

Ken Aboute Language: A student project for school outreach to develop KAL and awareness of linguistics

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Knowledge About Language (KAL) is considered an important part of the curriculum. However, much of the delivery of KAL seems to come from prescriptive ideologies of how to speak and write ‘properly’ and is often centred around ‘standard’ English as the norm, even in areas where local varieties are predominant.

Why is this the case given the academic progression of linguistics over the last 50 years? Why is there such a rift between the rich, descriptive and scientific body of linguistics and the provision of this area in pre-16 education? Trends in educational philosophy and the curriculum over the last 60 years, as well as governmental changes, have contributed to the current situation (Trousdale 2012).

Recent initiatives by Richard Hudson (UCL) and Graeme Trousdale (Edinburgh), both members of the Committee for Linguistics in Education (CLIE), are introducing linguistic enquiry to young people. Notable initiatives are: UKLO, the UK Linguistics Olympiad, which works with schools to organise competitions involving typological analysis of data; and The Language Detectives, a linguistics summer school for young people run at the Villiers Park Educational Trust.

We offer some preliminary answers regarding the current state of KAL in the curriculum, summarise the existing academic projects and introduce ideas for educational outreach that are being developed by students here in Edinburgh.

Acknowledgements:

In addition to the authors, the project group consists of Shyla Hossain, Veronika Kozak, Lili Fullerton, Catriona Fraser, Isabel Benson, Alasdair MacLeod and Dr. Graeme Trousdale; many thanks to the aforementioned for their input. Thanks also goes to LangSoc: Edinburgh University Linguistics & English Language Society, UKLO: UK Linguistics Olympiad and ULAB: Undergraduate Linguistics Association of Britain for their support. We are also grateful to Ruth Meyers for her comments and ideas after the original presentation of this paper at ULAB2, UWE 2012.

References

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