**Some personal reflections on Applied Linguistics studies in Wales since the 1960s**

Applied Linguistics in Wales in the 1960s primarily meant the application of linguistic insights to language teaching and learning; and I imagine that this was also the case across UK.

In Wales, that interest was given expression in three different ways. One distinctive development of it was the deliberate creation of a form of Welsh for learners that would be acceptable to all sides of the great dialect divides of Welsh-speaking people. It became known as Cymraeg Byw, “living Welsh”; it was meant as a form of conversational Welsh made easier for learners at a time when Welsh-medium education had become a political reality. This is the form of Welsh that I tried to learn and I attended regular classes in what was known as the *Wlpan* method; *wlpan* was the Welsh spelling of the Hebrew *ulpan* which referred to intensive teaching of the language for the benefit of immigrants to Israel. One advantage was that it was relatively easy to make rapid progress in the basic elements for conversation, but it suffered from two major problems: many native Welsh speakers mocked it as the “ydy dydy” language, and secondly, it didn’t help us to follow Welsh programmes on the radio and tv, nor with reading. But it was a serious application of linguistics to take various forms from different dialects and blend them together so that native speakers of the different dialects might indeed understand us.

A second area of linguistic application was the development of the Bilingual Method for teaching any foreign language. This method was mainly associated with two professors at Aberystwyth, Carl Dodson and Jac L Williams. Dodson published the first definitive presentation of the method in 1967. He had realized as an immigrant to Britain that he learnt English by comparing it with his native German, eg “Ach so, *come in*: das bedeutet ‘herein’!” This is a natural reaction for anyone when learning another language, by making reference to what they already understand. Quite the opposite to the so called Direct Method, where no use of the mother tongue was permitted; but you can’t forbid what goes on in a learner’s mind. The Bilingual Method made use of what H E Palmer had called “the judicious use of the mother tongue”. Applied linguistics provided Dodson with elementary contrastive analysis and rudimentary error analysis. The method found favour immediately with the teaching of Welsh, but also the teaching of foreign language in schools throughout Wales. It was exported to India where is was adopted by the Central Institute of English as a Foreign Language at Bangalore, as it was called then, and a similar institution in Hyderabad. But it never found favour with the British Council, because most of their English teachers were native speakers of the language without a knowledge of the local languages of their learners; and so elementary contrastive studies and rudimentary error analysis were not available.

That leads to the third dominant feature of applied linguistics in Wales 60 years ago: the training of teachers to teach English as Foreign Language (TEFL). There were then strong programmes in Bangor and Cardiff supported by the British Council.

I myself took the inaugural running of the postgrad Diploma in Linguistic Science at Cardiff in 1965-6.

We were fed on R H Robins (*General Linguistics: An Introductory Survey*; and *A Short History of Linguistics*), Halliday, McIntosh & Strevens (*The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*), Abercrombie (*Elements of General Phonetics*) and Daniel Jones, of course. We also were provided with locally produced notes translated from Cantineau’s translation in French of Trubetzkoy’s famous work on phonology; I hadn’t known then that Trubetzkoy’s original work was in German, which I could have read! The linguistics orientation at Cardiff was early Systemic-Functional Grammar, taught by David Young who before long published his *Structure of English Clauses* in 1980, and *Introducing English Grammar* in 1984. Robin Fawcett and Gordon Tucker provided strong continuation of that approach to linguistics.

Bangor, on the other hand, began with F R Palmer, David Crystal and Peter Matthews (*Morphology*, 1974) as a kind of offshoot of J R Firth’s London School in linguistics, but there was a radical turn to Transformational-Generative Linguistics with the arrival of Andrew Radford. He also led the new burgeoning field of child language studies, for which Bangor became well known internationally. TEFL programmes were maintained strongly there, with Carl James publishing world class presentations on *Contrastive Analysis* (1980), error analysis and language awareness; also Eddie Williams with his extensive experience of TEFL in Africa.

Jim Milton left Cardiff in the 80s to help set up a centre for the study of applied linguistics primarily for TEFL training, but before long it developed into an internationally known centre with a much wider field of research, the Dept of Applied Linguistics and English Language, which attracted people like Paul Meara and Tess Fitzpatrick in lexical studies.

Marilyn Martin-Jones established a centre for multilingual education in Aberystwyth, which gained international recognition. Indeed, bi- and multi-lingual education should be one of the most important and impactful exports that Wales can offer the rest of the world.

Linguistics applied to speech therapy was offered at what was Llandaff Technical College in Cardiff from 1970s, led by Siân Munro, who pioneered therapy for Welsh speaking patients; there had been hitherto no provision for such therapy for mother tongue Welsh speakers.

Forensic linguistics was established in Cardiff with the arrival of Janet Cotterill and aided by Michelle Aldridge and Chris Heffer. It was also established in Bangor, and apparently is now available at Wrexham and the University of South Wales.

As for myself, I have benefitted enormously from BAAL conferences: listening to the experts, meeting colleagues from around the country, and opportunities to present my own research, which included intonation in TEFL, contrastive and interlanguage phonology, phonological universals and mental systems of orthography. I was also a founding member of the Language in Africa SIG and took their very first session at Bristol in 2007, on my research into establishing a new orthography for Tera (Nigeria).

I’m absolutely sure that there is much more to tell, but you will have to ask colleagues in Wales who are 30 or 40 years younger than me! And I apologize unreservedly (as they say) to all those I have left out.

Paul Tench, Cardiff, January 2022