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# The last print edition of OPE

Read all about it on pages 14 and 15

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## PAM-Lingua – Annual General Meeting

Tietoranta 19.04.2008 at 14.30

**MINUTES** as recorded by Michael Möbius and revised by Daryl Taylor

- 1. Election of chairperson and recorder for the meeting.** Daryl Taylor chaired the meeting and Michael Möbius recorded: both elected nem. con.
- 2. Approval of the minutes of last general meeting** The minutes of the AGM of 28 April 2007 were distributed in the May 2007 edition of OPE. Minutes were approved nem. con.
- 3. Matters arising from the minutes.** Daryl Taylor reported that we received a response from PAM to the question concerning self-employed members that was sent to the union at the request of the 2007 AGM. Daryl apologised for being unable to report on this response in detail, owing to a shortage of time preparing for the meeting. The union's response indicates that we have no more than a handful of self-employed members in various occupations such as hairdressing. However, PAM remains favourably disposed to the idea of self-employed members and defends the current practice while seeking to define and improve services for such members.
- 4. Review of operations in 2007.**  
Some questions were raised about OAJ supporting PAM-Lingua member's case against ISH. The case against HAO about dismissing a PAM-Lingua member will go to court. PAM-Lingua argues that the member's job was permanent.
- 5. Accounts and auditors' report for 2007.** The accounts and auditors' report are attached (appendix 3). The accounts showed a loss for the year of 28.81 e, but this was offset by appreciation of our investment fund by 67.51 e to a total of 2,146.57 e at the end of the year. This growth in the investment fund (only the premium of 2,000 e is shown in the accounts) slightly exceeds the total paid in bank charges (60.32 e), which was the original motivation for starting the investment fund.  
The auditors had issued a standard statement recommending approval of the resolution at item 6 of this agenda.  
Members were given an opportunity to examine the bookkeeping materials. There was no further debate on the accounts, which appeared to be in order.
- 6. Financial resolution.** As the persons to be discharged were not permitted to participate in this item of business, the meeting was chaired at this point by Joel Pottala, who presented the following resolutions to the meeting:  
**That the Board of 2007 be discharged from liability for the accounts for the period 01.01.2007 – 31.12.2007.**  
**That we send a token of gratitude to the auditors for their help in our accounting.**  
**Both resolutions were carried nem. con.**  
Daryl Taylor reported on our current problems with Sampo bank regarding receipts and account statements. If these difficulties cannot be rectified by July 2008, then he may propose a change in our bank for the current account.

*Continued on page 6*

## Dianne Ward case settled out of court – reported by Daryl Taylor

The lawsuit filed in the Labour Court by the Trade Union of Education in Finland (OAJ) against the Private Education Sector Association and the Parents' Association of the International School of Helsinki (ISH) over the dismissal of shop steward **Dianne Ward** was settled out of court at the end of 2007. The details of the settlement are sealed by agreement, but Dianne is evidently very pleased at the outcome and relieved that the matter has been concluded.

The settlement comes roughly four years after Dianne was dismissed from her job as a teacher of English literature and shop steward for both the OAJ and the Pam-Lingua members at the school. Dianne's position as a member and representative of two trade unions was unique in the history of Finnish industrial relations. While this arrangement surprised officials in both unions, it was fully consistent with the principle of freedom of association and proved a sound practical solution under the circumstances. As the union involved in collective bargaining for the school education sector, the OAJ was primarily responsible for defending the interests of the dismissed shop steward, but PAM and PAM-Lingua provided essential support to the shop steward in bargaining with the employer, and also assisted in meeting the costs and catering for the practical needs of the subsequent legal proceedings. This collaboration of two unions ensured that Dianne was fully indemnified against the financial risks of litigation despite the limitation of the OAJ legal insurance scheme.

The problems of ISH will be familiar to regular readers of OPE and to members who have attended our parties and other events in recent years. Dianne was the third shop steward at the school in four years. Already representing the PAM-Lingua members, she was nominated by an overwhelming majority of the OAJ members to represent their interests as well. After the

employer refused to recognise and negotiate with Dianne as shop steward, she joined the OAJ and thereby became eligible to represent her OAJ colleagues under the applicable collective agreement. Dianne's membership subscriptions to the OAJ were reimbursed by PAM-Lingua.

In the light of the experiences of Dianne and many other ISH employees over several years, we feel that it is an understatement to describe the working atmosphere of the school as *toxic*. This was also reflected in an official inspection report in 2002. Though essentially a strong woman with a firm trade union background, Dianne eventually succumbed to the severe stress of attempting to negotiate with this employer and to cope with an increasingly hostile administration and spiteful behaviour by certain colleagues. She took extended sick leave in spring 2003. It was during this absence (!) that Dianne was dismissed.

The dismissal was virtually the last act in office of outgoing headmaster, **Peter Ostrom**, who resigned shortly after the official inspection but did not leave until the end of the academic year. The findings of that inspection included the following (in the original English language):

*Documents and discussions show that disputes between the Headmaster and members of the staff have often been connected to the regulation and arbitration of the conflicts of interest between the employer and the employees through laws and agreements. The Headmaster is not willing to acknowledge the status of the Shop Steward. However, when the school had to pay dozens of teachers their due salaries, the Shop Steward must have been right. There are still several questions open and disturbing the atmosphere, for example the unilateral attempts to change the job descriptions of permanent teaching assistants, and the lack of pay slips. The Shop Steward has been subjected to pressure. The attitude of*

*the headmaster and his closest associates seems to be that the Shop Steward is a "big problem" and that those demanding their rights are "politically interested".*

The full inspection report and a decision on a separate complaint from the parents of an ISH student (which resulted in a reprimand for unlawful practices at ISH) are available as scanned pdf documents here:

<http://www.pam-lingua.org/Files/ISH/ISH-OPM-LH-inspection.pdf> (inspection report)

<http://www.pam-lingua.org/Files/ISH/ISH-MORAV-LH-Decision.pdf> (decision on complaint)

By the standards of school education in Finland, these official documents show a quite extraordinary level of maladministration.

It was under these conditions that Dianne sought to bring order, sanity and justice to her workplace. I consider Dianne to be one of the heroes of our organisation, comparable in her courage to our founding members in 1984-85. With the benefit of hindsight we must obviously say that no job, and no shop stewardship, is worth sacrificing one's health. I shall personally always wonder whether I or others could or should have intervened at some point and in some way to head off the personal cost of this situation, particularly to Dianne, but also to others involved in it. Dianne still lives with that ongoing cost, even today, but the news that she is very pleased with the outcome of the process that followed her dismissal is at least something that we can all be happy to hear.

**Postscript:** Dianne was replaced as English teacher at ISH by **Paul Allison**, who was later also subject to pressure from the employer after querying its hiring and remuneration practices. Like Dianne, Paul also wound up taking extended sick leave and was dismissed at the end of the 2006-07 academic year. Paul is now suing the school for unlaw-

ful dismissal and discrimination with the support of the OAJ, and has since taken work in occupations covered by PAM-Lingua and has joined our union. Paul was elected

to the Board of PAM-Lingua at the 2008 AGM.

Peter Ostrom left Finland and took up an appointment as an Assistant Headmaster in the Senior School of Ashbury College in his native Can-

ada. We can only express the hope here that he never again takes charge of negotiating the terms and conditions of employment of teachers in Finland.

## You don't get me! I'm part of the union!

by Paul Allison

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Paul Allison has the nerve to make some suggestions about the future of PAM-Lingua and unionism in general

Those of us of a certain age will remember the above line as title and part of a song lyric by a band called Strawbs, so long ago that I can only vaguely remember the flared trousers and leery tank top sweaters (a tight sleeveless sweater combining as many unharmonised colours as possible) worn by all sorts of people in those days. When the song was played in the student union bar, the chorus was usually joined by a large group of rugby playing, Newcastle Brown swigging lads with hairstyles akin to that of Kevin Keegan. Who's Kevin Keegan? In those days he was a formidable Liverpool footballer who also had the looks that would fit in the front line of the band Slade. He did try to make a record as well. It's best we don't talk about that.

I started this article with the deliberate choice of the Strawbs song. It was released in 1973 and stormed up the charts to number 2 in the UK and no doubt contributed to the band's success at the time in other countries. The song was chosen by the record company for release at a time when it would do well. Britain was having a period of difficult relations between government, employers and unions. The period gave rise to the term "loony left" and a view of the unions as trouble making socialists who would "bring the country to its knees" if they had their way. Some might say that the song lyrics are anti-union, because they highlight what might be considered a rather paranoid union view of employers and their "spies" who

want to undermine the workforce. That being said, the song was unofficially adopted as something of an anthem for unionists and as mentioned above, it drew considerable vocal support in the student union bars.

Times have changed. We do not see the same level of union militancy as we did in the 60's and 70's. We see protests and there are strikes, but nothing on the scale of some of the events we witnessed back then. Does this mean trade unionism is dead or dying? While there has been a fall in the numbers of people who are union members, the international support and movements promoting union activity are still strong in their cause to bring all sorts of working people together. I say all sorts of working people because the spectrum of working people is large and covers a wide range of occupations and professions. The ETUC (European Trades Union Confederation) is an umbrella organization that represents the interests of over 60 million working people in Europe in 36 countries. It is an officially recognized body that works with the European Institutions on all kinds of social policy matters that affect workers' lives. It is important that this voice is heard in Brussels because it helps to shape the laws that eventually provide protection for the workers in each state. I say "eventually" because the process of getting EU directives active in every state sometimes takes a while and a bit of a push behind sluggish governments.

The EU has a lot to do with the ways in which workers' rights are protected under the law. Whatever anyone thinks about the EU and its executive arm, the European Commission, the process of social dialogue since the development of



the EU has done much to protect people's rights and build a framework in which those in need of support receive it. We know that the practicalities of bringing these directives to bear on particular problems can be a source of heartache and frustration. But, what would be the situation if the EU did not exist? The situation of workers from country to country would vary from good, based on powerful national union muscle, to hopeless, based on repressive governments who squash any form of demand from unions or even refuse a word of constructive discussion. How many countries would have a situation of constructive dialogue with unions leading to legislation that protects the rights of workers and recognizes the need for employers to be competitive and profitable? Given the movement in global economic muscle at the moment, the situation in Europe without an EU would perhaps not be a good thing to imagine from the point of

the point of view of working people.

It could also be said that the existence of the EU, the ETUC and all the other actors in the fields of employment and social policy have achieved something they did not expect; a reduction in the numbers of people in unions. Thanks to their efforts, people may have started to believe that they do not need to be in a union. The general conditions of employment may be good and the availability of legal recourse in the event of a dispute with your employer may be better. It seems that Germany is a good place to be fired prior to suing your former employer for so much money you may put them out of business. If you think it's all comfy in the workplace and there's no need for union representation then just wait until you have a problem with the employer. In your home country you may be able to find your way around the mechanisms by which you can extract justice, assuming you have the time and the knowledge where to go and what to do. However, being a foreigner working in another EU state does not always bring legal recourse easily when trying to extract fairness and recompense from a rogue employer. We glossy-eyed Euro-travelers may think we can skip from country to country, supported by the EU promotion of labour force mobility and may do so quite happily until we find ourselves in dispute with our boss, or former boss as he or she might insist on being. If you have been existing on a low salary and harder still, supporting a family, and find yourself suddenly unemployed, it does not take long before the rent is not paid or the mortgage hits arrears. These things tend to concentrate the mind a lot and finding time to sort out a strategy and action against the ex-employer can soon be forgotten in the quest to find another job, quick. This is when you start praying for the Trade-Union fairy to land next to you and say "we'll help you sort this out". At this point we should advise readers not to resort to medication at the thought of Daryl

Taylor in a fairy suit with fluttering wings.

I've been in unions for most of my studying and working life. Coming from a city where being a member of a union and the Labour party was almost mandatory if you were not already a member of the Communist Party seemed a more rational solution and sensible when you knew that your job might be under threat at any time. I've met the bitter proletarian shop-stewards and always thought "there must be more to a union than this, 'comrades'". My Maths teacher at school was a former secretary general of the local branch of the Communist Party. He would have been a great headmaster but the powers that be made sure he never advanced further than a head of department and the reaction of the middle class parents at my grammar school to his further promotion would have been something like Hitler's reception to the news of the fall of Stalingrad. What I admired in my Maths teacher was his adherence to rules of fairness and equality. He at least referred to all of us as "dimbos" (a student lacking in any hope of academic success).

As an employer for some years I went to have a look at the local employers' group to see what it might offer. I soon left after realizing that most of the members still believed Britain had an empire and that if we let down our guard for just one second, the EU would bring in socialism by the back door. As I worked primarily for the EU I made my apologies and left, quickly. I made no mention of the work I was doing in Russia as I was sure that any such news would result in a lynching or pulverization with Pith helmets.

What is my point in all this? All too often, the points of view on either side of the employment equation have been polarized to the extremes. The militancy of the unions I knew as a young man

hardened the views of the other side as much as the bitterness grew among workers. This did not do Britain a lot of good. The EU may have achieved much in building the framework for fair practice in employment but there are still those employers who will exploit every opportunity

to make extra profit at the expense of the people who earn their wealth for them. When working as a foreigner in another country it is not easy to see how your rights are eroded or denied unless someone with empathy, knowledge, experience and credibility in the local arena at least advises you. Finland is not the easiest place in the EU to obtain justice as a foreigner. A good Finnish friend recently said to me "Finland is not yet a democracy as far as foreigners are concerned." A ten minute encounter with the Finnish traffic police might illustrate this. While things become better, the seeming frostiness of the institutions that deal with foreigners can make you feel anywhere between uncomfortable and outraged. Is it incompetence? Is it fear? Is it that they just plain hate us? To get to the bottom of it all may take as long as it would to win a professorship in social anthropology, such is the depth you would have to go to understand the motives and machinations of Finland or any EU state. Accepting that every country has its plus and minus points, for me the balance is on the plus side, even if there are times when I would like to take a short course in nuclear physics. That being said, if you come to work in Finland, join a union, pronto. If your work is related to the use of language, join ours, now.

What do we offer? This will lead us to the sticky bit in the article. In the first instance you get to read things like this. You get to come to the occasional party which you may not remember the next day, but will remember the hang-over for several years. Above all, if you are not sure of your rights in



the workplace, wonder if you are being exploited or are afraid that you may be being pushed out of your job by unfair means then you have come to the right place for help. The expertise within PAM-Lingua has proved itself time and time again when it comes to dealing with rogue employers. You may even be able to find out if your prospective employer is on the side of goodness and fairness or after the side of beef they are going to cut from you if you work there. A new facility in the PAM-Lingua communications arsenal will include a review of employers based on public records that show whether they are good or bad. This will probably cause some grinding of teeth in some establishments in Finland but justly so where it is deserved to be brought to members' attention. This menu should be enough to warrant your membership fees alone. But, in the age of increasing competitiveness and globalization we need more bangs for the buck, or euro. These days, you get less bangs for a buck on a daily basis than you do for the ever ascending euro. Try saying that after the PAM-Lingua Spring party!



Some might say that PAM-Lingua is not much more than a talking shop.

For me this seems a bit short sighted and ignores the potential that exists in its membership. Within the board of PAM Lingua we have expertise in many areas of language operations, whether in

teaching at all levels or in the application of language in commercial activities. Communications seems a more relevant term for the activities of members. That means the development and application of language in many areas, not just selling phones or satellites. However, in the latter items, the role of language is key to the achievement of sales. Freelancers and employed personnel who work as teachers, consultants and authors have a lot of experience and expertise that could be shared with other members. It is an internationally recognized objective of unions to improve the skills of their members as part of the goal to improve the quality of the workplace for all. A regular forum that deals with skills development could be a valuable place to share and build competences. I have seen business cafes run these events and they rely upon local talent and it is surprising how much is there in our own union which could benefit us all.

The union can also be a place where employers should be encouraged to come looking for employees and contractors. Our experience and expertise shows that we know what is expected by the employers and that same expertise and experience can ensure that the employer knows what is fair to be expected of them to operate successfully and legally. I can already hear the short intake of breath from language school managers already and other agencies. However, we live in an open market situation so why cannot we work alongside those same agencies. The mechanics needs to be considered carefully, but it is not hard to see that

much good can come from this kind of activity, for everyone. Most people would agree that competition is healthy but as long as competition takes place in a fair and free marketplace under the rule of law.

Other areas of expanding activity could include a watch for events that are of interest to language people – Oops! I mean our “modern day communicators”. These things, whether seminars by language luminaries or a free beer party at a member’s house could be part of the web space which is big enough to accommodate a wide range of functions and content.

This demands a share of work for people in the union but I think it also brings growth for the union in terms of membership and quality of what we offer to members and ourselves. Some people have raised the question that in making such bold moves we might be stepping outside the definition of what PAM-Lingua is. I start to hear the ghosts of the past who used queries of procedure to block the evolution of the union from a bastion of battle cries into something that could meet the demands of a changing society. The world around us is changing and if we are to meet the needs of union members we must also evolve into the union of tomorrow, not yesterday. Now, all join in: 1,2,3 and “You don’t get me! I’m part of the union, part of the union, part of the union – You don’t get me! I’m part of the union, till the day I die, till the day I die!”

**NOW: Feast your ears on this:**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oR6l3r5BRT0>  
the ed.

A passenger in a taxi needed to ask the driver a question so he tapped him on the shoulder, at which the driver had a fit completely losing control of the vehicle, nearly hitting a lorry, driving up onto the pavement and stopping two inches away from a shop window.

The cab driver turned around and snapped at the passenger: “Don’t ever do that again. You scared the living daylight out of me.

Taken aback the passenger apologized.

“I’m sorry. I had no idea tapping on your shoulder would startle you so much.”

Having by now calmed down, the cabbie relented: “Yes, well, it isn’t really your fault. You see, I’m not really accustomed to my passenger in the back tapping me on the shoulder. This is my first day as a taxi driver and before this I drove hearses for 25 years.”

Continued from page 1: **Minutes of the AGM 2008**

7. **Election of Chairperson and Board for 2008-2009.** The meeting was free to determine both the size and composition of the Board. Most members of the current Board were willing to continue. Michael Möbius proposed Paul Allison as a new member. The following composition of the Board for 2008-2009 was approved nem. con.

Daryl Taylor – Chairperson	John Sigona	Juan-Luis Moreno
Paul Whybrow	Dianne Ward	Paul Allison
Michael Möbius	Olga Belyakova	

8. **Election of auditors for 2008.** Tuula Mäittälä and Marja Lindblom are willing to continue. As officers of the union that provides our income, they are also ideally placed for this function. These auditors were approved nem. con.
9. **Announcements and other informal business.** The Board decided some time ago to offer a token of gratitude to Rod Dowling for his years of service to the section. This has still not been properly communicated to Rod.

Paul Whybrow reported on some advice that he had received from a lawyer in response to a query from a member concerning copyright of printed and recorded publications in private education. These issues are surprisingly complex. Paul hopes to write more about this in an upcoming edition of OPE.

Daryl Taylor noted that with our party held early this year we might plan some summer event, and he suggested a family outing to Suomenlinna on the afternoon of 8 June. PAM-Lingua could provide some picnic supplies from our party stocks (e.g. bottles of wine). This will be clarified at the Board meeting on 17 May.

The meeting closed at 15.30.

## Construire la peur

by Juan-Luis Moreno

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Depuis la nuit des temps, la peur a servi d'instrument de pouvoir et d'arme. Nietzsche dans son *Le Crépuscule des idoles*, ou la philosophie au marteau, a analysé et critiqué avec éloquence l'instrumentalisation du péché en vue de contrôler les esprits. Aujourd'hui alors que nous assistons à l'alliance de toutes sortes d'intégrismes fondés sur des crédos religieux, politiques ou de marché, instiller la peur est plus que jamais d'actualité. Après l'infame attentat contre les Tours Jumelles, une formidable dose de peur supplémentaire a été instillée dans la population américaine, laquelle est déjà hautement réceptive aux discours et aux comportements générateurs de peurs, avec des effets pervers tels que de hauts niveaux d'insécurité (perçue ou réelle) et de nombreuses solutions bancales alimentant le phénomène au lieu d'y apporter remède (circulation étendue d'armes et recours à celles-ci; transformation de quartiers en camps retranchés et concentrationnaires;



portails qui n'ont rien à envier aux portes de coffre-fort; etc.)

Les Américains sont affectés, le reste du monde également. Illustrons par un exemple l'impact du phénomène sur nos vies: aujourd'hui prendre l'avion tient du cauchemar et peut très facilement en devenir un (priez pour que l'on ne vous confonde pas avec quelqu'un d'autre et rappelez-vous que les agents de sécurité n'ont aucun sens de l'humour). Cela dit,

il semble que nous ayons accepté de plein gré que voler soit conditionné à toutes sortes de prétendues mesures de sécurité totalement disproportionnées (collecte de données privées, filtrage chaque fois plus sophistiqué, interdiction ridicule de liquides, etc.) appliquées par une armée d'agents de sécurité du public et du privé. C'est un gros, gros commerce, brassant et engloutissant des sommes considérables d'argent. Mais voyons, quelle est ma probabilité d'être victime d'un attentat

terroriste? Moins d'un pourcent. Par ailleurs, quelle est la probabilité que je souffre une crise cardiaque? Au moins un pourcentage à deux chiffres (ne soyons pas trop précis au cas où l'un des dieux de la planète ne serait tenté...). Combien d'aéroports sont dotés de défibrillateurs automatiques? Vous pouvez les compter sur les doigts des deux mains. Pourtant, ces appareils coûtent un peu plus de 1000 euros l'unité. Avoir rapidement accès à l'un d'eux peut faire la différence entre la vie et la mort. Par conséquent, qu'est-ce qui est plus important, que l'on vérifie que le contenant de mon tube de dentifrice ne dépasse pas les 100 ml?

Si l'on pouvait réfléchir froidement à ces questions, il serait facile de constater que notre sécurité serait bien mieux assurée avec un régime de sécurité sociale mieux doté en personnel et en équipements... et ce avec un coût représentant une fraction de ce que nous avons été amenés à accepter de payer pour une sécurité illusoire. Mais il est vrai qu'à chaque fois que je franchis un sas de sécurité, il

m'est rappelé combien le monde est dangereux. Peut-être que l'objectif principal de toute cette gesticulation n'est pas ma sécurité mais la perception que j'ai de ma sécurité. Si mon esprit est occupé par des préoccupations quant à mon bilan cardiaque, cela ne génère pas beaucoup d'affaires, mais si je me ne sens pas en sécurité, voire mieux, si je me sens en insécurité permanente, alors l'industrie de la sécurité peut prospérer.

Voyons un autre exemple, peut-être même plus pernicieux encore, de politique génératrice de peurs. Il est frappant pour moi qu'un nombre croissant de jeunes et de moins jeunes ne sont pas conscients que faire grève est un droit de l'homme fondamental. Comment? Qu'est-ce qu'il a dit... ces salopards de conducteurs de bus sont en grève, je peux pas me rendre au travail et ils ne devraient pas "être mis au pas"? Ces infirmières âpres au gain ont laissé leur poste, je dois attendre pour être traité et elles ne devraient pas être "forcées"? Voilà, le mot est lâché: forcé. Comment appelons-nous une personne qui doit travail-

ler contre sa volonté? Un esclave. Qui plus est, je n'ai jamais au grand jamais rencontré de travailleurs heureux de partir en grève. Faire grève implique toujours énormément de stress et de craintes, peur de perdre au bout du compte son travail, peur que la perte de revenu ne soit insoutenable. Faire grève implique toujours une perte. Faire grève est toujours un dernier resort.

En Australie, un corps de police spécial, l'Australian Building and Construction Commission, a été établi en 2005 (gouvernement Howard) pour éliminer les grèves. L'ABCC dispose de pouvoirs discrétionnaires étendus qui rappellent ceux de la tristement célèbre Inquisition. L'ABCC tient des tribunaux à huis-clos sans le concours d'un avocat et peut infliger des amendes aux particuliers allant jusqu'à 28 600 dollars. Les personnes convoquées ne peuvent refuser de se présenter ni de répondre aux interrogatoires, elles peuvent être forcées à incriminer des compagnons et ne peuvent révéler à personne, y compris leur famille, la teneur de ce

qui s'est passé ou de ce qui s'est dit durant ces audiences. Sanction encourue pour la rupture du silence? Six mois d'emprisonnement!

Un documentaire effrayant de 40 minutes disponible à l'adresse: <http://www.constructingfear.com> décrit comment les libertés civiles sont rognées et les terribles effets sur les travailleurs et leurs représentants. Des voix s'élèvent en Australie et à l'OIT pour appeler le nouveau gouvernement travailliste australien à démanteler l'ABCC, voir ici comment cet organe se présente lui-même

<http://www.abcc.gov.au/abcc/WhatYouShouldKnow/General/>, et la législation qui appuie son activité. Lorsque faire de l'argent devient la priorité des priorités, lorsque l'argent cesse d'être un moyen pour devenir une fin en soi, il s'en suit beaucoup de tourments et beaucoup de douleur. Nos libertés et nos droits valent la peine d'être préservés et défendus. Déconstruisons la peur.

English translation on the website. <http://www.dlc.fi/~michi/pam/fear.htm>



### Letter to the editor

Dear Ed,

A word on the last 'article'/closing snippet of humour I submitted:

May I ask you to please add back in this issue, that which rather injudiciously edited from it, and so obviate any aspersion of plagiarism (Lord forbid in this teaching profession!); viz: That it was prefaced thus:

"And on the subject of humour, possibly trying to update beyond 30+ year old Python, might I be allowed to contribute, if not a joke, then a short foray into a great pun from a newer style of English comedy show, shown on TV here recently ('Green Wing / Vikatikki' Channel 2, Tuesday nights – and that's if you still get TV broadcasts and the Government hasn't analogously also unilaterally switched you off WITH NO CHOICE)."

It would also be nice to have this so credited in case TV 2 repeats the series (which in all likelihood, it will), so that one can tune into some more updated British humour.

Finally, on this matter, now having established that the essential punch line was a PUN, I can also address your own subsequent homepage message query and the fair criticism that such British puns 'go over the head of most of our members', to help direct the perplexed reader of the amusement behind that particular 'Green Wing' pun, to think of both gardens (popular with our Chairperson, recall ☺!), as well as the less the flattering reference to a lady. ('ho –hoe....well, check the dictionary!) Of course, as with all humour, once you have to explain it....it's gone.

Thanks for the opportunity to put that right (and no doubt confuse ('a cat') everybody bothering to read this! – you have to put something cryptic in the mag though, surely?)

\*Yet, 'Monty Python' humour remains ever popular here in Finland in particular, of which puns form the bedrock of the majority of its rib-tickling; consider the ever popular:

Man dressed as housewife 1: 'What's on the tele, tonight'?

Man dressed as housewife 2: 'A penguin!' (momentary double take)

M.D.A.H. 1: 'Noooo! Not what's ON the tele, what's on the programmes?!'

M.D. A. H. 2: 'Ohh.' (Which for the teachers amongst us, nicely lampoons the absurdity of our prepositions.)

Paul Whybrow

# Where are they now...?

**In this series we tell you about former members of PAM-Lingua and what became of them, after they left PAM-Lingua /Tekeri Language Teachers. Let's sweep down memory lane – in every new OPE.**

**Part 2:** John Harbord – *written by himself*

Those of you with long memories may recall that I taught at International House Helsinki (Habil OY) from 1988 to 1989, and was mildly active in TEKERI, leading a number of workshops. After leaving Finland, I spent quite a while knocking around Eastern Europe, in Bulgaria (during the fall of communism), Estonia (fall of the Soviet Union) and Czechoslovakia (as it was for the first half of my stay). Then I went to China as a teacher trainer for two years with the Brit-

ish Council, in the vague hope of precipitating the collapse of communism (didn't happen, sadly) before returning to Europe and settling in Budapest, where I have now been for ten years, more recently with my wife, Aitalina, her daughter, Anna, and our son, Kolya.

I work as director of the Center for Academic Writing at Central European University. I teach academic writing to students of social sciences and humanities. Bits of it are like English teaching, but it's a lot more fun because the students have something to say. I also work with native speakers, which is rather satisfying. Hungary is a bit wearing after ten years, but I love the job most of the time, especially as it gives me the chance to indulge my passion for teacher training, travelling to places like the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Balkans to help set up writing programmes and

writing centres both in English and in the local language. I was very lucky to return to Finland and Estonia a couple of years ago as a guest at the 21st Communications Skills Workshop in Otepaa and to see one or two old friends. Best wishes to those who still remember me!



Fact box

## About the Central European University

Central European University was founded in 1991 with the aim of helping the process of transition from dictatorship to democracy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and Central Asia. There is no predominant national majority. This creates a uniquely international atmosphere.

CEU focuses on research, teaching and issues of public policy.

CEU and all its programs are registered and accredited in the US, and the university also has Hungarian accreditation. The latter enables us to be a fully-fledged participant in EU higher education support schemes such as Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus.

[www.ceu.hu](http://www.ceu.hu).

Johns homepage: <http://web.ceu.hu/dpp/people/harbord.htm>



## Some light relief

George W. Bush, in an airport lobby, noticed a man in a long flowing white robe with a long flowing white beard and flowing white hair. He had a staff in one hand and some stone slabs in the other. George asked him if he were Moses. No response. George asked again. Still no response. Finally, George tugged at the man's sleeve and beseeched him: "Please, tell me. Are you Moses, the man who gave the world the ten commandments? Irritated, the man admitted that he was.

"Why were you so reluctant to tell me who you are?" George inquired.

Moses replied: "Because the last time a bush spoke to me I ended up spending 40 years in the wilderness.

# Content Language Integrated Teaching

by Rod Dowling

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How to combine language teaching with a certain subject like a profession, cultural education and such. It is known under a series of names: CBL /CBI, ESP, CLIL to name just a few.

Is Content Integrated Language Teaching (CLIL) a familiar concept to you? It wasn't to me until a short while ago. I had known about it under the name ESP. No, not extra-sensory perception, dummy. English for Special Purposes e.g. Business English. CLIL is a refinement of that original concept.



Why may you ask am I writing an article on this subject? This autumn I was invited to the HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences to conduct a teacher trainer course. I was forewarned that some of the students had been in an earlier class of mine, the purpose of which was to prepare them for an examination that would provide them with an English language proficiency certificate. I needed a new twist. I did some research and came up with the concept CLIL.

To coin a phrase from Walter Mondale you could be thinking: "Where's the beef?" Well, CLIL is relevant because with the expansion of the European Union diversity of language and the need for communication at a level higher than small talk are seen as key issues. However, the use of English alone as the medium for content-based instruction would indeed promote academic communication but kill diversity. The EU wants to develop communicative skills in a second or third foreign language.

Given then the EU's objectives of maintaining language diversity and facilitating meaningful communication between the citizens of its member states, serious attention needs to be paid to the training of teachers and the development of frameworks for efficient language teaching. CLIL is one such framework. Knowledge of a foreign language becomes the means of learn-

ing subject content and vice versa. Language is integrated into the broad curriculum in the belief that when students are interested in a topic, they are motivated to acquire language in order to communicate. In other words, language learning is improved through increased motivation.

The underlying assumption of course in such an integrated approach is that subject teachers are able to exploit opportunities for language learning. Benefits of a CLIL framework include the following:

- (a) the wider cultural context can be blended into the mix
- (b) students are prepared for productive employment in an international arena
- (c) the educational institution's international reputation is enhanced
- (d) the overall and specific language competence of the students is improved
- (e) student motivation is increased

Successful implementation of CLIL programmes has some obstacles to overcome some of which are:

- (a) opposition to language teaching by subject teachers on the part of specialist language teachers and a lack of willingness on their part to cooperate
- (b) unwillingness of subject teachers to see themselves as language teachers at all
- (c) most current CLIL programmes are still either experimental or simply a marketing gimmick
- (d) lack of CLIL teacher training programmes with the consequence that teachers are ill-equipped to do the job.

There is an urgent need to use a foreign language as a medium in vocational education. Such graduates need at the very minimum to be able to read manuals, instructions etc. in a foreign language, not to

mention being able to communicate orally in an international workplace. In addition to that proficiency in a foreign language is often a prerequisite to academic study and progression in one's career.

Brinton, Snow & Wesche in their 1989 work, Content-based Second Language Instruction, argue that for successful language learning to occur, the language syllabus must take into account the eventual uses the learner will make of the target language. CLIL teachers are therefore asked to view their teaching in a new way, from the perspective of truly conceptualizing their lessons as a point of departure for language acquisition and native-like proficiency.

At this point I would like to look at some of the theoretical underpinnings of the CLIL approach. Stephen Thrashen in his 1987 work, Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition, says that language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules. Instead, the best methods are those that supply comprehensible input in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. Such methods do not force early production in the target language, but allow students to produce when they are ready. He argues that a learner improves and progresses when he/she receives second language input which is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence. For instance, if a learner is at stage  $i$ , he/she will progress if the comprehensible input is at the level  $i + 1$ .

Merrill Swain on the other hand concluded that total immersion programmes that focused solely on input were not enough to achieve native-like target language proficiency. She found that such students acquired native-like reception skills, but continued to produce

non-target-like structures. Her focus therefore was on output and in her 1995 treatise, "Three Functions of Output in Second Language Learning" in G. Cook and B. Seidlhofer's Principles and Practice in Applied Linguistics pp. 125-144, she identifies three functions of output:

(a) Noticing

Students must be encouraged to notice gaps in their linguistic knowledge through production.

(b) Hypothesis testing

Once aware of the gaps they experiment with ways of filling the gaps.

(c) Students try to understand the logic underlying a communication i.e. the syntax.

In other words, to produce accurately like a native speaker complete syntactic processing is necessary and so CLIL and immersion courses should provide students with an environment that makes this a realistic goal.

CLIL is relevant to vocational and professional education in Finland because The Ministry of Education has set as an objective that by the year 2010, 8000 Finnish students will be studying at universities of applied sciences, and a further 6000 will be studying at normal universities. The Finnish establishment is committed to the aims of the Bologna process which are:

- (a) readability and comparability of degrees
- (b) uniform degree structures
- (c) establishment of a common system of credits
- (d) increased mobility
- (e) promotion of European cooperation with respect to quality assurance &
- (f) promotion of the European dimension.

Let's look now at student reactions to CLIL. I didn't conduct my

own student survey. What I did was surf the internet and found some information about student attitudes towards CLIL at the Laurea, Pirkanmaa and Seinäjoki Universities of Applied Sciences. Briefly, students feel that:

(a) it is important for the teacher to have a good command of the used language

(b) language learning is most effective when there are exchange students present.

(c) CLIL makes them stand out in a positive way from the pack. They are the stars.

(d) CLIL boosts their self-confidence, as they acquire practice in talking on matters of professional interest to them.

The other side of the coin is, of course, teacher attitudes towards CLIL. In a nutshell they are:

(a) some teachers feared their own linguistic competence adversely affected their ability to achieve positive outcomes.

(b) CLIL teaching is more demanding than teaching pure content in your native language.

(c) students participating in CLIL courses must have sufficient initial competence in the target language.

(d) CLIL is good for the image of the institution.

That's enough about my background research and the theoretical underpinnings of CLIL. With regard to my experiences at HAAGA-HELIA, I was somewhat disappointed that I had no contact with the English language teachers at this institution. I was primarily involved with teachers in the Degree Programme for Multilingual Management Assistants, a programme consisting of 210 ECTS credit points and taking 3.5 years to complete. ECTS stands for Euro-

pean Credit Transfer System. One credit point is equivalent to 30 hours of student work of all types – attendance at lectures and tutorials, group and project work, individual assignments and assumed required reading time. A course worth 5 credit points in Finland should therefore be equivalent to a course worth 5 credit points in any other EU country, and the 210 point degree should be equivalent in difficulty and status to a similar degree from any other tertiary institution in the European Union. Graduates can use either the English title of Bachelor of Business Administration or the Finnish title of tradenomi.

As I said I didn't meet any of the English language teachers. English is worth 17 credit points in this degree programme, 6 points from studying English as part of the core curriculum, and 11 as part of the professional studies that follow on from the core studies. I got the impression through from speaking to the content teachers in my group that they did not regard themselves as language teachers, just subject teachers using English as the medium of communication and instruction. In other words, the teamwork or cooperation which I would expect between pure language teachers and pure content teachers in order for the CLIL approach to be as effective as possible did not seem to exist. I would have expected that content teachers would have given the English language teachers tips as to what they could do in their lessons e.g. pronunciation exercises, remedial work etcetera to better reinforce the students' use of the language in a professional situation. I must say that this ten-week experience has given me a lot of food for thought.

**OPE – The official newsletter of PAM-Lingua members**

Published twice a year by the board of PAM-Lingua. Next issue (no. 56) in December 2008.

Editor in Chief: *Michael Möbius* [ope@pam-lingua.tk](mailto:ope@pam-lingua.tk) Thanks to all contributors and to the board.

Send your contributions, replies, corrections etc. in all common text formats or pdf to the same address.

## OPE Jokes

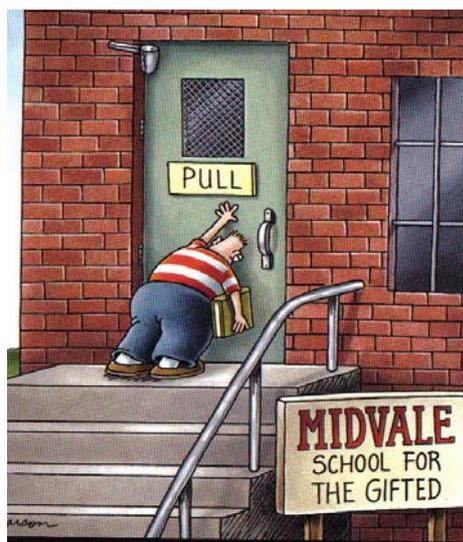
### Humour from an American colleague – Mexican Earthquake

A big earthquake with the strength of 8.1 on the Richter scale hit Mexico. Two millions Mexicans have died and over a million are injured. The country is totally ruined and the government doesn't know where to start with asking for help to rebuild.

The rest of the world is in shock. Canada is sending troopers to help the Mexicans army control the riots. Saudi Arabia is sending oil. Other Latin American countries are sending supplies. The European Community (except France) is sending food and money.

The United States, not to be outdone, is sending two million replacement Mexicans.

**God Bless America!**



A stranger was sitting next to a little 5th grade girl on the aeroplane when the stranger turned to her and said, 'Let's talk.'

'I've heard that flights go quicker if you strike up a conversation with your fellow passenger.'

The little girl, who had just opened her book, closed it slowly and said to the stranger, 'What would you like to talk about?'

'Oh, I don't know', said the stranger. 'How about nuclear power?'

'OK', she said. 'That could be an interesting topic. But let me ask you a question first:

'A horse, a cow, and a deer all eat grass, the same stuff. Yet a deer excretes little pellets, while a cow turns out a flat patty, and a horse produces clumps of dried grass. Why do you suppose that is?'

The stranger thinks about it and says, 'Hmmm, I have no idea.'

To which the little girl replies: 'Do you really feel qualified to discuss nuclear power when you don't know shit?'



Have yourself a pleasant  
spring time and recharge  
your batteries during the  
hopefully sunny and warm  
summer!  
See you all in autumn!

### Announcement

--- NEW ---  
on the PAM-Lingua Website:  
**Employers review**

See who is in the business of language education. Find out, who treats their employees with respect and according to labour laws – and who don't give a damn.

This new segment will keep you informed with regularly updated employer information, when you're planning to change jobs, expand your activities or seek new challenges. Point your browser to [www.pam-lingua.tk](http://www.pam-lingua.tk) and click on **Employers Review**.

See you on the Internet!

# All Shiny Computers in Language Learning

## Part II – Course progression in online courses

by Michael Möbius

OPE@pam-lingua.tk



Michael Möbius shares thoughts about learning in general and online course layouts

To set things straight: We are not discussing the progression of your course, that is up to your own didactical judgements and planning. We are concerned with issues typical for computer assisted courses.

The whole idea of having online courses is to enable independent, if not autonomous learning. This independence as such is not as easily gained as one might think. Most of our students, strangely enough, are not familiar with the concept of being in charge of their own learning activities. They rely on the teacher and if confronted with the task to locate and accomplish language exercises as well as to evaluate their performance and proceed from there, most of them face difficulties. These problems may manifest themselves in questions like *What shall I do next?* or *What are we doing today?*. This might be due to the fact that despite much hot air about *Oppimista oppiminen* (Learn-



ing to learn) most students did not receive proper instruction in that field. Let me give an example for a wrong learning style: The way students prepare themselves for a test or an exam. The learning by heart usually takes place in the last 24 hours prior to the exam – and right after it everything is forgotten. I state this is due to the fact that they don't know that only recapitulation and constant dealing with a subject is crowned with success – knowledge or skills that last for a life time. Go and ask them who invented the steam engine!

Well, to be able to conduct one's own learning autonomously self assessment is another crucial factor, as mentioned earlier. Students get better at this after a while and therefore it is a good idea to practise assessment in the traditional classroom at all times. That can prove to be a difficult thing with Finnish learners, especially if the assessment is bound to be not as positive. But sharing and exchanging evaluations teaches you at least

these three things:

1. How do I react to positive or negative evaluation, how do I relate to criticism?
2. How do I give constructive and honest feedback to others?
3. How do I transfer the ability to assess the performance of others to objectively assessing myself?

That, of course, involves all the activities the Finns hate: to perform in public, having their written papers on the wall etc. The latter can be made easier by anonymous publication, of course. But in time the students get used to this because they see that it is not to humiliate them but to learn from the mistakes of others.

Modern technology offers some help in this field. The authoring tool I use (Hot Potatoes) shows a percentage of correctly answered/completed questions upon task completion. But this is merely a guideline and sometimes not even correct math. It still gives the students a hint about how well they performed. To make this percentage really comparable to the progress the student makes the exercises

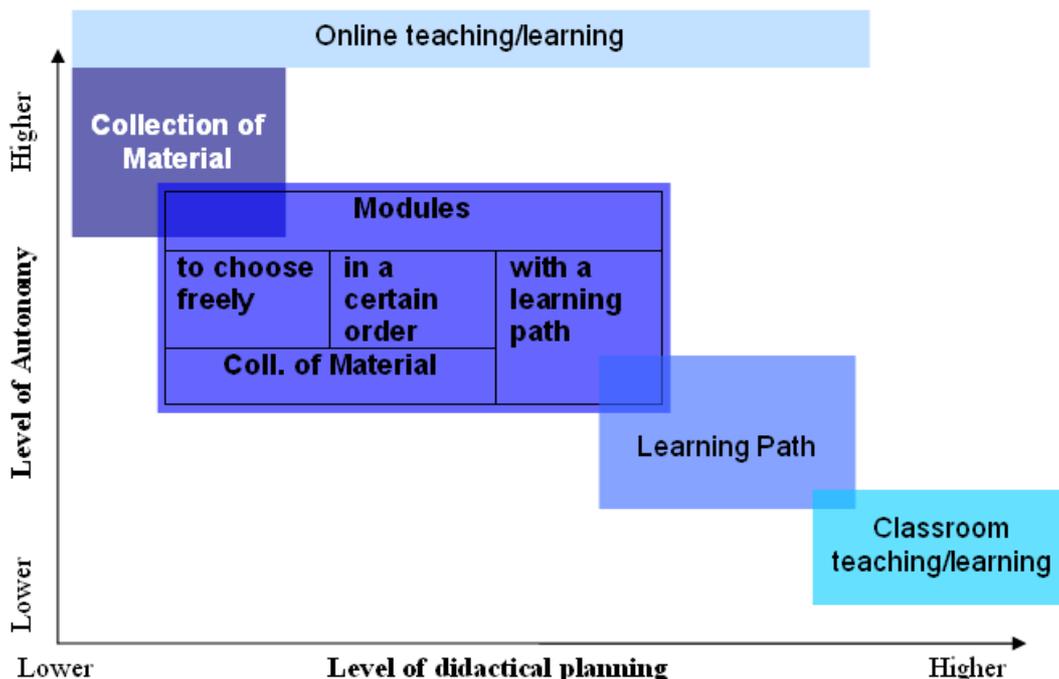


Figure 1 Learner Autonomy and Didactical Planning

must be planned thoroughly. But his is part of the normal content planning I referred to in the first sentence of this article...

So, language students need guidance about what to learn/practise and how often to do it. As computer programming teachers we must provide this guidance and it must be effective, simple, if not foolproof.

Of course, as teachers we may not be educated in the field of web design. This is one of the dilemmas of making web pages without proper training. If you want to perfect your pages you should talk to a web designer or graphic artist. I only can provide you with some recommendations. These are merely introspective and based on my own experiences.

There are different approaches; determined by different levels of freedom and didactical planning: One is the **collection of material**. The onus is on the student alone. He must pick the exercises and that needs knowledge about his level and needs. This is hard for some students; it is the highest level of autonomy, if you will. (see figure 1)

Another approach, narrowed down a bit, is the division into **freely applicable modules**. The students can select a module either freely or in a given progressive order. Within the module there can be either a collection of material, in which case the above mentioned applies, or a learning path to be followed.

That brings us to the third approach: A **learning path** to be followed precisely by the student. This offers the least amount of freedom for the learner but assures a methodically a didactically well planned progression. Let us focus on arranging a learning path apart from the content planning.

The way to arrange a learning path is to provide the student with a certain starting point and proceed from there on a straight line. You should use graphical means rather than writing. See some examples in figure 2.

You can employ other or more symbols depending on your course.

You also might want to label the pictures with an explanatory text so that if the mouse cursor enters the picture the text pops up. The title attribute in the picture properties will do this.

I feel that students should be given the possibility to “bail out” – to leave the path if they feel that a given task is too difficult – or too easy. So, provide links to certain anchor points from where you must have other alternatives to choose. The bail out button should always be available. If you work within a learning platform (*Moodle, Fronter* etc.) it is a good idea to open the exercises in a new window, so the course page remains open and the students cannot lose their way. But do instruct them to close the exercise window after completion. Also note that external exercises do not show up in the list of completed tasks within a learning platform. This is a good feature of platforms but it usually works only with exer-

ter/module XYZ” or something. Do provide a link to the next step or to the main page002E

Keep in mind that the student should be able to follow your path easily. Try it with several friends and colleagues and listen carefully to what they have to say about your learning path. Also give it a few supervised test runs in a computer classroom. You would be surprised how many things can be unclear in a learning path, which is, as you think, as clear and simple as possible. But you are the designer; to YOU it should be clear, shouldn't it? Just make sure the average student can understand it.

If you find all this too annoying, hard to do, etc. you might want to take at pre-fabricated learning paths in the learning platforms. I know there is one in *fronter*, used in the public sector in Helsinki. But, I did never even glance at it because I trust my own a lot further.

I hope I could give you some in-

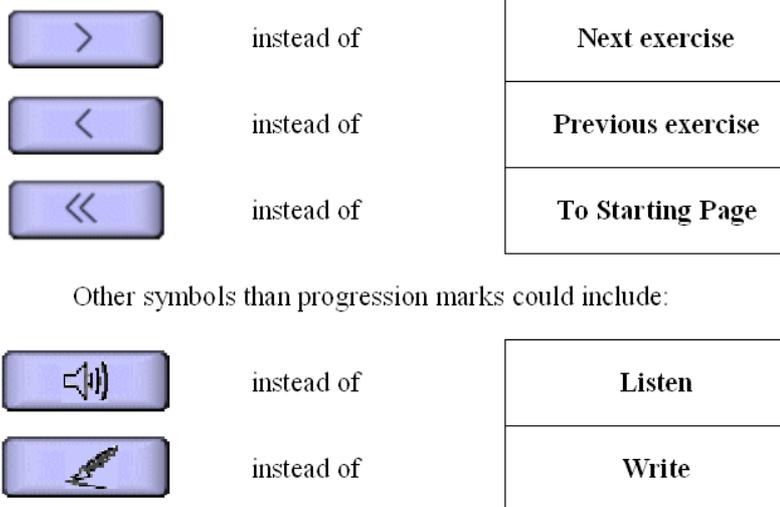


Figure 2 Buttons vs. Text boxes

cises within. But the variety of these internal exercises usually is too narrow. That's why I prefer my own exercises on my own server, thus, external exercises. That gives me a broader range of exercises at the cost of not being able to track its completion inside the learning platform – a small price, I think.

Don't forget to give a clear mark of module completion. This can be in the same picture form as the progression buttons, just labelled “You reached the end of chap-

spiration. And when you have to prepare a web course some of these thoughts may come to your mind and things go a bit smoother. Then these lines had fulfilled their purpose.



## Sampo Sees Service Standards Suffer

by Daryl Taylor

[CHAIR@pam-lingua.tk](mailto:CHAIR@pam-lingua.tk)



System changes at SAMPO bank lead to severe problems in online banking and PAM-Lingua got its fair share of the trouble

Most people manage their banking transactions electronically nowadays, and so a high standard of electronic services has become an important factor in choosing a retail banker. The average customer is unlikely to actually visit a branch of the bank more than once a year, and then only for some unusual reason. The rest of the time we use ATMs and Internet connections for nearly all regular banking functions.

The mark of a good retail bank is efficient and transparent service. The processes of banking should not obstruct the customer's aims. We need to be able to access our money and move it around with the absolute minimum of fuss and bother.

Too much fuss and bother was the reason why I moved my business accounts out of the old *Postipankki* 15 years ago. Remarkably, I was never asked why I did this, even though I had a ready answer: consistently poor service. This was probably the only time in my dealings with that bank when I did NOT have to complete some six-digit pre-process formality in order to perform a simple transaction.

Like most Finnish trade unions, however, PAM-Lingua has continued to bank with the old Finnish Post Office Bank through its various reincarnations as PSP, Leonia and now Sampo Bank.

<http://www.sampopankki.fi/en-fi/Pages/default.aspx>  
One important reason why I gave up on PSP was its unnecessarily clumsy network interface. On taking responsibility for keeping our union section's books, however, I had to struggle once again with the Sampo interpretation of *user-friendly*. A quick look at our book-keeping reveals that our demands of the system are by no means severe. All we need are monthly bank statements and a paper record of each customer-initiated transaction. And until this year, everything was fine. Still clumsy, but essentially OK.

As if in response to this uneasy customer satisfaction, Sampo Bank has now revised its network interface and created what can only be described as a monster. To borrow a term from our Vice-Chairman, I consider myself to be fairly *tech-savvy*, but it took me nearly 20 minutes to work out how to print out confirmation of a transaction,

and I am still trying to figure out how to print out our monthly bank statements. Perhaps in response to such problems, we received one bank statement by post in the spring, even though we specifically agreed with the bank years ago that we would retrieve our statements online.

Several column inches (yards!) have already been written in the national press about the new Sampo online banking service, and especially about how the service collapsed shortly after it was opened. The issue of compensation has been discussed, and I understand that bank charges have been waived for certain months. After experiencing the service for myself, I think the cause of the collapse is obvious. Customers are spending far too long online *trying to get the wretched system to work*.

One thing is certain. If this interface problem cannot be sorted out by the end of the year, then I shall recommend to the Board of PAM-Lingua that we follow my example from 15 years ago and switch to a bank with a better understanding of *customer service*.

### Important Announcements

Regarding OPE and our Website

Please note that this might be the last ever print version of OPE. Should it be the case that you do not have access to the Internet you will have to **order a hard copy!** Send a SMS to 050 537 4532. The changeover to online only has several reasons:

- Using the advantages of the Internet. We will be able to provide links to other sources, such as newspapers for background information, multimedia links (videos, music etc.). A greater reading enjoyment. Try this with an ordinary paper!
- More interactivity between edition and readership via Internet forms.
- Cutting cost – Declining membership numbers lead to less incoming money. On the other hand, cost for printing and postage are on the rise.

Our website will become the central mean of communication. We made it more attractive with a lot of interactive and real-time features. Recent additions:

- Employers review (s. page 5). (coming this spring)
- Links for teachers and translators
- Chat box: Optimal tool for exchanging information! Arrange to meet friends at PAM-Lingua, give comments, ask questions – as long as you can/want to share it with the rest of us, here is the right field! For personal communication refer to the private chat room in the Contact section.

*Read a commentary by Daryl Taylor on page 15*

# PAM-Lingua Spring Party 2008

reported by Michael Möbius

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Held on April 19<sup>th</sup> at Tietoranta – Mishaps and flukes at the traditional PAM-Lingua Spring Party

It was, again, a no-theme party. Against all union spirit and principles Daryl and I went shopping at Lidl in Pasila and were severely punished as they dropped the whole load of beer onto the floor. Thank god we only had cans! So, it didn't start well although the trip to Pasila kept us comfortably within our budget.

After overcoming a couple of more obstacles at Lidl and bringing the freight to Hakaniemi we started with a brief AGM (see the minutes at page 1). The turnout was moderate, but we were able to elect ourselves again and also relieve us from last years mess. All nem. con.

Being re-elected and relieved we moved on to party preparations, I

was chopping vegetables, Daryl stuffing the fridge and carrying the responsibility.

The party started officially at 5. We had hoped for a better turnout because we set the date so that it didn't interfere with any football cup final. But eventually we were the usual 20-odd people.

I have to admit that PAM-Lingua parties are always nice. It is just a good bunch of people and subjects for conversation never seem to run out. Conversation may be the reason that everybody comes into the kitchen. It always was the favourite place of our crowd, close to the food and the beverages. Speaking of which, some people felt that we hadn't

enough food this time. Well, since you never know how many people show up we took the option of not buying as much upfront and rather go the market and get some more if needed. Next time we should have a theme party again. That makes the choice of food easier. On the other hand, we were fully stocked with drinks. Since our people aren't heavy drinkers, Michael had to take most of it home and stow it away for the next party. It looks like we have a free party coming up. We should get rid of the stuff we have before buying new. The next possibility could be our trip to Suomenlinna during the spring. Check our website for detailed information.

Check out the photos I took and we hope to see you next time.



## OPE evolves – virtual format confirmed – A commentary by Daryl Taylor

Following the success of two pilot virtual editions of OPE, the Board of PAM-Lingua has now decided that future numbers will be released in electronic form only. You may now be holding the very last printed OPE magazine.

As a small organisation of academic professionals, it makes a lot of sense for us to develop a virtual newsletter. To begin with, we save substantial outlays on printing and postage. An electronic newsletter provides presentation and content features that are impossible with printed media, such as hyperlinks to background materials, audiovisual content and practical online resources. It can incorporate or accompany interactive functions that enable readers to provide various forms of public or confidential feedback and express opinions either openly or anonymously. Virtual publication is a boon to multilingual organisations, insofar as newsletter content can increasingly be provided in the language selected by the reader (ideally OPE could appear with a language selection button on certain multilingual articles). A virtual newsletter cannot be mislaid, chewed by the dog, rendered illegible by coffee stains or delivered to the wrong address. It can even be edited after release to eliminate or to highlight and correct any errors that might otherwise mislead members into unnecessary difficulties, for example in dealing with employers or public authorities. Finally, the marginal environmental footprint of a virtual publication (i.e. the difference that it makes in terms of environmental emissions and use of energy and materials) is negligible.

This is not to say that a printed OPE lacks any inherent advantages. There is a certain earthy satisfaction in thumbing through the printed edition, which is still a bit easier to carry around than even the most advanced mobile computing device. A printed OPE can be accidentally-on-purpose dropped onto the teachers' room table at a language school, left strategically open at a particular, relevant page.

The Board is aware that a very small number of language professionals still prefer to receive OPE in print, and we remain willing to print and post the magazine to any member who expresses this preference. For the time being this is a fairly simple matter of downloading and printing a pdf file. However, the possible need for a paper edition will no longer guide the evolution of OPE, and there is no guarantee that it will always remain possible to download and print the entire content. For example some materials may in future be set up as web pages containing multimedia elements (such as podcasts) that cannot be printed and sent by post.

OPE will be housed on the PAM-Lingua website and each new edition will be announced to the membership by electronic means. (E-mail and/or SMS), and we shall send a link to the latest edition on the day when that edition is released. These links will also be included in any communications that are sent by post.

# THE BACK PAGE

**Crossword** – Remember, the clues are in the paper!



**Across:**

- 4. Home of the CEU
- 6. Main target of new section on our website
- 8. Darling of virtual teachers
- 9. Last name of newest PAM-Lingua board member
- 10. Pal of Moses'
- 12. Partial berries
- 14. Aim for online OPEs to come
- 15. How we would like our students

**Down:**

- 1. Well, who invented the steam engine then??
- 2. Housebank in Kalevala
- 3. Daryl's new appearance
- 5. EU programme
- 7. State of chaos, really
- 11. Daryl's second working place
- 13. OPE appearance from now on



## FREE BOOKS!

I am moving to the US and cannot take all my books with me, so I have many English textbooks, grammars, books on linguistics, art, architecture, travel and picture books on Europe (Finland, Germany, Italy, the UK, etc.) as well the US and the rest of the world.

**Further information:**

Joel Pottala  
Tel. (09)753 48 38; 040 8905400

Address: Säästöpankinranta 4C40 00530 Helsinki

**FREE BOOKS!**

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