

University Training and Research
in the
Teaching of English
as a
Second/Foreign Language

Memorandum presented
by
THE LINGUISTICS PANEL
of
THE BRITISH COUNCIL

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**Memorandum on University Training and Research in the
Teaching of English as a Second/Foreign Language**

The Problem

1. This paper is submitted by the Linguistics Panel of the British Council at the request of the Council's Universities Advisory Committee. The original reason for the request was that H.M.G. granted funds to the British Council to send teachers abroad according to the recommendations of the *Teaching of English Overseas Report* of 1956, but no provision was made to train U.K. teachers for this purpose, or for research. Since 1956, the oversea teachers coming to the U.K. who need training in this subject have increased. The recommendations of the Commonwealth Education Conference, 1959 (Report Command 841, pp. 33-34, paragraph 17; p. 44, paragraph 5) will increase still further the numbers both of British teachers going overseas and of oversea teachers coming to the United Kingdom for training. No funds have been allocated to increase the number of places available in universities.

Teaching

2. We do not think that the training and research required can be provided by a limited programme directed to the teaching of English as a second language alone, though this is necessary. But we note the continued concern about the English of U.K. undergraduates, and we believe that if the study of contemporary English were more firmly established at our universities, it would benefit the teaching of English not only overseas, but also in our own schools. In our view, indeed, the two problems are inseparable.

3. In a few universities, contemporary English is already being taught and studied in close connexion with general linguistics and the comparative study of grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics (see Appendix A). We earnestly hope that wherever universities propose developments of a similar kind, the University Grants Committee will actively encourage them. The establishment of departments of general linguistics would assist collaboration between English and other language departments.

4. Ancillary to the teaching of contemporary English to undergraduates is the provision of complementary courses in English for oversea students, particularly those studying science, medicine, and technology. They need help in comprehending and using the kind of English appropriate to their subject. Courses are already being given in some universities (see Appendix B). We believe that complementary courses will often prove necessary for recently-arrived oversea students whose native language is not English. Courses of this kind also provide the opportunity for research into the use of second-language English as a medium of instruction (see again Appendix B).

