

**Re-Mapping Modern Languages III**  
**University of London, Institute of Romance Studies**  
**Part 2: Saturday 6 May 1995:**  
***Linguistics in the Modern Languages Degree***

The second day of the conference considered the place of linguistics in the modern languages degree. It was concerned with what some called « hard » linguistics as opposed to other « softer » manifestations of linguistics referred to in day 1.

The first morning session focused on *a gentle introduction* to linguistics with reference to Spanish, Italian and Portuguese courses across the range of HE institutions; it was evident that the issues raised were relevant to all languages. In the 1<sup>st</sup> paper Jane Freeland reported on various models used in Portsmouth to raise language awareness among students studying Spanish. This was later contrasted with the 1<sup>st</sup> year introductory course to the *Structure and Varieties of Modern Spanish* in Cambridge described by Chris Pountain (with parallels in the other Romance languages). Though these approaches and methodologies were different, some of the aims — e.g. enhancing students written skills — were common and could be seen as ways into linguistics. Stephen Parkinson referred to the « introduction of Portuguese linguistics » course at Oxford. This raised more general issues about the breadth of linguistics and whether there should be different linguistics for different languages.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> session referred to later-year courses. Mair Parry gave an account of her experience of teaching *about* Italian dialects in one of the final-year options at Aberystwyth. She described how the introduction provided by a sociolinguistic course in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year enabled her to develop in the final year a practical approach to Italian dialects. Roger Wright reported on how he brings together diachronic and synchronic linguistics at Liverpool.

After a brief stay at « Paradiso » (just a local Italian restaurant!) we returned to a French focused session illustrating a *variety of approaches*.

Anthony Lodge gave an overview of the place of French linguistics over the whole degree in Newcastle (where a one semester course in Stage 1 is compulsory) and then concentrated on one of the Stage 3 optional courses, *History of colloquial French* demonstrating how Historical Linguistics could be data-based and provide insights into sociolinguistic perspectives. Malcolm Offord — within the context of semesterisation leading to repackaging of courses into units — described the EHE funded « lexis » program. « Lexis » aims at replacing seminars to large groups by computer-based interactive work on lexis and neologisms (similar programs on morphemes and phonetic transcription are currently under development). Finally Anne Judge referred to a course on analysis of language varieties based on a range of texts from contemporary and other periods for final year students which brings out the link between linguistics and practical language classes. Samples of students' work were available, the emphasis being on students demonstrating their ability « to read between the lines » and analyse the interaction of form and context.

The conference was from beginning to end very stimulating and demonstrated, if it was necessary, the benefits of discussions across languages. German had been very appropriately drawn into the 1<sup>st</sup> day. The concluding session highlighted a number of issues visited during the Conference and which may need to be pushed through our respective language associations:

- | the scope of linguistics and where and when it should appear in undergraduate studies; whether it should be compulsory and if not how to deal with folk-linguistic prejudices and the lack of foundation; the role of language awareness in the initial stage; gradual teaching rather than short early — concentration seemed to be favoured though the development of modularisation made prior knowledge more difficult to assume.

- | the relationship between Linguistics and Modern Languages departments was broached with reference to the widening disparity between ourselves and linguistics. · · the linguistic input in the preparation

of future specialist language teachers and researchers is seen as a crucial component.

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