

Committee for Linguistics in Education

Meeting 94

Minutes 1.30-4.45 Friday 19th February 2010
British Library, 92 Euston Road, NW1 2DB

Present:

Graeme Trousdale (Chair, LAGB), Catherine Walter (Secretary, BAAL), Eddie Williams (BAAL), Urszula Clark (BAAL), Dick Hudson (LAGB), Vivienne Rogers (LAGB), Willem Hollmann (LAGB), Jonnie Robinson (BL), Ian Brinton (IB), Keith Davidson (NATE), Heather Qualtrough deputising for Jo-Ann Delaney (NATECLA), Ben Rockcliffe (TDA), Tim Shortis (co-opted)

1. Membership
 - 1.1 Apologies were received from Caroline Coffin (BAAL), Terry Lamb (ALL and LDDP), Melissa Cudmore (BC), Sue Holley (DCSF), Jonathan Gibson (ESC), Patricia Ashby (LLAS), Charlotte Franson (NALDIC)
 - 1.2 Thanks were given to Judith Broadbent, retiring LAGB representative and Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, retiring BAAL representative
 - 1.3 New representatives from member organisations: GT welcomed Urszula Clark (BAAL), Willem Holmann (LAGB), Melissa Cudmore (British Council), Kate Board (CILT), Ben Rockcliffe (TDA).
2. Minutes of Meeting 93: The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.
3. Matters arising not dealt with elsewhere
 - 3.1. TDA website for PGCE English (CW, DH) **DH and Anne Turvey to meet once the TDA situation is clarified. BR to confer with his TDA colleagues in the appropriate team. BR to present the work of the TDA Languages in the Children's Workforce team at May meeting (or failing that at the November meeting)**
 - 3.2. Mtg 93, Item 3.2, ALEL publications: TS and CW had agreed not to meet on this in order to prioritise the CLIE PGCE report. The issue is that commercial publishers are sometimes acting precipitately and with undue pressure in the way they develop textbooks and related guidance for teaching about language at A level. As a consequence, such publications were sometimes rushed to market with the consequence of providing inadequate and misleading information couched in authoritative framing. In recent years the problem has been compounded by awarding bodies creating alliances with commercial publishers and then pressurising examiners to become involved. In some cases these awarding bodies are multinational commercial businesses, creating potential for further conflicts of interest. **For discussion at May meeting (TS)**

- 3.3. Meeting 92, Item 8, Rose Curriculum Consultation: GT has written to Chair of UCGAL about whether UCGAL is taking this forward. CILT has been asked to provide the secretariat for the forum deriving from the Worton Review, for all 3 working groups. Can use KB as a contact for this process. KB will access CLIE comments on Rose Review from CLIE webpage. First meeting of forum on David Lamy & Diana Johnston 17 March. Two of HEFCE & Worton's major concerns were (1) UCML sphere of work and University language centres and how you bring these 2 worlds together; (2) Professionals concerned with each language operating as a community on its own.

4. PGCE survey: Report on survey and discussion of dissemination

TS and Julie Blake have revised the report in the light of comments from the CLIE subcommittee (GT, DH and CW). **CW will send an embargoed penultimate draft to CLIE members for comment; the final version will then be published on the CLIE website and a media release will be disseminated (TS, Julie Blake, CW)**

TB noted that this is an area where Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses have a lot of professional discretion, although they don't always realise this. High aspirational statements are sometimes the source of stress in student teachers.

BR noted that the TDA is now tracking exit rates for teachers leaving the profession since 2005. **TS to email BR to obtain this information for possible inclusion in report.**

EA are happy to host the report on their website. They will also write a page on contextualisation.

NATE may be able to offer £250 for printing and to mail copies with their mailings (contact is Andy Goodwin). To be confirmed.

TS and Julie Blake are submitting articles to *English in Education* and *EDM*, and will be presenting at the British Educational Research Association SIG meeting and the NATE conference.

TS: There are plans to append reader comments, so **All to send any reader comments to TS.**

On behalf of CLIE, GT thanked TS and Julie Blake for the excellent report.

5. Presentation of the work of CILT by KB:

CILT is an independent charity which operates both in the policy and politics sphere, and in the practical sphere of implementation and supporting professionals of all languages, spoken and signed. It works to improve commitment to languages, promote enthusiasm etc. It covers all phases of education. KB was appointed 18 months ago. She had previously been at the British Council for thirty years, so she has a certain awareness of what teachers and students are experiencing. CILT has existed since 1966. The majority of its funding has come from government until now, but it is moving to reduce that dependency on government. CILT England works in all of UK with sister organisations – Northern Ireland and Scotland organisations are very small and

CILT England supports them with marketing; works somewhat more closely with CILT Wales. CILT works across Europe and is the contact point for the European Commission for Modern Languages and the lead on a number of surveys on behalf of ECML, e.g. community languages, languages in the workplace. Working on “language rich” project which will map which are spoken across Europe – not just at country but also city level. This links with another project on languages in London.

CILT has two roles: one is advocacy, which is where the policy comes in. Influence from grassroots level through other work and used to influence policy. At the other end of spectrum CILT works on professional development – direct provider of teacher training. It works with other providers to raise standards of teaching and learning.

Objectives: CILT has had to take into account issues that are of considerable concern. In the languages community there have been reports giving grave concern, e.g. CBI 2009 report showing employers’ demand for languages and recognition that this demand is not being met – about 40% of employers take languages into consideration when they recruit, although they don’t expect fluency and will accept conversational skills.

On the other hand, the 2009 White Paper on Skills, which articulates what needs to be done to position UK well in global economy, makes no mention of languages. However, there are some indications of movement in this area.

CILT’s annual trends survey published in December 2009 showed that the take-up of languages at GCSE is only 44%. The decline is slowing but it is still in progress. Mandarin, Portuguese etc. are increasing (albeit from small initial numbers), but French, German and Spanish are in decline. Spanish has overtaken German. The Government benchmark of 50% of post 14 of language take-up is being ignored by many schools.

There is a cause for concern, because languages are a strategic and vulnerable subject that is not getting a lot of funding. Languages are not an alternative, but a core skill, and we need to create a perception change to integrate languages into the core curriculum. There is already evidence in the world of employment that UK monolingual graduates are losing out to multilingual peers from other countries in a range of jobs at the £40000 level. Research in Cardiff suggests that the UK loses £21 billion per year in trade because of the languages deficit. The EU Commission can’t get enough English native speakers to replace those they have. We are not using multilingual population we already have.

The issue of the personalised curriculum is an area of concern. It is clear why young people should be allowed to have a rich choice but they also need some guidance as what are the right choices. It is our responsibility to guide those choices and show impact of those choices.

Languages in primary: there is good news but there are also problems – linguistically upskilling teachers, setting standards.

Vision and objectives for next 3 years as per booklet (distributed): Set out what the challenges are. Set out the case for languages: economic, social and educational benefits. CILT can’t do it on their own but need to join forces and work together with other bodies. Languages don’t have a single ‘royal

institution' like some other domains. Language are fantastic in diversity and richness but sometimes that works against us. Partnership is absolutely critical. Document has been extremely well received. Now: what do we do about it? There are a number of big challenges:

1. Change of government – don't know what their priorities will be. CILT has relationships with outgoing government but need to establish new ones.
2. Recession – 2011 big funding cuts and so CILT is moving as fast as they can towards alternative sources of funding – will have to become much more businesslike in approach – what can we sell? Customer focused – have to convince schools they are worth buying from. Will they choose the option that's cheapest or the one that's best?
3. Fragmentation and competition – fragmentation within the world of languages and with other subjects. We need to do something which sees languages as integral, not sidelined as alternative.
4. CILT's own culture – there is a public sector culture within organisation and need to acquire more business structure with strong mechanism for reporting results.

GT thanked KB for the presentation and noted that CLIE hopes to cooperate with CILT, and to work to avoid competition or fragmentation.

CW: Appalled at the idea that children should have a free choice, because this has major socio-economic implications. Middle class and upper class children will choose to learn languages. A colleague at Linacre College Oxford did a study on how young black people choose what A-levels they are going to do. The factors here are complex, and the family doesn't always have the social capital to advise young people. There are enormous disparities in the resources that children have to make choices, and this compounds inequalities.

KB: Government has spent a lot of money on campaigns and there is a perception that those campaigns have made a difference. Reasons why children don't continue languages post 14:

1. lack of leadership from schools – league table focus
2. risk aversion – not prepared to go with subject that is not going to get them A*.
3. growing elitism of languages. Independent sector normal to do 1-2 languages. Schools with higher than average of FSM then much less likely.

BR: There is anecdotal evidence that languages are sidelined so that schools can go up the league table. This sometimes causes problems with meeting employer needs in local area (e.g., a town where the Bentley factory is largest employer but local schools don't teach German).

DH: Re the danger of fragmentation, note that CLIE is the only national organisation that includes all the languages organisations – the biggest fragmentation is between English as a first language and modern languages. Children can find language really interesting – e.g. AQA English language which is very successful. Yet MFL take-up is very depressing. There are similarities here, and there is a problem of teacher knowledge and education – if you really want a decent language education it should start in first language English and then branch out into other languages.

KB: CILT is working with TDA on teachers' own skills in languages. Many primary teachers have very limited knowledge of another language. Need to upskill – need for linguistic skills for teachers is fundamental.

TS suggested that there may be benefits in the raising general interest in language issues, including the home languages spoken by students in the class. This kind of approach, as promoted by Eric Hawkins's language awareness publications, raises curiosity about language in general, helps students to appreciate their tacit knowledge about language, and establishes the basis for future more specialised linguistic study. It plays to the intrinsic popular interest of language issues.

EW: There is a prejudice against other languages. TS: that's an issue for discussion in class.

WH: Where does this perception that languages are hard come from? Things are completely different in Holland.

KB: No idea, but it's deeply ingrained.

GT: How can we help?

KB: It would be helpful if people could read the document and we could come back to this at the next meeting. CILT is very interested in academic ways of taking things forward but there is the issue of funding. What are the ways in which we can help reverse decline in language take-up? How can we excite young people and permit a sense of play with languages? Talking about skills is important in our dialogue with employers. Employers see that they have deficit in skills, but headteachers are focused on league tables and vice chancellors don't come to meetings.

Action: all members to read the *Why Languages Matter* brochure and to communicate to KB via the mailing list any comments and suggestions.

6. Linguistics Olympiad (DH, VR, GT)

- 6.1. Funding: have around £2.5K from various donations: British Academy, LAGB, BAAL, Route into Languages, Continuum, donation in kind from University of Sheffield, gifts of books from CUP and Wiley Blackwell. GT in discussion with University of Edinburgh for funding next year's Round 2 in totality.
- 6.2. Background (see also earlier minutes): academic linguists set interesting linguistics problems that schoolchildren solve, started in Russia in 1960. Now international: 8th International Olympiad in Sweden in July this year. Last year we entered teams from 2 schools as guests in the Irish Olympiad. CLIE running the UK Linguistics Olympiad this year.
- 6.3. This year's Olympiad is very successful so far. Round 1 & Round 2, plus, uniquely, a junior section largely as a result of pressure from teachers to motivate previously recalcitrant KS3 learners to learn foreign languages. UKLO uses bank of questions from consortium of English language speaking countries (USA/Australia/UK/Ireland/Canada). This was publicized to MFL

teachers and to the ALEL teachers, and both of these groups encouraged pupils to come forward. A couple of days ago on the ALEL list from a teacher who wanted to do some work with their pupils was advised 'Why not do some of the LO materials? It's like death by chocolate'.

- i. Round 1: Foundation Level (which doesn't qualify for Round 2) and Advanced Level. Questions in the two levels overlap. Some examples given. Foundation Level Round 1 marked by teacher (moderated by UKLO Committee). 54 schools, 400-odd Advanced Level scripts. About 30% independent schools. However, only one Welsh school and no one from Scotland.
- ii. Round 2: Happening in Sheffield, who got some funding from Routes into Languages. 2-day residential, VR, GT and Neil Sheldon, a teacher from Manchester Grammar School, will tutor the contestants and choose the UK team of four to go to the international competition in Sweden. Will monitor whether there is a bias towards one kind of school (e.g. independent schools) among the finalists.

CILT will put something on their website about the results of the competition, and will help with publicizing the process next year. Next year: publicise to SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies). Do a press release for each second-round pupil for local papers and radio. Next year there may be a need to recruit more markers from LAGB and BAAL.

Should we be stressing the 'Linguistic Detectives' aspect of this? (Anecdote about boys not wanting their certificates being given out in assembly.)

7. CLIE paper on *standard English* (DH)

DH gave a summary of the background to the paper to date. Annie Williams has agreed to help with the bibliography. GT has done something on Scots, and will focus on one or two examples of World Englishes in order to demonstrate what emerging standards are like. JR has sent some materials from the Voice of the UK materials. **DH/GT/JR w/help from AW to complete the paper and distribute it**

8. Audit of grammatical knowledge of first-year undergraduates (DH)

DH to give a talk at a workshop of the Northwest Network for English and Linguistics Pedagogy conference. Charles Alderson has a small grant to process his data and to work a bit more on the data collected by DH. Results pretty clear: less metalinguistic knowledge than in 1980. **For report at May meeting.**

9. Reports from member organisations (for information)

LAGB: The LAGB's Education Committee will be holding a two-hour discussion during the LAGB's annual meeting in Leeds, on either the 2nd or 3rd of September 2010. The topic will be the use of corpora in teaching, and the speakers will include Dan Clayton (Francis Xavier College and UCL) and Vivienne Rogers (Oxford). More information at <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/ec/ecsessions.htm>

BL: The British National Corpus audio recordings are being digitised and will be made available online (in collaboration with the University of Oxford). The Opie Collection will be available digitally around the beginning of 2011.

NATECLA: has been lobbying, responding to Government, protecting the right of refugees and asylum seekers to English language support from the moment they arrive rather than having to wait. Conference in Guildford in July.

10. **ALEL:** TS suggested the most significant recent development relating to ALEL may be the introduction of compulsory spoken language study at GCSE, for the first time since Knowledge about Language (KAL) study was phased out in 1992. This innovation could have an impact on improved progression from compulsory schooling at KS4 to specialised study at KS5 and beyond. Recent meetings with GCSE examiners showed a problem in the lack of appropriate curriculum resources available for teachers who want to teach about talk. Such teachers had little access to transcripts of unplanned talk, let alone materials drawn from multilingual environments. Here there was some opportunity for CLIE's constituent groups to influence appropriately conceptualised learning designs, as with the influence of Ron Carter and other applied linguists on the LINC project in the 1990s. This might include consideration of ethical issues and procedures when recording data such as talk. To be discussed at May meeting.

11. Future meetings: May 21? **CW to circulate**

12. Minutes: VR was thanked for being second minute-taker for this meeting, and also volunteered to take half the minutes again next time.

13. **Minority language letter:** BR and KB to try and get a view of what the UK position is. CW to consult with CF to get a view. HQ will consult with NATECLA to see if they are interested in taking this forward.

14. Thanks to JR for hosting the meeting.

Abbreviations of members' names and their organisations:

CC	Caroline Coffin, BAAL
CF	Charlotte Franson, NALDIC
CW	Catherine Walter, BAAL (Secretary, CLIE)
DH	Dick Hudson, LAGB
EW	Eddie Williams, BAAL
GHB	Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, BAAL
GT	Graeme Trousdale, LAGB (Chair, CLIE)
HQ	Heather Qualtrough, deputising for Jo-Ann Delaney, NATECLA
IB	Ian Brinton, EA
JG	Jonathan Gibson, ESC
JR	Jonnie Robinson, BL
KB	Kate Board, CILT
KD	Keith Davidson, NATE
KS	Kate Saunders, BDA
MV	Mahendra Verma, co-opted
PA	Patricia Ashby, LLAS
RA	Richard Aplin, ALA
SE	Sue Ellis, deputising for Guy Merchant, EA
SH	Sue Holley, DCSF
TL	Terry Lamb, ALL and LDDP
TS	Tim Shortis, co-opted
UC	Urszula Clark, BAAL
VR	Vivienne Rogers, LAGB
WH	Willem Hollmann, LAGB

Abbreviations for organisations:

ALA	Association for Language Awareness
ALL	Association for Language Learning
BAAL	British Association for Applied Linguistics
BC	British Council
BDA	British Dyslexia Association
BL	British Library
CILT	CILT, The National Centre for Languages
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools & Families
EA	English Association
ESC	Higher Education Academy (HEA) English Subject Centre
LAGB	Linguistics Association of Great Britain
LDDP	Languages Diploma Development Partnership
LLAS	HEA Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (Linguistics Specialist Advisory Group)
NAAE	National Association of Advisers in English
NALDIC	National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum
NATE	National Association for the Teaching of English
NATECLA	National Association for the Teaching of English and Community Languages to Adults
UKLA	United Kingdom Literacy Association