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40 Years of the Linguistics Colloquium – 1966–2005

Wilfried Kürschner, Kazimierz A. Sroka, Heinrich Weber

1 Introduction¹ – by W. Kürschner

It has become a kind of custom to deliver a plenary lecture at those Linguistics Colloquia which are special occasions and which invite a glance backward at the history of this institution² – or rather, as will be explained later, non-institution. In the first and the third part of this paper I will say a few words on the first and the third decades of the Colloquium. The second and the fourth part will be presented by Heinrich Weber. He will concentrate on the second and the fourth decades. At the end, Kazimierz Sroka will contribute some personal remembrances and reflections. He holds a record: this is the 26th Linguistics Colloquium he has attended, delivering a paper each time. He has not missed any since the 15th Linguistics Colloquium of 1980 in Münster.

For a chronology of the meetings of the Linguistics Colloquium, their proceedings and some statistical details, the reader is referred to the Appendix.³ Among other things, an account of the percentage of papers published in German and in languages other than German can be found there. It will come as no surprise that the number of papers read and published in English has steadily increased, at least at those Colloquia that took place outside of Germany. Let me dwell on this point for a few moments. The fact that it seems to be necessary to present this plenary paper in English reflects a trait not only of the Linguistics Colloquium but of academic research as a whole. It gradually overcame the national boundaries, of the 1960s and of the time before and became international. Parallel to this process, academic research had to break the linguistic boundaries

1 Our thanks are due to Sara Bremermann and R. Karen Rudzinski, lecturers of English at the University of Vechta, for revising this paper and helping us in our efforts to make its English relatively idiomatic and situationally adequate.

2 Cf. W. Kürschner: *Zehn Jahre Linguistisches Kolloquium* (10/1975, P 1976, Vol. 1, 3-12); W. Kürschner: *25 Jahre Linguistisches Kolloquium. Mit einem Bericht über den Stand der Arbeit am „Linguisten-Handbuch“* (25/1990, P 1991, Vol. 1, 1-12); W. Kürschner: *A glance at the history of the Colloquium of Linguistics*, H. Weber: *Dreißig Jahre Linguistisches Kolloquium – ein Generationswechsel?* (30/1995, P 1996, XI-XIV, XV-XXI). Some parts of this paper refer back to these reports.

3 On the website of the Linguistics Colloquium (<http://www.linguistisches-kolloquium.de> = <http://www.linguistics-colloquium.com>) you may find a map showing the places of the meetings of the Colloquium as well as a link to the Google Earth program for a tour around these places.

of the various vernaculars and take advantage of today's and tomorrow's lingua franca: English.

For me, at least, this process is not without its difficulties, and I presume that among you there are at least some people for whom the move from their native language to English as a foreign or second language poses some problems, too. I always envy native speakers of English the ease with which they speak and write and understand their fellow-countrymen and anyone else who tries to come to grips with English. I must confess that I feel rather sorry that my mother tongue along with the other European vernaculars – French, Spanish and Italian, to name just some of the major ones – has lost its role as a standard means of communication in the area of academic research. If you just publish in German or French or Spanish, not to mention Russian, Chinese or Japanese, your findings and ideas are bound to remain parochial and unnoticed by the academic community. The papers you read at international conferences will not be given the attention they deserve if they are not delivered in English. However, there seems to be no point in deploring the situation. What we should recommend, in particular to our younger colleagues, is to face the situation as it is and to acquire a good working command of the English language.

In comparison with truly international congresses, the Linguistics Colloquium is a conference which is still confined to the boundaries of Europe, with strong roots in Germany. This is reflected both in the origin of those attending the Colloquia and in the language most widely used at them, which, undoubtedly, is German.

To be more precise, it is necessary to stress that it was Western Germany where the Colloquium originated in 1966. Participants from Eastern Germany were few and sparse until the Berlin Wall came down in 1989. In the files of the 1989 Colloquium, which took place in Bremen in September of that year, there was only the name of Lew Zybatow. He came from Leipzig but was a citizen of the Soviet Union, which was then still in existence. In September of 1990, shortly before Germany's reunification, there were quite a few colleagues from the now defunct German Democratic Republic at Paderborn. Nevertheless, the Linguistics Colloquium continued to be, as far as Germany was concerned, a West German affair with the exception of that of Jena in 2002.

However, the Linguistics Colloquium is no longer confined to Germany. Looking back on forty meetings, it evens out: twenty of them took place in Germany, the other twenty outside Germany. The Colloquium already went international at its sixth meeting which took place in Copenhagen in 1971. It came back to Germany every now and then, and it circled around Germany: from Denmark to the Netherlands, and on to Belgium, France, Italy, Austria, Poland, Switzerland, Greece, Slovenia, Hungary and finally Russia this year.

The choice of the venue depends on people's willingness to take over the burden of organizing a subsequent meeting. What makes the Linguistics Colloquium so special is the fact that there is no organization behind it, no academic society; not even a society of the kind of a 'Verein' we are so fond of in Germany. The Colloquium continues on its own accord, and the steering committee that was established a few years ago when a slight danger appeared on the horizon which suggested that there might be discontinuity – fortunately, the steering committee with Professor Weber as its captain has nothing to steer, really. The next two Colloquia have already found their hosts – Heinrich Weber will tell you the details. Let me add, however, that the final choice of the venue for the next Colloquium is the privilege of the General Meeting, which is still called 'Vollversammlung' in German. This term, at least for the older participants, has the flavor of the mid and late sixties, of student rebellions and grass root democracy: matters had to be determined by the people themselves, not by a self-declared elite.

2 Establishing the Linguistics Colloquium (1966–1975) – by W. Kürschner

This brings us back to the very beginning of the Colloquium in 1966, when the Colloquium started in Hamburg-Harburg as a meeting of students, candidates for a doctor's degree, and young university assistants. They had heard about 'a new way of doing linguistics over there in America' and were more and more dissatisfied with the way it was done in Western Germany, where linguistics was essentially a sub-discipline of philology. The new American way called itself 'generative grammar', and it was the aim of the first conveners to make themselves acquainted with what was then called 'modern linguistics' as a whole and generative grammar in particular. This is why the newly-born institution bore the name 'Linguistisches Kolloquium über generative Grammatik'. The addendum 'on generative grammar' was dropped after the fifth meeting in 1970 at Regensburg. I remember there being a heated debate on whether the Colloquium should draw thematic boundaries. Those who were in favor of such a confinement never succeeded in getting it passed. Participants simply proposed the papers they wanted to put up for discussion and since there never was a program committee responsible for deciding who was allowed to read a paper and who was not, there were no limitations on the topics and fields of linguistics you could discuss at a Colloquium. The absence of a program committee and a publishing committee bears some risks but to my mind the advantages are greater than the disadvantages. You can start a bright lecture and publication career at the Colloquium, but you can also learn how uncomfortable the reaction can be if your paper does not meet the standards or is simply incomprehensible. You will not be slaughtered by the friendly people convening here but your spirits will be dampened.

I do not want to finish my first part on such a sad note because in my experience the quality of the papers read at the Linguistics Colloquium is not better or worse than of those read at other conferences. What is most special about the Colloquium is its atmosphere. By this, I mean the friendliness of the people coming together here, the humaneness of the discussion style, a sense of familiarity among those that meet regularly in late summer or early autumn, and the willingness to welcome newcomers. This atmosphere could already be felt last night, and I am sure it will surround us until the end of the Colloquium. This is the merit of our kind organizers, Professor Souleimanova and her team, whom I would like to thank on behalf of the participants of the Fortieth Linguistics Colloquium for inviting us here to Moscow and carrying the burden of organizing the conference for us.

3 Maintaining the Continuity (1976–1985) – by H. Weber

The Linguistics Colloquium had fully established itself by the time it met for its tenth session in Tübingen. The next decade maintained its continuity. In the style of their publications, the next ten Colloquia followed the example set by the one in Tübingen. For me, these were quiet years since I did not participate in the Colloquium again until its 19th meeting, this time in Vechta. There are almost no reports and the only sources of information available are the proceedings.

All the German locations of the Colloquium between 1976 and 1985 are in Northern Germany: Aachen in 1976, Bochum in 1979, Münster in 1980, Kiel in 1981, Vechta in 1984, and Wolfenbüttel (Brunswick) in 1985. Of the six German universities, only two are traditional ones, namely Münster and Kiel. The others were founded later or are additions to technical or educational colleges. Conferences were a welcome means of making them better known. For the Technical University of Brunswick, with its young linguistic departments founded in the past two decades, hosting the Colloquium implied recognition and encouragement (cf. the editors' preface in 20/1985, P 1986, X). The Colloquium was held abroad four times during this period, twice in Belgium (Gent in 1978 and Brussels in 1982), and twice in the South: in the Austrian city of Linz in 1983 and even in a sunny Italy, in the city of Pavia, in 1977.

Alternating between Germany and its neighbouring countries was already a trademark of the Colloquium at that time. The Colloquia held in the second decade were larger than the first ones. In each case, except the 20th Colloquium, the proceedings were published in two volumes consisting of between 37 and 67 contributions. The number of oral presentations was even higher and the number of participants higher by far. In comparison to the first decade, the uniformity of the publications is particularly striking. The proceedings were uniformly published in the "Linguistische Arbeiten" of the Niemeyer publishing house. The publishers of the 11th Colloquium comment:

The 10th Linguistics Colloquium was a model for our work. The Plenary Session of Aachen also decided to publish its proceedings with Max Niemeyer in Tübingen and to follow the methods which had proven efficient. To save publishing costs, the authors prepare their contributions on special paper and according to specific instructions (cf. 11/1976: P 1977, IX).

It was the time of the IBM typewriters. One had to avoid making mistakes as it was tedious to blot them out and correct them. The publishers faced the same problem if they did not want to send back the essays for immediate re-editing. The word processing computer, without which one can hardly fathom science today, was not yet available at that time.

In their contents, the proceedings document the ‘pragmatic change’ in linguistics, i.e., the abandonment of purely formally oriented grammatical analysis and a turn towards describing the use of language and verbal action. This is documented by the words used in the titles of the proceedings. The words ‘text’, ‘pragmatics’, and ‘semantics’ or synonyms thereof occur five to six times; words like ‘form’, ‘structure’, or ‘grammar’ only once or twice. The proceedings of the 20th Colloquium use the artificial term ‘pragmantax’ to fuse all approaches into one higher unit. The Aachen publishers of 1976 find that “most papers are generatively oriented with a particular emphasis on semantics and pragmatics”, but they also note

a slow detachment from the strictly systemic view of the ’60s and early ’70s, when reflecting the competence of an idealized speaker-listener was considered the only legitimate goal of a generative grammar, and theories were established that were formally satisfying but could not be falsified empirically (cf. 11/1976: P 1977, IX-X).

In the report on Aachen, Ulrich Püschel becomes more specific when he criticizes the tenor of the discussion between “formally oriented” and “not formally oriented” linguistics:

A little more tolerance is needed from the discussion-oriented listeners and a little more willingness to give answers from the formally oriented linguists. This might loosen up this atmosphere of mock-combats which is counter-productive to any fruitful discussion (cf. 11/1976: P 1977, 103).

The fact that the formal linguists could not remain among themselves and discussions were possible is, last but not least, due to the character of the Colloquium, which invites and provides a platform for anyone who has something to contribute to linguistics, as the organizers and publishers keep pointing out in their forewords. To quote from the foreword by Armin Burckhardt and Karl-Hermann Körner in P 1986:

Contributions also vary with respect to their research topics [...]. But even that has its charm: the Linguistics Colloquium is to be and to remain an open forum in every respect (cf. 20/1985: P 1986, X).

I like remembering the 19th Colloquium in Vechta and the 20th in Brunswick, though less for the papers read than for the atmosphere in both places. Vechta excelled in the hospitality with which not only the university but also representa-

tives of local authorities received the participants. The reception hosted by the mayor, during which all the food and drinks which the region had to offer were rolled out, remains unforgettable. The Brunswick Colloquium took place in the productive atmosphere of a teachers' education seminar in Wolfenbüttel, and also offered opportunities to experience a residential and literary town.

4 Bridging the Gap between East and West (1986–1995) – by W. Kürschner

The volume with the proceedings of the 21st Colloquium of 1986 had a remarkable title, indeed. It was called “Linguistik in Deutschland”, and although the Colloquium took place in the Netherlands, this title correctly mirrored the fact that it was a German affair. To be sure, the organizer himself, Werner Abraham, lived and taught in Groningen but he was an Austrian, born in Berlin. There was a colleague from Switzerland but he was of German nationality. There was also a Greek colleague present but she taught at a German university. The same applied to a French colleague. Only two scholars from the Netherlands, one from Belgium, and Kazimierz Sroka from Poland gave the Colloquium a touch of internationality. Note that the title of the proceedings was not “German linguistics” – there was no such thing as a nationwide uniform approach to linguistics, not even in the then still existing German Democratic Republic, whose official policy was one of demarcation from the Federal Republic and the rest of the Western world.

Even the next Colloquium, the one in Paris, had a somewhat parochial character as far as the origin of its participants was concerned. Nearly all of them came from Germany, and some from France as people from the host country or city often take the opportunity to pay a visit to the conference nearby. Paris hosted one of the smallest Colloquia although everyone had expected that the place would attract interested scholars like a magnet. By the way, it was organized by a Polish colleague, Ryszard Zuber, who worked in France and who became the first editor of the proceedings with roots in the East.

1987 was the year when the new tones from the Soviet Union could not pass unnoticed. Although Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* and *perestroika* met with heavy skepticism in the West (and even more so in the East), there was a distinct wind of change in the air. I do not remember whether this was a topic of discussion at the meeting in Paris or the next one in Berlin – West Berlin, of course, as in 1988 it would not have come to anybody's mind to think of East Berlin as a candidate for organizing a Linguistics Colloquium. The big International Congress of Linguists had taken place there the year before, to be sure, but this had been an official affair of the East German authorities and part of their efforts to gain international acknowledgment. Nevertheless, the number of colleagues from Poland attending the Colloquium went up to five (plus Kazimierz Sroka)

and there was a Russian colleague present who worked in Leipzig (at the “Karl-Marx-Universität”, as it was called at that time). However, it was inconceivable that a German colleague from East Germany would be allowed by his authorities to attend the Colloquium. Only very few East German scholars had the status of a ‘Reisekader’ who was allowed to travel into non-socialist foreign countries, among which the Federal Republic and West Berlin with its controversial status were counted at that time.

The 1989 Colloquium took place in Bremen in early September, just two months before the incidents that were to change the face of the world in such a dramatic way, starting with the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November. The number of scholars from what was then called the Eastern Bloc had gone up slightly, there being present some colleagues from Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and from Poland again, but their number was still below ten.

The breakthrough happened at the 25th Colloquium which took place in Germany for the third time in a row, this time in Paderborn. This Colloquium was one of the biggest ever with 240 participants, of whom 175 gave a paper. More than 40 scholars used their newly won freedom of traveling and came, generously endowed, if necessary, to Paderborn from Eastern Central Europe (Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia), from Russia and from East Germany which was still in existence in the days of the Colloquium (27 to 29 September – Germany's re-unification was celebrated one week later on 3 October 1990). This was the date when the process mentioned in the heading of the present subsection of this report really started: bridging the gap between East and West.

This task was tackled vigorously by colleagues from Poland, Józef Darski and Zygmunt Vetulani, who organized the 26th Colloquium in Poznań. People who attended this meeting were overwhelmed by the organizational skills and the hospitality of the colleagues who had volunteered to host this first meeting in the no longer existing Eastern Bloc. Heinrich Weber's report delivers a vivid impression of the special atmosphere of this Colloquium (26/1991: R 1992). Four years later, in 1995, the Linguistics Colloquium returned to Poland again, this time to Gdańsk, where Kazimierz Sroka, the pioneer, organized its 30th meeting. In between, the Colloquium was hosted in Münster for the second time (after 1980), then went to Austria (Graz) and Denmark (Aarhus). Browsing the files of these Colloquia, one recalls the rapidity with which the political scene altered after 1989. Scholars now came from states that had freed themselves from foreign rule and gained independence, like Croatia, Slovenia, Latvia, Slovakia, and so forth. As soon as the political and economic situation permitted, the Colloquium was invited to some of these states. It went to Slovenia (2001), to Hungary (2003), and to Russia (2005). Academic exchange and cooperation were thus promoted in a significant way and many rewarding friendships were established. All this can be seen in the context of the steady growth of the European

community and thus might be considered an example of global net-working as a whole. This is the cue for Heinrich Weber's report on the fourth decade of the Linguistics Colloquium.

5 Globalization (1996–2005) – by H. Weber

After a decade of consolidation, a decade of continuity, and a decade of building bridges between West and East, I now turn towards the fourth decade, the decade of globalization. The horizon of the Colloquium widens during the fourth decade. The meeting took place in Germany only three more times, namely in Kassel in 1997, in Germersheim in 1999, and in Jena in 2003. Three times it took place in neighbouring countries: in Bern/Switzerland in 1996, in Innsbruck/Austria in 2000, and in Amsterdam/The Netherlands in 2004, and three times already in countries that do not border on Germany: in Saloniki/Greece in 1998, in Ljubljana/Slovenia in 2001, and in Piliscsaba/Hungary in 2003. This had been the case only once in the preceding three decades, in 1977, when the Colloquium took place in Pavia/Italy. Today we are glad to be with you in Moscow, and therefore can convene for the fourth time in the four decades far away from Germany. The originally-intended alternation between a German and a foreign venue for the Colloquium holds true only when Germany's neighboring countries are considered.

The Colloquia on the whole have grown to become slightly larger than those of the second decade. The proceedings of the Colloquium in Saloniki show 45 contributions; the two bulky volumes of the Germersheim proceedings present 182 contributions; the records of the other Colloquia are in between. A Colloquium needs a working size of about 50 participants, which has always been achieved. As regards a larger Colloquium, however, one has to cope with the shortage of financial and human resources. Thus, Reinhard Rapp, the editor of the Germersheim Proceedings – the most voluminous so far – had a hard time publishing the two volumes of almost 200 contributions without any help.

There are reasons to hope that the future Colloquia can take place in accordance with the established pattern. Mannheim has applied to host the Colloquium next year. It will take place 6–8 September 2006, and its overall topic will be “The Order of Standard and Differentiation of Discourses”. The Aegean University with its main campus on the beautiful Greek Rhode Island has proposed to organize a Colloquium in 2007. Perhaps then new perspectives will develop for the years to come.⁴

4 [Addendum 2009:] The 42nd Colloquium took place in the City of Rhodes as announced. The 43rd Linguistics Colloquium was hosted by the University of Magdeburg in September 2008. The 44th Colloquium was organized by linguists at the New Bulgarian University in Sofia in September 2009. There are proposals to organize the 45th Colloquium at the

At the beginning of the fourth decade, the publication of the proceedings had to be reorganized. The series of “Linguistische Arbeiten” of the Niemeyer publishing house, Tübingen, which had continuously published the papers since 1978, for economic reasons as well as because of a particular type of academic policy, ceased to be available in 1998. When publishing the last three volumes of the proceedings, Niemeyer had the idea to print the papers not as complete texts but to present the proceedings as a collection of abstracts. This concerned the proceedings of Aarhus in 1994, Gdansk in 1995 and Bern in 1996. Luckily, this did less damage to the Colloquia than to other congresses because there were still four to five pages available per contribution, and not just one meaningless page. The idea of abstract-publications was soon abandoned.

After intensive efforts, members of the organizational committee succeeded in interesting Peter Lang publications in the proceedings and in establishing a new series for this purpose. Its title is “Linguistik International”; I quote from the preface by the editor:

The title of the series emphasizes the principles which have been proven for more than 30 years: internationality, an open mind towards new developments, a forum for the young generation of scientists, an open mind towards different paradigms of linguistics. [...] It encourages us to increasingly turn the Colloquia into a turntable of linguistic East-West dialogue which both sides profit by (cf. 32/1997: P 1999, 3).

This series has seen fourteen publications so far, the most recent being the records of the linguistics meeting in Jena. The next two volumes are being prepared.

The outer appearance of the records changed in its third decade. On the whole, the typewriter was replaced by the computer; the last two volumes by Niemeyer had already presented themselves in a uniform printing mode which was further perfected in the Peter Lang editions.

Where the contents are concerned, the schematic order of syntax – semantics – pragmatics assumes a slightly minor importance; instead, expressions like ‘international’, ‘intercultural’, and – even four times – ‘European’ appear. The rationalist orientation of the Chomsky tradition is expressed by the terms ‘linguistic competence’, ‘linguistics and cognition’, cultural diversity by such terms as ‘multilingual’, ‘translation’, ‘new media’, ‘variation’, and ‘differentiation’. At one of the Colloquia (the 35th, or rather the 37th), the organizers established a general theme for the meeting and announced it in the call for papers in order to encourage potential speakers to come up with suitable topics. As long as it does not lead to a rejection of papers not relevant for the general theme, this innovation may improve the quality of the Colloquia.

Four recent volumes of the records show another innovation: their titles now are not just in German, but German and English⁵ – another indication of the globalization of linguistics.

Let me finish with a remark on the future of the Colloquium. German educational and scientific institutions these days put much emphasis on key words like ‘elite’ and ‘excellence’. Those who created these terms strive to advance scientific research to top position by promoting particular projects at certain universities and thereby creating elitist groups and excellence. Basically, there ought to be no objection to it: who would oppose successful research that might advance mankind?

The problem, however, is that of the underlying attitude. Terms like ‘elite’ and ‘excellence’ serve to create a social barrier, i.e., the distancing from non-academic or – in our field – from the many scientists who pursue research and teaching at universities and colleges. The appointment to the ‘elite’ gives additional power to those who run the show and imposes adaptation on those who strive to join them. Those with influence will hardly promote anything that contradicts their own convictions. Thus the elite keeps reproducing itself.

The great innovations which have influenced our future often did not originate from institutions, but successfully proved themselves as outsiders against the prevailing dogma. To name two examples: the pioneers and founders of historical-comparative linguistics, Johann Gottfried Herder and Jacob Grimm, were never professors of logic, poetry, and rhetoric at a traditional humanities department; Jacob Grimm lost his later professorship in Göttingen after a few years because he contradicted his king. Noam Chomsky, an outspoken critic of American imperialism, is a dissident, and theoretical linguistics at MIT is a marginal subject. Chomsky would never have become a key figure in German linguistics if it had not been for the post-1968 generation of students who strongly supported him with their criticism of the traditional curricula.

Universities and colleges are charged with imparting factual and methodical knowledge to their students, thus enabling them to fulfill the requirements in their chosen profession. This applies in particular to liberal arts. Here it does not suffice for a few to develop the apparatus which can then be used by many; the seed of their thoughts will only ripen if accepted, used, and passed on by their students. To name one example: syntactic research has experienced an unexpected rise over the last decades and has recognized many details about the

5 This is true also of the URLs of the Colloquium: <http://www.linguistisches-kolloquium.de> and <http://www.linguistics-colloquium.com>. The latter form with the noun ‘linguistics’ rather than the adjective ‘linguistic’ was fixed at the Ljubljana Colloquium in 2001. Before that the English term most commonly used was ‘Colloquium of Linguistics’. – Astonishingly enough, the title of the proceedings of the Amsterdam Colloquium, which appeared in 2006, is in German only, without an English equivalent.

structure of English, German, and other languages. Vice versa, the reflective knowledge about language has been so scant among German college freshmen that many cannot tell an adverb from a preposition. What is the use of a small elite if it is achieved at the expense of the ignorance of many because research remains immanent and there is no interest in passing on its results?

As I see it, the Linguistics Colloquium does not consider itself an elite-promoting body; it is supposed to remain an open forum for all those who deal with linguistics, languages and the various forms of speaking them. It is supposed to be a forum for those who, perhaps for the first time, present a new idea to a knowledgeable public, for those looking for stimuli for their scientific research, for those eager to learn about the way teaching and research are done elsewhere and who want to establish new contacts. It is dedicated to an extensive exchange of ideas and thoughts.

Of course it is a pleasure to listen to imaginative and ground-breaking contributions. However, this cannot be planned. What can be planned, and what has now been achieved continuously for the 40th time, is the framework within which this can happen. May the 40th Linguistics Colloquium be successful, interesting, and productive.

6 Attending the Linguistics Colloquia – by K. A. Sroka

On the occasion of the 40th Linguistics Colloquium, I would like to say a few words about my personal experiences and feelings connected with that informal institution (which I shall refer to in the singular as the Linguistics Colloquium) against the background of its history.

The first Linguistics Colloquium in which I took part was the “15. Linguistisches Kolloquium” organized in Münster in 1980. As has been pointed out already, the Linguistics Colloquium was called into existence in Germany in 1966 by young linguists who wanted to have their own forum to deal with the new ideas appearing at that time in the discipline they followed. The Linguistics Colloquium became a counterbalance to the ‘Societas Linguistica Europaea’ (with its annual meetings), which grouped older linguists. These two institutions have worked parallel to each other. In 2005, the ‘Societas Linguistica Europaea’ will have its 38th Annual Meeting in Valencia (Spain).

There is a characteristic organizational difference between the two institutions mentioned. The ‘Societas Linguistica Europaea’ meets all the exigencies of a society from the formal point of view: it has its president, treasurer, and other members of the administration board, and all members of the society have to pay annual membership fees. The Linguistics Colloquium is, in this respect, a very strange institution. It has no president, no treasurer and no administration board, and those who participate in the Colloquia do not have to pay any annual membership fee. It is not a regular society but an informal and fluctuating group of

scholars, who, nevertheless, manage to organize a meeting every year and publish its proceedings.

One may then ask the questions, (1) how does the whole thing hold together? and (2) what invisible hand takes care of the continuation of the Colloquia? Certainly, there is some understanding among the participants and readiness to undertake the enterprise. However, at the Colloquium of 1991 there were no candidates to organize a successive meeting, and in this connection an organization committee was set up in order to deal with the difficulty which ultimately was overcome. The committee was gradually enlarged by including the organizers of the later Colloquia. Also, an editorial board was elected. In recent years, there has been no trouble in finding a successor for organizing a meeting.

If we look further for the factors which assure the stability of the Linguistics Colloquium, we shall find them first of all in the persons of Professor Heinrich Weber and Professor Wilfried Kürschner. They are the souls – *spiritus moventes* – of the institution we are talking about. They do everything in order to assure the continuation of the Colloquia. There is also a country which assures stability to the Linguistics Colloquium, and this is Germany. The Colloquia have been organized in various countries, but Germany has been their most frequent host. Now the organizing committee adheres to the idea (close to original intentions and practice) that every second year a Linguistics Colloquium should have its venue in Germany.

As mentioned before, the first Linguistics Colloquium in which I participated was that of 1980. Since that time I have been lucky to take part in all the Colloquia, which means that my present participation is the twenty-sixth without a break. In 1995, together with my colleagues, Professor Halina Stasiak and Dr Tadeusz Danilewicz, I organized the 30th Linguistics Colloquium (at that time phrased ‘Colloquium of Linguistics’) in Gdansk. It was the second Linguistics Colloquium which took place in Poland; the earlier one, the 26th was that organized in Poznan in 1991.

The Linguistics Colloquia, along with the meetings of the ‘Societas Linguistica Europaea’, in which I also participated, although not so regularly, played a very important part in my scholarly life. They forced me to have the papers prepared for particular meetings. Among the topics I worked on, there were grammatical categories in general and the grammatical category of definiteness in particular, and at this Colloquium I am going to present briefly a synthesis of my results concerning definiteness. I think that I will not be alone in saying that linguistic conferences, including Linguistics Colloquia, urge us to do our scholarly work more efficiently.

But there are other positive aspects of the Colloquia as well. One of them is of an interpersonal nature. We meet many colleagues, exchange views, make friends. Another aspect concerns the area of international relations. At the Col-

loquia, various countries, various nationalities, and various cultures are represented. We know that relations among different countries, different nations, and different cultures leave much to be desired. These relations can gradually be improved by individual contacts. I myself have experienced that my participation in international conferences has positively influenced my attitude towards people of other nationalities. Thus linguists taking part in the Colloquia may exceed politicians in the effects of their work in the area of international relations.

Let me conclude my speech by expressing the opinion, which I hope will be shared by other participants, that the Linguistics Colloquium has played an important role not only in the sphere of research but also in the sphere of interpersonal relations, including those among people representing different nations, and, as such, it fully deserves a place among distinguished scholarly institutions. It is true that it is idiosyncratic, but idiosyncrasy may also have positive aspects, and, in the case of the Linguistics Colloquium, it certainly has. Owing to its characteristics, the Linguistics Colloquium fills a slot whose existence is determined by demand.

The future of the Linguistics Colloquium is in the hands of all its actual participants and especially of those who now are young, but will gradually become older, more experienced and more influential. They should be prepared to take the lead.

We are happy that this year, owing to the courage and tremendous work of Professor Olga Souleimanova and her colleagues, the Colloquium is taking place in Moscow, which is thus far the eastern-most point in the territorial extension of the Colloquia. We hope that it will contribute to increasing the exchange of ideas and the co-operation among linguists of various countries.

Appendix

- 1/1966** **Erstes Linguistisches Kolloquium über generative Grammatik. Hamburg-Harburg/(West) Germany**
- 2/1967** **Haus Rothenberge bei Ochtrup/Niedersachsen/(West) Germany**
P [Proceedings] 1967: Zweites Linguistisches Kolloquium: „Über generative Grammatik“. Haus Rothenberge bei Ochtrup/Niedersachsen. Universität Stuttgart: Lehrstuhl für Linguistik, Dezember 1967 (photocopied).
Number of papers: 10; in German: 9 (90 %), in English: 1 (10 %)
- 3/1968** **Burg Stettenfels bei Untergruppenbach (Heilbronn)/(West) Germany**
P 1968: Drittes Linguistisches Kolloquium. Über generative Grammatik. Burg Stettenfels bei Untergruppenbach (Heilbronn). 1.–4. Oktober 1968. Universität Stuttgart. Lehrstuhl für Linguistik. Papier Nr. 8. Dezember 1968 (photocopied).
Number of papers: 15; in German: 15 (100 %)

4/1969 Berlin/(West) Germany

P 1971: Dieter Wunderlich (ed.): Probleme und Fortschritte der Transformationsgrammatik. Referate des 4. Linguistischen Kolloquiums. Berlin 6.–10. Oktober 1969. München: Hueber. (Linguistische Reihe. 8)

Number of papers: 22; in German: 21 (95 %), in English: 1 (5 %)

R [Report] 1970: Roland Posner (1970): Viertes Linguistisches Kolloquium Berlin 1969. Ein Erfahrungsbericht. In: Linguistische Berichte 7: 63–70.

5/1970 Regensburg/(West) Germany

P 1971: Arnim von Stechow (ed.): Beiträge zur generativen Grammatik. Referate des 5. Linguistischen Kolloquiums. Regensburg, 1970. Braunschweig: Vieweg. (Schriften zur Linguistik. 3)

Number of papers: 28; in German: 27 (96 %), in English: 1 (4 %)

6/1971 Copenhagen/Denmark

P 1972: Karl Hyldgaard-Jensen (ed.): Linguistik 1971. Referate des 6. Linguistischen Kolloquiums. 11.–14. August 1971 in Kopenhagen. Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum. (Athenäum-Skripten Linguistik. 1 – Kopenhagener Beiträge zur germanistischen Linguistik. 2)

Number of papers: 24; in German: 23 (96 %), in English: 1 (4 %)

7/1972 Nijmegen/The Netherlands

P 1973: Abraham P. ten Cate, Peter Jordens (eds.): Linguistische Perspektiven. Referate des VII. Linguistischen Kolloquiums. Nijmegen, 26.–30. September 1972. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (Linguistische Arbeiten. 5)

Number of papers: 24; in German: 19 (79 %), in English: 5 (21 %)

8/1973 Leuven/Louvain/Belgium

P 1976: Rudolf Kern (ed.): Löwen und Sprachtigger. Akten des VIII. Linguistischen Kolloquiums. Löwen, 19–22. September 1973. Institut de Linguistique de Louvain. (Bibliothèque des CILL [Cahiers de l'Institut de Linguistique de Louvain]. 4)

Number of papers: 33; in German: 18 (55 %), in English: 10 (30 %), in French: 5 (15 %)

R 1974: Gabriel Falkenberg, Günther Öhlschläger, Rainer Wimmer: Das 8. Linguistische Kolloquium in Leuven (Belgien). In: Zeitschrift für germanistische Linguistik [ZGL] 2: 81–86.

9/1974 Bielefeld/(West) Germany

P 1975: Veronika Ehrich, Peter Finke (eds.): Beiträge zur Grammatik und Pragmatik. Kronberg/Ts.: Scriptor. (Skripten Linguistik und Kommunikationswissenschaft. 12)

Number of papers (selection): 18; in German: 15 (83 %), in English: 2 (11 %), in French: 1 (6 %)

R (1975): Ulrich Knoop, Ingulf I. Radtke: Das 9. Linguistische Kolloquium in Bielefeld (27.–30. August 1974). In: ZGL 3: 67–72.

10/1975 Tübingen/(West) Germany

P 1976: Akten des 10. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Tübingen 1975. Vol. 1: Heinrich Weber, Harald Weydt (eds.): Sprachtheorie und Pragmatik. Vol. 2: Kurt Braunmüller, Wilfried Kürschner (eds.): Grammatik. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (Linguistische Arbeiten [LA]. 31; 32)

Number of papers: 67; in German: 63 (95 %), in English: 3 (4 %), in French: 1 (1 %)

R (1976): Ulrich Püschel: Das 10. Linguistische Kolloquium in Tübingen (23.–27. September 1975). In: ZGL 4: 228–231.

11/1976 Aachen/(West) Germany

P 1977: Heinz-Werner Viethen, Wolf-Dietrich Bald, Konrad Sprengel (eds.): Akten des 11. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Aachen 1976. Vol. 1: Grammatik und Interdisziplinäre Bereiche der Linguistik. Vol. 2: Semantik und Pragmatik. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 49; 50)

Number of papers: 66; in German: 61 (92 %), in English: 4 (6 %), in French: 2 (3 %)

R (1977): Ulrich Püschel: 11. Linguistisches Kolloquium in Aachen (22.10.–25. 10.1976). In: ZGL 5: 99–103.

12/1977 Pavia/Italy

P 1978: Maria-Elisabeth Conte, Anna Giacalone Ramat (eds.): Akten des 12. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Pavia 1977. Vol. 1: Wortstellung und Bedeutung. Vol. 2: Sprache im Kontext. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 61; 62)

Number of papers: 46; in German: 21 (45 %), in English: 16 (35 %), in French: 4 (9 %), in Italian: 5 (11 %)

13/1978 Gent/Belgium

P 1979: Marc Van de Velde, Willy Vandeweghe (eds.): Akten des 13. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Gent 1978. Vol. 1: Sprachstruktur, Individuum und Gesellschaft. Vol. 2: Bedeutung, Sprechakte und Texte. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 76; 77)

Number of papers: 74; in German: 41 (55 %), in English: 28 (38 %), in French: 5 (7 %)

14/1979 Bochum/(West) Germany

P 1980: Edda Weigand, Gerhard Tschauder (eds.): Akten des 14. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Bochum 1979. Vol. 1: Perspektive: textintern. Vol. 2: Perspektive: textextern. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 88; 89)

Number of papers: 47; in German: 39 (83 %), in English: 7 (15 %), in French: 1 (2 %)

15/1980 Münster/(West) Germany

P 1981: Akten des 15. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Münster 1980. Vol. 1: Manfred Kohrt, Jürgen Lernerz (eds.): Sprache: Formen und Strukturen, Vol. 2: Götz

Hindelang, Werner Zillig (eds.): Sprache: Verstehen und Handeln. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 98; 99)

Number of papers: 67; in German: 58 (87 %), in English: 7 (10 %), in French: 2 (3 %)

16/1981 Kiel/(West) Germany

P 1982: Klaus Detering, Jürgen Schmidt-Radefeld, Wolfgang Sucharowski (eds.): Akten des 16. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Kiel 1981. Vol. 1: Sprache beschreiben und erklären. Vol. 2: Sprache erkennen und verstehen. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 118; 119)

Number of papers: 51; in German: 48 (94 %), in English: 2 (4 %), in French: 1 (2 %)

17/1982 Brussels/Belgium

P 1983: René Jongen, Sabine de Knop, Peter H. Nelde, Marie-Paule Quix (eds.): Akten des 17. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Brüssel 1982. Vol. 1: Sprache, Diskurs und Text. Vol. 2: Mehrsprachigkeit und Gesellschaft. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 133; 134)

Number of papers: 45; in German: 26 (58 %), in English: 9 (20 %), in French: 9 (20 %), in Dutch: 1 (2 %)

18/1983 Linz/Austria

P 1984: Herwig Krenn, Jürgen Niemeyer, Ulrich Eberhardt (eds.): Akten des 18. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Linz 1983. Vol. 1: Sprache und Text. Vol. 2: Sprache und Gesellschaft. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 145; 146)

Number of papers: 56; in German: 50 (89 %), in English: 6 (11 %)

19/1984 Vechta/(West) Germany

P 1985: Wilfried Kürschner, Rüdiger Vogt, Sabine Siebert-Nemann (eds.): Akten des 19. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Vechta 1984. Vol. 1: Grammatik, Semantik, Textlinguistik. Vol. 2: Sprachtheorie, Pragmatik, Interdisziplinäres. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 156; 157)

Number of papers: 66; in German: 59 (89 %), in English: 5 (8 %), in French: 2 (3 %)

R 1985: Wilfried Kürschner: 19. Linguistisches Kolloquium in Vechta vom 18.–20.9.1984. Ein Bericht. In: Edgar Papp (ed.): Aufgaben und Chancen kleiner Hochschulstandorte. Vechta: Vechtaer Druckerei und Verlag, 50–55. (Vechtaer Universitätsschriften. Sonderheft 1)

20/1985 Wolfenbüttel (Brunswick)/(West) Germany

P 1986: Armin Burkhardt, Karl-Hermann Körner (eds.): Akten des 20. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Braunschweig 1985. Pragmantax. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 171)

Number of papers: 47; in German: 43 (92 %), in English: 3 (6 %), in French: 1 (2 %)

21/1986 Oosterhesselen (Groningen)/The Netherlands

P 1987: Werner Abraham, Ritva Århammer (eds.): Akten des 21. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Groningen 1986. Linguistik in Deutschland. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 182)

Number of papers: 26; in German: 23 (91 %), in English: 3 (9 %)

22/1987 Paris/France

P 1988: Heinrich Weber, Ryszard Zuber (eds.): Akten des 22. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Paris 1987. Linguistik Parisette. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 203)

Number of papers: 29; in German: 13 (45 %), in English: 6 (21 %), in French: 10 (34 %)

23/1988 Berlin/(West) Germany

P 1989: Norbert Reiter (eds.): Akten des 23. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Berlin 1988. Sprechen und Hören. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 222)

Number of papers: 57; in German: 55 (96 %), in English: 2 (4 %)

24/1989 Bremen/(West) Germany

P 1991: Eberhard Klein, Françoise Pouradier-Duteil, Karl-Heinz Wagner (eds.): Akten des 24. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Universität Bremen, 4.–6. September 1989. Betriebslinguistik und Linguistikbetrieb. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 260; 261)

Number of papers: 81; in German: 72 (89 %), in English: 9 (11 %)

R 1990: Marlene Faber: Betriebslinguistik. 24. Linguistisches Kolloquium. Bremen, 4.–6. September 1989. In: ZGL 23, 87–90.

25/1990 Paderborn/(West) Germany

P 1991: Elisabeth Feldbusch, Reiner Pogarell, Cornelia Weiss (eds.): Neue Fragen der Linguistik. Akten des 25. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Paderborn 1990. Vol. 1: Bestand und Entwicklung. Vol. 2: Innovation und Anwendung. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 270; 271)

Number of papers: 130; in German: 102 (79 %), in English: 25 (19 %), in French: 3 (2 %)

R 1991: Werner Abraham: 25. Linguistisches Kolloquium. Paderborn, 27.–29. September 1990. In: ZGL 19, 235–239.

26/1991 Poznań/Poland

P 1993: Józef Darski, Zygmunt Vetulani (eds.): Sprache – Kommunikation – Informatik. Akten des 26. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Poznań 1991. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 293; 294)

Number of papers: 101; in German: 50 (49 %), in English: 45 (45 %), in French: 6 (6 %)

R 1992: Heinrich Weber: Begegnungen – 26. Linguistisches Kolloquium in Poznań (Polen). In: Sprachreport 2–3/92, 6–7.

27/1992 Münster/Germany

P 1993: Satz – Text – Diskurs. Akten des 27. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Münster 1992. Vol. 1: Susanne Beckmann, Sabine Frilling (eds.). Vol. 2: Peter-Paul König, Helmut Wieggers (eds.). Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 312; 313)

Number of papers: 77; in German: 69 (90 %), in English: 7 (9 %), in French: 1 (1 %)

R 1993: Heinrich Weber: 27. Linguistisches Kolloquium. Münster, 9.–11. September 1990. In: ZGL 21, 231–234.

28/1993 Graz/Austria

P 1994: Dieter W. Halwachs, Irmgard Stütz (eds.): Sprache – Sprechen – Handeln. Akten des 28. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Graz 1993. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 320; 321)

Number of papers: 100; in German: 78 (78 %), in English: 17 (17 %), in French: 4 (4 %), in Italian: 1 (1 %)

29/1994 Aarhus/Denmark

P 1995: Per Bærentzen (ed.): Aspekte der Sprachbeschreibung. Akten des 29. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Aarhus 1994. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 342)

Number of papers (shortened versions): 65; in German: 44 (69 %), in English: 18 (28 %), in French: 3 (5 %)

R 1995: Kirsten Adamzik: 29. Linguistisches Kolloquium. Aarhus, 16.–18. August 1994. In: ZGL 23, 87–90.

30/1995 Gdańsk/Poland

P 1996: Kazimierz A. Sroka (ed.): Kognitive Aspekte der Sprache. Akten des 30. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Gdańsk 1995. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 360)

Number of papers (shortened versions): 52; in German: 27 (52 %), in English: 20 (38 %), in French: 5 (10 %)

31/1996 Bern/Switzerland

P 1998: Jörg Strässler (ed.): Tendenzen europäischer Linguistik. Akten des 31. Linguistischen Kolloquiums, Bern 1996. Tübingen: Niemeyer. (LA. 381)

Number of papers (shortened versions): 64; in German: 45 (70 %), in English: 17 (27 %), in French: 2 (3 %)

R 1997: Ernest W. B. Hess-Lüttich, Lenore Schiewer: Das 31. Linguistische Kolloquium 1996 in Bern. In: ZGL 25, 217–219.

32/1997 Kassel/Germany

P 1999: Hans Otto Spillmann, Ingo Warnke (eds.): Internationale Tendenzen der Syntaktik, Semantik und Pragmatik. Akten des 32. Linguistischen Kolloquiums in Kassel 1997. Frankfurt am Main: Lang. (Linguistik International [LI]. 1)

Number of papers: 65; in German: 48 (74 %), in English: 15 (23 %), in French: 2 (3 %)

R 1998: Bettina Wetzel-Kranz: Das 32. Linguistische Kolloquium 1997 in Kassel. In: ZGL 26, 225–229.

33/1998 Saloniki/Greece

P 2000: Käthi Dorfmüller-Karpusa, Ekaterini Vretta-Panidou (eds.): Thessaloniker interkulturelle Analysen. Akten des 33. Linguistischen Kolloquiums in Thessaloniki 1998. Frankfurt am Main: Lang. (LI. 3)

Number of papers: 45; in German: 29 (64 %), in English: 13 (29 %), in French: 3 (7 %)

R 1999: Elisabeth Rudolph: Das 33. Linguistische Kolloquium, Thessaloniki, 24.–26. September 1998. In: ZGL 27, 362–365.

34/1999 Germersheim/Germany

P 2002: Reinhard Rapp (ed.): Sprachwissenschaft auf dem Weg in das dritte Jahrtausend. Linguistics on the Way into the Third Millennium. Akten des 34. Linguistischen Kolloquiums in Germersheim 1999. Proceedings of the 34th Linguistics Colloquium, Germersheim 1999. Teil I: Text, Bedeutung, Kommunikation. Part I: Text, Meaning, Communication. Teil II: Sprache, Computer, Gesellschaft. Part II: Language, Computer, and Society. Frankfurt am Main: Lang. (LI. 7; 8)

Number of papers: 182; in German: 81 (45 %), in English: 95 (52 %), in French: 6 (3 %)

R 2000: Jürg Strässler: Das 34. Linguistische Kolloquium in Germersheim (7.–19. September 1999). In: ZGL 28, 418–420.

35/2000 Innsbruck/Austria

P 2003: Lew Zybatow (ed.): Europa der Sprachen. Sprachkompetenz – Mehrsprachigkeit – Translation. Akten des 35. Linguistischen Kolloquiums in Innsbruck 2000. Teil I: Sprache und Gesellschaft. Teil II: Sprache und Kognition. Frankfurt am Main: Lang. (LI. 11; 12)

Number of papers: 110; in German: 53 (48 %), in English: 46 (42 %), in French: 11 (10 %)

R 2001: Jürg Strässler: Das 35. Linguistische Kolloquium in Innsbruck, 20.–22. September 2000. In: ZGL 29, 389–392.

36/2001 Ljubljana/Slovenia

P 2004: Stojan Bračič, Darko Čuden, Saša Podgoršek, Vladimir Pogačnik (eds.): Linguistische Studien im Europäischen Jahr der Sprachen. Linguistic Studies in the European Year of Languages. Akten des 36. Linguistischen Kolloquiums in Ljubljana 2001. Proceedings of the 36th Linguistic Colloquium, Ljubljana 2001. Frankfurt am Main: Lang. (LI. 13)

Number of papers: 78; in German: 47 (60 %), in English: 22 (28 %), in French: 9 (12 %)

R 2002: Miriam A. Locher: Das 36. Linguistische Kolloquium. Ljubljana, 12. bis 14. September 2001. In: ZGL 30, 126–128.

37/2002 Jena/Germany

P 2004: Rolf Herwig (ed.): Sprache und die modernen Medien. Language and the Modern Media. Akten des 37. Linguistischen Kolloquiums in Jena 2002. Pro-

ceedings of the 37th Linguistic Colloquium, Jena 2002. Frankfurt am Main: Lang. (LI. 14)

Number of papers: 53; in German: 38 (72 %), in English: 15 (28 %)

38/2003 Piliscsaba/Hungary

P (2006): Paweł Karnowski, Imre Szigeti (eds.): Sprache und Sprachverarbeitung. Language and Language-processing. Akten des 38. Linguistischen Kolloquiums in Piliscsaba 2003. Proceedings of the 38th Linguistics Colloquium, Piliscsaba 2003. Frankfurt am Main: Lang. (LI. 15)

Number of papers: 47; in German: 32 (68 %), in English: 14 (30 %), in French: 1 (2 %)

R 2004: Cécilia Klaus: Bericht über das 38. Linguistische Kolloquium, 27.–29. August 2003, Piliscsaba/Ungarn. On the Internet: <<http://www.linguistisches-kolloquium.de/frueher/klaus-38.lk.pdf>>

39/2004 Amsterdam/The Netherlands

P (2006): Maurice Vliegen (ed.): Variation in Sprachtheorie und Spracherwerb. Akten des 39. Linguistischen Kolloquiums in Amsterdam 2004. Frankfurt am Main: Lang. (LI. 16)

Number of papers: 40; in German: 20 (50 %), in English: 19 (48 %), in French: 1 (2 %)

40/2005 Moscow/Russia

P (2009): This volume.

Number of papers: 41; in German: 18 (44 %), in English: 21 (51 %), in French: 2 (5 %)