

# CONVENOR'S REPORT

to

## BAAL Executive Committee

### July 2005- July 2006

#### 1. Aims

The UK Linguistic Ethnography Forum (LEF) was set up in March 2001, and we aim

- \* to bring together researchers conducting linguistic ethnography here and abroad, and
- \* to explore a range of past and current work, to identify key issues, and to engage in methodologically and theoretically well-tuned debate.

#### 2. Organisation

##### 2.1 2005-06 Coordinating Committee:

During 2005-2006, the Coordinating Committee has been:

Convenor:	Prof Ben Rampton ( <a href="mailto:ben.rampton@kcl.ac.uk">ben.rampton@kcl.ac.uk</a> ) 2005-07
Treasurer:	Dr Richard Barwell ( <a href="mailto:richard.barwell@bristol.ac.uk">richard.barwell@bristol.ac.uk</a> ) 2005-07
Communications secretary:	Dr Karin Tusting ( <a href="mailto:k.tusting@lancaster.ac.uk">k.tusting@lancaster.ac.uk</a> ) 2004-06
Meetings coordinator:	Dr Angela Creese ( <a href="mailto:a.creese@bham.ac.uk">a.creese@bham.ac.uk</a> ) 2004-06
Ordinary members:	Dr Janet Maybin ( <a href="mailto:j.maybin@open.ac.uk">j.maybin@open.ac.uk</a> ) 2004-06
	Dr Vally Lytra ( <a href="mailto:vally.lytra@pobox.com">vally.lytra@pobox.com</a> ) 2005-07

##### 2.2 CC for 2006-07?

After 5 years of marvellous work, not just setting up and maintaining our website but also making a major contribution in all sorts of other areas, Karin Tusting is stepping down from the Committee. Karin was one of the originators of LEF, but now she's cutting back on her involvement in order to look after a new-born baby. We'll hugely miss her on the Committee, but she will certainly still stay active in linguistic ethnography more generally, and we look forward to seeing her and Tusting *minimus* at future meetings.

We've also benefited hugely from the advice and guidance of Richard Barwell, who has been our Treasurer since 2003, and has done an excellent job devising a financial strategy for the different types of meeting that we're running now. Richard's moving to a post at the University of Ottawa in Canada, where he's also got family connections, so we can look forward to hearing more about LE from North America.

All this means that for 2005-06, we will be looking for

- a new Communications Secretary
- a new Treasurer

The office of Meetings Coordinator and one of the Ordinary Member posts is also up for (re-)election in September 2006.

#### 3. Email list and membership

Our email list ([ling-ethnog@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:ling-ethnog@jiscmail.ac.uk)) is counted as our membership, and members are asked every year if they want to continue on the list. Membership currently stands at 173, of whom approximately a quarter are based abroad. There were 160 members in July 2005, 146 members in July 2004, and 129 in July 2003. An informal survey of the institutional affiliations evident in the membership data available on 126 researchers on the LEF mailing list<sup>1</sup> found that

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<sup>1</sup> Since some of the institutional names counted combine several of these key words (as in eg 'Culture & Communication'), the figures here amount to more than the 126 members for whom it's possible to infer disciplinary/thematic alignment from institutional affiliations.

- **54** members were formally aligned with **education** (flagged up by words like ‘Education’, ‘TESOL’, ‘Teaching’ in the names of the Centres, Institutes and/or Departments that they belong to)<sup>2</sup>
- **53** members were formally aligned with **language** (flagged up by ‘Language’, ‘Communication’, ‘Literacy’, ‘Translation’, ‘Applied Language Studies’)
- **17** members were formally aligned with **culture & area studies** (flagged up by ‘Culture’, ‘Intercultural’, ‘Media’, ‘Literature’)
- **6** members were formally aligned with **anthropology** (flagged up by ‘Anthropology’)
- **10** members were formally aligned with other disciplines (computing, psychology, medicine, geography, sociology etc)

#### 4. Web-site

We continue to maintain a website, which we regularly update with news of forthcoming events and details and papers from recent ones. See <http://www.ling-ethnog.org.uk>

#### 5. Finance

Our balance currently stands at £752.52, and auditable accounts for 2005-2006 have been submitted to the BAAL Treasurer.

#### 6. Activity during 2005-2006

##### 6.1 Publications

Last year, we produced a discussion document which explored some of the origins, affiliations and distinctiveness of linguistic ethnography in the UK (*UK Linguistic Ethnography: A Discussion Paper*, at <http://www.ling-ethnog.org.uk>), and this is now being followed up with two publications:

6.1.1 *Special issue of Journal of Sociolinguistics*: Following the LEF colloquium at the 2005 BAAL Annual meeting in Bristol (‘Linguistic ethnography and the social sciences’ - see 6.2 below), we are preparing a special issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* entitled ‘Linguistic Ethnography: Explorations in Interdisciplinarity’. There will be 5 papers (by Ben Rampton, Ron & Suzie Scollon, Alison Sealey, Lukas Tsitsipis and Margie Wetherell), two discussant commentaries (from Jan Blommaert & Martyn Hammersley), and the guest-editors will be Ben Rampton, Janet Maybin and Karin Tusting. The volume is due to come out in the second half of 2007.

6.1.2 *Contribution to The Encyclopaedia of Language & Education*: Angela Creese has written a paper entitled ‘Linguistic Ethnography’ for Volume 10 of *The Encyclopaedia of Language & Education* (Springer/Kluwer). This subject of this volume is ‘Methodology’, it is being edited by Kendall King and Nancy Hornberger, and it will be published during 2007.

##### 6.2 Meetings

LEF is currently in the process of arranging its 15<sup>th</sup> academic meeting since inception in 2001, and for the 2005-06 academic year, our calendar of past and forthcoming meetings is as follows:

6.2.1 *‘Bakhtin, language and discourse’*: A one-day event on Tuesday 13 September 2005 held at King’s College London, jointly organised by the KCL Discourse and Social Interaction Network ([www.kcl.ac.uk/dsi](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/dsi)), and attended by 35 people. Presentations on ‘‘Journey with Bakhtin on the path of linguistic anthropology’’ (Lukas Tsitsipis, Thessaloniki), on ‘Speech genres and ‘evaluation’ in socialisation and identity’’ (Janet Maybin, Open University), and a ‘what would Bakhtin say?’ data session (Alexandra Georgakopoulou, Ben Rampton & Lauren Small, King’s College London). The papers from the meeting can be found on our website ([www.ling-ethnog.org.uk](http://www.ling-ethnog.org.uk)).

6.2.2 *‘Linguistic ethnography and the social sciences’*: A colloquium held Thursday 15 September 2005 at the 2005 BAAL Annual meeting in Bristol. Using our discussion paper as a point of departure (6.1 above), the aim was to situate linguistic ethnography in a wider academic context, and the contributors from outside LEF were Margaret Wetherell (discursive psychology), Martyn Hammersley (sociology & education), Lukas Tsitsipis (linguistic anthropology), and Alison Sealey (applied

<sup>2</sup> When the statements that members made about their interests were also considered, a research interest in education extended to 80 out of 173 members.

linguistics & critical realism). The papers presented are being developed for a special issue of *Journal of Sociolinguistics* (see 6.1.1 above).

6.2.3 “*Methodological issues in Linguistic Ethnography*”: A one-day event held on Saturday 4th March 2006 at The Open University, Milton Keynes. Papers addressing a range of methodological topics were presented by Keith Richards (Warwick), Moira Inghillera (Goldsmiths), Khadeegha Alzouebi & Kate Pahl (Sheffield), Ellen van Praet (Ghent), Mike Baynham (Leeds) & Alexandra Georgakopoulou (King’s), and Brian Street (King’s) acted as the respondent. The event was organised by Janet Maybin, Theresa Lillis and Julia Gillen, it was attended by 30 researchers, and the papers have also been posted on our website ([www.ling-ethnog.org.uk](http://www.ling-ethnog.org.uk))

6.2.4 ‘*Ethnographic Challenges & Opportunities in Language Research*’: This is a half-day LEF colloquium organised at Sociolinguistic Symposium 16 in Limerick on 7 July 2006. The colloquium asks what ethnography means nowadays for linguists and discourse analysts – indeed what does and doesn’t count as ethnography in language research – and papers are being presented by Francesca Bargiela (Nottingham Trent), Alexandra Georgakopoulou (King’s), Theresa Lillis (OU), Celia Roberts (King’s), Frances Rock (Cardiff), with Jürgen Jaspers (Antwerp) acting as discussant.

6.2.5 *A linguistic ethnography track at the 2006 BAAL Annual meeting in Cork*: BAAL offers its Special Interest Groups two types of platform at BAAL Annual Meetings: (a) ‘colloquia’ and (b) ‘tracks’. In advance of the March/April closing deadline for AM abstracts, a SIG can (a) prepare/organise a colloquium on a specific theme more or less independently, and submit the rationale/abstracts for scrutiny by the AM organisers. Alternatively, after abstracts for papers have been sent in to the AM organisers, the SIG can (b) select and configure the abstracts submitted in a special SIG-designated track. For the last 5 years, LEF has organised colloquia at the BAAL AM, but this year we have decided to try out option (b) – a ‘linguistic ethnography track’.

## **7. Application to the ESRC for a linguistic ethnography research training initiative**

The ESRC runs a Researcher Development Initiative for advanced methods training (RDI), and in April 2006, several of us at King’s and the Institute of Education put in a bid for £100,000 for a 3 year advanced research training scheme in ‘Sociolinguistic Ethnography in a Changing Society’ designed for advanced doctoral and post-doctoral researchers across the social sciences (KCL: Ben Rampton, Adam Lefstein, Celia Roberts; IoE: Jan Blommaert, Jeff Bezemer, Carey Jewitt). We’ve proposed 20 sessions over 3 years, comprising 2 x 5-day courses on ‘Frameworks & Procedures’, 4 x 1-day follow up support sessions, 4 x 1-day thematic application workshops, and 2 x 1-day ‘master classes’. In addition, we’ve said we will develop linguistic ethnography training materials, leading to a 1-day conference on teaching LE and an LE tutors’ network, and that we will be linked both to the ESRC *Identity & Social Action* Research Programme and to the ESRC/National Centre for Research Methods *Real Life Methods* node at Manchester and Leeds. During the preparation of this application, we circulated a questionnaire round the linguistic ethnography email list, and we got a very positive response. So although the programme will be based at King’s & the Institute, we’ll run a third of the sessions at Leeds, Birmingham and the Open Universities, and over time, look towards integrating the scheme more and more into LEF’s annual activity. We should hear whether or not our application has been successful at the end of July 2006.

## **8. BAAL**

As ever, our identity as a BAAL Special Interest Group continues to be of enormous value to us, and we would like to thank the BAAL Executive for its ongoing support.

Ben Rampton  
on behalf of  
UK LEF Coordinating Committee  
(Richard Barwell, Angela Creese, Vally Lytra, Janet Maybin, Ben Rampton, Karin Tusting)

30<sup>th</sup> June 2006