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ABSTRACT

On- and off-campus opportunities for linguists with the schools of education at their own colleges and with public education in general are discussed, with a view to suggesting new areas of employment for those in linguistics. Depending on the linguist's background, there are many people in education to contact. Student teacher supervisors, reading teachers, and those who work with curriculum design are often highly receptive to and interested in the linguist's ideas. People working with social studies can utilize work done in linguistic geography and social dialectology. Abstract concepts of newer grammar models interest those who train mathematics teachers, and guidance counselors are interested in psycholinguistics. Particular emphasis is given to the need for more cooperation between professional educators and scholars, and several ways in which linguists at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have handled the problem of interdisciplinary cooperation are described. (PMP)

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The Linguist and the Field of Education

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Our major concern at this session is that of the linguist's 'survival.' I assume survival to mean being in a situation where the pursuit of one's teaching and research from the perspectives of our discipline is not impossible. The word 'impossible,' of course, can cover a range of contexts: lack of library resources, amount or type of teaching load, or job market conditions. At first, statistics on current employment, released by the LSA Manpower Survey Committee in 1972/3 (Carroll, 1973: 12-17), are gloomy. In brief, the hiring peak passed in 1970 and projected job opportunities do not match the projected number of linguists. And, slightly over 70 % of the appointments which linguists now hold are in departments which are not purely or exclusively linguistics departments. It is to this 70-plus per cent, now and in the future, that we must speak first, although, hopefully, our remarks will be of some value to the others as well. Perhaps our remarks may suggest new opportunities, new avenues.

Exclusive of several summer appointments, my own teaching has been within the provinces of the seventy-plus per cent: my appointment is in an English department, for which I teach both 'English courses' and linguistics. And, again with a few exceptions, my students are not linguists and do not ever want to be. Almost all of them take one -sometimes a second, occasionally a third - linguistics course as part of the curriculum for teacher certification. Our graduate students follow the same pattern: our two present graduate degrees are on the Master's level and are offered in conjunction with the College of Human Development and Learning (HDL), which incorporates teacher training and certification. Without the cooperative establishment of curriculum for teacher training between my department and HDL, the demand

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for my services (and for the other linguists in my department) would be much less.

I suspect that there are quite a few among the seventy-plus percent who are in a similar situation, and that many of those in linguistics departments work with colleges or departments of education. Part of this paper will indicate what I feel to be the benefits accruing to the home department, the department or college of education, and the linguist from this situation. Many of my remarks will, necessarily, be based on personal experience; I have little else to offer at this point, although I hope our discussion will elicit a few general hypotheses for future testing. This paper will be concerned, then, with on-campus opportunities for linguists with schools of education, off-campus extensions with public education in general, and some indication of the new opportunities I and many others have found.

On-campus opportunities

Every state has numerous institutions offering majors in education, or teacher certification programs. In 1971, the total of earned Bachelor's degrees was 877,676; the greatest number of degrees were in Education, with 176,571 (Business and Social Sciences were close seconds). Education also accounted for the greatest number of M.A. degrees (88,716 out of a total of 230,509), and of Ph.D. degrees (6,398 out of 32,107). These figures, and others, may be found in the Education Section of the 1973 Statistical Abstract of the United States.

These totals may well change over the next decade in response to a falling market, as indicated by the Carnegie Commission's tables showing choice of major and degrees awarded (CC, 1973: 186-189). The percentage of total degrees awarded in Education (Bachelor's, first-professional, Master's and Doctor's) rose for men from 9.3 % in 1948 to 12.8% in 1970; the percentage awarded to women climbed from 26.2% to 39.2% for the same time period.

However, tables showing the probable career choices of college freshmen from 1966-1972 show a steady drop for both men and women after 1968: 11.3% of the men and 34.1% of the women in 1966 anticipated careers in elementary/secondary education; in 1968 the percentages were 12.7% men, and 37.5% women; while in 1972, percentages had dropped to 5.7% and 19.5%, respectively (CC, 1973:174-175). We should remember that not all students awarded teacher certification, especially for the secondary level, major in education.

While the size of the field of education may change, the linguist whose students are drawn primarily from education still serves a large number of students, many of whom realize their need for language training. Students who plan to work with any form of language arts skills, including budding reading specialists and speech therapists, and those who plan to work with special education, are greatly in need of linguistics offerings. The linguist's task is to offer these students not only models and theories of past and current linguistic thought, but also to harmonize (at least initially) this often-abstract body of material with the desire for practical application and the particular philosophical slant brought by these students from their work in education. And if the assumptions of each group, of the linguist and of the students, are to have validity, they must undergo challenge as well as reconciliation. Neither 'side' has exclusive rights on truth.

I have just alluded to a sort of partisanship; division between 'academics' and 'educators' exists on many campuses. At its best, this partisanship is healthy, yeasty, exciting. Too often, a dreary, uncooperative, even snappish tension is the case. Here the linguist can be of use, especially to the home department, through serving as interpreter if nothing else. And, once a good working relationship is established between the linguist and some of the professional educators, the linguist - and the home department - may often be called upon for curriculum, textbook, and standards reviews.

How can the linguist establish such a relationship outside of the home department, especially from a department whose major thrust is literary? UNCC professor Lazaros Varnas suggests, 'Make yourself useful.' True, this is not always (or even often) easy. But it does not do at all to follow Miss Fanny Squeers' suggestion in Dickens' Nicholas Nickleby: 'Pity their ignorance and despise them.' With some support from the home department, the linguist can initiate informal contacts with members of the education wing; the eventual good results of the first encounters (including more and better trained students) mutually enrich both academic divisions.

My own experience is probably unusually felicitous; my home department of English more than tolerates, it encourages a diversity of teaching styles, approaches and backgrounds, while our professional educators in HDL have been increasingly receptive. I think it is up to the linguist to make the first move in contacting new people, in part due to the partisanship which may exist on a campus.

Helpful persons for the linguist to contact include those who supervise student teachers, especially in English (secondary) and the language arts (intermediate and elementary), those who are involved with the teaching of reading, and those who work with curriculum design. The first are highly receptive to ideas about and models of grammars; the second are most interested in whatever phonological approaches the linguist may offer; and the third are eager to share and question. In addition, those people working with social studies can utilize what the linguist presents from linguistic geography and social dialectology. The abstract concepts of newer models of grammars are of interest to those who work with teacher-training in mathematics; guidance counselors are receptive to work in psycholinguistics. Depending on the linguist's background, there are, then, a variety of people in education to contact.

Best of all, the exchange of ideas can be mutual. My own linguistic background is primarily historical, with additional work in general linguistic theory and in medieval literature. Mathematics educators have increased my understanding of mathematical systems; counseling educators have enriched my awareness of emotional factors affecting language; reading and language arts specialists have extended my knowledge of cognitive theory; curriculum specialists have helped me understand the concerns of the professional educator. Disagreements and frustrations which inevitably accompany cross-disciplinary work are themselves part of the rich rewards that can be gained. My initial 'bath by fire' of several years ago, in which I teamed for a week with each of twelve professional educators to introduce some concepts of social dialect into introductory education classes, was invaluable. Exchange lectures, panel discussions, and joint directed studies soon followed; these have led to even further opportunities, both on and off campus.

Off-campus opportunities

The professional educators on my campus re-introduced me to public education by inviting me, first, to attend local and state meetings of primary educators and reading specialists, and then to present papers and offer workshops. My own department was already working closely with secondary teachers of English in the area. Through these meetings, I extended my contacts with professionals in the public school systems of my community and state. On the local scene, my colleagues guided me by identifying and introducing the education 'power structure.' Consultancies in language, linguistics, and dialect snowballed, bringing with them more opportunities for fieldwork than I can handle.

One of the most exciting activities of my teaching here was a two-day Symposium with Charlotte teachers, students, parents and administrators from an entire feeder area (a subsystem involving elementary, junior and senior

high schools which 'feed' into each other). The Symposium was offered at a time of racial tension in our school system, and worked with social and psychological aspects of language and communication. The team which led the two-day process included faculty from several institutions in our area, whose fields included American Studies, Anthropology, Black Studies, English, Human Development and Learning (education) and Linguistics. We also had the services of two NTL-taught trainers. Response was solid; several of us have since offered workshops in language and culture for the local school systems. One colleague in particular, Dr. Ann Carver, who works with English and with Black Studies,has been especially helpful in extending my education. We have taken our teamed presentation in language, culture and self-concept to over twenty schools and special groups, and this semester, we have expanded the original process to initiate a teamed course on 'Appalachian Cultures and Urbanization.' Here we have worked to discover with our students some of the cultural and social dynamics affecting the language and life styles of members of a non-urban environment who move to an urban center. We have more questions than answers, but we have begun to ask about cultures in transition in a more rigorous way.

I do not want you to think that I am the sole linguist in my department engaged in such activities. Dr. Lazaros Varnas works closely not only with our students, but also with the large concentration of Greek-speaking citizens in our area; Dr. James Hedges concentrates on expanding writing skills and models for folklore. Newcomer David Amante plans work in Semantics; Karen Horton coordinates present-day communications models with traditional approaches. These are but a few of their activities; interest in language and linguistics is by no means limited to those who were formally trained as linguists per se.

As a postscript: my own historical interests have not been dismissed. Instead, from working with language with an increasing number of students, I have gained several who wish to pursue historical aspects of language. Over

the past two years, I have been able to offer ten independent studies in the areas of Old and Middle English, Medieval Welsh, and Latin. It's been exciting.

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