ABSTRACT
        Issues in the development of an undergraduate
linguistics major are discussed for linguists wanting to initiate
such a major at their institution. The discussion, which assumes the
pre-existence of service courses in linguistics, addresses
administrators' questions and concerns in deciding whether to
implement a major program, including: the objectives of such a
program other than preparing students for advanced study in
linguistics; the program's administrative status; resources required
for initiating a major (courses and faculty, crosslisting of courses
for graduate and undergraduate credit, library resources, equipment,
and other specialized material); and differences between the proposed
degree program and other similar programs offered in the geographic
vicinity. (MSE)

Using Existing Resources to Develop
an Undergraduate Linguistics Major

by

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PREFACE

The Linguistics in the Undergraduate Curriculum (LUC) project is an effort by the Linguistic Society of America (LSA) to study the state of undergraduate instruction in linguistics in the United States and Canada and to suggest directions for its future development. It was supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities during the period 1 January 1985-31 December 1987. The project was carried out under the direction of D. Terence Langendoen, Principal Investigator, and Secretary-Treasurer of the LSA. Mary Niebuhr, Executive Assistant at the LSA office in Washington, DC, was responsible for the day-to-day administration of the project with the assistance of Nicole VandenHeuvel and Dana McDaniel.

Project oversight was provided by a Steering Committee that was appointed by the LSA Executive Committee in 1985. Its members were: Judith Aissen (University of California, Santa Cruz), Paul Angelis (Southern Illinois University), Victoria Fromkin (University of California, Los Angeles), Frank Heny, Robert Jeffers (Rutgers University), D. Terence Langendoen (Graduate Center of the City University of New York), Manjari Ohala (San Jose State University), Ellen Prince (University of Pennsylvania), and Arnold Zwicky (The Ohio State University and Stanford University). The Steering Committee, in turn, received help from a Consultant Panel, whose members were: Ed Battistella (University of Alabama, Birmingham), Byron Bender (University of Hawaii, Manoa), Garland Bills (University of New Mexico), Daniel Brink (Arizona State University), Ronald Butters (Duke University), Charles Cairns (Queens College of CUNY), Jean Casagrande (University of Florida), Nancy Dorian (Bryn Mawr College), Sheila Embleton (York University), Francine Frank (State University of New York, Albany), Robert Freidin (Princeton University), Jean Berko-Gleason (Boston University), Wayne Harbert (Cornell University), Alice Harris (Vanderbilt University), Jeffrey Heath, Michael Henderson (University of Kansas), Larry Hutchinson (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis), Ray Jackendoff (Brandeis University), Robert Johnson (Gallaudet College), Braj Kachru (University of Illinois, Urbana), Charles Kreidler (Georgetown University), William Ladusaw (University of California, Santa Cruz), Ilse Lehiste (The Ohio State University), David Lightfoot (University of Maryland), Donna Jo Napoli (Swarthmore College), Ronald Macaulay (Pitzer College), Geoffrey Pullum (University of California, Santa Cruz), Victor Raskin (Purdue University), Sanford Schane (University of California, San Diego), Carlota Smith (University of Texas, Austin), Roger Shuy (Georgetown University), and Jessica Wirth (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee).

ERRATA

P. 2 The last paragraph should begin:

In the past, universities and colleges have often placed linguistics
(in some cases as a semi-autonomous program) within the English or
Anthropology Departments. This status persists in a very few cases and
recently linguistics has sometimes been placed within the Psychology
department. For further information on the administrative affiliation
of linguistic programs, see a separate LUC Project report titled: "The
Status of Undergraduate Education in Linguistics in the United States
and Canada."....

(NOTE: There is no report titled "Brink/Raskin Questionnaire: An Anal-
ysis of Undergraduate Linguistics Programs in the United States and
Canada.")

4

This report is aimed at linguists who wish to initiate a full-fledged undergraduate major in linguistics. It assumes the existence of service courses in linguistics (or even a minor), but no major. The report will attempt to address the questions and concerns administrators may have in deciding whether to implement such a major.

1. What objective would such a degree program serve other than preparing students for advanced study in linguistics?

(a) A B.A. in linguistics provides a broad liberal arts education emphasizing the study of language, treating language both as a fundamental human faculty and as a changing social institution. (Linguistics is the discipline that encompasses all areas related to the scientific study of th nature, structure, and function of language.)

(b) Such a degree would also provide a pre-professional major for certain fields. Linguistics has been recognized as a valuable pre-professional major, for example, for law, not only because it is methodologically varied, employs rigorous means of analysis, and develops critical thinking, but also because linguistics has contributed to: the evaluation of voice-print evidence, interpreting the complex language of statutes and contracts, analyzing ambiguity and presuppositions (e.g., in testimony or in cross-examination), elucidation of attitudes towards language, and attempting to interpret and make uniform different states' laws covering the same area.

(c) It also provides preparation for advanced study in fields such as Anthropology, Business, Communications, Computer Science, Education (Language Arts and Language teaching), Journalism, Neurosciences (for the study of, e.g., dyslexia and aphasia), Speech & Hearing Sciences, Philosophy, and Psychology.

(d) Along with preparing students for further study in areas mentioned under (c), the major would also prepare students for careers in fields where the knowledge of linguistics has proven essential. We give just a couple of examples here, for additional ones the reader is referred to the 'advocacy statements' available from the LSA.

--Second language teaching in general, and teaching English as a second language (TESL) in particular.

--Communication between humans and machine using natural (including spoken) language (a task central to artificial intelligence and robotics). Jobs for linguistics majors could involve the following types of tasks: Evaluation, selection, implementation, and training of others in use of commercially-available linguistic tools for word processing, e.g., spelling checkers/correctors, grammar/style checkers; using and training others to use commercially-available speech processing devices, including text-to-speech synthesis, automatic speech recognition systems; constructing dictionaries, and glossaries for specialized purposes; translating experts' statements into LISP statements for expert systems; computer aids for the disabled (blind, paralyzed, deaf).

--A B.A. in linguistics serves, as does any liberal arts degree, to qualify

1   5

a graduate for sales and management training programs in business and indus-
try. Students with this degree compete favorably with those from other
humanities and social science disciplines for entry-level positions in public
relations, commerce (e.g. banking), publishing (e.g., editing, lexicography),
and other fields requiring analytical, communication, and research skills,
e.g., technical writing, translation, government and non-profit language
research organizations, social service groups.

It should be mentioned that although not many universities have "tracked"
their graduates for employment obtained after graduating, information from one
that did, namely UCLA, supports the above statements regarding job possibili-
ties for graduates in linguistics. UCLA surveyed their (B.A.) graduates of
1981-82 and 1985-86 via questionnaire. Of the 74 respondents, only six of
those interested in jobs were unemployed. The rest were employed in careers
such as business (sales and marketing, managerial), law, computing, tech-
nical writing, teaching. A number of them were continuing further studies in
fields such as law, speech pathology, TESL, psychology, and linguistics.

2. Administrative status

Where should the linguistics program be housed: under which school and
which department? Linguistics, in part for historical reasons and in part
because of its nature, is sometimes seen as essentially inter-disciplinary in
character. This has contributed to the setting up of inter-departmental
programs at a great number of institutions over the past few decades. The
more successful of these have tended to gain independent status, often as
autonomous departments within the faculty/college of Humanities or within
Social Sciences. A case could even be made to house linguistics with the
natural sciences (cf. G.K. Pullum 'Topic...Comment', Natural Language and Lin-
guistic Theory 3, (1985) pp. 107-112). There are a few long established
inter-departmental programs which continue to function effectively, but in
general it seems that while there is every justification for expecting that
linguists will provide service to the university community as a whole, and for
expecting academics whose object of study is language will have close inter-
disciplinary ties to many other administrative units, the systematic, scienti-
fic study of language is now so well-established, independent and mature a
discipline that it will be able to best serve that community if established as
a separate linguistics department as early as possible.

In the past, universities and colleges have often placed linguistics (in
some cases as a semi-autonomous program) within the English or Anthropology
departments. This status persists in a very few cases and recently linguis-
tics has sometimes been placed within the Psychology department. For further
information on the administrative affiliation of linguistic programs, see the
attached 'Brink/Raskin Questionnaire: An Analysis of Undergraduate Linguis-
tics Programs in the United States and Canada.' While there is obviously some
justification for placing a new venture within some existing department, the
field now has an internal integrity and a basic methodology which makes it
very hard for linguists to function effectively in a university setting with-
out some autonomy--and there are good academic grounds for thinking that none
of the above arrangements will provide a congenial environment within which
linguists can effectively serve the university. Problems arise when faculty
who know little about the highly complex area of linguistics have to make

2

decisions which affect linguistics in the area of personnel, curriculum, and allocation of resources.

3. Resources required for initiating the major.

These would differ depending on whether the existing program was a minor, a minor plus a graduate program, or only a graduate program. The cost of setting up a major would also differ depending on whether just a general linguistics B.A. was to be offered or whether special emphases such as natural language processing by computers are being planned. If the campus already has a minor and a graduate program the cost of offering a major will be minimal.

Courses & faculty

Although there are no prescribed set of core courses for a major in linguistics, most universities offering a B.A. in linguistics seem to include what could be called a traditional core. Along with one or two general introductory courses in linguistics (Introduction to linguistics, Introduction to language) this usually includes courses in the following:

Phonetics/Phonology

Syntax/Semantics

Historical-comparative and/or Typological Linguistics

(Some universities have separate courses in each of the areas of phonetics, phonology, syntax and semantics.) If the campus already has a minor and/or graduate program in linguistics most of these courses would already be existing offerings. Also, it is possible that historical-comparative linguistics or courses in language typology might be existing courses in other departments, such as the department(s) that teach foreign languages. However it must be emphasized that it is essential that the core courses be taught by faculty with degrees in linguistics specializing in the areas listed above. Thus to initiate the major there should be at least two faculty positions assigned to the program, one for a specialist in phonetics/phonology and the other for one in syntax/semantics (although it would be advisable to start with at least three positions to give the breadth and intellectual stimulation required). Additional courses required to 'flesh out' the major could either be additional offerings in linguistics (morphology, field methods, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, etc) or relevant courses from other departments. A campus wishing to offer some special emphases within the major (e.g., Natural Language and Computers, TESL) will naturally offer courses in the specialized areas beyond the core. A sample program from a university emphasizing theoretical descriptive linguistics in the major is given in the advocacy statement by Jorge Hankamer, 'The UCSC Linguistics Major', available from the LSA.

Crosslisting linguistics courses for graduate and undergraduate credit

Another question may arise for universities that have a graduate program

in linguistics and also allow the option of crosslisting courses for both graduate and undergraduate credit. Should existing courses be crosslisted for both graduate and undergraduate credit? There are pros and cons to the issue. In favor of crosslisting there are of course budgetary advantages. There are also some instructional advantages: it is good for undergraduates to be treated as 'adults', i.e., to be reading the same literature as graduate students. And it is beneficial for the graduate students in that undergra-duates often ask some rather penetrating basic questions. Finally, the rather special character of linguistics as a graduate discipline--it is still true that many students enter such a program with little course work specifically in linguistics--ensures that many introductory courses will have graduate as well as undergraduate enrollment. The disadvantages are that the content may be too technical for some undergraduates; that assignments requiring original research papers may be inappropriate for some undergraduates; and that instructors might have to grade undergraduates and graduates using different criteria.

Library resources, equipment & other specialized material required to initiate the major:

If the campus already has a graduate program, the library resources should be adequate. If not, additional library resources will be required. The LSA is prepared to give some guidance; see the document by Judith Aissen, 'Library List: A Suggested Library Collection for Undergraduate Linguistics Programs', available from the LSA. With regards to equipment, although some areas of linguistics are enhanced by the availability of specialized equip-ment, it is not a hardware-dependent discipline. However, depending on which of the technical areas the program wishes to emphasize, some equipment might be required. For example, a natural language and computers emphasis would require computational facilities and some staff for operation and maintenance. Also, the teaching of phonetics is generally enhanced by the availability of a lab, especially if speech synthesis or automatic speech recognition are to be covered.

3. Difference between the proposed degree program and other similar ones offered in the geographical vicinity.

Inevitably administrators contemplating the introduction of an undergra-duate degree in linguistics will have to ask the question of how the degree differs from similar degrees offered by neighboring institutions, i.e., will the proposed program fill an identifiable niche in the local ecology of higher education? The answer to this question will of course vary depending on the location of the campus, the nature of the students, and the interests of its faculty. Some campuses have emphasized the Liberal Arts & Science profile of linguistics and others its technical preprofessional character. Yet others have emphasized both. It is one of the positive characteristics of the disci-pline of linguistics that a good major program can be constructed with dif-ferent types of profiles. The 'advocacy statements' available from the LSA are sufficiently varied to give administrators considerable choice in which areas to emphasize based on the characteristics of their campus.

4