



Newsletter March 2007

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The Seventieth Meeting in Bristol, 2-4 April 2007

Members will find enclosed a draft programme for the 70th meeting of the CUTG to be held in April at the University of Bristol. Alongside the lead panel on 'British-German Cultural Relations', organised by the host department, the conference features a wide range of panels on literature, history and linguistics that we hope will offer a truly representative picture of research in German Studies in Great Britain and Ireland.

Committee News

The CUTG Committee attempted to meet officially on 18 January 2007 at the University of Warwick, as storms brought the country to a standstill. Although only two members of the Committee made it through the chaos to the meeting, a number of important points for the running of the CUTG and the conferences themselves were raised and discussed later by all Committee members electronically.

1. Conference procedure

The Committee decided to simplify the rates we charge to those attending the conference. Until now, we have operated a complex tariff, which inevitably is never complex enough to meet the exact requirements of all attendees. This leads to confusion and a lot of extra work for the Conference Secretary and the Treasurer. Conference attendance will now be charged according to the following three options:

- i. a full conference rate with accommodation and full board at three price levels (member/non-member/PG);
- ii. a conference rate without accommodation but including all meals at these three levels;
- iii. a standard day rate including all food and refreshment. This rate will be the same irrespective of the day.

Until now, we have charged a deposit, with the balance to be paid at the conference. This causes problems for the Treasurer, who has to track down individual attendees during the conference and make sure they pay the correct amount. From now on, attendees will simply pay their total conference fee up front when they register to attend.

2. Scholarships

No application for publications scholarships were received. It was decided that the Committee would therefore convert the unclaimed publication scholarship into a further two travelling scholarships. Four travelling scholarships were awarded to Frauke Matthes (Edinburgh), Elaine Morley (Kent), Filippo Nereo (Manchester), Regina Standún (Maynooth).

The Committee would like to encourage members to alert postgraduate students to this source of funding. It is important to note, however, that postgraduates must be members of the CUTG before the deadline for the submission of applications (see 'Membership matters' under 5).

3. Financial reporting year

The Committee agreed that the Treasurer would prepare the financial report by calendar year rather than by financial year from now on.

3. CUTG website

The current website is very serviceable, but is due for a redesign. The Committee agreed that the Publicity and Publications Secretary would look into having the website redesigned by a professional web designer and this is now in hand. The new design should be implemented in the next three to four months.

4. Publications

So far, the CUTG's offer to subsidise any publication resulting from a conference to a maximum of £500 has not been taken up. The Committee decided that these funds could be allocated flexibly, for example to support editorial or administrative assistance by a postgraduate student, where no actual publication subsidy was required by the publisher. It was also agreed that the publication need not be based on the lead panel at the conference, so long as the content emerged from a panel or panels at the conference, and that the publication could also include material not presented at the

conference. The Committee would like to invite interested parties to contact the Publicity and Publications Secretary, David Clarke, at mlsdc@bath.ac.uk.

5. Membership matters

For the purposes of awarding publication and travel scholarships, the Committee noted that membership of the CUTG begins with receipt of an application form accompanied by a cheque for the relevant membership fee. Full details of membership matters can be found at <http://www.cutg.ac.uk/joining.htm>.

Employment of Lektoren / Language Staffing Survey

In the summer of 2006, the President of the CUTG, Prof. Martina Lauster, conducted a survey on behalf of the Conference into the employment of Lektoren and other native speaker language teaching staff, after concerns were raised about the effects of the new employment legislation on staff with fixed-term contracts. A summary of the results of this survey is presented below.

BASIC FIGURES:

24 returns were received from HE Departments teaching German in England, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.

These included 'pre-' as well as 'post-1992' UK Universities. I was heartened to see that German survives as a HE subject in some form or other outside (a dwindling group of) UK 'old universities'. But permanent staff at one 'new' University were reported to have been redeployed in management and generic teaching. Sadly, too, the only post-1992 University represented in this survey that employs a German Lektor is phasing out German as a degree subject over the next few years.

Lektoren (DAAD, Österreich-Kooperation and Ortslektoren) are employed in 19 of the 24 institutions. Of these 19, 12 employ more than one Lektor. Six employ a **Language Instructor** or permanent Teaching Fellow in addition to (or, in one case, in lieu of) a Lektor / Lektoren.

Size of Departments of German (I use this increasingly obsolete expression also to include 'Sections', 'Units' or 'Programmes' within bigger administrative setups):

This varied considerably between one and 11 permanent staff (or 19 in the case of the Oxford collegiate system). The interesting result here was that size is of comparatively little importance with regard to the employment of Lektoren and other non-permanent language teaching staff.

Two or even three Lektoren are employed by Departments varying between 3.5 and 11 permanent staff. One Lektor may be employed by Departments numbering between one and 11 permanent staff. With regard to staff on fixed-term contracts other than Lektoren, it emerged that 18 of the 24 institutions employ a total of at least 60 between them, i.e. a minimum average of 3.3.

The proportion of Lektoren and other fixed-term staff within the total staff of a Department may be as big as or even in excess of 50%, and it is rarely smaller than 25%.

These results prove what is widely known, but perhaps not taken for granted by many university administrations, i.e. that language subjects are very teaching intensive, requiring and involving a lot of staff. They also show that, whatever the number of permanent staff, to teach the subject effectively an infrastructure of well-qualified native speakers is needed.

PART A – LANGUAGE TEACHING AND ITS STAFFING AT THE MOMENT

Proportion of language teaching within teaching programme: In most Departments, the ratio of language to content teaching, measured in contact hours, is around 60% / 40% or 70% / 30%; very rarely the other way around (i.e. content outweighing language).

In 16 returns I was able to work out the **share Lektoren and other fixed-term staff take in language teaching, as opposed to the share of permanent staff.**

In the Irish institutions, Lektoren teach between 10% and 30% of the language programme. They seem to have a stronger input into Landeskunde.

In UK institutions, Lektoren typically teach around 50% of the language programme (in 2 institutions, around 40%, in another 2, around 60%). Permanent staff in the Irish institutions teach 25%-45% of the language programme. For UK institutions, there is no clear picture. The number of Departments which involve permanent staff very little in language teaching (max. 25%) equals that of

Departments where permanent staff teach between 30% and 50% of the language programme. **Fixed-term staff** other than Lektoren in UK German Departments typically teach around 10-15%, occasionally 30% of the language programme, and around 40% of it in a few big Departments only. In Ireland, their share in language teaching is higher than the UK average.

These figures show that non-permanent staff teach the lion's share of what is, in most Departments, the bigger part of the teaching programme. Of the non-permanent staff, Lektoren typically teach the biggest part of the lion's share.

PART B – POSSIBLE CHANGES TO STAFFING OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

From this part of the questionnaire, no particular conclusions could be drawn. I was expecting to hear of **difficulties encountered by Departments with regard to the 4-5 year employment period** allowed for Lektoren by the DAAD and ÖK. The new employment law will not leave scope for this (either up to 2 years or open-ended, i.e. practically permanent). So far, the fact that Lektoren are becoming 'more permanent' and 'more expensive' seems to have affected only one Department which had to lose one of its two Lektoren. Maybe the questionnaire was sent too early, and we will know more in 1-2 years' time when the new legislation begins to have an effect. A longer-term employment of Lektoren is what most Departments want, as this ensures maximum benefit to both the Lektor and the Department. I therefore ask Departments to let CUTG (either me or my successor as President) know of any untoward developments regarding the contracts of Lektoren. The statistics contained in this report might serve as ammunition if a post is under threat.

In a number of institutions, **German / Austrian Lektoren are the only ones employed under a proper scheme**, compared to more ad hoc arrangements for less experienced Lecteurs / Lectrices in French and other languages. In a number of cases, colleagues answering this part of the questionnaire admitted that they did not know what the arrangements were regarding contracts for language assistants in other subjects. This seems typical of the **relatively chaotic situation regarding the employment of non-permanent staff in Languages**. What needs to be watched here is the effect of the new contractual framework. It must ensure that differences between language teachers / Lektoren / Lecteurs are recognised and at the same time provide a satisfactory employment basis for all non-permanent staff.

Very few institutions seem to put pressure on permanent staff to abandon language teaching in order to carry out research-related teaching only. Good to know.

I have heard from only two Departments where **collaboration with a Language Centre** means that Departmental staff teach a programme or programmes for the Centre, which in both cases is closely related to the Department. One very worthwhile experiment seems to be the introduction of a GCSE-level entry channel for German through the Centre.

Ab initio German, which might be taken by increasing numbers of students who have been unable to opt for German at school, is currently taught by 11 of the 24 Departments and by one Language Centre associated with a Department. It seems wise to explore ways in which German for Beginners can be made a joint operation from which Centres and Departments alike can profit.

Prof. Martina Lauster

President of the Conference of University Teachers of German
in Great Britain and Ireland

5 February, 2007