

THE SLU-UFSAL LINGUISTICS COOPERATIVE PROGRAM (1972-1987)

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The cooperative program in linguistics between St. Louis University in Baguio City and the Universitaire Faculteiten Sint- Aloysius in Brussels, Belgium provided a means by which developments and trends in linguistics were introduced in a principled way to students at the SLU Graduate School taking up English as a major field of study.

This program was an outcome of a two-year contract (1972- 1973) between SLU and UFSAL which included linguistics as an area of cooperation between the two institutions. It was signed by Paul Zwaenepoel, CICM, president of SLU, and Jan Lindemans, rector of UFSAL in November 1971. The original agreement was for UFSAL to send a visiting professor to the SLU Graduate School to handle a linguistics course for teachers of English at the university during the summer term of 1973. The course was intended to be a part of the faculty development program of SLU through which teachers of English could update themselves on developments in their field. As it turned out, instead of only one course, two courses were actually given by the first visiting professor from UFSAL, Willy P. F. De Geest, over the six-week summer term of 1973: Introduction to General Linguistics and Introduction to Descriptive Grammar. In his report, De Geest noted that his students were enthusiastic about the courses and they expressed great interest in the subject matter. This enthusiasm was evident not only among the teachers who followed De Geest's courses, but also among the top administrators of SLU. They expressed the wish for the linguistics cooperative program between SLU and UFSAL to continue. With this program, SLU would be able to add a new course offering in its Graduate School: an MA program in English, major in linguistics. Guadalupe Carbonell, dean of the Graduate School then, and De Geest drew up a curriculum for this new course. The long-term goal of this MA program was to enable SLU to produce its own professors to teach linguistics courses on the graduate level. Thus the original agreement for a one-summer-term updating course in 1973 was expanded to offer a series of linguistics courses leading to an MA degree. Likewise, the time frame extended from 1974 to 1977.

From 1974 to 1976, UFSAL sent two linguistics professors every summer term: Willy P. F. De Geest and Yvan Putseys, who handled the linguistics courses in the new MA program: General Linguistics (3 units), English Transformational Grammar (6 units), Generative Phonology (3 units), and Generative Semantics (3 units).

During the summer term of 1976, three candidates were ready to present their thesis proposals. De Geest and Putseys served as their advisers. Sending them much-needed reference materials in the form of books and articles and advising them by correspondence, they were able to help their students write up their research. Sonja Chan, Clarita Pangilinan, and Guillermina L. Verzosa successfully defended their theses during the summer term of 1977 and were the first to earn at SLU an MA in English degree, major in linguistics.

As the cooperative project for the MA program came to its end in 1977, a new contract between SLU and UFSAL was drawn up for a Ph.D. program in English, major in linguistics. The late Ghisleen De Vos, CICM, then Acting President of SLU, and Jan Lindemans, rector of UFSAL, signed this agreement in May 1977. This enabled SLU to further expand its doctoral course offerings. Again, De Geest and Carbonell collaborated in drawing up a curriculum for this new program. Linguistics courses would make up the required courses for specializing in this area, and literature courses, the electives. These, as well as advisership of dissertation writing, would be handled by visiting professors.

Since more courses were needed for the Ph.D. program, UFSAL entered into a program of cooperation with the Catholic University of Louvain. In June 1979, Rector Piet De Sommer of KUL approved this project. Thus KUL professors became part of the Belgian team that handled courses for the Ph.D. students at the SLU Graduate School. Madeleine Sergant gave a three-unit course on Language and Logic in January 1980. Leopold Engels, Dries De Bleeker and Emma Vorlat offered courses in Applied Linguistics, Stylistics, and Pragmatics during the 1980 and 1981 summer terms at SLU. De Geest and Putseys continued their pioneering work and handled additional courses: Generative Phonology II, Generative Semantics II, Applied Linguistics I and II, Sociolinguistics I and

II, and Psycholinguistics I and II.

Literature courses were handled by UFSAL professors. Martine de Clercq gave classes on the Theory of Literature during the 1978 summer term. In January 1979, she handled a course in Aesthetics and Literary Theory. Willy Braeckman gave lectures on English and American Contemporary Poetry in February 1980.

The extension of the SLU-UFSAL cooperative program in Linguistics covered a period of four years. The summer term of 1981 saw the first three candidates of the Ph.D in English program major in linguistics successfully presenting and defending their dissertations: Sonja Chan, Clarita Pangilinan, and Guillermina L. Verzosa. For this important event, aside from the visiting professors, top linguists in the Philippine were invited to form the reading and oral defense committees: Andrew Gonzalez, FSC and Fe Aldave-Yap.

The courses offered within the cooperative program of SLU and UFSAL focused on theoretical issues in the development of linguistics. These introduced students to the minds of Chomsky and other important contemporary linguists. Also, they helped the students understand and gain deeper insights into current linguistic thinking. The visiting professors encouraged their students to evaluate positions advanced by linguists, and where these positions were inadequate for explaining linguistic data in their native languages, students were further encouraged to develop and articulate their own proposals and explanations.

As a follow-up to the Ph.D. program, Guillermina L. Verzosa was granted a fellowship to do independent study at the Regional Language Center in Singapore from July to October 1982. Upon her return, she submitted a proposal for the establishment of the SLU Language Center, which was approved by the president of SLU then, Ghisleen De Vos, CICM. Through this center, the professional development needs of teachers of English in the CICM mission schools of Northern Luzon were identified. In response to these, the focus of linguistics courses developed for them at the SLU Graduate School shifted from theoretical issues to practical concerns. Intensive English language training was added to the curriculum. Classes in language teaching methodology were opened. For these, Yvan Putseys of UFSAL returned as visiting professor and offered EFL methodology courses during the 1985 and 1986 summer terms at the SLU Graduate School. Scholarship grants were given by UFSAL and the Asia Foundation. Scholarship grants were not limited to the teachers of English in the CICM mission schools, but were also given to teachers of English in public schools and in other regions of the country. In the meantime, UFSAL continued to send books to update the linguistics collection at the SLU Libraries.

The SLU Language Center also involved itself in linguistic research. One important national project handled by the Linguistic Society of the Philippines, A Summative Evaluation of the Bilingual Education Policy of the Philippines (1974-1985), saw the SLU Language Center as the regional coordinating center for Northern Luzon. Students doing research for their linguistic courses or masteral and doctoral theses and dissertations were also helped through this center.

In the field of undergraduate teacher training, some changes in the curriculum for the students taking up B.S.E., major in English, were proposed by Guillermina L. Verzosa. Dean Restituto Ayson of the SLU College of Education submitted to the DECS a request to offer new courses in linguistics. These changes in curriculum were approved and undergraduate students were given introductory courses in Modern Linguistics, Transformational Generative Grammar, Generative Phonology and Generative Semantics.

In January 1987, the SLU-UFSAL cooperative program in linguistics formally closed. By this time, SLU had trained its own staff of specialists in linguistics who were ready to carry on its linguistics program.