

MINUTES
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2004
BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Kings College, University of London,
Auditorium of Franklin Wilkins Building, Waterloo Campus.

10 September 2004, 17.45

Forty four BAAL members were present, with a few coming and going in the course of the meeting.

Executive Committee attending: Ron Carter (Chair), Mike Baynham, Joan Cutting, Esther Daborn, John Field, Susan Hunston, Marilyn Martin-Jones, Kate Segall, James Simpson, Paul Thompson, Catherine Wallace, Catherine Walter, Goodith White, Eddie Williams (Minutes), Virpi Ylanne-McEwen, Catherine Xiang.

EC Apologies: Gabrielle Hogan-Brun.

1. Introductions: Ron Carter and the members of the Executive Committee introduced themselves. The Chair expressed the sadness of the meeting at the death of John Roberts (Essex University), who had served BAAL as Secretary. Ron informed the meeting that an obituary for John would appear in a forthcoming issue of Baal News.

2. Minutes: The minutes of the 2003 meeting were approved.

3.1 Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

3.2 [AOB item, taken early] Linguistic evidence in asylum cases

Deborah Cameron described how linguistic data are used by the UK Home Office as evidence in asylum cases where the original provenance of an applicant is at issue; she believed that applicants risk being unfairly denied the right to remain in the UK on the basis of such evidence, which is procured by the Home Office from an agency based in Sweden (the agency employees are native speakers of various languages but they have no linguistic training).

A group of international linguists, including Diana Eades, have promulgated a set of guidelines which Deborah and Peter Patrick (Essex) would like BAAL to endorse, and which lawyers working in asylum cases would be able to refer to as an authoritative statement that represents the position of linguists.

Guy Cook suggested that linguistic evidence be used with caution, and that the views of interpreters, as well as those of professional linguists, deserved to be taken into account.

Ron Carter suggested that the BAAL EC endorse the guidelines on behalf of BAAL. Deborah Cameron stressed the need for rapid action, and said that the guidelines represented the final statement from the group, and was not a draft subject to

alteration. Chris Brumfit proposed the motion that the BAAL membership be asked through baalmail whether they wished to endorse the guidelines. This motion was approved by the meeting.

ACTION: BAAL Secretary

In answer to a query from Marilyn Martin-Jones, Deborah Cameron repeated the need for urgency, since linguistic evidence was that could be inimical to claimants was increasingly used, a point echoed by Jan Blommaert (one of the contributors to the guidelines), who urged BAAL to get involved in this issue.

Paul Thompson pointed out that the guidelines had some time ago been put on the BAAL website following email discussion by the EC, but that BAAL's relation to the guidelines was not made explicit.

Ron Carter said the EC would seek comment from the membership, in line with Chris Brumfit's motion, by email within the next 4 to 6 weeks. Charlotte Fransson said that a distinction should be drawn between (i) BAAL's action with respect to the existing guidelines and (ii) Guy Cook's general concerns that the guidelines ignored the linguistic expertise of interpreters in such cases.

4. Reports

4.1 Chair - see written report.

Ron Carter stressed that RAE 2008 was already in train, with the nomination of panel members going ahead. This process was to be completed by the end of 2004. Of special concern to BAAL was ensuring representation for Applied Linguistics on the RAE Education Panel as well as other relevant panels such as Linguistics and European Studies.

4.2 Secretary - see written report

Eddie Williams took the meeting through his second report as Secretary.

4.3 Treasurer - see written report

In reply to a question from Richard Barwell, Esther Daborn said that BAAL SIGs were legally regarded as "wholly owned subsidiaries" of BAAL and that BAAL would be liable for any financial losses they incurred. It was noted that the Ethnography SIG had made a surplus on its meeting.

Esther Daborn proposed that Kurban Abji be re-appointed as the auditor of BAAL. The motion was carried *nem. con.*

Action: Esther Daborn

4.4 Meetings Secretary - See written report.

Ros Mitchell pointed out that in 2004 and 2005 the BAAL annual conference coincided with that of EuroSLA (European Second Language Association). Ron Carter pointed out that BAAL's conference dates were on BAAL's Web site several years in advance. Catherine Walter said that she was writing to EuroSLA.

Action: Catherine Walter

4.5 Membership and Publicity Secretary - see written report

Ron Carter in the absence of Gabrielle Hogan-Brun pointed out that the membership was slightly down on last year. Ron Carter added that one way of addressing this was that Departments could consider paying the BAAL subscriptions for their PG students on the same principle as they might fund attendance at North West Centre for Linguistics (NWCL) PG research training programmes.

Action: BAAL members who are in agreement

4.6 Postgraduate Liaison and Development Officer - see written report.

Catherine Xiang took the meeting through her first report as PG officer.

4.7 Publications Secretary – see written report

Marilyn Martin-Jones expressed special thanks to the many book reviewers. Ben Rampton asked whether the reviews could appear in Baal News. Marilyn replied that this was already in hand.

Richard Barwell suggested that the £25 fee publishers pay with each submission might be increased, but this was met with no great enthusiasm from the meeting. Roz Ivanic felt that BAAL Book Prize reviews might go beyond the BAAL Newsletter, and Marilyn replied that this was being encouraged. The Chair and Secretary thanked Marilyn for her sterling work on the Book Prize after agreeing to be co-opted for this post.

4.8 Newsletter Editor – see written report

Virpi Ylänne-McEwen presented her last report as Newsletter editor. Thanks came from the Chair and Secretary to Virpi for her efforts on producing the revamped newsletter.

4.9 Web Editor

Paul Thompson took the meeting through his last report as Web Editor. The Chair thanked him on behalf of BAAL for his excellent work.

5 Reports from BAAL Delegates on Outside Bodies

5.1 AILA (Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée): The Chair reported that Gabrielle Hogan-Brun would represent BAAL in the forthcoming AILA meeting in Essen.

5.2 CLIE (Committee for Linguistics in Education): See written report by Catherine Walter. Catherine Walter went through CLIE's remit. David Barton pointed out that the wording excluded a specific commitment to adult education. Catherine said that the same possibly applied to ESOL students, and that CLIE may have been acting beyond its remit. In her view CLIE should be able to raise any educational issue involving language. Catherine said she would revisit the documentation and take appropriate steps.

Action: Catherine Walter

5.3 LLAS ([Subject Centre for] Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies): See written report by Esther Daborn. Esther stressed how illuminating her contact with LLAS had been.

5.4 UCML (University Council for Modern Languages): Eddie Williams reported on behalf of Anne Ife, who had missed the last UCML meeting through illness. Michael Kelly (Southampton) had raised concerns of applied linguists with the BBC in the light of their decision not to produce any further modern language teaching programmes.

5.5 AfSS (Academy for Social Sciences): Ron Carter reported that BAAL relations with AfSS were good, and that two BAAL nominations, Guy Cook and Michael Hoey, had been elected.

6 BAAL/CUP Seminars: See written report by Kate Segall.

7. SIGs (Special Interest Groups): See written report by John Field.

David Barton pointed out that there had been a slight drop in BAAL membership despite the introduction of SIGs. John Field replied that without SIGs the drop might have been greater. In discussion on the effect of colloquia and tracks (associated with SIGs) upon the Conference programme, John Field pointed out that colloquia had been a problem, since, unlike tracks, they had no time-specified sections, which made it difficult for conference participants to order their days (unless they were happy to stay with the same colloquium throughout). Kate Segall added that particular problems for Conference organisers occurred when both tracks and colloquia were on related themes.

Ron Carter noted that there was at present no upper limit on the number of SIGs, but that this situation would be monitored. As regards Conference organisation, issues would be considered by the EC and any decisions incorporated into the Conference organisation template that would be handed on to next year's organisers.

Action: EC and Meetings Secretary

8a) Report from Applied Linguistics Co-editor

Guy Cook said that high quality articles on applied linguistics were welcomed, and listed three myths relating to ALJ which he would attempt to dispel:

- (1) that the decision period is excessively long – Guy said decisions were made in 3 to 5 months
- (2) that lead-in time from decision to publication was excessively long – although precise figures were not available Guy said this was less than one year.
- (3) that papers of a quantitative nature or related to SLA were favoured: not so, maintained Guy, and referred the meeting to the aims of the journal on the inside back cover.

Guy also reminded the meeting Stef Slembrouk was in charge of the *Forum* and *Book Review* sections of the journal.

8b) Report from BAAL Representative on ESRC Virtual College

Guy Cook said that the ESRC virtual college has two main functions:

- (1) it reviews small grant proposals (up to £40 thousand). The success rates were reported to be relatively high and turn-around time was some 14 weeks.
- (2) it contributes to ESC policy formulation

Guy's 3 year term as BAAL nominee was coming to an end, and BAAL would shortly need to find a successor.

Action: BAAL EC to respond in due course to the ESRC Virtual College

In response to a query from Richard Barwell, Guy said that LAGB and other associations also made nominations of people with linguistics interests.

9 Notice of amendment to the BAAL Constitution

Eddie Williams gave notice of minor amendments to the current BAAL Constitution. These non-substantive amendments were in the interests of consistency. Because of time pressure, the amendments were not discussed in the AGM, and the meeting was told that the amendments would be put on Baalmail and voted upon at the next AGM.

Action: BAAL Secretary

10 Elections to the Executive Committee

The following officers were returned uncontested to the BAAL EC for a three-year period (2004/5 – 2006/7):

Meetings Secretary: Joan Cutting

Membership Secretary: Svenja Adolphs

Publications Secretary: Goodith White

Web Editor: Martin Edwardes

Newsletter Editor: Sarah Lawson

The following were elected as EC ordinary members for a two year period (2004/05 – 2005/06):

Richard Barwell

Graham Turner

Ema Ushioda

11 There being no further business (but see 3.2), the Chair declared the meeting closed at 19.45.

The next Annual General Meeting of BAAL will be held during the annual conference at Bristol in September, 2005.

**Eddie Williams
Hon Sec, BAAL**