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EDITORIAL

Editorial Secretary

BOARD

Claus Ohrt, Ängen, S-560 34 VISINGSÖ, Sweden
 Tel. Int. Code +390 40604
 Fax Int. Code +390 40776

English section

Language

Literature

Mats Möbärg

Ronald Paul

Engelska institutionen
 Göteborgs universitet
 S-412 98 GÖTEBORG
 Sweden

French section

Language & Literature

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 S-106 91 STOCKHOLM
 Sweden

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Redaktionsmeddelande

Efter två temanummer utkommer tidskriften denna gång med ett häfte utan specialinriktning. Icke desto mindre innehåller detta nummer en stor mängd intressanta artiklar och recensioner. Allt kan inte nämnas, men vi vill peka på följande artiklar:

Den *engelska* avdelningen innehåller en matnyttig genomgång av svensk-engelska svårigheter i samband med numeriska uttryck av Donald MacQueen i Uppsala. Vidare presenterar Marie Källkvist ett knippe nya forskningsrön om ålderns betydelse vid inläring av främmande språk. Dessutom tar Kelly Anspaugh oss med till ett mycket intimt rum i Joyces *Ulysses*. I den *tyska* avdelningen finns två litteraturvetenskapliga bidrag. Ulla Niebergall ger oss en översikt över Monika Marons litterära verk, medan Broney Skogström och André Skogström-Filler granskar en text av Arno Schmidt ur textlingvistisk synvinkel. Den *franska* avdelningen innehåller bl a en artikel om en av den franskspråkiga litteraturens idag mest omtalade namn, den magrebinske författaren Tahar Ben Jelloun. Carmen Silva-Corvalán är idag ett av de främsta namnen inom sociolingvistisk forskning med anknytning till det spanska språket. Hennes bidrag i den *spanska* avdelningen behandlar den väsentliga frågan om huruvida det är meningsfullt att tala om "latinamerikansk spanska" som en särskild variant av språket. Det andra bidraget, författat av Juan Carlos Piñeyro, berör de många bottnarna i den argentinske författaren Jorge Luis Borges' författarskap.

I och med det kommande årsskiftet sker en förändring i redaktionens sammansättning. Redaktionen för den tyskspråkiga avdelningen har velat dra sig tillbaka. Även i den spanskspråkiga redaktionen sker ett byte, eftersom Johan Falk p g a nya uppgifter inom universitetet inte anser sig kunna fortsätta med sin del i redaktionen som han skött sedan 1990. Vi vill tacka dessa medarbetare för deras stora insatser för *Moderna Språk* under de gångna åren och samtidigt hälsa de nya redaktörerna Martin Todtenhaupt, universitetslektor i tyska i Göteborg, och Ken Benson, professor i spanska i Göteborg, hjärtligt välkomna i redaktionen.

From the editors

After two previous special issues, the present number of the journal appears without a common theme. Nevertheless, the issue contains a whole range of interesting articles and reviews. Not all can be mentioned here, although we would like to point to the following articles in particular.

The *English* section contains a very useful survey of Swedish-English language difficulties in connection with numerical expressions, written by Donald MacQueen of Uppsala. Marie Källkvist presents some new research findings relating to the importance of age when learning a foreign language. Readers of the journal are also ushered by Kelly Anspaugh into a rather intimate room in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. In the *German* section there are two articles on literary criticism. Ulla Niebergall provides a survey of Monika Maron's literary writing, while Bronny Skogström and André Skogström-Filler examine a work by Arno Schmidt from a text linguistic point of view. The *French* section contains among other things an article on one of the most renowned writers in French literature today, the Maugrabin author Tahar Ben Jelloun. Carmen Silva-Corvalán is one of the foremost names in sociolinguistic research into the Spanish language. Her contribution in the *Spanish* section examines the principal question of whether or not it is meaningful to speak about 'Latin American Spanish' as a particular variant of that language. The other main contribution, written by Juan Carlos Piñeyro, covers some of the many layers in the works of the Argentinian writer, Jorge Luis Borges.

In the new year there will be another change in the make-up of *Moderna Språk's* editorial board. The editors of the German section have expressed a desire to be replaced. Also among the editors of the Spanish section a change will take place. Because of his new duties within the university, Johan Falk does not feel he can continue his work on the board, of which he has been a member since 1990. We wish to take this opportunity to thank all of these colleagues for their excellent efforts in connection with *Moderna Språk* over the past few years. At the same time we would like to extend a warm welcome to the new members of the board, Martin Todtenhaupt, lecturer in German, and Ken Benson, professor of Spanish, both at the University of Göteborg.

DONALD S. MACQUEEN

A Sampler of Numerical Expressions in "Swenglish"

Donald MacQueen är amerikan och sedan många år verksam vid engelska institutionen i Uppsala. Bland hans publikationer kan nämnas *American Social Studies* (1991) och *Using Numbers in English* (1990). I den här artikeln diskuterar han ett urval svensk-engelska kontrastiva problem i samband med numeriska uttryck.

Introduction

Numerals are among the most uniform and universal symbols in the modern world. For this very reason, however, they are the source of a great deal of interference in cross cultural communication: people simply assume that the idiomatic trappings that are used to express universal numerical relationships are directly translatable into other languages. The linguistic casings of numerical expressions are in fact just as idiosyncratic and prone to misunderstanding as any other features of a language.

Most people are unaware that they use so many numerical expressions in their everyday language. Whenever it comes up that I wrote a book about English usage involving numerals, *Using Numbers in English, A Reference Guide for Swedish Speakers* (Studentlitteratur 1990), I find that people assume the volume consists of arcane discussions of formulas and algorithms, matter for engineers and technicians but certainly not for a general audience. I am far from qualified to make pronouncements about advanced mathematics, but I must be right in assuming that it is precisely at advanced levels that numbers are international and uniform; it is in the basics, in everyday expressions, that languages have developed their own usage florae. These differences pester mathematicians and lay people alike.

Point, comma or blank?

The devil is in these details. One tiny item that opens onto a vista of geopolitical controversy involves the punctuation of decimals. Most languages use a decimal comma (17,8 mm), while English uses a decimal point (17.8 mm). Up until a few years ago this was a simple matter for foreigners to adjust in their English: merely change the decimal commas to points and change the points between thousands, millions, etc. to commas in English.

But as of 1992 the International Standardization Organization (ISO) in Paris officially recommends that numbers be punctuated like this: