

BAAL/LAGB COMMITTEE FOR LINGUISTICS IN EDUCATION

Minutes of Meeting 21 held in Room 705, London Institute of Education, on 30th October, 1985.

21.1 Attendance

21.1.1 Present at the meeting:

Tom Bloor, Connie Cullen, Peter Gannon, Vee Harris, Dick Hudson, Bill Littlewood, Joyce Morris, Brian Newton, John Rudd, Mike Stubbs (in the Chair) and Geoffrey Thornton.

21.1.2 Apologies were received from Ron Arnold, Colin Biggs, Arthur Brookes and Carl James.

21.1.3 The Committee received notice of resignation from Andrew Crompton and Sally Twite. Colin Biggs will take the place of Andrew Crompton.

21.2 CLIE Secretary and Minutes Secretary

The Chairman thanked Bill Littlewood for his work as Secretary of CLIE and was grateful to Tom Bloor for taking over the post. Vee Harris was welcomed as Minutes Secretary.

21.3 Minutes of Meeting 20 were amended to take account of the following inaccuracy: 'Minutes of Meeting 20 held in.....on 22nd

February 1984' should read 'Minutes of meeting 20 held in..... on 22nd February 1985'.

21.4 Matters for Report A

21.4.1 UKRA Special Interest Group on Linguistics in Teacher Education

Joyce Morris reported considerable success in attracting people to join the group. There were now 33 committed members and it seemed likely that the group would continue to expand, providing a forum for discussion for people from a variety of institutions.

She then outlined the programme for the UKRA World Congress Symposium to take place at the Institute from the 28th to the 31st July, 1986.

There was some discussion as to how BAAL could best support the Special Interest Group. Possibilities included: a) their incorporation into BAAL as a minority group b) setting up a BAAL stand at the UKRA Congress c) running a joint seminar of BAAL and UKRA for all those interested in Linguistics in Teacher Education.

21.4.2 Appraisal of APU's Language Monitoring Programme

Geoffrey Thornton announced that the appraisal should be published in November, and he summarised some of its major findings. The appraisal approves the functional linguistic model used as a framework for the Programme and welcomes the Programme's conclusion that characteristics of pupils' performance are dependent on the type of task set.

It appears, from questionnaires administered to pupils, that they consider neatness and accurate spelling to be the main features of 'good writing'. Since it was felt that such views reflected those of their teachers, the Committee discussed how teachers' linguistic perspectives might be broadened. The importance of making linguistic findings accessible and relevant to teachers proved to be a recurrent theme of the subsequent discussions.

Two suggestions for possible future publications were made: a) a book incorporating the different descriptive studies of regional dialects that have been undertaken, or descriptions of major differences between spoken and written language b) a book on agreed metalanguage. The Chairman suggested that these publications might take the form of a series of short handbooks.

21.5 Questionnaires to investigate students' knowledge of language.
Tom Bloor issued copies of the second questionnaire administered to students commencing degree courses in Modern Languages or Linguistics. The results confirmed his impression of the disturbing lack of knowledge about language, even amongst students who might be expected to be reasonably well informed. Dick Hudson's results had been remarkably similar.

It was agreed that the two questionnaires should be amalgamated and then made available as a CLIE publication to other institutions. Certain areas however gave some cause for concern. It was felt that the widespread administration of the questionnaire might do little more than reveal students' ignorance, if it were not also used as an opportunity to extend their knowledge. It was therefore decided that

the revised questionnaires should be accompanied by a booklet which provided a brief explanation of the 'right' answers, and so could be used as follow-up teaching material. In addition, some of the statements in Question 14 were thought to be ambiguous. In order to alleviate the burden of work that would otherwise fall on Tom Bloor, members of the Committee agreed to take two of the statements each; rewriting them, where necessary, and adding the accompanying explanation. These should be sent to Tom Bloor by the end of November. The Committee expressed its thanks to Tom Bloor and Dick Hudson for the considerable amount of work undertaken.

21.6 LAGB Educational Linguistics Section

21.6.1 The Chairman reported that the next LAGB Meeting would take place at the University of East Anglia from the 14th to the 16th April. The theme of the ^{Educational Linguistics Section at the} meeting would be linguists' current views on the state of knowledge about the synchronic organisation of English Spelling.

21.6.2 Connie Cullen described the response of the Autumn meeting of the LAGB Educational Linguistics Section to the presentation of the three A and A/O level Language syllabuses. Although a great deal of interest had been expressed in the syllabuses, teachers felt hampered by their own lack of knowledge. For the study of Linguistics in schools to make further progress, teachers must feel confident about teaching it and must therefore be provided with more readily accessible information.

21.6.3 Dick Hudson proposed the title 'How Homogeneous is English Grammar?' as a possible topic for the next meeting. ^{The Educational Linguistics Section of} The focus would be on regional variations, since there would not be sufficient time to include stylistic variations as well.

Any additional ideas for possible topics should be sent to Dick Hudson or Connie Cullen.

21.7 Matters for Report B

21.7.1 The Chairman reported that the RSA has set up a diploma in 'Language in Education', intended for teachers. This is currently being piloted.

21.8 Date and venue of next meeting

Meeting 22 will be held on Friday 21st February at 1.00. at the London Institute of Education.

21.9 Any Other Business

It was agreed that one of the items on the agenda for the next meeting would be the revised questionnaires and the accompanying 'Answer' booklet.