SCOTT

Jim Miller: *Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics, University of Auckland, Private Bag, 92019, Auckland.*
<margaret.miller@lineone.net>

On a wet morning in November 1977 a colleague in the Linguistics Department at Edinburgh University phoned to find out if I could talk to a young chap who was studying for a degree in English Language, had discovered Linguistics late and wondered if he could go straight into the second year course without taking the first year course. (The teaching year had begun on the second Monday in October and we were three weeks into the first term.) Five minutes later a young man, who looked a bit nervous at first, came into my room. It soon became clear that he wasn't nervous, just full of nervous energy. It also quickly became clear that he had read and understood a lot of basic material, was enthusiastic about language and linguistics and knew where he wanted to go. By that time I had acquired enough experience to recognise a keen and capable student and Scott joined Linguistics 2. He completed the coursework and examinations with panache and embarked on the third and fourth year of the Honours degree in English Language and Linguistics.

Having obtained a first-class degree, Scott decided to stay on at Edinburgh to carry out research for a PhD under the supervision of John Anderson. He was investigating historical change, syntax and the lexicon and changes in the English modal verbs, partly in response to David Lightfoot's generative account of changes in the modal verbs (Lightfoot, 1979) and partly because he was excited about language change and the variation in the syntax of modal verbs that had just been revealed by work on non-standard varieties of English in the UK and North America.

Scott was an outstanding teacher and infectiously enthusiastic about language and Linguistics. He had a temporary lecturing job in the Edinburgh Linguistics Department from 1982 to 1984. He taught a third year phonology

course, on which I tutored, and an optional historical linguistics course for third- and fourth-year students. The students became amazingly keen on these subjects. Of course, it is not at all amazing to anyone who has seen Scott in action: unbelievable one-liners, unexpected comments and ideas, engagement with the students, superb examples and incredible delivery. Scott's enthusiasm for recording good examples and using them in lecture did not fade. Just three weeks before his death, while he was listening to a speaking-book version of a Dalzell and Pascoe novel, he came across a passage — a press conference in which Dalzell says nothing in many long phrases. The passage was ideal for demonstrating a speaker disregarding Grice's maxims about saying as much as you can and being relevant. Scott didn't just tell me about the passage; he sent me an excited e-mail and the next time we were out visiting he produced a sheet of paper with the passage transcribed and typed out.

Scott put other good ideas into practice. In late May 1983 Scott and Phil Carr organised a conference for the doctoral candidates in the Department of Linguistics. This was an enormous success and has been held in late May every year since then. For many doctoral candidates it has been an opportunity to present their work in a formal setting but before an audience that includes many familiar faces. Such postgraduate conferences are now commonplace in the UK but they weren't in 1983 and they are a useful stepping-stone on the way to papers at national or international conferences.

In 1984, after a two-year freeze on posts, the Edinburgh Linguistics Department was allowed to make an appointment to a permanent post. It went to a candidate who was older and had publications. (The era of Research Assessment Exercises had arrived.) Scott had already applied for and been offered a job in the Department of English at Auckland and he accepted the offer.

Scott took something of Edinburgh with him to Auckland which continued to inform his teaching and his thinking about language. A word is needed here on the history of the Edinburgh Department of Linguistics. It had arisen via two amalgamations. In 1967 the Department of Phonetics, established in 1948, combined with the Department of General Linguistics, established in 1949. In 1969 the resulting Department of Linguistics and Phonetics combined with the School of Applied Linguistics to form the Department of Linguistics.

Scott went through a Linguistics training which reflected the origins of the Department and which was unusual, certainly in the UK. It offered Linguistics 1 and Linguistics 2, each of which lasted the entire academic teaching year.

Each course consisted of a strand of phonetics and phonology and a strand of syntax and semantics (including some morphology and some pragmatics). Depending on which course they were taking, students were taught some Historical Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and Psycholinguistics. There were three lectures and two tutorials each week; Linguistics 1 tutorial groups consisted of 10–12 students while Linguistics 2 tutorial groups consisted of 8–10 students. The phonetics and phonology components of Linguistics 1 and Linguistics 2 involved a lot of practical phonetics; the focus in Linguistics 1 was on the recognition of sounds while the focus in Linguistics 2 was on both recognition and production of sounds.

In their third and fourth years students could choose to study for an Honours degree involving Linguistics, either by itself or in combination with another subject. The third year Linguistics programme contained obligatory courses in Phonetics, Phonology, Syntax and Semantics/Pragmatics. The fourth year programme required students to take two out of the four 'core' courses. The third and fourth year programmes also contained optional course in topics such as Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Historical Linguistics, and Discourse Analysis.

Scott took a joint Honours degree in English Language and Linguistics, a combination which ensured a solid grounding in the whole range of linguistic theory together with detailed application of the theory to English. His Edinburgh training strongly influenced his teaching in Auckland and his phonetics and phonology sections in *Introduction to English Language — Sound, Word and Sentence*, the outstandingly successful textbook which Kon Kuiper and he wrote. Colleagues at the University of Auckland talk with awe of Scott's performance when teaching Phonetics as part of LINGUIST 103 'Introduction to English Linguistics' or LINGUIST 100 'Introduction to Linguistics'.

The breadth of the Edinburgh programme (I like to think) is reflected in LINGUIST 203 'Applied English Grammar', which brings together the analysis of clauses and sentences and the analysis of discourse. This course was a stroke of genius on Scott's part. Because he was on sabbatical leave when I arrived in New Zealand and then because he was ill and died, I had the pleasure first of teaching the course and then of adapting and teaching it. Students without any knowledge of Linguistics take the course and come to enjoy it; even students who have taken LINGUIST 300 find much that is new and interesting in 203. Each year a number of students enrol thinking that it is an ESOL course. They get a rude awakening, but many such students

persevere and learn a lot about English as well as how to analyse clauses, sentences and discourse. I am about to return to Britain and have passed the course on to a new colleague who has a similar English Language and Linguistics background to Scott's. Tutorial materials will be refreshed and parts of the content will change but Scott's basic conception will remain.

Scott had other interests. He was a serious cook and gourmet, conducting many successful experiments in his Edinburgh kitchen. My wife and I ate the results with delight. I have a picture of Scott and Harriet introducing us to spritzers one sunny summer day in 1983. (In the context of Scotland *sunny* and *summer day* is not actually a contradiction in terms.) We sat and drank ours while they chopped and sliced on the kitchen table, making a wonderful meal for seven.

Scott had definite talent in micro-engineering. When I e-mailed one of my brothers and mentioned that Scott was ill, he replied that he had actually met him 'In your kitchen, round about 1983. He was mending your coffee grinder'. I had forgotten, but remembered instantly how Scott had saved us from disaster. Scott could dismantle, repair and reassemble coffee grinders (indeed any piece of kitchen equipment), cassette players, CD players and even PCs. My own limitations were painfully obvious in comparison.

Scott was even a hillwalker, but only temporarily. One early Spring day — late March or early April 1982 — he and I took our young black Labrador for a walk on the Pentland Hills, just outside Edinburgh. Like many Scottish hills the Pentlands are bare and empty and you can see approaching rain a long way off. We did that day. I had on a long waterproof coat but Scott had on a very small anorak and got very wet. I don't remember any more hill walks.

A colleague in Edinburgh circulated my e-mail announcing Scott's death. He was amazed to find how many people remembered Scott vividly and with affection. The final word in this memorial belongs to another colleague, who recalled giving a conference talk for the very first time: 'Scott was a humane voice who stood there providing friendship and a smile to a nervous student presenting a first conference paper and a man who brought humour and good sense to his peers. I knew him only a little and consider myself to have been lucky to have spent any time with him at all and will remember him fondly. He was a good man.'

Reference

Lightfoot, David. 1979. *Principles of Diachronic Syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.