

Minutes from UKLEF business meeting, 10th September 04, at BAAL Annual Meeting – King’s College London.

Present: Richard Barwell, Jan Blommaert, Jim Collins, Angela Creese, Roz Ivanic, Vally Lytra, Marilyn Martin-Jones, Kate Pahl, Ben Rampton (chair), Karin Tusting (minutes).

Apologies: Rosie Flewitt, Janet Maybin, Stef Slembrouck.

1. Developments since the last AGM.

BR referred the meeting to the Convenor’s Report to BAAL July 04 which summarised the previous year’s activity (circulated and attached).

The organisation of the UKLEF SIG activities at the BAAL Annual Meeting was discussed, with some concern expressed as to the mechanism for ensuring that the papers identified as being part of the Linguistic Ethnography strand in fact represented the work of the SIG. It was felt that there might be some confusion as to the relationship between the colloquium (which we had organised) and the individual papers (self-identified as LE, with the option for us to check whether we agreed with that identification).

It was felt that BAAL is currently in a period of transition regarding SIGs and this would probably be resolved in coming years. In the meantime, we need to make sure labelling of sessions at the AM makes it clear which have been directly organised by the SIG and which are merely in the same topic area, and make sure the review process of the individual papers happens as it is designed to. We agreed to clarify this at the BAAL AGM (*note: in the event this proved unnecessary as the SIG co-ordinator went through the process in his report*).

2. Future activity.

Seminars

BR reported that the Co-ordinating Committee had discussed the possibility of shifting from one 2-day seminar a year focused on a particular topic with well-known key speakers, to two smaller 1-day events which focused more on members’ own work, for the following reasons:

- the 2-day seminars were a big organisational job, and it was becoming harder to find local organisers
- it was getting harder to find people to participate in them
- the themes were becoming increasingly specialised, and this could be putting people off coming and closing the group down
- shorter seminars with smaller groups of people could be less formal
- we could open up more topics for discussion
- they would give better opportunities to get to know one another’s work
- more frequent meetings could generate more ongoing discussion
- they could be held in different parts of the country, enabling people to participate in local events

RI asked for clarification of the difference in character between a colloquium and a seminar. The colloquium format was papers and discussion, in a seminar there was a broader range of papers and different format, with some small group discussions, methodological, theoretical and research project-based issues, and more time for discussion than at a colloquium. MMJ felt it would be a shame to lose the intermediate events, in which discussions have been very rich, and less rushed than often happens at a colloquium.

The possible format for such a one-day event was discussed, with the idea that they should be less structured in terms of a given 'theme', but without losing the possibility for extended discussion. Possibilities included:

- An unstructured event in which people would be invited to take an hour to present and discuss issues in their current research. This would require five or six people to come with issues to discuss. It was felt that given people's busy schedules, it might be hard to get a group together for a completely un-themed event.
- An event where a group of researchers in one locality discussed their own research and issues raised by this with a wider audience.
- A combination of the two, with some slots to discuss research from a local group or around a particular theme, and some slots kept 'open' for people to bring their current issues.

Themes could be generated from a call for interest on the email list, or suggested according to local interests.

We are planning a trial one-day meeting in Birmingham.

Other future activities

Other possible future activities include:

- a day with the BSA Sociology of Education group, potentially a data session in which different analytic approaches were taken with the same piece of data
- next year's BAAL Annual Meeting colloquium, a call will go around the email list for ideas
- BR floated the idea of a big conference in 2007, linking in with our international networks in Europe, the US and Canada (and perhaps beyond)
- The question 'What is linguistic ethnography?' has been raised recently. In response, the Co-ordinating Committee have begun work towards the formulation of a 'position paper'. We are working on a starting-point for this, a few paragraphs based on what has come out of discussions in the past four years, and we will circulate this for discussion on the list.
- Following the position paper, we have been talking about putting together an edited collection of papers from the group, either as a journal special issue or as a book.