

**Minutes of the LAGB Annual General Meeting  
University of Cambridge, 1 September 2005, 4 p.m.**

1. Apologies for absence

None received.

2. Approval of the minutes of the AGM held at the University of Surrey  
Roehampton, 31 August 2004 (circulated)

Approved.

3. Matters arising from the AGM 2004

3.1. *Guidelines for the Use of Language Analysis in Relation to Questions of National Origin in Refugee Cases* (President to report)

The proposed amendments to the Guidelines have been communicated to Peter Patrick. LAGB have accepted the revised Guidelines, they are now available for viewing.

3.2. Registration fee: surcharge for non-members (Treasurer to report)

It was agreed that £15 would be added to the registration fee and LAGB members will obtain a discount of this value.

3.3. Appointment of the President

There was one nomination of Professor Kersti Börjars who was unanimously elected, to begin her term after the leaving President's report (item 4).

4. President's report

4.1. Linguistics Strategy Group and HESA statistics

The President summarised the history of the HESA statistics exercise that began with the discussions with Paul Rowlett on the state of linguistics as an academic discipline and on student statistics. In 2002/3, a statistical study on the state of Modern Languages was carried out, supported by interviews. In September 2004 Professor Keith Brown convened a meeting of learned societies at which the results were discussed. Linguistics Strategy Group was formed in order to conduct another statistics exercise, but also to work actively in different ways to raise the profile of the discipline generally. Five years of statistics were bought and funds were collected from the LAGB and other learned societies with an interest in Linguistics to employ a statistician to analyse them. The results were presented at a meeting in May 2005. The general outcome was that there is a steady decline of the number of linguistics courses and student numbers over the period. However, problems with the accuracy of the data were reported in that the classification of courses may have skewed the results. The next meeting will take place in October 2005. Dr Dunstan Brown observed that it was an expensive exercise and the quality of the service was not satisfactory. As paying customers we should send a comment to HESA stating our concerns. It was also pointed out that the way in which HEIs sent the information to HESA may have contributed to the distortion in the results. The President also pointed out the necessity of raising the profile of linguistics through cross-sector collaboration, in particular liaising with schools and forming a professional lobbying body. In the discussion on the declining student numbers, the President also observed that declining student numbers were not the reason for closing the department at Durham.

The Honorary Secretary and the LAGB membership thanked the retiring President for her service to the Association.

## 5. Reports of other Committee members

### 5.1. Treasurer's report

The Treasurer presented the LAGB accounts as at 31 December 2004. The Association made a loss of £337.24, which is a significant improvement as compared with 2003 when the loss was £5,810.31. Generally the reason for the improvement was the reduction of the expenditure and the increase in the income. He noted that money was still coming in for the Roehampton meeting and the loss would decrease. The cost of processing subscriptions went up. However, since we are moving to the electronic distribution of circulars and other materials, the cost of printing is going down. The cost of maintaining the LAGB website will be considerably reduced by changing the operator and introducing the new site *lagb.org.uk*.

### 5.2. Honorary Secretary's report

Honorary Secretary wrote a protest letter concerning the closure of linguistics programmes in Spain. He also coordinated responses to the draft statement of criteria and working methods of the Linguistics RAE sub-panel. Two main problems were reported: (1) the potential discouragement of research collaboration internal to departments and (2) unclear formulation of the criteria for 4\*. He invited more comments from the membership. The discussion followed under item 12.

### 5.3. Membership Secretary's report

Membership Secretary reported that there are currently 583 members (increase on 2004: 545). Most members are based in the UK but there are also nearly 200 from overseas. There are 140 student members. 64 people joined for the 2005 LAGB meeting. He encouraged payment by direct debit.

### 5.4. Assistant Secretary's report

Assistant Secretary reminded the membership that there are now 15 bursaries available to students and unwaged members for attending LAGB meetings.

### 5.5. Meetings Secretary's report

Meetings Secretary confirmed that the next meeting would be held at the University of Newcastle from 30 August to 2 September 2006, and the meeting after that will be held at King's College London from 29 August to 1 September 2007. He invited discussion on whether the change to one meeting per year has been a success. He also pointed out that the cost of the meetings went up due to having two invited plenary speakers and a workshop. There was general agreement that the move to one meeting per year and the timing and length of the meeting had been a success but that the structure of the meeting should be reconsidered. He pointed out that not many participants of the LAGB meetings register for the whole event: only c. 50 out of 200 for the Cambridge meeting. However, it was agreed that the current registration procedure would be maintained as it was generally agreed that the fact that not everyone registers for the full duration of the meeting does not pose a problem. It was also agreed that submission of abstracts would be limited to one single-authored and one joint submission per person. Meetings Secretary also invited proposals to organize the 2008 meeting. The AGM decided to continue with the present format for the meetings for the time being, but to monitor the success of the length and timing of the meeting.

6. LAGB response to the draft statement of criteria and working methods of the Linguistics RAE sub-panel (Honorary Secretary to report)

Discussed under item 5.2.

7. Nominations for the Treasurer

Dr Dunstan Brown wishes to step down as treasurer at the end of his term in mid-2006. He invites nominations and is happy to cooperate with the new Treasurer for a six-month changeover period.

8. Proposal to abolish paper submission of abstracts and paper distribution of the circulars (Membership Secretary to report)

Membership Secretary reported that the electronic submission of abstracts had been a success and would be continued. The option of submitting on paper will be available only on request and in special circumstances. Abstracts of papers accepted for presentation should if possible now be made available on the web before the conference. He also reported that circulars would now be distributed electronically. Members who wish to receive paper copies will have to opt in.

9. Establishment of the regular deadline for submissions of abstracts (1 April, Meetings Secretary to report)

The following schedule for circulars and deadline for the submission of abstracts were agreed:

1 February – deadline for issuing the first circular

1 April – deadline for submission of abstracts

1 June – deadline for issuing the second circular

10. Future funding for conferences and workshops

The Committee's proposal of funding two postgraduate conferences per year, with one site in the north and one in the south, was accepted. The sites will be chosen on a rotation basis. The President is to write to the organizers to encourage cooperation between the two sites in the south and two in the north respectively. Assistant Secretary summarised the problems with funding workshops on a tight budget, ensuring the quality of contributions and their relevance to the Henry Sweet lecture. It was decided that the format of the workshops would be left open to fit particular occasions. There was agreement that the 'teach-in' format had worked well and that this could be brought back when the topic was suitable. If there was no obvious topic or speakers for a workshop, then ordinary sessions could be scheduled on that day. Co-operation between holders of large grants and joint funding of workshops or special sessions should also be explored.

11. Address by Dr Ken Lodge, University of East Anglia

Dr Ken Lodge thanked the Association for sending a petition protesting against the closure of Linguistics at UEA. He reported that the situation of linguistics at UEA is not as bad as was expected. Some undergraduate programmes have been cancelled but postgraduate courses remained. New courses in related areas have been established such as Speech and Language Therapy. He reported that there would be a working group on the future of linguistics established at UEA.

12. RAE: address by Professor John Local, followed by a discussion. Professor John Local presented and commented on the draft statement of criteria and working methods of the Linguistics RAE sub-panel. He presented panel membership, subject coverage and the structure of assessment. He also addressed the two main problems raised by the LAGB membership: (1) the potential discouragement of research collaboration internal to departments and (2) unclear formulation of the criteria for 4\*. He reassured the membership that point (1) was not intended by the sub-panel and the criterion would be re-examined so as to remove the possibility of disadvantaging interdepartmental collaboration. He also explained the sub-panel's decision to rank longer pieces of written work as single submissions. Finally, he answered questions on the criteria used by the members of the sub-panel in assessing written work, including the question on the significance of the quality of the journal in which an article appeared. He explained that the work would be read for its quality and the decision would be made independently of the source in which the publication appeared. This guideline, however, is not to be understood as a possibility that a publication in a highly ranked journal may nevertheless score a very low mark due to subjective judgement of the assessor. Whenever there is doubt as to the quality of the piece of work, an additional expert will be appointed to adjudicate.

12a. LSA resolution to support the recognition of electronic databases of language material as academic publications (Assistant Secretary to report)

Assistant Secretary communicated a request from Professor Anna Siewierska to open a discussion on the consideration of electronic databases of language material as academic publications in cases of promotion. She quoted a resolution to this effect adopted earlier this year at the annual meeting of the LSA. She is to forward the text of the resolution to the LAGB list for an email discussion and report the results at the next AGM. It was also noted that electronic resources can be submitted to the RAE in the UK.

13. *Comité International Permanent des Linguistes* (Assistant Secretary to report)

Assistant Secretary reported that in May 2005 she and Professor Klaus von Heusinger from Stuttgart were invited to advise the board of the *Comité International Permanent des Linguistes* on the future direction of the organization. Dr Jaszczolt and Professor von Heusinger agreed that there is a need for an international organization of linguists that would serve as an umbrella organization for the national associations such as LAGB and this role cannot be fulfilled by the *Comité* whose objectives do not extend to certain functions that such an international body would have to fulfil. In addition to its academic and intellectual function, the association would be indispensable in, for example, making representation on the occasion of a closure of linguistics programmes (such as the recent case in Spain, or UEA and Durham in the UK), or coordinating the work on linguistics education in schools and comparing the situation and experiences in this field in different countries. She is to initiate a discussion on the LAGB list on the need of such an international association and will summarise the comments at the next AGM, also reporting on the outcome of an analogous discussion in Germany.

14. Education Committee / CLIE report

Professor Dick Hudson presented a summary of the work of the Education Committee (available as a separate written report), focussing on the increase of teaching English on

the school curriculum and on the work in progress on the advanced A-level in linguistics. The President thanked the Education Committee for its work.

15. Future guest speakers: President to report

At the 2005 AGM, the membership voted for the following speakers (ranked by the number of votes): (i) Noam Chomsky, (ii) Sharon Inkelas, and (iii) Hans Kamp. The President is to approach the first two for the 2006 meeting. Three nominations were added, accepted in the following order (ranked by the number of votes): (i) Elan Dresher, (ii) Nicholas Evans, and (iii) Alec Marantz. It was suggested that Nicholas Evans could also be approached to present a language tutorial.

16. Future language tutorials

Proposals already existed for language tutorials for the following languages: Archi, Norwegian and Athabaskan. Members voted to invite (a) Keren Rice to hold a language tutorial for Athabaskan for the next meeting and (b) a group at the University of Surrey with collaborators to hold a language tutorial on Archi for the 2007 meeting. There was no interest in a language tutorial on Norwegian.

17. AOB

It was reported that the book auction at the Roehampton meeting raised £55.

The meeting ended at 6.20 p.m.

K. M. Jaszczolt  
Assistant Secretary, LAGB

8 September 2005, revised 29 September 2005