



# UKLO and language analysis

## Language analysis in UK education

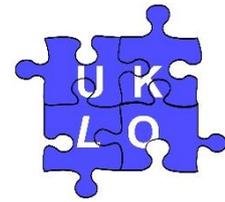
- 'Language analysis' = systematic study of structure in vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar (syntax and morphology) and meaning.
- Compared with many other countries, UK education pays little attention to language analysis.
- **At university,**
  - departments of language (English and foreign languages) typically give language very low status, do not teach about language structure and are not concerned with educational issues.
  - English and foreign languages rarely cooperate.
  - linguistics departments are typically not concerned with educational issues.
- **At school,**
  - foreign languages are seen as boring and difficult, and are in decline.
  - English is generally popular, but literacy levels are unimpressive.
  - English and foreign languages rarely cooperate.
  - children generally don't learn to think about languages as systems, except for:
    - grapheme-phoneme correspondences in phonics (at KS1).
    - elementary grammar and vocabulary analysis leading to the SPaG tests at KS2.
    - some elementary grammar in A-level English Language.
    - a slightly increased focus on language at GCSE (English and foreign languages).

## Linguistics and schools

- Linguistics is strong in UK universities, e.g. it has a separate section in the Academy.
- Since 1960s, some linguists (following Quirk and Halliday) have promoted linguistics in schools.
- This activity has been spearheaded since 1980 by the Committee for Linguistics in Education.

## UKLO (the UK Linguistics Olympiad)

- Linguistics olympiads are academic competitions for schools like those in STEM subjects.
- They were invented in the 1960s by linguists in Moscow.
- The International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) started in 2003, with 27 member countries in 2017.
- The UK olympiad (UKLO) started in 2010, and in 2017 UKLO
  - already had 4,000 participants (twice as many as in the USA)
  - won a record 3 Gold medals and the team trophy at the IOL.
- UKLO is entirely free thanks to
  - a lot of unpaid voluntary work by both academics and teachers.
  - a budget of £8K from its supporting associations.
  - But we welcome further funding.
- Children enjoy the challenge and many schools welcome it.
  - But it's harder to gain traction in the state sector.



# UKLO and language analysis

## The 2017 IOL squad

We sent two teams, named 'U' and 'K'. Members of Team K, which won the trophy, are marked '\*'.

- Alfie Vaughan (East Norfolk Sixth Form College)
- Ben Morris (City of London School): **Silver**
- Benjamin Liow (St Paul's School)
- \*Harry Taylor (Magdalen College School): **Silver**
- \*Kamran Sharifi (Manchester Grammar School)
- Liam McKnight (Magdalen College School): **Gold!**
- \*Sam Ahmed (King's College School): **Top Gold!**
- \*Simi Hellsten (Bournemouth School): **Gold!**

## UKLO and language analysis

- UKLO problems all require language analysis.
- They're normally based on real languages researched by linguists, and illustrate the diversity and interest of languages.
- UKLO's long-term aim is to develop
  - interest in languages for their own sake, rather than as instruments.
  - confidence and ability in recognising patterns in language data.
  - enthusiasm for thinking and talking about language, including English.

## Some web links

- The web page for **this meeting**: [clie.org.uk/language-analysis](http://clie.org.uk/language-analysis)
- The UK Linguistics Olympiad (**UKLO**): [www.uklo.org](http://www.uklo.org)
  - problems from past papers: [www.uklo.org/past-problems](http://www.uklo.org/past-problems)
  - supporters: [www.uklo.org/sponsors](http://www.uklo.org/sponsors)
  - a press release about our success at the IOL in 2017: <http://www.uklo.org/about/press>
- International Linguistics Olympiad (**IOL**): [www.ioling.org](http://www.ioling.org)
- The Committee for Linguistics in Education (**CLiE**): [www.clie.org](http://www.clie.org)
- A register of **enthusiast** for increasing language analysis at school: [lagb-education.org/for-enthusiasts](http://lagb-education.org/for-enthusiasts)