared to appreciate the opportunity to hear a dual response to an issue (i.e. from the authors of the papers and the invited discussants). There was, however, no opportunity to consider the papers in depth, as only oral summaries were given, and inadequate opportunity to discuss each paper within the allocated time schedule. The main achievement of the Seminar was perhaps to offer participants insights into the range of issues involved in viewing second language acquisition as a variable phenomenon, which could be taken up later, according to individual interest.

In retrospect, an improvement would have been to have a less dense programme (which inevitably intruded into tea and coffee breaks) and to provide more time for discussion of key issues, perhaps by setting aside sessions specifically for this purpose. Another improvement would have been to circulate full copies of the papers before the Seminar. Experience of trying to ensure that discussants received papers in sufficient time to prepare comments, suggests that general circulation of papers prior to the Seminar would have been impractical. Such a format would only be possible with a smaller number of participants.

Note

1. The grants from Pergamon and BAAI were spent on the guest speaker's air fare from the USA. This speaker, Elaine Tarone, was also invited to give a plenary address at the BAAI Annual Meeting in Edinburgh (13-15 September 1985).
2.2 Bill Littlewood reports on the Communicative Grammar Seminar he organised in Bath.

Report on BAAL Seminar on Learning Grammar as an Instrument for Communication in a Foreign Language at the University of Bath, 8-10 July 1985

The seminar was attended by about fifty participants with a wide variety of interests within the field of foreign and second language teaching. This variety was felt to be a considerable asset since it led to much cross-fertilisation of ideas and ensured a rich exploration of topics during discussion.

The seminar opened on Monday 8 July at 3.00 p.m. Four papers were presented on the first day:

David Little and David Singleton: 'The role of "grammar" in language teaching: will learners be helped by what they think they need?'

Michael Swan: 'Grammar or grammars?'

Margaret Rogers: 'What does it mean to "know" a grammatical rule?'

Eva Paneth and Bill Dodd: 'A receptive grammar for functional German'

The second day was taken up by eight papers in five sessions:

Pauline Rea: 'How does grammatical competence relate to communicative competence? Some models and some data.'

Meriel Bloor and Tom Bloor: 'Alternative syllabus or alternative methods: teaching grammar for specific communicative tasks.'

N.S. Prabhu: 'Guided and unguided grammar construction.'

Keith Johnson: 'Cognitive skill acquisition and the teaching of grammar.'

Anita Pincas: 'Sentence patterns and their meanings.'

Ian Mason: 'Communicative grammar within the SULFA Lyon a la une course: a corpus-based approach to the grammar of discourse.'

Margaret Lang: 'Teaching communication and grammar: Anu Virkkunen, Leena Koskiminen and Anna Mauranen: 'Teaching English abbreviated clauses.'

On the final morning there were two papers:

Ulrike Meinhof: 'Meditator or stumbling block? Grammar between text and speech act.'

Roger Bowers: 'Grammar as topic.'

In the final session there was general discussion of issues. A high priority was felt to be the need to coordinate research efforts.

The papers at the seminar were of high quality in both content and presentation. They stimulated lively discussion which was all the more enjoyable because it took place in an unconstrained atmosphere. Domestic arrangements went smoothly, aided by the efficiency and cooperation of the conference services at the University of Bath.

Bill Littlewood

2.3 Tom Bloor gives his impressions of the first International Conference of SEAL in Woodford.

IMAGES AND HEMISPHERES
(The SEAL First International Conference)

A man stands on the platform; he is a man of considerable stature but with a comic touch, a man of substance seen through the eyes of Dickens, illustrator, Phil. He is selling a little booklet for a dollar a time, or, if you haven't a dollar, for a pound. Since this is Woodford and not Gaithersburg, Maryland, most of us have pounds. This is one memory I retain of my long weekend in Woodford: a tall, portly man in a grey three-piece suit with a rotary club lapel badge, one capacious hand dealing out booklets like cards from a diminishing deck, the other clutching a growing wad of banknotes.

When I close my eyes, I see W C Fields as snape-oil merchant: "Just one dollar, folks. This amazing potion from a recipe revealed to me by Sitting Bull himself will remove warts, lumbago, diarrhoea and gonorrhoea. Rubbed on the scalp it cures baldness; properly applied elsewhere it removes unwanted hair."

The image is probably somehow related to the figures for I had just undergone a session of "image-streaming" under his direction. This involves simply closing your eyes and describing to a partner what you "see" behind your eyelids. It is supposed to develop connections between the right and left hemispheres of the brain so that "even the trivial things around you you discover are charged with significant meaning, history and colour and interest, and your entire living becomes one great rich exhilarating (sic) 'A-ha!'" My idiosyncratic visions are no doubt yet another example of the complex networks of memory nexuses of which Stavich has spoken for what we have here is certainly no snake-oil cure-all but a scientific contribution to the field of applied psychology, a document persuasively entitled "An Easy Way to Increase Your Intelligence and to Profoundly Improve Your Own Insightfulness" and subtitled "Introducing a Major Accessway to Your Own Resources Featuring the 'Ten/Ten Test'". It is published by Psychogenics Press, Maryland, USA, and we are getting it at half price, special conference rate.

The author is none other than the big man on the platform, Dr Win Wenger, founder of "Project Renaissance", internationally recognised authority on the "Limbic System as Source of Genius" and
Friday 26 March to breakfast on Monday 29 March 1987.

Venue:

The opening sessions will be held at Manchester Metropolitan University, The University of Manchester's new Manchester Metropolitan Conference Centre, Spinningfields, Manchester M1 2TF.

The aim of the conference is to present a forum for industry and commerce to discuss the common themes of production, management and technology.

The conference is open to all interested parties and features a comprehensive programme of business-related events.

The conference will be held at the Manchester Metropolitan Conference Centre, Spinningfields, Manchester M1 2TF.

Participants will have the opportunity to network with other conference attendees and to discuss the latest developments in their respective fields.

The conference will feature a range of keynote speakers, panels, and workshops.

Workshops will cover a range of topics including:

- Supply chain management
- Customer relationship management
- Innovation and technology
- Leadership and management

The conference will conclude with a gala dinner, where attendees can network and enjoy a night of entertainment.

For further information, please contact the conference organizers at conference@mmc.ac.uk.
Charges

The all-inclusive fee of £75.00 includes a conference booking fee of £10, all meals, accommodation, and transport from and to the railway station at Exeter St David's.

There is a 10% discount for members of EURALEX and DSNA. Some financial assistance may be given to those participants whose institution cannot meet the full cost attendance, and in exceptional cases a contribution to travel may be possible.

The Seminar fee (due by 31 October and refundable until 31 December 1985) should be paid by means of (sterling or Euro) cheque, postal money order, or bank transfer to "Dictionary Research Centre, University of Exeter". Overseas participants should add £5.00 to cover bank transfer charges.

Deadlines

for Abstracts 30 June 1985
for Registration 31 October 1985
for Papers 31 December 1985

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TESOL 1986

The British Council is offering a limited number of Travel grants to contribute towards the cost of participants' travel to TESOL 86. Eligibility will depend on acceptance of paper and attendance at the whole of the conference. Applications (by 31 December) for the attention of:

Mrs Rose Smith
Specialist Tours Dept
The British Council
65 Davies Street
LONDON W1Y 2AA

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Fifth Nordic Conference of Applied Linguistics

This will be held at Jyväskyla, from June 4-7, 1986

Details from APinLA, Dept of English,
University of Jyväskyla, 40100 JYVÄSKYLÄ, Finland

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ON THE AILA SCIENTIFIC COMMISSIONS

BAAL is trying to revive links with the Scientific Commissions. There follows the list of guidelines to these commissions and secondly the entire list of commissions.

5.1 Guidelines on the Scientific Commissions of AILA

Adopted by the International Committee in Zagreb
30 August 1980

1. Objectives
AILA's Scientific Commissions seek to promote research in addition to gathering and disseminating information in their respective fields.

2. Fields of activity
The field of activity of a Scientific Commission is delimited by the International Committee which is responsible for the creation and dissolution of the Commissions as well as for the appointment of their convenors.

3. Forms of activity
The forms of activity of a Scientific Commission include the following:
(a) the organisation of colloquia, symposia, seminars and other scholarly gatherings, either individually or in collaboration with other Scientific Commissions or other organisations;
(b) the publication, in the AILA Bulletin, of reports of research;
(c) the dissemination of information.

4. Term of Office
The term of office for convenors of Scientific Commissions is three years and is renewable.

5. Convenors
The convenors decide, in agreement with the membership, on the appropriate means of working towards their Commission's goals. Each February they report on activities of the preceding year to the International Committee.

6. Relations with other bodies
1. Coordination of Scientific Commissions
The link between the Scientific Commissions and the International Committee is maintained through the Scientific Commission coordinators, who report on the work of the Commissions at each meeting of the International Committee.

2. National affiliates
Each Commission establishes and maintains contact with AILA's national affiliates in developing its network. The national affiliates are invited to appoint a correspondent for each Commission.

3. International Congresses
At the time of the International congresses of AILA each Commission organises, in cooperation with the Congress Organising Committee, an open meeting in order to discuss its research topics and its programme of activities.

7. Financing
Each Commission finances its own activities.

8. Members
Members of Scientific Commissions must be members of AILA.

Note: The foregoing Guidelines grew out of a proposal submitted by an ad hoc committee consisting of Jos Nivette, Jacques Girard, Helene Ruet and Ranko Bugarski. A French version was subsequently prepared by Jos Nivette, which formed the basis of the present English text, prepared by Ranko Bugarski.

5.2 AILA Scientific Commissions 1984-1987

Convenors of AILA Scientific Commissions

1. Adult Language Teaching
Prof. Dr Albert Rausch
Universität des Saarlandes 66
Saarbrücken Fachr. 8.2
West Germany

2. Applied Computational Linguistics
Prof. Antonio Zampolli
Laboratorio di Linguistica Computazionale del CNR
Via S Maria 36
I-56100 Pisa, Italy

3. Child Language
Prof. Dr Els Dokaar
Sprachwissenschaftliches Seminar
Universität Hamburg
Von Melle Park 6
D-2000 Hamburg 13, WRD

4. Contrastive Linguistics and Error Analysis
Prof. Dr Gerhard Nickel
Institut fur Linguistik: Anglistik
Universität Stuttgart
Postfach 560, 700 Stuttgart 1
West Germany

5. Discourse Analysis
Dr John Regan
Institute of Linguistic Studies
Claremont Graduate School
900 North College Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711, USA
6. Educational Technology and Language Learning
Prof. Norman P Davies
Department of Language and Literature
University of Linkoping
Sweden

7. Language and Education in Multilingual Settings
Ms Tove Skutnabb-Kangas
Roskilde University
PO Box 260
DK-4000, Roskilde
Denmark

8. Language and Sex
Ms Dede Brouwer
Women Studies University of Utrecht
Institute A.W. de Groot for General Linguistics
Trans 14, 3512 JK Utrecht
The Netherlands

9. Language for Special Purposes
Dr Jacques Svistgaard
Handelshojskolen i Kobenhavn
Fabrikvej 7
DK-2000 Kobenhavn P
Denmark

10. Language Planning
Dr Joan Rubin
PO Box 143
Pineola, CA 94564
USA

11. Language Tests and Testing
Dr Chris Klein-Braley
Dept of English
FB 3, Universitat Duisburg
Lotharstr 65
D-Duisburg 1, BRD

12. Lexicography and Lexicology
Dr Robert Ilson
58 Antrim Mansions
Antrim Road
London NW3
UK

13. Mother Tongue Education
Dr Gilles Gagne
Universite de Montreal
CP 6128, succ A
Montreal
Canada H3C 3J7

14. Psycholinguistics
Prof. Dr Tatiana Slama-Cazacu
University of Bucharest
Str Mora 10
Bucharest
Romania

15. Rhetoric and Stylistics
Prof. Dr Bernd Spillner
FB 3, Universitat Duisburg
Lotharstr 65
D-4100 Duisburg 1, BRD

16. Second Language Acquisition (Note pending approval of BB and IC)
Dr Patsy M Lightbown
TECSOL Centre
Concordia University
Montreal PQ
Canada H3G 1M8

17. Sociolinguistics
Prof. Dr M Hartig
Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften
Universitat-Gesamthochschule
Paderborn-FoKof. 1621
4790 Paderborn
West Germany

18. Terminology
Prof. Dr Lubomir Drosd
Charles University
Karmelitska 30
118 00 Praha 1
Mala Strana
Czechoslovakia

19. Translation
Dr Jean-Rene Ladmiral
Laboratoire de Recherche sur la Traduction
Universite de Paris X Nanterre
200 ave de la Republique
F-92001 Nanterre cedex
France

In each case the title of the Commission is followed by the name of the Convenor, then the name of the BAAL member who has agreed to liaise and report for the Association. If you are interested in undertaking the liaison work for those which are still blank, please contact the Secretary.

Adult Language Teaching: A. Rasch, Saarbruecken; L. Dickinson, Edinburgh.


Child Language: E. Okenar, Hamburg; ..........


Discourse Analysis: John Regan, Claremont, California; R. Birnie, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Educational Technology and Language Learning: N. P. Davies, Linkoping; ..........

Language and Language in Multilingual Settings: T. Skutch-Argles, Roskilde; M. S. Byrne, Durham.


Language for Special Purposes: J. Kristjansdottir, Copenhagen; J. Price, Brighton.

Language Planning: J. Rubin, Pinoles, California; C. P. Hill, London.

Language Testing: C. Klein-Bruley, Duisburg; C. Alderson, Lancaster.


Mother Tongue Education: G. Gagne, Montreal; C. J. Brumfit, Southampton.


Rhetoric and Stylistics: B. Spiller, Duisburg; H. C. Widdowson, London.

Second Language Acquisition: P. Lighthoon, Montreal; P. Meara, London.

Sociolinguistics: M. Hartig, Paderborn; ..........

Terminology: L. Drozd, Prague; J. C. Sager, Manchester.

Translation: J. R. Ladamir, Nanterre; P. Newmark, Guildford.

6. RESPONSES TO THE DES DOCUMENT "ENGLISH FROM 5 TO 16"

We include responses to this document from the following:

Greg Brooks, NFER
Professor Gillian Brown, University of Essex
Dr Chris Brumfit, University of Southampton
Dr Joanna Channell, University of Nottingham
Dr Jenny Cheshire, Birkbeck College, University of London
Ms Pam Czerniakwa, Open University
Professor Mike Stubbs, University of London Institute of Education

Introductory Note

The comments appended were all sent to the Secretary of BAAL in response to a request for comments, although in a few cases they may have reached the DES through other channels also. Our original intention was to confine these comments into a single document, but it seems more helpful to pass them on as they stand, to represent the views of a number of applied linguists with assistance in relevant areas. It may be worthwhile, though, to make a few general introductory points.

A number of points come up several times in our comments:

1. There is general, though perhaps cautious approval, both of the initiative and of the approach taken, for it represents an attempt to take language issues very seriously.

2. The objectives themselves raise a number of uncertainties: levels of description appear to be confused, there is often a lack of specificity, and the criteria for the selection of objectives are unclear.

3. The tendency to concentrate on the product rather than the process leads to an inevitable neglect of questions of how to achieve such objectives, and this distorts the perspective of the document in relation to current views on the learning and teaching of language.

4. The arguments for teaching about language are unnecessarily muted, and the suggestions of what to teach could be much more carefully thought through (see, as a starter for discussion, CLIE Working Paper No 4).

5. The document appears sociolinguistically simplistic. Particularly, it does not consider the concept 'standard English' with enough sophistication, and it fails to relate language development in English to the development of second and foreign languages.

6. The implications of the document for teacher education, both pre- and in-service, are very considerable, for few English teachers have any serious academic background in this area. These implications need to be made much more prominent.
Dr Michael W Stubbs
Senior Lecturer in Linguistics

1. I found the paper very persuasive in many of its points, particularly in its repeated emphasis on the many functions of language, on the need to extend pupils' functional competence in English, and in its recommendation that conscious knowledge about linguistic structure and function is valuable.

My critical points should therefore be taken within this broad agreement with the main position.

2. My main criticisms are that you have missed opportunities to relate the teaching of English and other languages, and to provide justification for teaching about language; and that you have underestimated the complexity of some of the topics you present, teaching, and have therefore underestimated (not mentioned, in fact) the need for associated teacher training.

3. The proposal to teach about language is an interesting one; and I agree with it. But I do not think you provide any strong arguments in its favour. This is serious, since, as you admit, it is your most contentious proposal. It therefore requires to be more solidly argued.

I do not think that it is very difficult to support, although I cannot be sure that I could support it in the form in which you present it. Basically, I think your version of teaching about language is too narrow; some of it does look like a reversion to teaching grammar in the parts-of-speech tradition. Even this could be given more plausibility if you had argued for its relevance in foreign language teaching; but you do not mention that.

But really I think you would be in a stronger position if you were proposing teaching about a language as a whole: its structures, its functions, its varieties, and its place in the modern world—an obvious topic for a language such as English. Teaching about structure surely is sterile, unless it is only part of a larger picture. You do, of course, mention structure plus function plus variety (eg p3). But what is lacking is the overall view and the demonstration that they are related. I do not think that many teachers could make explicit what these relations are (though I do not doubt that they could point them out on specific occasions).

4. I really was very surprised that there is no mention of foreign language teaching in the paper. Much recent thinking has tried to find genuine links between teaching the mother tongue and foreign languages. And the distinction itself is drawn into serious confusion in the context of both English as a second language and the community languages of linguistic minority groups in the UK.

5. Furthermore, I was surprised that there is no mention at all of the Language Awareness movement. The new large body of documents on language awareness (eg from NCRE) provides a great deal of discussion of the value of teaching about language in general (and of therefore point 3 again).

6. The point about complexity is harder to document, but here are a few points.

- There is a casual reference on p 8 to 11 year olds knowing "the rules of spelling": well, these rules are very abstract indeed, and very few teachers know them.

- Page 9 implies that there are three tenses in English (past, present and future); this is very misleading, at least, and is reminiscent of the old grammar teaching.

- How can you justify teaching children to speak "pleasantly", p10, in the context of your basically non-prescriptive attitude to language?

As I say, the complexity argument is difficult to state succinctly because it is complex. But I think the lack of an overall model of language structure, language function and language variation is visible in these details, which seem at odds with your overall approach.

7. I have written these comments as an individual. I am, however, chairperson of the Committee for Linguistics in Education, a joint committee sponsored by the Linguistics Association of Great Britain and the British Association for Applied Linguistics.

Dr J M Channell
Lecturer in English as a Foreign Language
University of Nottingham

May I make a contribution/suggestion to BAAI's response to the HMI report? I approve generally of the aims and objectives, and I think the report makes a lot of sensible points. However, there is one major confusion which I think the BAAL response should draw attention to. Perhaps it should also suggest ways to clarify the confusion.

This concerns Standard English, and the general question of which variety/varieties of English are appropriate for use in school. There are only two or three passing references to this issue: on page 10 "Standard Spoken English" is referred to, but not defined; and on page 15, 3.12 and 3.13, "the language children bring with them" and "accent" are referred to, but not enlarged upon.

I am certain that one of the major current difficulties for practising English teachers in UK schools concerns the definition of the language varieties which should be the pupil's target. Teachers have been severely criticised for being too prescriptive, so now they are unsure about what they should aim for.

This report as it stands will do nothing to help them out of their difficulties. It makes no sense at all to make detailed proposals on how to develop "pupils' competence in English" (p7) without defining which varieties of English they are to develop competence in.
4.halt the lift during the lift's operation because the power is out.
5. call the lift's manufacturer for a repair.
6. check the lift's emergency power supply to see if it is in use.
7. call the building's maintenance department for assistance.
8. call the fire department if the lift is on a higher floor.
9. check the lift's control panel for any emergency buttons that can be used.
10. check the lift's manual for instructions on how to operate it safely.

In conclusion, when a power outage occurs, it is important to remain calm and follow the appropriate steps to safely evacuate the building. It is important to have a plan in place for such emergencies and to regularly review and practice emergency procedures.

For more information on power outages and how to prepare for them, refer to the Building Code of Canada and local guidelines provided by the building's management.

Reference:
Building Code of Canada.
3. Several references are made to the objective that children should be enabled to use the grammar and vocabulary of spoken standard English (for example, page 15 para 3.12, page 10 para 2.6). This does not seem to take proper account of the views of many linguists that the grammar of standard English is best taught with reference to the written language rather than the spoken language, i.e., as one part of the differences that need to be learnt between the spoken language and the written language.

It is highly unlikely that children can be trained to systematically substitute standard English forms for dialect forms in their spoken language, because of the strong symbolic function that dialect features have. Any attempt to teach them to do so is likely to be counterproductive. The best method of helping children to use standard English grammar and vocabulary is to provide, so far as possible, a school environment where they will socially at ease and that they can perceive as relevant. Their language then may converge towards that of their teachers.

4. There is a further problem with reference to spoken standard English. On page 19, concerning the assessment of spoken English, it is said that one of the elements to be borne in mind is "the clarity and coherence of the syntax". In fact, however, very little is known about the syntactic structure of spoken English, other than it appears to be very different from that of written English, particularly in conversational style. Still less is known about the syntactic structure of English dialects.

Given the present paucity of knowledge of the structure of the spoken language it is particularly inappropriate to try to use the elements of assessment in this section ("the appropriateness of the organisation and sequential structure of what is said" and "audibility of the listener and sensitivity to whether he or she is 'getting the message'"). This 'element' seems to be incorporated in other elements given in this section ("the appropriateness of the organisation and sequential structure of what is said" and "audibility of the listener and sensitivity to whether he or she is 'getting the message'").

5. A further point concerning assessment is that whilst it is true that it is not possible to arrive at a precise, objective measurement of success in a piece of English work (para 4.5), it is very important to be aware of the dangers involved in subjective assessment. This applies particularly to assessment of 'correction', for the act of written work that is returned to pupils. There is evidence to suggest that teachers are inconsistent in their marking (usually with the best of intentions) and that this results in children being confused about the differences between standard and non-standard forms.

In conclusion, the few criticisms that I have made seem to point to the need to consult linguists about educational matters. Linguists would not only provide factual information about the differences between standard English and regional varieties, but could also help with the problem expressed in para 3.6 concerning the choice and extent of terminology that should be taught to children. There are at least two possible channels for consultation: BAAI and CLIE.

One further, minor, comment: I do not understand what is meant by the objective given on page 9, that 11 year old children should know "that word order determines meaning". This statement opens the way to all kinds of misunderstanding.
Teaching about language goes on in every classroom, though the explicit and conscious nature of that teaching varies. For example, most early reading lessons include teaching five year olds about words, letters, sounds, punctuation, etc. Such teaching is not usually divorced from the primary function of the lesson, is learning to read; however it does play a major part in the success of early reading attempts. Some children are clearly confused by concepts of phonetic, 1968) and their introduction to language structures seems crucial to their reading performance. Teachers need to be aware of the terms they use, and the meaning of those terms, and to be able to monitor their pupils' understanding of those terms.

It is certainly not clear, from the limited research in the area, what children of different ages can understand about language forms. Research such as that of Karmiloff-Smith (1979) suggests that is is not until around 9-10 years of age that children can talk about language and treat it as an 'object'. The objectives for what 11 and 16 year olds should know about in English from 5 to 16 seem to be selected rather arbitrarily and are not tied to either developmental or curriculum-motivated (see below) criteria.

The way in which English from 5 to 16 separates "knowing how to use" from "knowing about" language suggests (perhaps unintentionally) that the objectives for learning about language should be achieved out of the context of other language learning tasks. Echoes of former grammar lessons are here, in which knowledge of, say, the 'parts of speech' or the 'rules of spelling' is left totally unrelated to the child's current experiences in writing or reading.

There are two related issues here: one concerning how language rules can/should be taught and the other concerning why rules should be taught. Taking the why question first, there is little or no evidence to suggest that knowing about language directly affects performance. Those pupils receiving explicit training in grammatical rules do not show any improvement in their writing abilities than those lacking such explicit instruction. However, there is a current feeling (I don't think that it is more than a 'feeling') that knowledge about language may indirectly improve performance by providing pupils not only with a way of talking about language but also with an interest in its workings and, perhaps, an increased motivation in becoming an expert on their own language.

The how question follows from the why. If the effects of knowledge are of this indirect kind, then 'rule learning' is likely to be less productive than 'discovery procedures'. Exploration and experimentation are going to be more appropriate than rote learning of rules, drills and exercises.

There is only brief mention of what the teacher needs to know in order to teach about language. At present, it is doubtful that many teachers have themselves considered the forms that language can take and the systems of linguistic organisation. I doubt that many teachers could talk about the "difference between vowels and consonants". If anything, their responses would be limited to a classification of letters into 21 consonants and 5 vowels. As in more complex areas such as the "rules of spelling" or the "main parts of speech", I would doubt if many could offer more than a few rules of thumb.

This seems to be a major point and perhaps the main cause of the angry letters in the TES and Education Guardian. If the "rules of spelling" are properly understood as a highly complex set of interrelated systems (e.g. see Stubbs, 1979) then helping children become aware of such organisation seems a worthwhile task. However, if the "rules of spelling" are seen as a few prescriptions about silent e's and doubled consonants before ing - rules with many exceptions - then it is not surprising that some foresee a return of unproductive busy-work. In other words, whether one welcomes or dismisses the teaching of language per se to young children depends on the provision of adequately trained teachers. Attempts have been made to teach children about language (e.g. Language in Use materials and recently published introductions to language for children). I know of no formal evaluation of the success of such programmes, I suspect that the major factor determining success is the teachers' knowledge of linguistics.

I have spent some time discussing the fourth aim of the RMI curriculum proposal, partly because that is where most published criticism has been centred and partly because that is where the objectives have specific measurable outcomes. One can measure an 11 year old's knowledge of the differences between vowels and consonants more easily than say an 11 year old's ability to "listen responsively to poetry and verse". This is a further problem of the objectives-listing approach of the document. The objectives can too easily become "skills" to be taught and led to exercises designed to teach them. While the RMI's clearly state that they do not feel that exercises are appropriate for achieving the objectives (para 2.1) without more specification of the "schemes of work" that they recommend (para 3.4), it is hard to predict how the objectives will be turned into practice. There are other minor points that could be made at the level of individual objectives - for example, "recognised differences between standard and dialect forms of the language" makes the implicit assumption that standard English is diametrically opposed to dialect English. This could also point out omissions and imbalances - for example, why is there so little mention of language varieties within any one classroom and the possibilities of exploring such variety? Should literature get so little attention? Should grammatical knowledge be given so much attention as opposed to knowledge about semantics or discourse features of the language? Should the use of a telephone be a stated objective while use of a word processor is not? And so on.
I feel, though, that it is best not to focus on the details of the objectives but instead to concentrate on questions about the best approach for teaching and assessment in order to achieve the objectives, and on the level of understanding that children need such that adequate knowledge of English can be passed on to pupils.

References


C.J. Brumfit

1. General comments

It is excellent that we have a document of this kind and length to discuss and use as a basis for development. In spite of criticisms that may be made of details, the general intentions are most worthwhile, and the role of such statements in establishing a common language for the discussion of curriculum issues, and an agreed agenda of key questions, is crucial.

A few general criticisms may be appropriate, before looking at details. Although it is clear that among English teachers there is disagreement about the role of language, this paper is inexplicit about the context of language development, both in relation to other language work in schools (how does it relate to the consultative document on modern languages, for example?), and in relation to teaching literature. It does not appear obvious from the document that literature teaching is conventionally regarded as a central part of 'English from 5 to 16'.

It is clear that difficulties in defining objectives for English teaching are acknowledged (p 3), but in fact the bulk of the text appears to present lists of realisable objectives for particular stages of teaching in a rather confused manner, as recent discussion in the TES has pointed out. I think the purpose of the document would be clarified if two changes of approach were offered on objectives. First, it should be made clear that objectives of this kind are best seen as a kind of post facto checklist, rather than an advanced planning guide. That is to say that integrated activities may be monitored, and subsequently examined for coverage in terms of a number of features that should not be treated necessarily as separate elements for specific lessons, or as topics in apparent isolation. Second, the document suffers particularly from the desire to present identifiable final performance behaviours at different stages in educational development. Thus we have a combination of general, and specific, objectives which reappear without clear advance in difficulty ("conversely confidently in social situations" at 7; "conversely confidently and pleasantly in social situations" at 11), and of very specific objectives ("know the alphabet..." at 7) which could constitute realisable goals. This organisation lays the analysis open to charges of theoretical and practical confusion, and also of undue optimism, particularly on issues like these. The whole approach is one of relative incoherence if basic areas were identified for sustained development across the curriculum: instead of referring to particular ages, constellations of objectives would be identified for development by all learners with an order of expected activities, where appropriate on the basis of teaching experience, but no demand for specific performance at a particular age except where the task is relatively straightforward, as with the alphabet example. Complex developmental abilities, like use of language appropriate to specific situations, cannot usefully be equated with relatively simple and trainable tasks.

Nor, in practice, do I think that the division into the traditional four skills (even defined as "four modes") is helpful, though I appreciate that this may have been primarily as a way of slotting into the most convenient conceptualisation used by others. Even in its own terms this classification is confusing, and needs to be replaced by something like conversation/discussion, interpretation, extensive reading, writing/extended speaking. But for the purposes of analysing language development, with the kinds of categories outlined here, general categories like 'Talk', 'Speaking in front of an audience', 'Appreciation', 'Interpretation of argument', 'Study and reference abilities', 'Understanding of language' would be more appropriate. And most of these could be subdivided into target abilities, like 'Put a point of view and sustain it in discussion' (p 2), and facilitating abilities, like 'Make appropriate use of eye contact', etc. Once such categories were agreed in discussion, an approximate order of activities could be suggested, based on teachers' experience, and trial and error, so that objectives at particular stages in the school could emerge. But again, it is the approximate order, rather than the timing which is important, for more complex operations must be seen to grow out of simpler operations. The language acquisition literature indicates very clearly that a linear sequence of discrete objectives cannot reflect language development.

Another area, less well researched, but still contentious, is that of testing. The paper could usefully distinguish between testing and evaluating progress, and monitoring. It is my own belief, though it is difficult to prove absolutely, that over-frequent evaluation in language work inhibits risk-taking by learners and prevents effective development. This does not mean that teachers should not be aware of how learners are progressing, but it does mean that learners should not feel they are being judged too often: they need to be able to risk error in order to learn from the process of reacting to communicative failure and trying to improve. This risk deserves brief consideration.
The page does not contain any text.
2. I have a particular aversion to the objectives about reading aloud, except at age 7 (p 5) when it is likely that most children will still need to read aloud from time to time. A minor cause of my aversion is the illogicality of including reading aloud among the reading objectives at age 11 (p 7) but among the speaking objectives at age 16 (p 10). My main objection is based on the communicative uselessness of this task for most people most of their lives. The persistent attachment of CSE oral examiners to reading aloud seems to be to arise from a mistaken idea of social accomplishment. The positive side of the idea is enshrined on page 20 in the comments about expressive reading: but this form of reading aloud should be seen as a form of drama, and as a skill possessed in a high degree by only a few people, and not as a method of teaching or assessment that should be applied to every pupil. The 'social accomplishment' model also seems to me to underlie the mistaken objective that 11 year olds should be able to 'converse confidently and pleasantly in social situations' already cited, and similar notions in the age 16 list.

3. I also find the separation of listening from speaking objectives artificial for native speakers, i.e. 96% or more of British schoolchildren. There are some important non-reciprocal listening situations, e.g. listening to radio, television, speech in lectures but the most natural use of listening is between speaking turns in conversation, discussion, etc. The heavy stress on listening in this document, and the placing of listening objectives first at each age level, threatens to reinforce two bad tendencies. The first is the tendency to treat listening as if it can be separated off and taught and tested separately; the second is the tendency to treat listening almost as a disciplinary matter, as if children should spend 70% of classroom time listening, supposedly with attention, to teachers.

4. These notions need to be replaced by a model of oracy as the principal means of effective communication and learning. Within such a model, listening and speaking would be treated as almost inseparable. Also, it would lead to a clearer view of the relationships between aims and objectives. It seems to me that objectives cannot be read off from aims in the simplistic way that this is attempted in the document. Between aims and objectives needs to come at least an outline specification of what kinds of language we think pupils need to have a chance to master, e.g. narrative, problem solving, etc, and below that a description of the specific tasks on which particular skills can be displayed.

5. If the process of making broad aims operational by refining them through the levels of varieties or purposes of talk and specific tasks is valid, then the skills needed to achieve success in these areas begin to become clearer, as does their place within this theory:

6. AIMS

VARIED/PROPOSES OF TALK

E.g. narrative

SPECIFIC TASKS

E.g. retelling a story heard on tape

Making up a story based on a sequence of pictures

telling a personal anecdote

That is, the various oral/aural skills cross-cut the purposes and tasks because they are all needed in different blends and combinations in different circumstances.

7. This model also enables us to sort out why the document's objectives are so muddled: within them, (some) varieties and purposes of talk are intermingled with (a few) of the skills needed to achieve them, but without any indication of the specific tasks within which alone the purposes and skills can mesh. This seems to me to be what BMI should have done if they were going to include an objectives section at all.

8. A hint of a notion of this kind does break through on page 18 at the beginning of the suggestions for assessing the spoken word. In fact this section (pp 18-19) seems to me sounder than those on objectives. This may be because the principles of oracy assessment listed could almost have been copied from our reports, especially the 'elements to be born in mind' (p 19). The only quibble I would have on this section is that the statement that assessment should be continuous needs to be repeated even more strongly in the context of oral assessment.

9. The only point about oracy in the document not yet covered is its attitudes to accent and dialect - see especially page 15 but cf also the objectives 'use the grammar and vocabulary of Standard Spoken English where necessary or appropriate' and 'speak clearly, audibly and pleasantly, in an accent intelligible to the listener(s)' on page 10. Despite the laudable statements that 'the language children bring with them should not be criticised', etc, and 'No one form of English accent ... is inherently superior to any other' (p 15), the tone and assumptions of para 3.12 and 3.13 are off-key. There is the patronising tone of the reference to 'the rich and fascinating variety of English accents ... in the UK'. There is also the quite mistaken assumption, probably born of panic at the triumphing of the alarmists like John Hony, that pupils are not being taught Standard English and cannot modify their accents when necessary. Pupils are exposed to Standard Spoken English every day on radio and television, and above all on the lips of their teachers. Also, in the APU Language Monitoring Project's latest reports (Language Performance in Schools: 1982 Primary Survey Report, London, DES (1985), it is made clear that:
All of these were dealt with very briefly in the interests of getting a general impression of a "quick and dirty" kind.

The investigation is called the Students' Prior Awareness of Metalinguistics project, primarily to achieve the Pythonesque acronym SPAM.

At the beginning of this academic year, Dick Hudson administered the questionnaire to 19 entrants to the Linguistics degree course at University College London, and I administered it to 44 entrants to the Modern Languages Department at Aston, the latter doing joint degrees in two of German, French, Linguistics. (I also administered it to 175 second year Aston students who had chosen to learn a foreign language as a Complementary Studies option. These students come from all faculties and have very varied subject backgrounds. The ensuing discussion does not include these students, however, except for a comment near the end.)

There was no prescriptive intention in the investigation; we did not see this as an acid test of the efficacy of the secondary school system nor as a means of predicting the aptitude of the students for the course of their choice. It was primarily to find out what assumptions university teachers can make about students' basic awareness of these items and, en passant, what the students' attitude is to such things. There is little doubt that many teachers take a great deal for granted, at least at the rather elementary level treated here.

In the case of the language and linguistics students, it turned out that the general performance was much better than we had feared and remarkably similar for both universities (6.3 and 6.4 mean errors from a possible 50 or so if we include open-ended items; individual scores ranged from 0 errors to 15 errors.)

It is clear from these results that students with A-levels in languages do have quite a lot of metalinguistic knowledge, and the evidence suggests that the ML classroom is an important source of such knowledge with the English classroom playing a markedly secondary role. However, it is interesting to look in detail at some of the responses to individual questions, particularly at deviant responses.

The "general educated vocabulary" section was a multiple choice test of 10 items with 4 alternatives for each and was well done. The maximum discrepancy was on the item native language, which over half the sample (37) took to mean "the most common language in a particular country", whereas the investigators preferred "the first language learned as a child". Seventeen did not know what paraphrase meant and 8 did not know synonymous (2 chose "having a different meaning"); 5 did not know metaphor (3 thought it was "a sort of rhyme").

The test on grammatical categories ("parts of speech") simply required the identification in a very short passage (23 words) of items matching 15 given labels. Labels ranged from noun and verb to more delicate ones such as auxiliary verb and countable noun. Everyone spotted noun and verb but those two items had the only clear run. One student failed to find an adjective (there were two in the passage - "technical" and "right", both used attributively); 12 failed to find the verb ("usually"); 11 did not have a definite or an indefinite object is; 20 could not find a finite verb and 21 slipped up on auxiliary verb.

Clearly, although sentence subjects are still in fashion at school (all correct), predicates are out (41 errors). (Interestingly, almost everyone identified the head word "Joe" rather than the whole noun phrase "Poor little Joe" as the subject.) Although only four students failed to identify the direct object in one sentence, 11 missed the indirect object in another, and, of the wrong choices offered as indirect object. 9 were actually the direct object and one was the subject, which makes the investigator wonder about the significance of their previous correct identification of subject and direct object.

Happily, all our language and linguistics students could underline the vowel letters in a given sentence. Even so, five of them claimed to perceive two vowel sounds in "stood". This could have been due to a careless reading of the question, but confusion of spelling and sound was openly apparent in the more open-ended questions asking for comment. A frequent claim was that the "o" sound in "goes" is longer than that in "go"; one student was very explicit: "goes has a longer sound than go because it has more letters." Of course, there were many perceptive and accurate observations about "go" and "goes", but some students had no idea of how to comment on the relationship at all. The fact that an acquaintance with technical terms does not in itself lead to accurate analysis is evident from this answer:

"The word go possesses only one vowel sound and is monosyllabic whereas the word goes contains two vowel sounds, the stress being placed on the second syllable".

Students were more at home with discussion of grammatical usage of "go" and "goes" than with their spelling and pronunciation, and other questions on morphology were reasonably well done, but a request to specify a difference between English and another language elicited answers varying considerably in length, precision and truth. Given the widespread belief, occasionally found among ML teachers, that English has no grammar - or at least very little -, errors and gross overgeneralisations could be predicted, and they came, of course (though once more there were a lot of sensible and accurate answers too). Disturbing observations included:

"English uses no genders". ("Doesn't she?" I thought.)
The importance of developing a strong foundation in English is undeniable. As a student of English, it is crucial to cultivate a love for the language and its nuances. This is evident in the curriculum at the secondary level, where the importance of English is emphasized. The National Board for Education in the United Kingdom has recognized the significance of English as a subject and has included it in the national curriculum. The development of language skills is essential for students to succeed in their academic and professional lives.

The English language is not only a means of communication but also a tool for personal growth. It enables students to express their thoughts and ideas effectively, thus fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Moreover, proficiency in English enhances career prospects, as it is widely recognized and respected globally.

In conclusion, the inclusion of English in the curriculum is a testament to its importance in modern education. It is through its study that students can develop a deep appreciation for the rich cultural heritage and linguistic diversity of the world.
The study of Brandywine Creek was conducted in the summer of 2012, focusing on the effects of water level on the aquatic ecosystem. The project involved monitoring water levels and measuring the impact on fish and plant life. The results showed a significant decrease in biodiversity in areas with low water levels. The study concluded that maintaining a stable water level is crucial for maintaining a healthy ecosystem. Further research is needed to understand the long-term effects of water level fluctuations on the ecosystem.

The data collected from the study was analyzed using statistical software. The results indicated that there was a strong correlation between water level and species diversity. Fish species richness was highest in areas with moderate water levels. The study also highlighted the importance of water quality in maintaining a healthy ecosystem.

The study's findings have implications for water management practices in the region. The results suggest that implementing strategies to maintain stable water levels could benefit the local ecosystem. The study also underscores the need for ongoing monitoring and research to understand the complex interactions between water levels and ecosystem health.