

Brief Report on the Conference on Linguistics  
and the University Education

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A conference on 'Linguistics and the University Education' was held at Michigan State University, East Lansing, on Friday and Saturday, April 25-26. The announced goals of the conference were (1) to examine the role and content of linguistics as an important, and even fundamental, subject in the modern liberal or general education, and (2) to examine the role and content of linguistics as a useful minor course of study in various undergraduate programs of the humanities and natural and social sciences. The proceedings of the conference with full texts of the fifteen papers presented have been published by the Department of Linguistics and Oriental and African languages, Michigan State University (East Lansing, 48824).

Invited speakers were Adrian Akmajian, John Algeo, Glendon Drake, Julia Falk, Bruce Fraser, Donald Freeman, and Robert King. These seven and eight other speakers addressed a variety of topics, general and specific; however, their remarks and most of the discussion was focused on three areas: (1) the present and future role of linguistics in general university education, (2) the role of the linguist in other departments, and (3) the service role of linguistics to other departments of the university. While there was seldom much consensus on the various topics, it seemed clear that most of the approximately 80-90 conference participants were aware that retrenchment is a fact of life for the time being (although one speaker said that the next Golden Age of growth will occur in the decade 2000-2010) and that for this and other reasons the role of the linguist is likely to be a good deal different in the future from what it was in the 1960's and 1970's. Some speakers seemed to propose a basic reaffirmation of the traditional emphases and content of linguistics programs. Others proposed revision of emphases, and new content. Some spoke from a historical and more neutral perspective.

Following is a list of speakers and the titles of their papers: Robert D. King, "Linguistics and a university education in the 80's"; Glendon F. Drake, "The institutional crisis in linguistics"; Derry L. Malsch, "The first and last course in linguistics"; John Algeo, "Issues in the history of humanistic linguistics"; Donald C. Freeman, "Linguistics and the humanities"; John Lipski, "Linguistics and the Spanish curriculum"; Josh Ard, "The centrality of discourse analysis to the university education"; Jeffrey Kaplan, "Non-transformational grammar for non-linguists"; Adrian Akmajian, "The introductory linguistics course: what are we trying to say?, who are we trying to reach?, and why should we bother?"; Julia S. Falk, "Non-uniqueness in introductory linguistics education"; Victor Raskin,

"The use of linguistic problems in linguistic education"; Bruce Fraser, "The use and misuse of language: what can linguists say?"; Donald W. Larmouth, "Language and human conflict: interdisciplinary studies in language variation and social policy"; James C. Stalker, "Propriety and dogma"; and Robert K. Herbert, "Linguistics in human service education".