

# Memory, Mind and Language



# Memory, Mind and Language

Edited by

Hans Göttsche

**CAMBRIDGE**  
**SCHOLARS**  

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

Memory, Mind and Language, Edited by Hans Götzsche

This book first published 2010

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-1639-6, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-1639-7

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## PREFACE

This book has been a long time under way. In 2006, Center for Linguistics, Aalborg University, organised a conference under the auspices of The *Nordic Association of Linguists*, and the theme of the conference was *Brain, Mind and Language*. The contributions in this book constitute a selection of the papers presented at the conference, but it has two additional features: the volume was also to signify a celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The *Nordic Association of Linguists* (NAL) in 2007. This was not achieved by then, but instead the book will, hopefully, become a historical document both, on the one hand, telling the story about how Nordic linguists organised their efforts during the last decennia of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, on the other hand, illustrating the diversity and the skills of Nordic and other linguists at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The other additional feature is the fact that history has come more in focus in the book; on two accounts: as mentioned, it is a narrative on the history of NAL; and, less flattering, it has taken a long time to finish the book.

The background of the long process of production is, firstly, that bringing together electronic manuscripts—often including diligently elaborated figures, tables, and other illustrations, and text formats I had never heard about—has been a fairly laborious task and, secondly, that I have done all the editing alone. I am the only one to blame for the longevity of the task but, on the other hand, I have no regrets concerning decisions made by me as an editor—even though they may have delayed the book unduly—and I have no apologies if these decisions have slowed down the process of editing. I only hope that the end result has become better than if I had made a hasty compilation of papers.

The book is dedicated to all linguists of the past and those of the future.

HANS GÖTZSCHE  
(EDITOR)  
AALBORG UNIVERSITY  
OCTOBER 2009



# **PART I**

## **HISTORY, LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS (HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS)**

# INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

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The Historical Linguistics part of this volume of conference proceedings contains two rather different contributions: one is a detailed narrative on how linguists in the Nordic countries acknowledged their common interests and founded an association (in the original meaning of the word, viz. that they—as a group of people—organised for a joint purpose), the other is an article taking up some basic theoretical problems in Historical Linguistics.

Both deal with history. The history of NAL (The Nordic Association of Linguists) is a description of a mental process as well as an organisational one, in that the society was, in fact, a manifestation of common acceptance of common interests. Theoretical, or General, Linguistics came, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in focus among scholars in the Nordic countries—in parallel with other western regions—and scholars in this minor academic field united with scholars in the traditional fields of national Philologies in order to pursue common goals, viz. to study language as well as languages. One vital step was the organizing of the *International Conference of Nordic and General Linguistics* (ICGNL) in Reykjavík in 1969 by the Icelandic scandinavianist and linguist Hreinn Benediktsson, and less than ten years later NAL was founded in Austin, Texas, in 1976 and went into operation in 1977. In retrospect, the history of NAL reflects the very long perspective of Nordic history intertwined with the history of the Nordic languages. In the outset, so we think we know, the Nordic area was one, extremely outspread, culture with one language, albeit with dialectal variation. Then came the Catholic Church and Low-German, and then a landslide of language changes (by some called development), the most extreme of which are found on the peninsula of Jutland in Denmark, making the Nordic languages still harder for mutual understanding. From the Middle Ages and up till the 19<sup>th</sup> century the main kind of relationship between the Nordic countries—in essence: Denmark and Sweden—was warfare, but now this has been exchanged with Nordic collaboration; and so in the language sciences. And the peaks of early modern Nordic linguistics were the (to some extent united)

achievements of Historical Linguistics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; which may be ironic since Nordic linguistics of today covers all kinds of language science, from phonetics and grammars of vernaculars to discourse analysis and sociolinguistics. Where Nordic linguistics will bring us from this palette of academic subjects, only the future will tell.

The other contribution is, as mentioned, an article that queries the traditional notion of ‘genetic relationship’ in Historical—or Comparative—Linguistics (the initials in the upper case signify traditions). The basic problem seems to be that we speak frankly about ‘language families’ and ‘language ancestors’ but, as opposed to the study of biological creatures, we as linguists know very little about the mechanism of linguistic inheritance. There seem to be two ways of escaping the predicament: one way is to say that it does not matter; we only use such words as descriptive means yielding informative patterns of similarities that apparently correspond to the history of cultures and countries. Another way is to take up the theoretical challenge and try to clarify which mechanisms may justifiably be said to work as ‘linguistic genes’, and the article follows the last path.

As mentioned, both contributions have to do with history, and whatever troubles linguists may have with becoming unanimous when debating scholarly matters in detail, we will, supposedly, agree on the claim that we would be out of work—and maybe nations and countries would not be there—if we as humans did not have language as a process and as a point of identity in time and history.

## CHAPTER ONE

# THE NORDIC ASSOCIATION OF LINGUISTS: THE PREPARATORY PHASE AND THE FIRST THIRTY YEARS (1977-2006)

STIG ELIASSON

NORTHERN EUROPEAN AND BALTIC LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURES

JOHANNES GUTENBERG UNIVERSITY MAINZ

### Abstract

The Nordic Association of Linguists (NAL) is the linguistics society of the five Nordic countries Denmark (with the Faeroes and Greenland), Finland (with Åland), Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Founded in Austin, Texas, in 1976, NAL went into operation in January 1977. It is a major organizational platform for Nordic linguists and language scholars as well as linguists outside the Nordic countries working on the languages of this particular geographical region. Two series of international conferences are organized under its auspices, the *International Conference of Nordic and General Linguistics* and the *Scandinavian Conference of Linguistics*. Although oriented towards modern linguistics, the former conference series has traditionally tended to place a greater emphasis on the historical and descriptive study of the Scandinavian (i.e., North-Germanic) languages, whereas the latter one has been more concerned with general linguistic and theoretical issues and a wider range of languages. Beside an impressive string of conference proceedings, the major scholarly outlet of the Association is the *Nordic Journal of Linguistics* (NJL), since the beginning of 2003 brought out by the Cambridge University Press. The journal is open to contributions from all branches of linguistics, but gives priority to articles of a general theoretical and methodological nature and studies of the languages of the Nordic region. For a number of years (1977-2004), the Association also issued a news bulletin, the *Nordic Linguistic Bulletin* (NLB), until the spread of electronic communication made this form of news dissemination largely superfluous. This article traces the major issues and the main stages in the evolution of the Association: the first tentative

airings of the idea in the early 1970s, the preparatory work in the years 1972-1976, the launching of the Association in 1977, and its subsequent development through 2006. Appendices provide supplementary details, a bibliographical listing of conference proceedings and thematic journal issues as well as Internet links.

## 1. Introduction

The *Nordic Association of Linguists* (NAL) is “the main organizational forum for Nordic linguists” (Hovdhaugen et al. 2000: 497).<sup>1</sup> The adjective ‘Nordic’ in its name is used in a political sense, referring to the five Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, including the semi-autonomous Greenland, Faeroe Islands, and Åland Islands (with Greenland belonging geographically to North America). In the Nordic countries themselves, speakers normally apply the one-word designation *Norden* (or its equivalents, Icelandic *Norðurlönd*, Faroese *Norðurlond*, Finnish *Pohjoismaat*, sometimes *Pohjola*) to this region, a usage that I will occasionally resort to also in English (on the term Nordic, see also fn. 21). The idea of a society specifically geared to linguists in Norden was put forward informally in the early seventies and subsequently debated in more formal contexts. The Association was founded at the Third Interna-

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<sup>1</sup> Jussi Niemi (Joensuu), NAL President 2003-2008, initiated this report on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of NAL in January 2007. I am greatly indebted to him for supplying copies of NAL Minutes from recent years and other related material, to Kurt Braunmüller (Hamburg) for providing missing issues of the *Nordic Linguistic Bulletin*, and to Jens Allwood (Gothenburg) for the seven volumes of proceedings of the two combined NAL conferences organized by him in Gothenburg in 1993. Thanks also go to Helge Dyvik (Bergen), Guðrún Þórhallsdóttir (Reykjavík), and Martha Thunes (Bergen) for answering queries or heeding requests for printed information as well as a number of individuals whose assistance is recognized in the appropriate places below. Jussi Niemi, Fred Karlsson (Helsinki), Hans Götzsche (Aalborg), Richard Hudson (London) and Kurt Braunmüller kindly read a pre-final version of this paper and provided helpful comments on specific points. Furthermore, it is only proper to acknowledge once again the generous grant from the Nordic Cultural Foundation in Copenhagen in 1974 that enabled the preparatory work necessary for launching the Association. As this is the first attempt to sum up the NAL activities over the years, since the information about NAL is widely scattered in different countries, and because in certain cases data have been lost or were not retrievable, the writing of these annals was somewhat tricky. Nevertheless, I have tried to secure accurate information and to double-check crucial details, and I hope inexactitudes have been kept at a minimum. All responsibility for the errors that remain rests, of course, with me.

tional Conference of Nordic and General Linguistics in Austin, Texas, in 1976 and started its work in January 1977. Its general aim is to provide a common scholarly and organizational platform for linguists in the Nordic countries as well as non-Nordic linguists with an interest in the languages of this particular region. This article will pursue the specific background, the broader setting, the preparatory phase as well as the development and main activities of NAL during the past thirty years and offer a succinct assessment of what has been achieved.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The Rationale

The *raison d'être* of a specialized scholarly association derives from specific factors or developments in the disciplines concerned. During the 1960s, interest in general linguistics had gradually increased in the Nordic countries. In the 1960s-early 1970s, moreover, quite a few linguistics departments were established at various Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish universities. Accordingly, the need grew to maintain contacts between linguists at different Nordic locations, not only within the separate countries, but also across their borders.

During most of the 1960s, no regular inter-Nordic linguistics meetings existed. However, for the benefit of scholars working on Scandinavian languages and interested in general linguistic issues, the Icelandic Scandinavianist and linguist Hreinn Benediktsson took an important initiative by organizing an *International Conference of Nordic and General Linguistics* (ICNGL) in Reykjavík in 1969.<sup>3</sup> The general theme of the conference was “The Nordic Languages and Modern Linguistics” (Benediktsson 1970: 25), where the term ‘Nordic’ was understood as referring specifically to the North Germanic, or Scandinavian, languages.<sup>4</sup> Greenlandic, Sámi lan-

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<sup>2</sup> When available at the time of writing, certain information has been provided in the Appendices also for the years following 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Hreinn Benediktsson (1928-2005) was an internationally oriented scholar. After studies in Oslo and Paris in 1947-54, then in Freiburg and Kiel, he received his Ph.D. in linguistics from Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., in 1958. For the next forty years, up to 1998, he was professor of Icelandic linguistics at Málvísindastofnun Háskóla Íslands (Institute of Linguistics, University of Iceland). On his scholarly oeuvre, see, e.g., [http://is.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hreinn\\_Benediktsson](http://is.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hreinn_Benediktsson) and Ottosson (2002).

<sup>4</sup> In this article, the term ‘Scandinavian languages’ will always refer to the North-Germanic branch of the Germanic languages, whereas the adjective ‘Nordic’ will be employed in the wider political sense just cited. Hence, except for its presence

guages, Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornedalsfinska), Kven, Yiddish, and Romany were not within the purview of the conference (cf. also Hovdhaugen et al. 2000: 496). Thus, only one prominent scholar representing the non-Germanic languages in Norden, the Sámi language specialist Knut Bergsland from the Finno-Ugric Institute at the University of Oslo, participated in the meeting, although not with a paper. The conference, rightly hailed by everybody as a great success, was documented in an attractive volume of proceedings, and gave rise to a series of similar conferences, on which see further below. Benediktsson's timely initiative amply illustrated the value of inter-Nordic meetings with printed proceedings.

Nordic publication opportunities in general linguistics were otherwise provided by the journals *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia* (ALH) in Copenhagen, *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap* (NTS) in Oslo, and *Studia Linguistica* (SL) at Lund. After irregularities in its publication, the old *Acta Linguistica* of Viggo Brøndal and Louis Hjelmslev had been resurrected in 1965, with the addition of the word *Hafniensia* and the subtitle *International Journal of General Linguistics* to its name. NTS (28 volumes, 1928-1976), until 1965 edited by the Celticist Carl Marstrand, was principally an internationally oriented outlet for Norwegian linguists (“[o]rgane eksklusif des linguistes norvégiens”; NTS, vol. 23, 1969, inside front cover) rather than linguists from other countries, even though foreign linguists contributed, too. SL, in turn, appeared to suffer from a slight lull in the early seventies, at least in comparison to several other international journals. Apart from the journals just mentioned, in the 1970s, a plethora of provisional or sometimes even ephemeral working papers began to see the light of the day. These provided speed of publication and allowed many voices to be heard, yet the diversity sometimes hampered the overview, and permanence and availability in libraries were not always afforded. It was clear that the rapidly increasing quantity of linguistic research throughout the Nordic countries motivated some kind of coordination and a strengthening of the permanent publication channels. Ideally, such a step could also enhance the outreach to an international linguistic audience. In other words, a joint Nordic journal of linguistics seemed to be called for. Quite unexpectedly, this idea turned out to be in line with a broader initiative in Nordic publishing in the humanities at the time. As it emerged, the *Inter-Nordic Committee for Research in the Humanities* (Internordisk nämnd för humanistisk forskning) had decided to promote the coordination of Nordic scientific publishing in general and, at its meeting on Octo-

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in quoted material, the expression “Nordic languages” in the sense of “Scandinavian languages” will not be used here.

ber 2, 1974 in Helsinki, entrusted a *Nordic Publication Committee for Journals in the Humanities* (Nordiska publiceringsnämnden för humanistiska tidskrifter) to work out corresponding recommendations and measures.<sup>5</sup>

Still another matter of relevance to linguists in the Nordic countries was the regular and rapid distribution of news on linguistic events, publishing, etc., which could in those days be best materialized by means of a newsletter. In sum, then, a joint permanent forum for Nordic linguists with a common Nordic linguistics journal, regular Nordic linguistics conferences, a vehicle for spreading news and information, and the option of taking further inter-Nordic initiatives appeared to be called for.

### 3. Preparations

From the initial idea to the actual establishment of an association, there was some way to go.<sup>6</sup> In informal discussions with participants at the *Seventh Meeting for the Description of Swedish* (Sjunde sammankomsten för svenskans beskrivning), April 7-8, 1972, in Turku, Finland, the proposal met with interest. Encouraged by these positive reactions, I wrote a letter to Karl-Hampus Dahlstedt, professor of general linguistics at Umeå University, who had himself attended the Turku gathering and who had been charged with the task of organizing ICNGL 2 in Umeå in June 1973. The letter detailed the major arguments for a common Nordic linguistic forum, ending with the question whether the topic could be put on the agenda of the General Assembly of the Umeå conference. Moreover, word of the

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<sup>5</sup> This decision in turn had its roots in earlier developments regarding Nordic scientific publishing generally. As Martinsson (1973: 123; transl. SE) notes, “[in] 1961 through a decision at the meeting of the Nordic ministers of education, the Nordic governments assigned to the Nordic Cultural Commission the task of carrying out an analysis of Nordic journal production and, if called for, of submitting a proposal for rationalizations through widened Nordic co-operation”. Martinsson (*ibid.*; transl. SE) further explains:

The mood that constituted the point of departure in Swedish [research, SE] council circles was radical. Existing [nationally or locally based, SE] journals and monograph series (jointly called “journals”) should be abolished and replaced by new Nordic journals.

<sup>6</sup> The need for some kind of joint permanent forum for Nordic linguists first became apparent to me when, as a graduate student of linguistics in Cambridge, Mass., in the late 1960’s, I noticed that sometimes similar descriptive, historical or theoretical issues were discussed in different Nordic countries without the discussants being seemingly aware of each other’s work.

informal Turku discussions rapidly spread. In May 1973, the Department of Linguistics at Stockholm University arranged a meeting on the organization of study programs in general linguistics in Sweden under the chairmanship of Bengt Sigurd, professor of linguistics in Stockholm. On this occasion, the need for a Nordic linguistics forum and a Nordic linguistics journal was voiced again. The meeting appointed a three-member committee consisting of Sigurd (as convener), Sture Ureland, and Eliasson to work for expanding publication opportunities for linguists (af Trampe 1973: 5). Further, it entrusted the task of arranging a symposium for Scandinavian linguists in the following year to the linguist group at the University of Gothenburg (ibid.).

The formal proposal for a Nordic linguistic association, including an associated journal, was made a month later, however, on June 19, 1973, in the General Assembly of ICNGL 2 under the chairmanship of the Helsinki Scandinavianist Carl-Eric Thors. The main objectives of the proposal were (Eliasson 1977b: 4):

- (i) to establish a common permanent forum for linguistics in the five Nordic countries
- (ii) to expand the publication resources in a relatively new and rapidly growing field
- (iii) to increase the opportunities for discussion by arranging meetings more frequently
- (iv) to aid in the dissemination and exchange of information on linguistics in these countries
- (v) to enhance, by joining forces, the Nordic participation in the international discussion in the field

Also Bertil Malmberg, Sweden's best-known and most influential general linguist and main editor of *Studia Linguistica*, participated in the ensuing deliberations. In Bonebrake's (1973: 1) words:

Professor Bertil Malmberg agreed basically to a linguistic society of Scandinavia, but preferred to reserve "national sections" for purposes of publication in order to review contributions. The publication *Studia Linguistica* could function as a publishing organ for the Swedish section provided the present publisher ... accepts such an agreement.

Having debated the various issues involved, the ICNGL Plenary Session (Resolutions 1973 [1975: 43])

adopted a resolution that a linguistic society of Scandinavia or a [N]ordic association of linguists be organized. The name of this body was not decided upon.

Moreover, “[t]he members at the conference elected ... an organizing committee, entrusted with the planning of the linguistic society and its journal” (ibid.). The committee consisted of six members, representing Denmark, the Faeroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden (the Umeå Committee):

Denmark:	Kristian Ringgaard (Aarhus)
Faeroe Islands:	Ulf Zachariassen (Tórshavn)
Finland:	Carl-Eric Thors (Helsinki)
Iceland:	Hreinn Benediktsson (Reykjavík)
Norway:	Einar Lundeby (Oslo)
Sweden:	Stig Eliasson (Uppsala) (Chair)

On the same day, I also had a personal conversation with Malmberg, who declared himself willing to explore the possibility of some kind of coordination of the nationally based linguistics journals in Scandinavia. A few months later, after consultations with the publisher issuing *SL*, he contacted the boards of *ALH* and *NTS* on the matter (p.c., 9/19/73 and 10/19/73). Whether he received any response from *ALH* is not clear. The representatives of *NTS*, on the other hand, saw themselves unable to accept the conditions he had suggested. Presumably as a consequence of his lack of success, Malmberg turned against the proposed project.

Furthermore, the three-member group appointed in Stockholm in May 1973 for strengthening publishing opportunities for linguists was never summoned together. However, the idea of regular Nordic linguistics conferences was less delicate than that of a Nordic linguistics journal and a Nordic linguistic society. As an outgrowth of the discussions in Stockholm, the *First Scandinavian Conference of Linguistics* (here abbreviated *SCL 1*) was successfully arranged in Kungälv, Sweden, in March 1974.<sup>7</sup> In

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<sup>7</sup> The word “Scandinavian” in the conference title refers to all the five Nordic countries. The choice of the preposition “of” in the title—which has parallels in names such as “World Congress of Semiotics”, “International Conference of Cognitive Science”, “International Congress of Psychology”, or “International Congress of Genetics”—recurs in the names of the following meetings in the series. At my request, Gregory K. Iverson (Milwaukee, Wisc./College Park, Md., p.c., 7/9/08) kindly provided native speaker intuitions on prepositional usage. Comparing with the International Circle of Korean Linguistics (ICKL, formed in 1975), he makes the following observations, worth quoting in full:

the concluding session on March 31, the participants debated the proposal for a Nordic society for linguistics further.<sup>8</sup> Having decided upon a second SCL in 1975, they urged that, rather than waiting for the next ICNGL in 1976, a concrete proposal for a linguistic society should be delivered to the next SCL. To this end, they appointed an additional, five-member committee, in its composition partly overlapping with the Umeå one. The members of the Kungälv Committee were:

Denmark:	Hans Basbøll (Copenhagen)
Finland:	Kalevi Wiik (Turku)
Iceland:	Hreinn Benediktsson (Reykjavík)
Norway:	Even Hovdhaugen (Oslo)
Sweden:	Stig Eliasson (Uppsala) (Chair)

Having been designated chair of both committees, I united these as the *Committees for Nordic Linguistic Cooperation* (Kommittéerna för nordiskt lingvistiskt samarbete). Subsequently, I applied for and received funding for their work from the *Nordic Cultural Foundation* (Nordisk Kulturfond) of the *Nordic Council of Ministers* (Nordisk Ministerråd), the agency for Nordic governmental cooperation in Copenhagen. After preparations and preliminary consultations, the two Committees met for a full-day session

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... the [Korean linguistics, SE] society ... has had the same issues. The organization is the 'International Circle of Korean Linguistics', with 'of', which seems to be pretty much OK, but it would work better with 'Linguists' rather than 'Linguistics'. Still, as an organizational name, it doesn't appear to be too odd. The meeting they hold, on the other hand, is the 'International Conference on Korean Linguistics' and here 'of' would be distinctly strange ... meetings are held 'on' a topic, but organizations can be 'of' something or, better, of people. So, 'Scandinavian Conference on Linguistics' would ring much better to my ear, while 'Scandinavian Conference/Society/Circle of Linguists', as an organization, would be fine. I've always wondered at the name 'Scandinavian Conference of Linguistics', and have assumed it just got stuck that way back in 1974.

The designation "International Conference of Nordic and General Linguistics", introduced in the late sixties, exhibits in principle the same stylistic feature (also here the preposition might preferably be 'on'), although in this case, due to the different syntactic setting, the deviation makes itself less strongly felt. Having appeared in the titles of several printed proceedings, including a volume of proceedings published in the US, the usage was also carried over into the NAL By-laws.

<sup>8</sup> In this case, no minutes were taken and the conference proceedings contain no record.

in Uppsala on May 23, 1975. The Danish ALH was represented by its Editorial Assistant Niels Ege, the Editorial Board of the Norwegian NTS had entrusted to Even Hovdhaugen to be its spokesman, while the Swedish SL had submitted a brief written statement. The agenda included first of all the two primary questions whether a Nordic society of linguists was needed and whether a common Nordic linguistics journal would serve a useful purpose. In case of an affirmative answer to these two questions, the meeting was to discuss the possible name of the society, its organization, its starting date, whether to favor the creation of a new journal or to recommend refashioning an old one, and in the former case, what should be the name of the new journal, its publication policy, the structure of its editorial board, its starting time, and the relation between the society and the journal. Having considered all these issues, the two Committees decided unanimously in favor of founding a linguistics society and creating a common Nordic journal, whether—if this should turn out to be possible—as a continuation of one or more existing journals or constituting a new one.<sup>9</sup>

An interim report on the work of the Committees was read at the SCL 2 Business Meeting at Lysebu, Oslo, in April 1975 (Eliasson 1975) and was extensively debated by the people present. Furthermore, on behalf of the Committees, I had prepared a questionnaire that was circulated at the meeting. Of the 56 respondents, 46 were in favor of creating a Nordic linguistic society, 8 undecided, and 2 against. As for a common Nordic journal of linguistics, 50 were in favor, 4 undecided, and 2 against. Moreover, 26 respondents were in favor of starting a new journal, while 15 were undecided and 15 against, 14 of the latter opting for refashioning an existing journal for the task. Thus, the majority of the respondents were clearly sympathetic to the idea of a Nordic society and journal, whereas opinions about how to establish the journal were less clear-cut.

The final report of the Committees for Nordic Linguistic Cooperation was presented at ICNGL 3 at the University of Texas, Austin, on April 9, 1976, in its concluding Business Meeting under the chairmanship (in part) of the internationally renowned Harvard Scandinavianist and linguist Einar

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<sup>9</sup> Later, Professor Werner Winter, Secretary-Treasurer of *Societas Linguistica Europaea* (SLE), was to suggest a further option. In late 1976, he offered as an alternative to a Nordic journal now and then to devote an issue of the SLE journal *Folia Linguistica* to Nordic contributions. The particular needs and interests within the Nordic linguistic community seemed, however, to call for some kind of publication outlet in addition to the Pan-European *Folia Linguistica*.

Haugen.<sup>10</sup> A special supplementary report outlined the pros and cons of a joint Nordic journal that was to gear to “general and theoretical linguistics as well as studies in the specific Scandinavian languages, Finnish and Lappish” (Minutes 1976: vii). In a long and detailed discussion, both reports were greeted with general approval. The meeting subsequently proceeded to pass a resolution to found a society by the name of the *Nordic Association of Linguists* (NAL) to go into operation on January 1, 1977. The conference further elected the first NAL Executive Committee, which included the following eight scholars from the Nordic countries:<sup>11</sup>

President:	Stig Eliasson (Uppsala)
Vice-President:	Hreinn Benediktsson (Reykjavík)
Secretary:	Alvar Ellegård (Göteborg)
Treasurer:	Mirja Saari (Helsinki)
Members-at-large	Einar Lundeby (Oslo)
	Kristian Ringgaard (Århus)
	Carl-Eric Thors (Helsinki)
	Gun Widmark (Uppsala)

The meeting further assigned to Even Hovdhaugen (Oslo) the task of preparing for the publication of the journal.

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<sup>10</sup> Einar Haugen (1906-1994) was Professor of Scandinavian and Linguistics at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., from 1964 until his retirement in 1975. Haugen had done much to draw attention to Scandinavian linguistics internationally and to promote the Norwegian language in the US and elsewhere. Fittingly, at the later ICNGL 4 in Oslo in 1980, he was to be elected “the Association’s first Honorary Member” (1980 Business Meeting minutes, NLB 4.3-4, 1980: 104). On his multi-faceted contributions to 20th century linguistics, see, e.g., Eliasson (1997) and references there.

<sup>11</sup> The unchecked Texas “Minutes”, published in the conference proceedings, mention an executive “committee of ten members”. However, the preliminary proposal for statutes of the Association discussed before the Texas ICNGL explicitly envisaged a nine-member committee. Furthermore, although the question of a ten-member committee was raised at the Texas conference, the Business Meeting eventually settled for a nine-member board, and only nine members were elected. It may be added that one Committee member elected in Texas, the Information Secretary, did not take up his duties, which were therefore for the first two years handled by the chairman. In January 1979, the Finnish and Meänkieli specialist Erling Wande (Department of Finno-Ugric Languages, Uppsala University) took on the task as Information Secretary.

## 4. Launching the Association

NAL went into operation in January 1977, as planned. In agreement with the original motives for creating the Association, the preliminary By-laws (NLB 1.1, 1977: 10-12) describe its goals as follows (ibid. 10):<sup>12</sup>

[The aim of the Association] shall be to advance linguistic research and study in the Nordic countries. It proposes to attain this aim

(a) by publishing a journal, the Nordic Journal of Linguistics (NJL)

(b) by publishing a newsletter, the Nordic Linguistic Bulletin (NLB), for the dissemination and exchange of information, especially as pertaining to linguistics in the Nordic countries

(c) by arranging the International Conferences of Nordic and General Linguistics and the Scandinavian Conferences of Linguistics at regular intervals, and

(d) by any other appropriate means as may be decided by the Association in due course.

Besides handling certain legal, financial, and other practical formalities relating to the founding of the Association as well as initiating the recruitment of members, the three most urgent tasks were getting the journal off the ground, getting the newsletter started, and taking on the responsibility for the further planning of the two conference series. In what follows, we will first discuss the NJL, the NLB, and the conference series. Subsequently, we will touch on some topics that were either addressed at the founding stage of NAL, brought up during the course of its existence, or may for other reasons be of some special interest: the core countries represented in NAL, the name of the Society, its main working language, the composition of the NAL Executive Committee, NAL in the context of other linguistic societies in northern Europe and elsewhere, the reflection in NAL of linguistic schools, and the languages, sociolects and dialects of Norden as pools of empirical data in the NAL context. A short conclusion follows as well as an Appendix tabulating certain vital information on NAL that could be retrieved from available sources.

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<sup>12</sup> By far the most important single source for the history of NAL is the *Nordic Linguistic Bulletin* (NLB), not least since the Minutes of many NAL Business Meetings are reproduced there. We will frequently refer to it below.

## 5. *Nordic Journal of Linguistics* (NJL)

In 1978, only one year after the launching of NAL, its journal, the *Nordic Journal of Linguistics* (NJL) began appearing. The rapid publication start was made possible above all because the Editorial Board of NTS had generously settled for supporting a common Nordic publishing policy and to turn NTS into a Nordic linguistic journal. This measure was fully in line with the general recommendations made by the *Nordic Publication Committee for Journals in the Humanities* (cf. above section 2).

In his editorial statement, the first editor of NJL, Even Hovdhaugen, observed that (Hovdhaugen 1978: 1):

both NAL and *NJL* represent a reaction against the accelerating speed of specialization ... They represent an attempt to stress the common factors and common interests of all linguists and the importance of cooperation at both the scholarly and organizational levels.

Specifically with respect to the journal, he expressed the hope “that *NJL* will become a scholarly focus for linguistics in the Nordic countries and stimulate linguistic research in these countries, and also that it will promote the international status and reputation of Nordic linguistics” (ibid. 2). According to a recent formulation of its editorial policy, NJL “covers all branches of linguistics, with a special focus on issues related to the Nordic languages (including Finnish, Greenlandic and Saami) and on issues of general theoretical interest” (NJL, vol. 31.1, 2007, inside front cover).<sup>13</sup> International and inter-Nordic in scope, NJL has from the outset

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<sup>13</sup> These aims may be compared to the current editorial policies of ALH and SL. ALH (vol. 39, 2007: iii) defines itself explicitly as an outlet for the research interests of Danish linguists with supplementary input on the same or similar topics by international scholars (boldface added by SE):

*Acta Linguistica Hafniensia* is the **voice of the Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen**. Our aim is to **reflect the research of Danish linguists**, while simultaneously maintaining the international scope of the journal. One of the ways in which we seek to pursue this dual aim is to look for opportunities to present work of Danish contributors in combination with articles by international authors on related subjects. To the extent this strategy succeeds, we will (as a third aim) achieve a measure of thematic coherence.

Renamed *Studia Linguistica*. A journal of general linguistics in 1993, SL nowadays “provides an international forum for the discussion of theoretical linguistic research, primarily within the fields of grammar, cognitive semantics and language typology” (<http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0039-3193>;

been a refereed journal, generally published semi-annually. In 2003, Cambridge University Press (CUP) took over the publication, also making the Journal available online.<sup>14</sup> The *Nordic Publication Committee for Periodicals in the Humanities* offers financial support. Unlike the SLE journals, *Folia Linguistica* and *Folia Linguistica Historica*, which require at least one author of a paper to be a member of the SLE,<sup>15</sup> NJL remains open to contributors regardless of NAL membership. Since 1989, the second issue of each NJL volume is a thematic one, devoted to an area of language or linguistics of special contemporary interest. Guest editors are invited or may offer themselves for special issues on current topics. In the years 1988-2008, one thematic volume and 20 thematic issues appeared.<sup>16</sup> Ex-

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accessed 08/30/2008; cf. also NLB 16.3, 1992: 4). With a slightly different wording, it deals with “the field of general linguistics, such as syntax, morphology, phonology, semantics, pragmatics, psycholinguistics and computational linguistics” (<http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0039-3193&site=1>; accessed 08/30/2008). In 1992, when the journal was being remodeled, its publication scope vis-à-vis grammar was at first announced as the very special domain of “principles and parameters theory”, i.e., Chomsky’s Government-Binding (GB) model as in Chomsky (1981) (Blackwell [1992]: 2), but this restrictive formulation was soon dropped. The SL editorial statement makes no particular reference to the languages indigenous to the Nordic countries. Established in 1983, *Norsk Lingvistisk Tidsskrift* (NLT) publishes articles in Norwegian on general linguistic topics, on Norwegian, or on other languages, but also articles in English about Norwegian. The annual Finnish *SKY Journal of Linguistics*, created in 1988 and now available online as well as in a paper version, disseminates papers in all branches of linguistic research. The journal *NOWELE (North-Western European Language Evolution)* “is devoted not only to the study of the early and more recent history of a locally determined group of languages, but also to the study of purely theoretical questions concerning historical language development” (NOWELE 49, 2006, inside front cover). Also, some additional journals exist that may be less familiar to general linguists. For instance, members of the Institute of Language and Communication at Odense University bring out *RASK*, which is devoted to studies on language and communication in general. Similarly, the Department of Languages and Business Communication of the Aarhus School of Business, University of Aarhus, produces the semi-annual *Hermes. Journal of Language and Communication Studies* with articles in English, German, French, Spanish, Danish, Norwegian, or Swedish.

<sup>14</sup> Through 1991, Universitetsforlaget (Norwegian University Press) put out NJL, beginning with vol. 15, 1992, under the name Scandinavian University Press (Universitetsforlaget). Taylor & Francis issued volumes 23-25, 2000-2002.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.folialinguistica.com/contributors.html> (6/23/08).

<sup>16</sup> For the complete list of thematic issues, see the Appendices under C. Volume 11, put together by the regular NJL editor, was devoted in full to computational

cepting shorter pieces (brief introductions to thematic issues, discussion notes, etc.), in the thirty-year period 1978-2007, NJL published 222 articles as well as 117 reviews or review articles, on an impressively wide range of linguistic topics.<sup>17</sup>

## 6. *Nordic Linguistic Bulletin* (NLB)

The main vehicle for quickly disseminating linguistic news to the NAL membership and other interested readers was for a long time the *Nordic Linguistic Bulletin* (NLB). The NLB, with its characteristic light yellow cover, was started and edited for two years by Stig Eliasson as interim editor. The purpose of the newsletter was “to serve as a means for spreading information relevant to linguistics, with a special focus on the Nordic countries” (Eliasson 1977a: 3) or, more specifically, to “carry information on such matters as linguistic meetings and symposia, ongoing linguistic research, recent linguistic literature, activities of the Association, and other news relevant to linguistics” (Eliasson 1977b: 5). As already noted, much of the running business of the Association is reflected in the NLB. Created before the advent and widespread use of swift electronic communication, it was to fulfil its task under a series of editors in Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Great Britain for 28 years (1977-2004). From April 1992, the Bulletin information was circulated in both electronic (*NLB Electronic News*, for short *NLB E-News*) and paper versions. Suffering the same fate as several other printed newsletters, e.g., the German *Mitteilungen der DGfS* or the American *LSA Bulletin*, it was phased out in October 2004. An alternative means of communication is the unmoderated NAL electronic discussion forum, *Nordlingnet*, established in 1996 by Helge Dyvik (Bergen), NAL President in the years 1993-1998. He described the purpose of the discussion list in the following way (NLB 20.4, 1996: 1):

Nordlingnet is the discussion list of the Nordic Association of Linguists (NAL). Its target group is linguists within all subfields of the discipline in the Nordic countries, and linguists elsewhere with an interest in Nordic languages.

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linguistics: “Of the ten papers on Computational Linguistics in this double issue, five are based on papers presented at the Sixth Scandinavian Conference of Computational Linguistics, Copenhagen ..., 1987..., [earlier versions of which] also appeared in the proceedings of that conference” (NJL 11.1-2, 1988: 2).

<sup>17</sup> No cumulative index exists of NJL articles, book reviews, topics, and authors over the past three decades.

Nordlingnet is meant to meet the need for informal net contact among linguists in the Nordic countries that is not fully met by the more general Linguist List. Relevant topics for the list include, for instance, discussions of linguistic data and theory, the teaching of languages and linguistics in universities and schools, information about conferences, courses and similar events, search for colleagues working on specific topics, and job postings. Contributions in all Nordic languages are of course welcome.

Inasmuch as the NLB no longer exists, it may for the future be of some interest to document systematically the main activities of the Association in some other way.

## **7. Conferences and Proceedings**

The NAL conferences evidence a lively and multifaceted linguistic research scene in the Nordic countries. The ICNGL had been launched several years before the idea of a Nordic society of linguistics was brought up for public discussion. The SCL, moreover, was instituted prior to the actual formal foundation of the Association (section 3 above). The conference structure, therefore, was already established, when NAL went into operation. Often of longer duration, ICNGL has usually been held triennially, whereas SCL has tended to be annual or biannual. The venues for meetings have been institutions all over the Nordic countries except Greenland and the Åland Islands (Aalborg, Århus, Bergen, Copenhagen, Gothenburg, Helsinki, Joensuu, Lund, Odense, Oslo, Reykjavík, Roskilde, Stockholm, Tórshavn, Tromsø, Trondheim, Turku, and Umeå) as well as the University of Texas, Austin, Texas. Since 1977, the responsibility for finding organizers of the meetings rests with the NAL President and the Executive Committee, who have strictly upheld the principle of choosing different host institutions for successive meetings. In spite of a growing number of Nordic conferences devoted to specialized linguistic topics, the general NAL conference series, not least the SCL, have remained eminently attractive. Attendance has been good and there has been no shortage of papers offered. In contrast to the Linguistic Society of America (LSA), but like the SLE, NAL does not require the submitting author of a paper for a meeting to be a member of the Association. Actually, the large majority of the presenters are not.

In regard to themes, languages analyzed, the professional orientation of the participants, and the languages used in presentations, the two conference series in part overlap, in part differ. In their announcement of the 1995 ICNGL 9 and SCL 15 in Oslo, the organizers attempted to sum up

the similarities and differences (NLB 18.2, 1994: 10; bracketed substitutions and division into paragraphs by SE):

for those who are unfamiliar with these conferences, the following review of the different traditions for the two in many ways similar conferences may be useful. The differences have to do with conference language, participants and topics addressed in talks.

Papers at the [SCL] are usually given in English, whereas papers at the [ICNGL] are given in any of the Scandinavian languages, Norwegian (nynorsk or bokmaal), Danish, and Swedish, as well as in English or German.

As for participants at the two conferences, the majority at [SCL] have been general linguists in the Scandinavian countries (incl. Finland and Iceland), with some participation from other countries as well. A number of Scandinavianists and people from language (e.g. English) departments within Scandinavia have also participated. [ICNGL] has had a larger number of people from Scandinavian departments in the Scandinavian countries, but also many general linguists from these countries, as well as people from other language departments. [ICNGL] has tended to have a higher proportion of participants from outside Scandinavia, from Scandinavian and linguistics departments. The original goal of [ICNGL] was to bring Scandinavianists into closer contact with new developments in general linguistics.

When it comes to the topics covered at the two conferences, there has been extensive overlapping. However, [ICNGL] has concentrated more on the Nordic languages, whereas papers using data exclusively from languages outside the Scandinavian countries have mostly been given at [SCL]. ...

At least in principle, the scope of languages covered at the ICGNL has widened since the first meeting in 1969. As noted above, ICNGL 1 was devoted to the Scandinavian, i.e., North Germanic, languages to the exclusion of Fennic, Sámi, Greenlandic Inuktitut, etc. By the time of ICNGL 9 in Oslo, however, the organizers explicitly formulate the language scope as “the linguistic study of the Nordic Languages, Finnish, Sami and Greenlandic” (Fjeld et al. 1996: 7). The SCL, on the other hand, is the natural platform also for papers on West Germanic, Romance, Latin, Slavic, Turkic, Semitic, East Asian, and so forth. Beyond these features, in his review of the SCL 4 Proceedings, Haugen (1979: 5) brings up another characteristic of at least the early SCL meetings: “These annual meetings [i.e., SCL] are relatively informal, compared to the tri- or quadrennial International Conferences of Nordic and General Linguistics”. With some slight adjustments, we convert the foregoing observations into Table 1.

	<i>ICNGL</i>	<i>SCL</i>
<i>Proportion of Nordic vs. non-Nordic participants</i>	Higher proportion of non-Nordic participants	Higher proportion of Nordic participants
<i>Departmental affiliation of participants</i>	A large number of Scandinavianists from the Nordic countries	Mostly general linguists from the Nordic countries
<i>Language of presentation (language in which papers are given)</i>	English, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, German	Usually English
<i>Language of data</i>	A greater proportion of Scandinavian linguistic data	Nordic or non-Nordic
<i>Proceedings</i>	More formal	Often more informal

Table 1. Differing characteristics of the two NAL conference series, essentially as described in the ICNGL 9/SCL 15 meeting announcement (NLB 18.2, 1994: 10). Cf. quote in text.

The existence of two conference series instead of a single one is in part a consequence of how NAL came into being, in part the result of diverging general linguistic and language-specific professional pursuits. Naturally, the overlap/divergence raises the question of how to shape the conference activities in the future. The organizer of the 1993 ICNGL 8/SCL 14 in Gothenburg, Jens Allwood, tried to solve the problem by merging the two. Later, on the basis of responses to an inquiry (Dyvik 1993, Dyvik et al. 1994), the “NAL board ... opted for ... co-organization, but retained the identities of the two conferences, one occurring immediately before the other” (Dyvik 1994: 2). Accordingly, this was the solution for the next two meetings in Oslo in 1995, where ICNGL 9 immediately preceded SCL 15. Summarizing the achievements of ICNGL 9, the Oslo Scandinavianist Kjell Ivar Vannebo put in a strong plea for preserving this particular conference series (Vannebo 1996: 69; italics in original):

... it is important that the conferences on Nordic and General Linguistics are arranged. In my opinion we need conferences of this kind, where the