

## **Conference of University Teachers of German in Great Britain and Ireland (CUTG), University of Southampton, 10-12 April 2000**

Conference report by Sally Johnson, Lancaster

This year's meeting of the Conference of University Teachers of German in Great Britain and Ireland (CUTG) at Southampton saw a number of lively contributions on a range of topics in German language and linguistics. The strand was opened on the afternoon of Monday 10th by Leila Luukko-Vinchenzo (Liverpool John Moores University), who gave us an informative overview of a long-term research project entitled "The influence of health care system on doctor-patient communication". This project involved the cross-cultural analysis of a substantial number of doctor-patient encounters in Germany and the UK, and highlighted both differences and similarities between the two. Leila's paper was followed by the plenary slot traditionally bestowed upon the most recently appointed member of staff in the host department. This year, the honour fell to Deniz Göztürk, who gave a fascinating analysis of the theme of ethnicity in recent German films entitled: "Who is in and who is out? Identity trouble in German film comedy".

On Tuesday 11th, I joined the Society, Media and Institutions group for a talk by Heike Bartel (Nottingham Trent University) on the representation of Germans and 'German themes' in the British press, entitled "Britain's Berlin wall: 'Deutsche' Themen in den britischen Printmedien". It was an interesting paper, which gave way to a sometimes heated discussion about the press in both Germany and the UK, and their respective capacity to accurately represent one another's cultures, institutions and inhabitants. This was followed by the traditional annual reports given by representatives from the German Academic Exchange Service, the Austrian Cultural Institute, and the Swiss Embassy, all of which demonstrated a lively involvement in cultural and academic activities around the country.

The next papers in the Language and Linguistics strand were given by Christine Leahy (Nottingham Trent University) and Heidi Zojer (University of Wales, Lampeter). Christine's paper offered a useful insight into "Computer-mediated communication as a language learning tool", describing an ongoing project at Nottingham where business and law students make use of email to work with students on similar courses at German universities. This was followed by Heidi's talk entitled: "Translation in language teaching: isn't it time to give up 19th-century

teaching methods in the 21st century?" Drawing extensively on theories of translation and translation pedagogy, Heidi recommended a range of alternative methods for the teaching of translation, all of which could help to make the subject a more practical yet simultaneously more theoretically-oriented exercise in the foreign language classroom.

After dinner, Kent University's Osman Durrani provided us with a detailed musical journey entitled: "Virtual paradises: the rise and rise of the *Schlager*". Osman guided us through the musical delights of German popular music from Zarah Leander to TicTacToe via Roy Black and various Eurovision Song Contest entries, complete with lyrics and record sleeves (yes, records).

On Wednesday 12th, there were three more papers in the Language and Linguistics section. In the morning, Nils Langer (University College Dublin) gave a talk entitled "On finding standard German in early foreign language grammars". As with his previous work on grammars for native speakers, Nils's analysis has similarly been able to demonstrate shifts over time in attitudes towards specific grammatical constructions, all of which reflected the ongoing process of standardisation in the Early New High German period. In the afternoon, the final two papers were presented by Mathias Schulze (UMIST) and Peter Hohenhaus (Bradford University). Mathias's paper "(An)other argument for the verb" reported on an ongoing project to analyse case-marking and the order of arguments required by German verbs. Finally, Peter's talk "Taking the risk: using humorous material in the teaching of German as a foreign language" explored some of the uses of, and potential problems with, the analysis of humour in the foreign language classroom.

Overall, it was an enjoyable conference, well-attended and friendly. The hosts at Southampton provided us with excellent facilities for all aspects of the meeting. And once again, the Language and Linguistics contributions demonstrated that this is a thriving strand of the CUTG, indeed of German studies generally in Great Britain and Ireland. The next meeting of the CUTG will take place in Oxford in April 2001, and anyone interesting in attending or giving a paper should visit the website at [www.cutg.ac.uk](http://www.cutg.ac.uk) .