

## IN MEMORIAM

### DWIGHT BOLINGER

Dwight Bolinger was born in Topeka, Kansas on August 18, 1907, and died in Palo Alto on February 23, 1992, at the age of eighty-four. He received a B.A. from Washburn University in 1930; an M.A. from the University of Kansas in 1932; and a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in 1936. In 1934, he married Louise Schrynmaker, and they had two children. She predeceased him in 1986.

Dwight's teaching career included a year at Wisconsin (1936); a year at Kansas City (Mo.) Junior College (1937); six years at Washburn University (1937-43); sixteen years at the University of Southern California (1944-60); three years at the University of Colorado (1960-63); and ten years at Harvard University (1963-73). Sometime after his retirement from Harvard, he became a visiting emeritus professor of Linguistics at Stanford University.

Like other linguists of his generation, Dwight came to linguistics through literature (His doctoral dissertation, incidentally, was a study of the Spanish novelist, Pío Baroja). and since his prime interest in linguistics has been the lexicon, he found the experience at Wisconsin useful, working under Antonio G. Solalinde, in the latter's editing of medieval Spanish texts and assembling citations for the medieval Spanish dictionary. His early years of teaching undergraduates stimulated his interest in language as opposed to literature, and especially in contrastive grammar, for he was teaching Spanish to native speakers of English. Contrastive analysis of Spanish and English became so strong an interest (already reflected in his first book, *Intensive Spanish*) that Dwight eventually developed two scholarly careers, one in Spanish linguistics and the other in English linguistics.

Dwight's early interests must not be overlooked<sup>2</sup> for an understanding of his later scholarly development. An early strong interest was in music composition, and music was his undergraduate minor. In 1941, he published a monograph titled *The Symbolism of Music* (Yellow

Springs, Ohio: Antioch Press), in which he said: 'Music is one of the three great symbolic systems of the western world, of which the two others are language and mathematics... The comparison of music to language is a familiar one, and is phrased in the bromide that music is a "universal language."' Dwight once said, recalling his undergraduate days, that 'it was close to a toss-up between mathematics, music, and Spanish which way I would go.' His continuing interest in music has been reflected in his work on intonation (articles by him on this subject began to appear in the forties), especially in his two-volume work *Intonation and Its Parts: Melody in Spoken Language* (1986) and *Intonation and Its Uses: Melody in Grammar and Discourse* (1989). Looking back on his career, he once said: 'I was not born to be a linguist. I was born to write music, and somewhere along the line I got mislaid.'

When Dwight learned of Yale's Sterling Fellowships, he applied for one, and his application was successful. In 1943 he moved his family to New Haven. The fellowship he received was what my colleagues in the sciences call a 'post-doc;' and he was free to do his research there as he pleased. He spent most of his time in the library, but lamented the fact that the terms of the fellowship did not require him to advance his preparation in linguistics through a close association with such eminent linguistics scholars at Yale as Bloomfield, Bloch, and Trager. Going his own way, however, may have helped keep him uncommitted to 1940 structuralism, and this experience may have been the start of an independence and a lack of doctrinairism that have marked his scholarship ever since.

Dwight spent the longest period of his teaching career at the University of Southern California, and he was department head for thirteen of the sixteen years that he was there. His teaching post at USC was quite demanding, and it is remarkable that he was able to find time and energy for his scholarly and publication activities for his duties, especially in his latter years there, included visiting classes and supervising the work of teaching assistants, an activity which carried over into his period of service at Harvard.

It was during his service at the university of Southern California that Dwight published the following books: *Intensive Spanish* (1948); *Spanish Review Grammar* (1956); *Interrogative Structures of American English* (1957); and, in collaboration with five others, *Modern Spanish* (1960; 3rd edition, 1973). Moreover, he also published many articles on both Spanish and English linguistic topics. It is interesting to note that, while Dwight's teaching career was dedicated to Spanish, his two scholarly careers, one in Spanish and the other in English, developed simultaneously since his early years in teaching. Many articles on English appeared before he began to publish on Spanish and articles by him on English lexical matters began to appear in the late thirties.

The project that brought Dwight and me together was the book *Modern Spanish*, sponsored by the Modern Language Association during the period that William Riley Parker served the MLA as Executive Secretary, editor of PMLA, and Director of the MLA Foreign Language Program. Bill Parker asked Dwight to head up a writing committee, which consisted of J. Donald Bowen, Ernest F. Haden, Agnes M. Brady, Lawrence Poston, Jr., and the two of us. This collaboration marked the beginning of a long-standing friendship that ended with Dwight's death.

The writing committee of *Modern Spanish* met for short periods of time on our various campuses, but a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation enabled us to take a semester's leave in 1958 and move our families to Austin, where the University of Texas was our generous host, providing us with office space for our daily meetings, in addition to fine facilities for making the recordings which would accompany the text.

Though I cannot disagree with Dwight's statement that *Modern Spanish* 'was an important part of the audiolingual revolution,' nevertheless it is well to point out that its authors were not doctrinaire audiolingualists. The following statement in the *Instructor's Manual*, for which I assume responsibility, makes this clear: 'It is not the "authorized version" of a beginning Spanish course. It cannot be tied to any of the standard methodological brands. It

does not represent the ideology of any one of its creators. It is not all things to all people. It does give priority to the audiolingual aspects of language instruction, but its authors will be unhappy if it produces fluent illiterates...'

Working on, *Modern Spanish* with a committee of which Dwight Bolinger was the coordinator, was one of the highlights of my career. I recall, among other things, the originality, the freshness, and the lucidity of Dwight's treatment of phonological and syntactical topics. What a seminar that semester was! It took place in 1958, and it remains vivid in my memory. Our families hit it off from the start, and I developed an admiration for Dwight Bolinger not only as a scholar with a strong pedagogical orientation, but also as a man of humanitarian views.

The National Defense Education Act (NDEA), as many of us recall, provided for the establishment of language institutes for secondary school teachers of Spanish, among other modern foreign languages, starting in the summer of 1959, and, as it turned out, *Modern Spanish* became a launching pad for Dwight Bolinger, Larry Poston, and me for an involvement with the language institutes program in one way or another.

Larry, or Lawrence Poston, Jr., took a three-year leave of absence from the University of Oklahoma to go to Washington and serve as director of the NDEA Language Institutes Program. Dwight wanted me to join him at a summer institute in 1959 at the University of Southern California if his application for such an institute were successful. Accordingly, I accepted a summer session offer at USC only to find later on some unanticipated developments. The U.S. Office of Education initially funded only one summer institute, and it was to be at the University of Colorado. Dwight was invited to go there for the applied linguistics assignment, and he accepted (Not the least of the attractions was the fact that Pierre Delattre had moved to Colorado). Several more institutes were to be established for that summer and I received an offer to teach applied Spanish linguistics at one of them. Here I was with two offers, and had accepted the one with no institute. What to do? Dwight offered to release me from my com-

to the <sup>Calif.</sup> commitment, but I agreed to stay with it and to teach an advanced course in Spanish literature, and one in Spanish Civilization, courses with which I felt comfortable. I was to have my initial institute experience at the first year-round institute for secondary school teachers of Spanish, which was to be held right after the summer of 1959 at the University of New Mexico. Little did Dwight or I know that our institute experiences eventually would lead to a career move, he from the University of Southern Colorado, and later, to Harvard University; and I, from Oberlin College to the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where I taught applied linguistics in four summer institutes, and served from time to time in Washington on the selection panel for institute programs.<sup>1</sup>

At the University of Colorado, Dwight taught not only courses in Spanish linguistics and applied linguistics for language teachers, but, for the first time, he gave a couple of courses in straight linguistics. His stay at Colorado lasted only three years, when Harvard University lured him in 1963, where he spent the last ten years of his teaching career. In spite of the fact that at Harvard, half of his duties were in the training program for graduate students, which involved his teaching applied linguistics and visiting classes, he found more time for his research, which was moving increasingly toward general linguistics and the semantics of English.

For his teacher training program, Dwight needed an outstanding teacher who could serve as a model for the graduate students, and help him in supervising them. He called me for a recommendation, and I had no hesitation in recommending Hugo Montero, whom I had observed when I was invited to give some lectures on Spain at the Foreign Service Institute of the State Department. Hugo, at that time, was one of the Spanish instructors in the intensive program designed to prepare foreign service personnel for service in Spanish-speaking countries. Rarely had I seen so enthusiastic, energetic, and effective instructor in action. He subsequently moved to San Francisco State, and I urged Dwight to go after him, which he did. I was delighted that he made a hit at Harvard.<sup>2</sup> I had occasion to

see him again when Dwight arranged for me to teach a summer session at Harvard in 1964.

Dwight summed up the differences in linguistic approach between himself and his MIT neighbor, Noam Chomsky: 'We are almost polar opposites in our approach ... He loves Theory with a capital T and wants evaluations conducive to the Best, with a capital B. I want theories, plural, with small t's, and I think that the Best is the enemy of the Good. He sees language as orderly *and* tightly organized. I see it as heterogeneous *but* tightly organized.' The Bolinger view of language, in contrast to that of Chomsky, is well described in Dwight's article (originally a lecture delivered at Brown University, 29 April 1974) titled *Meaning and Memory*, published in *Forum Linguisticum*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1976), the journal of the linguistic society known as LACUS.

What is LACUS, and how did it come about? And what did Dwight Bolinger have to do with it? It seems that a number of linguists, including some well-known structuralists and others in some areas of sociolinguistics felt that their views were not sufficiently represented by the existing journals and associations, which were dominated by the generative-transformational 'establishment.' They then decided to form a new society in 1974 called the Linguistic Association of Canada and the U.S., or LACUS, with Dwight Bolinger as its first president. Dwight had been elected president of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA) only three years earlier.

In summarizing Dwight Bolinger's career, we wish to offer the following lists:

#### MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (President, 1960)

American Dialect Society

Linguistic Association of Canada and the U.S. (President, 1975-76)

Modern Language Association of America

Linguistic Society of America (President, 1972)

Fellow, Haskins Laboratories, New York, 1956-57

Fellow, Center for Advanced Studies of the Behavioral Sciences, Palo Alto, 1969-70  
 Fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1973  
 Orwell Award, National Council of Teachers of English, 1981; Corresponding Member, Royal Spanish Academy, 1988  
 Corresponding Fellow, British Academy, 1990

## PUBLICATIONS

## I. Books and Monographs

*Intensive Spanish*; Philadelphia, Russell Press, 1948

*Spanish Review Grammar*, New York, Holt, 1956

*Interrogative Structures of American English*, American Dialect Society, Univ. of Alabama Press, 1957

(co-author) *Modern Spanish*, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1960 (3rd ed. 1973)

*Generality, Gradience, and the All-or-none*, The Hague, Mouton, 1961

*Forms of English*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, Tokyo, Hokuou, 1965

*Aspects of Language*, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968 (2nd ed., 1975; co-author of 3rd ed., 1981)

*Degree Words*, The Hague, Mouton 1972

(Editor) *Intonation*, Penguin, 1972

*Meaning and Form*, London and New York, Longman, 1977 (Japanese translation, Kobiau, 1988)

*Language the Loaded Weapon*, London and New York, Longman, 1980 (Japanese translation, Kobiau, 1988)

*Intonation and Its Parts: Melody in Spoken Language*, Stanford, Stanford Univ. Press, 1986

(Co-author) *On Accent*, Indiana Univ. Linguistics Club, 1987

*Intonation and Its Uses: Melody in Grammar and Discourse*, Stanford, Stanford Univ. Press, 1989

*Essays on Spanish: Words and Grammar*, Newark, Delaware, Juan de la Cuesta Hispanic Monographs, 1991

## II. Articles

A list here would be difficult to make. At the conclusion of his last book, *Essays on Spanish: Words and Grammar*<sup>3</sup>, there is a chronologically organized list of 312 writings from 1934 to 1989. If we deduct the fifteen books and monographs listed above, we have close to 300 articles written by Dwight Bolinger. Apart from articles on Spanish and English linguistics, there are at least a dozen showing Dwight Bolinger the humanitarian, concerned citizen, and responsible faculty member.

Of his many honors, I suspect that the one he treasured as much as any was the George Orwell award, established in 1974 by the Committee on Public Doublespeak of the National Council of Teachers of English. This Award was in recognition of his book *Language, the Loaded Weapon: The Use and Abuse of Language Today* as a work that has made an outstanding contribution to the critical analysis of public discourse. In my view, this book, which could be appropriate for a course in sociolinguistics, combines so much of Dwight: his ability to present a technical subject to a general educated readership together with his political and social concern as an informed citizen. Moreover, Dwight admirably mastered the resources of the English language, including informal and slang usage. He was certainly one of the most capable writers in the academic profession that I have read. There is none of the leaden prose that mars so much of the writing of many academics.

The last time that we saw Dwight and Louise Bolinger was in March, 1985. I had a visiting appointment at Brigham Young University in Provo during the spring semester of that year, following my retirement from Wisconsin. The University of Hawaii, joined by the Hawaii campus of Brigham Young University at Laie, Oahu, co-sponsored an international convention on the general topic: *Language and Culture: East and West*. I was invited to give a plenary session address at the convention. Louise had been suffering from terminal cancer, and Dwight decided to take her to Hawaii for a couple of weeks of relaxation and vacation. Fortunately, we were in Honolulu at the same time, and I recall Dwight and Louise together with my wife and me having dinner at a favorite Chinese restaurant I remembered from the three years that I had lived in Hawaii in the early forties. What a brave and cheerful soul Louise was and Dwight was his usual warm and cordial self, unaware that five years later he would be stricken with the same disease as his wife.

Dwight Bolinger was one of a kind. He <sup>was</sup> one of the most decent, humane, and civilized persons I have known, in or out of academe.

On July 1, 1990, he wrote me that in May he was diagnosed with myeloma, and it was cancer, less than two years later, that took his life. His loss will be deeply felt here and abroad.

In the words of Catullus: <sup>ATQUE P</sup> ~~tu~~ in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale.

Norman Sacks  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Emeritus

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For reports on the Language Institutes Program, and accounts of experiences with these institutes, see *Hispania* (1969) 52.355-383.

<sup>2</sup> For tributes to Hugo Montero, see 'For Hugo Montero: A Master Teacher,' in the *Modern Language Journal*, 63 (1979): 243-250. Those paying tribute to Hugo were Dwight Bolinger, Raquel Halty Ferguson, Lorraine Ledford, and Barbara Weissberger. Dwight said of Hugo: 'For almost a generation, student teachers of Romance languages—first at San Francisco State University and for the last fifteen years at Harvard—have had the inspiration of Hugo Montero's teaching and his attention to their struggles as they take the plunge in front of their own classes.'

<sup>3</sup> See my review of this book elsewhere in this issue.