

Introduction to the volume

James E. Alatis

Chair, GURT '99

This volume contains the published versions of papers from the 1999 Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, also known as the Round Table, or GURT, for short. The theme of the 1999 conference was “Language in Our Time: Bilingual Education and Official English, Ebonics and Standard English, Immigration and the Unz Initiative.”

The year 1999 marked the return of the Round Table after a two-year hiatus, in time for its fiftieth anniversary celebration. Sponsored by Georgetown University’s Center for International Language Programs and Research, GURT '99 followed tradition by bringing together college and university professors, program administrators, researchers, government professional staff, elementary- and secondary-school teachers, authors, and students of languages and linguistics. Scholars and students from the United States and other countries—among them, Germany, Israel, Singapore, and the United Kingdom—met for days of listening, discussing, and learning from each other.

The conference was opened by the chair, Dr. James E. Alatis, the evening of Thursday, May 6, 1999, with a plenary panel featuring Stephen Krashen of the University of Southern California, Delia Pompa of the U.S. Department of Education, Rosalie Pedalino Porter of the Institute for Research in English Acquisition and Development, and Eric Stone of the U.S. English Foundation.

The rest of the conference featured twenty-four speakers over a two-day period. Preconference events included a full-day program by members of the federal Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) and the Society of Federal Linguists on the following themes: “Lessons learned from a half-century of language learning, teaching, and testing in the U.S. government” and “The present cutting edge in U.S. government language programs.” There were also two concurrent tutorial sessions. One by John Rassias of Dartmouth College introduced the methodology of the Dartmouth Method to second-language learning and teaching. The other, by Stephen Krashen, presented an overview of Dr. Krashen’s GURT presentations since 1989.

Selected papers from Round Table 1999 are presented in this volume.

Content made available by
Georgetown University Press,
Digital Georgetown, and
the Department of Languages and Linguistics.