NETPhon: Network for Education & Training in Phonetics

Report on Workshop 3: Materials

University of Newcastle upon Tyne
13th September 1995

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NETPhon is a Higher Education Discipline Network supported by the Department for Education and Employment and coordinated at University College London.

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The 3rd NETPhon workshop took place in Newcastle upon Tyne on 13th September 1995. There were around 20 participants, many of whom were involved in teaching phonetics to students on courses leading to a professional qualification in Speech & Language Therapy. The workshop was organised by the NETPhon Teaching Materials Working Party, and the overall aim of the day was to report on the activities of the working party. The programme of the day's activities is attached as Appendix I.

Following an introduction, Gerry Docherty, on behalf of the Teaching Materials Working Party presented an account of the activities of that group. Membership of the group is as follows:

Gerry Docherty (Newcastle, Convenor)
Helen Pandeli (Cardiff)
Sandra Whiteside (Sheffield)
Martin Duckworth (Plymouth)

The aims of the working party were:

- to collate information on what teaching materials have been developed at different establishments for teaching phonetics (theoretical, practical, acoustic);

- to establish whether the materials could be made available to other colleagues;

- to collate and disseminate information received from colleagues;

- to identify any gaps in provision with a view to promoting collaborative development of materials.

In order to pursue these goals, a number of steps have been taken. In the Spring of this year a questionnaire was circulated to all teachers of phonetics in the UK, and (via e-mail and relevant bulletin boards) to as many overseas phoneticians as could be contacted. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix II. The aim of this exercise was to gather information about what teaching materials are currently available in the area of practical phonetics, and also for general and instrumental phonetics. The questionnaire also attempted to uncover the extent of the material available which is tailored to teaching clinical phonetics. Around 25 replies were received from almost every continent. The replies showed that there are a number of sites which have developed interesting tools for teaching a range of aspects of phonetics. Many of these sites are prepared to share their material with colleagues at little or no cost. One of the key findings of the questionnaire, however, was that there are three

significant gaps in teaching materials provision: (a) materials which enable students to have practice working with 'clinical' speech (i.e. recordings of utterances spoken by people with a range of developmental and acquired speech impairments); (b) there is very little coverage of prosodic aspects of speech in the materials which are currently available; (c) there are very few teaching resources which focus on varieties of English other than 'R.P.'

The outcomes of this questionnaire indicated two further lines of action for the Materials Working Party - dissemination and development. In order to disseminate the information which had been gathered and which is potentially of great value to teachers of phonetics, it was decided that the WWW could be used as a suitable medium. Consequently, a NETPhon WWW site has been established (*http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/netphon/*) into which has been embedded the principal findings of the questionnaire (Appendix III provides examples of the information provided). In order to ensure that the information contained in the questionnaire returns can be accessed by members of the consortium who do not have access to the WWW, it was agreed that a hard copy should be provided and circulated to those who request it. Members of the materials working party stated that they would be happy to maintain the WEB page following the initial period of NETPhon funding. It was noted that links could usefully be made to a number of other interest groups in the area of phonetics, including the COCOSDA group and the ERASMUS Phonetics Group coordinated from the University of Utrecht.

The gaps in provision identified by the questionnaire gave strong pointers to the materials development activity of the materials working party, which was discussed in both morning and afternoon sessions at the workshop. First, agreement was sought from participants at the workshop that a certain amount of pre-existing material would be of general interest and that NETPhon should arrange to obtain this material (which is available free of charge) and to have it copied and circulated. The working party undertook to carry this out. Second, the working party proposed a collaborative scheme for generating new material which would be of relevance and interest to members of the consortium and which would go some way to plug one of the gaps identified in the questionnaire returns. Following the discussion session later in the day, it was agreed that each member of the consortium should make a recording of speakers with regional accents producing the lexical set from Wells' volume *Accents of English* (CUP. 1992) together with around 5 minutes of spontaneous conversation, and that all of the recordings should be made available to all members of the consortium. The working party undertook to organise the collection and dissemination of this material over the Autumn. It was anticipated that this would be the start of a rolling programme of collaborative development, the result of which would be the production of some extremely useful teaching and self-study teaching and learning materials.

The workshop had two other sessions. In the morning there was a slot devoted to demonstrations of state-of-the-art computer-based systems which can be used for teaching aspects of phonetics. The Laryngograph PCLx system was demonstrated by Professor Fourcin of UCL, the Dr Speech Science system was presented by Dr Colin Watson of the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh, and Martin Ball from the University of Ulster demonstrated some of the ways in which the Kay Elemetrics CSL system could be used as a teaching aid for practical phonetics. These were extremely interesting demonstrations which served to emphasise the crucial role which multi-media technology will have to play in the very near future in the teaching of practical phonetics skills. In the afternoon, a discussion was held on the topic of

the ethical issues pertaining to obtaining material from recipients of speech & language therapy with a view to using it for teaching purposes. Comments from members of the consortium revealed that there is a significant problem in this regard, and that this is one of the key reasons why there is such a paucity of clinical material available. Matters raised included the role of a consent form and the ethics of sharing material across institutions. No firm conclusions were reached in this regard at the workshop. The materials working party agreed to consider this further and to solicit views from members of the consortium as part of a circular which would be sent out in the autumn.

An afternoon presentation from Stephen McNair, HE Advisor to the Department for Education and Employment, was followed by a lively discussion. The speaker focussed firstly on changes in the graduate labour market which had motivated the DfEE's network initiative, and the Enterprise philosophy underlying it; secondly, since bids for continued funding were imminently due, he suggested a set of criteria against which applications would be judged.

Changes in the graduate labour market included:

* graduate destinations -- majority overall not employed in related subject area
* application of knowledge -- need problem-solving and teamwork skills to deal with real world
* employer organisations smaller and more volatile; little job security; unreliable in-service support
* self-management -- graduates to take responsibility for continued learning and career development.

Networks should address such questions as:

* how far are teaching/learning methods preparing students for real world?
* how is workplace changing?
* how is place of learning changing?

They should also be investigating problem-based learning, and considering whether modularised course structures encouraged over-assessment.

Primary criteria for continued funding were:

* is the network achieving its declared objectives?
* is it addressing graduate employability?
* can it become self-sustaining?
* is a proper evaluation process in place?

Secondary criteria would involve some subset of the following:

* widening the network to increase penetration
* new approaches to learning/assessment
* a consideration of the role of NVQs
* involving academic journals and professional bodies
* increasing employer involvement

* new projects (surveys, handbooks...)
* links with quality assessment/assurance
* increasing understanding of networking

In discussion it was agreed that SLT graduates were perhaps unusual in that a very high proportion did in fact become practising therapists, and there was realtively little wastage. Statistics would be obtained from RCSLT to substantiate this belief.

GJD
12/12/95

APPENDIX I

NETPhon Workshop 3: Materials

Wednesday 13 October 1995

Newcastle upon Tyne

Programme

9.15 Introduction to meeting

9.30 Activities of Teaching Materials working party
- results of mail shot
- World Wide Web page
- dissemination of pre-existing material
- plans for continued collaboration in sharing of teaching materials

10.30 Coffee

11.00 Demonstrations of teaching tools
- PCLX
- Dr Speech Science
- CSL

1.00 Lunch

2.15 Discussion of ethical issues relating to clinical phonetics

2.45 Address by Stephen McNair, HE Adviser to the Dept. for Education and Employment

3.30 Tea

3.45 Discussion of future collaborative development of teaching materials

5.00 Review and summary of workshop

APPENDIX II

NETPhon: Network for Education and Training in Phonetics

Dear Colleague

As you may already know, NETPhon is a one-year project which is being funded by the Department of Employment in the UK. It is a consortium of higher education departments which teach theoretical, practical and acoustic phonetics to student of speech and language therapy (SLT). The network also includes members from the College of Speech and Language Therapy. Students are also represented in the network.

The network aims to provide a means for the development of good practice in teaching and assessment of phonetics in the context of speech and language therapy. It also aims to promote the development of innovative teaching methods and materials that will encourage student-centred learning. Through its activities the network aims to forge closer links between colleagues both in academic and professional establishments.

Within the framework of NETPhon a working party has been set up to promote the sharing and development of teaching materials for phonetics. The aims of this working party are to:

i) collate information on what teaching materials have been developed at different establishments for teaching phonetics (theoretical, practical, acoustic);
ii) establish whether the materials could be made available to other colleagues;
iii) collate and disseminate information received from colleagues and
iv) identify any gaps in teaching materials with a view to further promoting the development of teaching materials.

As a first stage in setting about these tasks the working party is carrying out an international survey of colleagues involved in the teaching of phonetics (in all contexts, not just that of speech and language therapy programmes), with a view to constructing a database of available materials.

We would be most grateful if teachers of phonetics who have developed teaching materials which they think may be of interest to colleagues would take the short time required to answer the following questions.

i) Please give brief outline description of the materials which you have developed.

ii) What level are the teaching materials aimed at (i.e. beginners, more advanced etc.)?

iii) What part of the phonetics curriculum are the teaching materials aimed at (i.e. practical articulatory and auditory phonetics and/or acoustic phonetics)?

iv) What form do the teaching materials take (i.e. audio cassettes, video cassettes, computer software)? If you use software please state what computer platforms they can be mounted on.

v) Is there any material to support the teaching materials (e.g. workbooks, manuals, other documentation etc.)?

vi) Are you willing to share the teaching materials with colleagues at other establishments? If so, what would the cost be ?

viii) The name of a contact person who would be responsible for distributing the teaching materials, their postal address, telephone number, fax number and email address

ix) Finally, what sort of teaching materials would you like but don't have ?

Any information you can give us will be gratefully received. Please send replies by e-mail to: s.whiteside@sheffield.ac.uk
or by surface mail to:

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We plan to make our materials database available on the internet, in the form of a WWW page. We will make a further announcement about this when it is available.

A workshop on teaching materials is due to be held in mid September 1995.

Sincerely

Sandra Whiteside
Helen Pandeli
Gerry Docherty
Martin Duckworth
(NETPHON Working Party on Teaching Materials).