

UCML Executive Committee

Friday 26 April 2019

12.30 – 16.00

Room C60b/c, InfoLab21
School of Computing & Communications
Lancaster University, LA1 4WA



Item 10j – Linguistics report

Liaison with associations of linguistics in the UK and possible cross-initiatives

BAAL

The *British Association of Applied Linguistics* is holding its Multilingual SIG on 8 July 2019 at the University of Westminster, and its 52nd Annual meeting, focusing on “Broadening the Horizons of Applied Linguistics”, on 29-31 August 2019 at Manchester Metropolitan University. As you may remember from my previous report, a session will be devoted to **signed languages**, and the implementation of **modules of signed languages** in Linguistics curricula. On signed languages, UCML could maybe open up a discussion regarding curricula in Modern Languages, and eventually join BAAL’s campaign for a legal recognition of signed languages in Higher Education across the UK.

In the latest issue of its [newsletter](#), BAAL has also started a discussion about *Neurodiversity: an idea whose time has come* and, more specifically, on the necessity of adopting the concept of **neurodiversity to inform teaching and learning** in the classroom and of setting up training sessions (**CPDs**) for **language teachers** on this matter. I have requested further material to BAAL, to better understand what kind of training will be available on this subject which, I assume, could potentially interest UCML members.

LAGB

The annual meeting of the *Linguistics Association of Great Britain* (LAGB) will take place on 9-12 September at Queen Mary University of London, 9-12 September.

Together with BAAL, LAGB has launched the *Language Analysis in School: Education and Research* (LASER) project at the British Academy on the 11 March 2019. As already mentioned in my November report, **LASER** is formally managed by the Committee for Linguistics in Education ([CLiE](#)), and its compelling manifesto has been approved by BAAL and LAGB. LASER’s main projects are a) a campaign for collaboration between English and Foreign-language teachers; b) the assessment of Knowledge About Language taught under the National Curriculum; c) an attempt to introduce linguistics as a school subject.

I believe that UCML should approve LASER’s manifesto and formally support it.

On this matter, another initiatives that UCML should engage with more consistently is *Linguistics in Modern Foreign Languages* (**MFL**), co-ordinated by

colleagues at Anglia Ruskin University, Universities of Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, and Westminster. The MFL initiative/project aims to assess the potential for the **inclusion of linguistic topics in the Further Education MFL curriculum**. Also, it engages students with linguistics and deepens their interests in language, including its historical, cultural and social reflexes, its [key questions](#) being a) how interesting and intellectually stimulating do students find linguistics? b) What effect does exposure to linguistics have on students' language attitudes? c) What effects does better linguistic knowledge have on language skills?

The project is concerned principally with taking drastic action to address a crisis in MFL teaching and learning, and its ultimate aim is **to drive stronger uptake and results in MFL study**, and to enthuse and better prepare candidates for entry into MFL at university by bringing about a change in the curriculum. This could also encourage more students to take MFL degrees at university. A **pilot scheme** involving the five aforementioned HE institutions and several schools across the UK has been launched in 2018-19, and if successful it will be seeking further funding to be extended to a broader national level.

As clearly explained by Dr Michelle Sheehan (Anglia Ruskin University, MFL Project Lead), "linguistics is singularly well-placed" to contribute towards the core aims of the new Modern Foreign Language (MFL) A level (i.e. aiming to equip pupils not with the ability to learn other languages and apply analytical/critical skills language, culture and society"), but exam board specifications have not yet capitalized on this fact, nor on the evidence that studying language from an analytic perspective can help improve language confidence.

I believe UCML should engage with MLF as much as possible, and liaise with its leads to be actively involved in the next stages of the projects. As I have proposed in several occasions, it would be beneficial to all UCML members if we prepare some promotional material to **promote linguistics in schools as a 'bridge' between language and culture teaching**, and I would be happy to be closely working with MLF on behalf of the UCML Executive.

UCGAL

University Council of General and Applied Linguistics (UCGAL) has recently organised two workshops on REF, which seems to be its main focus and priority at the moment.