

LAGB report for CLIE – February 16th 2005

a. Billy Clark and Dick Hudson attended one of the twice-yearly Information Sessions hosted by the English Team at QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) on November 18th. Here are some points that are relevant to linguistics.

* (We may have reported this already after the last session.) The team has published a report (by Ron Carter) "Introducing the grammar of talk." downloadable from www.qca.org.uk/ages3-14/subjects/2933_9430.html

* They're adding more material to their (splendid) collection (<http://www.ncaction.org.uk/subjects/english/index.htm>) of pupils' writing, speaking/listening and reading.

* They've published a new report called "Moving on: progression in writing at KS3" (www.qca.org.uk/ages3-14/subjects/2933_9055.html)

* They're planning to launch a fundamental review of the content of "the English family of subjects" next Spring - expect to be consulted!

b. Richard Aplin and Dick Hudson attended a meeting of the Language Alliance on behalf of CLIE. Here's a brief report.

b1. The new framework for teaching foreign languages at KS2 (upper primary) was out for final consultation at

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationId=1265>. The deadline for comments was December 22. It's a good read and contains much that is encouraging for linguists:

- knowledge about language is high profile
- so are strategies for learning a language
- the languages taught could be community languages
- the main aim is to motivate future language learners, so the recommended methods are imaginative and fun.

b2. A survey by CILT and ALL

<http://www.cilt.org.uk/key/Language%20Trends%202004.pdf>, "Language Trends 2004", has found a very gloomy picture for KS4, where foreign languages are now optional. 70% of state schools now treat them as optional, and in such schools only 54% of pupils choose to study them in Year 11, and even fewer (41%) in Year 10. On the other hand, the report also found an increasingly wide range of language being taught in secondary schools, including community languages such as Bengali and also Japanese, Chinese and (even) Russian.

c. The Subject Centre (for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies) has set up a working group to consider the introduction of exam courses on Language Study at A-level (and possibly at GCSE), to complement English Language and MFL; it is chaired by Billy Clark, has met twice, and hopes to present preliminary proposals to LAGB (and possibly BAAL) in the Autumn, and to consult widely.

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BAAL Events and Developments

MFL

- A new Special Interest Group for Language Learning and Teaching, which includes colleagues doing research in MFL, has just been approved by the BAAL Executive and will hold its first seminar (already fully booked), on Instructed Second Language Learning: State of the Art, in York on 11-12 April.

Other

- BAAL now has six Special Interest Groups which hold events throughout the year: Linguistic Ethnography, Corpus Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, Multi-Modality, Language in Africa and Language Learning and Teaching. See www.baal.org.uk for details.

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