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THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

The aims of the Association are to promote the study of language in use, to foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and to provide a common forum for those engaged in the theoretical study of language and for those whose interest is the practical application of such work. The Association has over 750 members, and awards an annual Book Prize.

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Dear All,

Welcome to the Spring 2008 issue of *BAALNews*.

As preparations for the 2008 BAAL Conference move on apace, this issue of *BAALNews* contains a number of notices of importance and relevance to all members interested in attending or otherwise supporting this event.

The Spring issue also contains details of this year's round of BAAL/CUP Seminars, together with reports on two highly successful BAAL/CUP Seminars that were staged last year. As well as making stimulating reading in themselves, I am sure that these reports will encourage many of you to make it a priority to attend at least one of the forthcoming seminars this year.

Finally, you will find within this issue book review articles on topics as diverse as Word Grammar and Forensic Linguistics, as well as another first-rate piece of tongue-in-cheekery from our resident satirist Michael Swan.

I trust that 2008 is getting off to a good start for all of you, and I do hope you will enjoy reading this, the 88th issue of BAAL's in-house publication.

Nick

Nicholas Groom
Newsletter Editor
Centre for English Language Studies
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT

Members of BAAL Executive Committee 2007-2008

Officers:

Chair (2006/7 – 2008/9)

Susan Hunston
Department of English
University of Birmingham
Birmingham B15 2TT
s.e.hunston@bham.ac.uk

Secretary (2007/8 – 2009/10)

Paul Thompson
Department of Applied Linguistics
School of Languages and European
Studies
The University of Reading
Reading RG6 6AA
p.a.thompson@reading.ac.uk

Treasurer (2006/7 - 2008/9)

Richard Badger
School of Education
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT
r.g.badger@education.leeds.ac.uk

Meetings Secretary (2007/8 - 2009/10)

Erik Schleef
Linguistics and English Language
The University of Edinburgh
Adam Ferguson Building
40 George Square
Edinburgh EH8 9LL
erik.schleef@ed.ac.uk

Membership secretary (2007/8 - 2009/10)

Lynn Erler
Department of Education
University of Oxford
15 Norham Gardens
Oxford OX2 6PY
lynn.erler@education.ox.ac.uk

Publications Secretary (2006/7 – 2008/9)

Veronika Koller
Lecturer in English Language
Department of Linguistics and English
Language
Lancaster University
Bailrigg, Lancaster LA1 4YT
v.koller@lancaster.ac.uk

Web Editor (2007/8 - 2009/10)

Valerie Hobbs
41 Rustlings Road
Sheffield
S Yorks S11 7AA
vhowardhobbs@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editor (2007/8 - 2009/10)

Nicholas Groom
Centre for English Language Studies
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
n.w.groom@bham.ac.uk

Postgraduate Development and Liaison Officer (2007/8 – 2008/9)

Dawn Knight
School of English Studies
University Park
University of Nottingham
Nottingham
NG7 2RD
aexdk3@nottingham.ac.uk

Special Interest Groups Officer (2006/7 - 2008/9)

John Field (SIG Co-ordinator)
54 Belsize Park Gardens
London NW3 4ND
jcf1000@dircon.co.uk

**BAAL/CUP seminars co-ordinator
(2007/8 – 2008/9)**

Caroline Coffin
Centre for Language and
Communication
Faculty of Education and Language
Studies
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes MK7 6AA
c.coffin@open.ac.uk

Ordinary Members (2006/7 – 2007/8)

Gibson Ferguson
Department of English Language and
Linguistics
University of Sheffield
5 Shearwood Road
Sheffield S10 2TN
g.r.ferguson@sheffield.ac.uk
'tope Omoyini
School of Arts
Roehampton University
Roehampton Lane
London SW15 5PH
T.Omoniyi@roehampton.ac.uk

(2007/8 – 2008/9)

Lynne Cameron
Centre for Language and
Communication
Faculty of Education and Language
Studies
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes MK7 6AA
l.j.cameron@open.ac.uk

Alice Deignan
School of Education
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT
a.h.deignan@education.leeds.ac.uk

Sheena Gardner
School of Education
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
s.f.gardner@bham.ac.uk

Co-opted Member (2007/8 only)

Catherine Walter
School of Culture, Language and
Communication
Institute of Education, University of
London
20 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AL
c.walter@ioe.ac.uk

Report from BAAL Chair September 2007 to January 2008

My activities since September have mainly involved liaising with other bodies of various kinds.

Academy for the Social Sciences

A nomination was made in December 2007 (the result is not known at the time of writing) and preparations are in hand for another nomination in June 2008. We are entitled to make up to 10 nominations a year, so BAAL members are encouraged to put forward names to me (by email directly, not via BAALmail).

AILA/NEAL

The Network of European Applied Linguistics Associations (NEAL) has a number of proposed initiatives, which BAAL is supporting while taking steps to avoid compromising member confidentiality. One is an on-line journal to be published by Mouton De Gruyter. The other is a questionnaire designed to discover opinions and practices among applied linguists in Europe. I have communicated to Karlfried Knapp BAAL's support of both initiatives based on voluntary participation by members.

Charities Commission

I have responded on BAAL's behalf to the Charities Commission's proposals for requiring charities to report 'public benefit' every year. They will be carrying out more consultations in February 2008 (including specific consultation with fee-charging organizations) and the new rules will

come in during 2009.

Home Office / Immigration

I have responded on BAAL's behalf to the Home Office consultation on pre-entry language tests for spouses, expressing doubts about their efficacy.

Press list

At the EC meeting in January it was agreed that we should investigate getting the services of an advisor with the aim of raising BAAL's profile in the public arena. This is in hand.

Research issues

A number of activities since September have related to research assessment and funding. These are: response to the Impact of Research Survey run by researchers at the LSE; response to the consultation on the Research Excellence Framework (essentially, the next RAE); response on the European Research Index for the Humanities (ERIH). All these initiatives relate to current government concerns about (a) how valuable our research is to the country, in either financial terms or by affecting policy, or improving the cultural life of the community; and (b) how research should be measured / assessed. I felt it would be useful for BAAL to have a more considered position on these and similar issues. At the EC meeting in January 2008 it was agreed to set up a working party to draft a consultation paper.

Susan Hunston, January 2008

BAAL 2008 SWANSEA (11th – 13th September)

BAAL 2008 will be held in Wales' second city of Swansea, situated on the South Wales coast. The conference theme is "Taking the Measure of Applied Linguistics". This theme is deliberately intended to be inclusive and might include papers which take stock of Applied Linguistics generally, consider attempts to quantify language and language learning which is one important element of Applied Linguistics, or make the case that non-quantified language descriptions can be equally valid and useful in linguistic applications. Plenary speakers are Charles Alderson (Lancaster University), Ben Rampton (King's College London), and Alison Wray (Cardiff University).

The local organising committee includes representatives of all areas of applied linguistics at Swansea University. Tess Fitzpatrick and Jim Milton are the local organisers. Further members of the LOC include Nuria Lorenzo Dus, Geoff Hall, Paul Meara, Chris Shei and Cornelia Tschichold.

The University campus is located in coastal parkland, between the five-mile-long beach of Swansea bay and 100 acres of parks and gardens. The city centre is within reach of the campus by foot or by bus. The nearest airport, outside Cardiff, is served by regular flights with low-cost airlines from cities across Britain and Europe, including Belfast, Glasgow, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Cork, and Dublin.

BAAL 2009 NEWCASTLE (3rd -5th September)

BAAL 2009 will be held at Newcastle University. Newcastle's School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences is a dynamic research centre, and has had a long association with BAAL. The University campus is located in the city centre close to a wide range of cultural, culinary and shopping attractions, and within easy reach of railway and bus stations. We are confident that it will provide an inspiring conference experience too.

Erik Schleeff
Meetings Secretary
1 February 2008

BAAL Poster Prize

The BAAL executive committee is happy to announce that the 2008 conference in Swansea (11-13 September) sees the return of the BAAL poster prize. This prize is awarded to one of the posters accepted for display, and actually displayed at, the conference. Two judges will assess the posters in terms of structure and appearance. The winner receives £50 and can choose a title from the books submitted for the BAAL book prize.

The deadline for poster abstracts is 31 March.

Looking forward to your contributions,

Veronika Koller
(on behalf of the BAAL executive committee)

The Chris Brumfit International Scholarship 2008

Following the sad loss of Professor Chris Brumfit in 2006, Many BAAL members indicated a wish to donate to a fund in Professor Brumfit's name. Accordingly, The Chris Brumfit International Scholarship was established with the aim of providing an award for an Applied Linguist from outside Britain to attend the BAAL Annual Meeting. As our Meetings Secretary Erik Schleef noted in his most recent Report (see BAALNews 87), the first Scholarship was duly awarded last year, to Huamei Han of the University of Toronto.

We hope to be in a position to make an award this year as well, and so would welcome any donations, large or small, from the BAAL membership. If you wish to support the Chris Brumfit International Scholarship, please send a cheque for an amount of your choosing to

Jeanie Taylor
The Chris Brumfit International Scholarship
BAAL Membership Administration
PO Box 6688
London SE15 3WB

Cheques and money orders should be made payable to 'BAAL'. If you wish to pay by credit card, complete the credit card payment form below and send/fax it to Jeanie Taylor at the above address. The website is not secure so we would prefer that it was not used to make donations.

If you are a UK tax payer we can reclaim the tax on your donation. Please consider allowing us to claim Gift Aid tax relief on this. Just complete the Gift Aid Declaration form included with this issue of BAALNews and return it to Jeanie Taylor at the address given above.

We would be grateful if you could send any donations **by the end of May 2008**. However if you are not able to make a donation before this your donation will be included in the fund for the conference in 2009.

Thank you!

Donation to the Chris Brumfit International Scholarship Appeal	
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This year was a bumper year for proposals. In total twelve were submitted on a wide range of topics. A maximum of three seminars can receive BAAL / Cambridge University Press funding each year, so the selection process was difficult. Twelve proposals were received and ranked and rated by 5 raters – myself, Lynne Cameron, Alice Deignan, Gibson Ferguson and Sheena Gardner. In cases where referees were members of a proposing committee or were named as part of a proposal, ratings were provided by an experienced 6th rater, Richard Kiely. Our recommendations were then put forward, discussed and ratified by the full membership of the BAAL executive. It was decided that three seminars should receive funding. Each will be offered a £450 grant and a £500 repayable float.

Brief information about the 2008 seminars is given below (details are also available on the BAAL website: <http://www.baal.org.uk/seminars.htm>). All BAAL members are welcome to attend the seminars. Contact details of the organizers are included below.

Caroline Coffin
BAAL/CUP Seminars Coordinator
C.Coffin@open.ac.uk

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS



CAMBRIDGE
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BAAL / Cambridge University Press Seminar Programme 2008

Integration and Achievement in a Multilingual Europe: Languages for Learning and Life

Proposed by: Dr. Jean Conteh, Senior Lecturer, University of Leeds; Dr. Charmian Kenner, Lecturer, Goldsmith's, University of London

Date: June 18-19 2008

Venue: Leeds University

Contact details: j.conteh@leeds.ac.uk
Aims of the seminar:

- To provide a forum where researchers, policymakers and practitioners can come together to discuss how discourses of integration interact with linguistic and cultural practices in multilingual communities and schools in different European countries
- To identify policies and practices that foster educational achievement for children from minority backgrounds.
- To develop positive research relationships with researchers in UK and the wider European community.

We will be considering these questions:

- What kinds of teacher training programmes enhance understanding of multilingual identities and language development?
- What kinds of intercultural curricula help develop multilingual identities?
- How can bilingual learning be used to access the curriculum?
- How can research into bilingual learning be effectively used to inform policy and practice in specific educational contexts?

Main speakers:

Professor Christine Helot, University of Strasbourg

Professor Eve Gregory, Goldsmith's, University of London

Conceptualising 'Learning' in Applied Linguistics

Proposed by: Prof Paul Seedhouse, Dr Steve Walsh, Dr Chris Jenks, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, Newcastle University.

Date: June 19th & 20th 2008

Venue: Newcastle University

Contact details: paul.seedhouse@ncl.ac.uk

Objectives of the seminar:

- to explore and unpack the different conceptions of 'learning' involved in research into learning and teaching a language;
- to develop awareness of how different conceptions of 'learning' originate in different paradigms, methodologies and epistemologies;
- to develop awareness of how conceptions of 'learning' vary according to the particular aspect of language or communication which is being learnt or taught;
- to produce a conceptualisation of learning to which members of different schools of SLA will be able to subscribe;
- to apply this conceptualisation of learning to a range of data involving learning and teaching a language;
- to explore notions of learning in non-institutional settings.

Themes which are expected to emerge include:

- Why do conceptions of 'learning' vary in research into learning and teaching a language?
- How do different conceptions of 'learning' relate to different paradigms, methodologies and epistemologies?
- Which conceptions of 'learning' are most appropriate to learning which aspect of a language?
- Is it possible to produce a conceptualisation of 'learning' to which members of different schools of SLA will be able to subscribe?

- New perspectives and approaches to 'learning';
- How can conceptions of 'learning' be applied to data?
- What happens when different conceptions of learning are applied to the same data?

Applied linguistics: what do primary teachers need to understand? Developing an applied linguistics curriculum for pre-service primary school teachers.

Proposed by: Sue Ellis, Childhood and Primary Studies Department; Elspeth McCartney, Speech and Language Therapy Division; Jill Bourne, (Incoming) Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Strathclyde.

Date: 2 x one-day conferences, March and September 2008

Venue: University of Strathclyde

Contact Details and Objectives of the Seminar: TBA

1. Spoken Online Learning Events

The Open University, 22nd – 23rd June 2007

Organisers: Jim Coleman and Regine Hampel (Department of Languages, INTELLECT Research Group) and Peter Scott (Knowledge Media Institute),

BAAL/CUP two-day seminars are designed to allow intensive discussion among about twenty of the most active and innovative researchers in a particular domain, and this objective was fully met. Two features made the seminar unique, however. One was the public access to discussion offered by simultaneous and deferred webcasting, and the possibility of input by simultaneous webchat and email. The other was the use of the latest communication technologies to reflect the topic of the conference. Thus, the first plenary was delivered using the Open University's own enhanced videoconferencing software, FlashMeeting, and encompassed live presentations from Cynthia White at Massey University (Palmerston North, New Zealand) and Yuping Wang (Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia) and live discussion with those present at the Open University.

The seminar objectives were

- To develop a shared understanding of a new disciplinary area drawing on a range of domains
- To address major issues for oral learning of languages and cultures online
- To address the limitations of existing pedagogical parameters for spoken online learning and teaching
- To re-evaluate theoretical paradigms underpinning research in spoken interaction
- To examine and extend the repertoire of analytical tools and methodologies
- To bring together scholars in synchronous online interaction, online discourse, spoken interaction at a distance, communication studies, multimodality and the spoken mode, and online pedagogy
- To establish networks of shared interests
- To open up avenues of investigation and provide a stimulus for new research projects
- To involve early career researchers by offering two student bursaries and by webcasting all discussions.

Spoken interaction is key to successful language learning in both a cognitive-interactionist and a socio-cultural paradigm, and new technologies are beginning to make available robust environments for multi-participant online spoken interactions. The Open University, which has for a decade

developed, piloted and researched the new pedagogies appropriate to online language learning at scale, has to some extent set the research agenda. This embraces methods of collection and analysis of the ‘fractured’ discourse which makes up multimodal corpora (spoken and written text, audio, video, graphic elements, human-computer interface) – not least how to interpret online silences; the social, cognitive, affective and strategic aspects of learner behaviour; teacher and learner beliefs and styles, and the professional development of tutors; the facilitative and debilitating facets of anonymity, online presence and new identities adopted in virtual learning environments.

White’s impressive opening plenary reviewed the theoretical and methodological challenges facing research into the affordances and constraints of online spoken interaction, and suggested research questions, methods and tools which might inform both research and practical pedagogy, including assessment. Wang’s discussion of Collaborative Cyber Community contained the first of several allusions to the high demands which managing multiple audio, video and text resources as well as the learning process place on the teacher.

The use of other new digital technologies to bring speaking into the online language class was addressed by

Fernando Rosell-Aguilar (podcasts), Gary Motteram and Dhafir Kasassbeh (Breeze, now Adobe Connect) and Chris Jenks (Skype), who raised issues such as pronunciation, mediation, intercultural competence and social presence in online learning environments. Nese Cabaroglu reported on a sophisticated language-and-culture project linking trainee teachers of English in Turkey with a native-speaker teacher trainer in the UK.

Primary research findings involving fine-grained analyses of spoken interactions in audiographic environments were presented by Maud Ciekanski and Thierry Chanier (Besançon – collaborative writing tasks), and Carolyn Batstone, Ursula Stickler, Annette Duensing and Barbara Heins (OU – collaborative speaking tasks), highlighting social presence and the continuous negotiation of the norms of the learning space. Regine Hampel and Ursula Stickler evaluated a five-week pilot of FlashMeeting in a Moodle-based course: visual contact adds further complexity to earlier studies which have brought out the importance of task design, tutor style, and social and affective factors.

Dorothy Chun, from the University of California, Santa Barbara, USA, was the only keynote speaker who was physically present at the Open University. Her presentation examined different ways of using online resources to improve students’ oral proficiency.

This included using tools on the World Wide Web to improve learner pronunciation and prosody (through speech recognition, for example), and getting learners to communicate with native speakers in telecollaborative projects to improve their communicative and intercultural skills.

Glenn Stockwell joined the seminar from Waseda University, Japan. His closing plenary summarised the conference themes and reviewed the parameters and pedagogies of spoken online learning events in the area of language teaching. He firmly reminded the audience that the learner has to be the focal point, and that technologies and “gadgets” have to take second place to the objectives of the learning event.

The simultaneous webcast was watched by a global online audience in Europe, North America, Asia and Australasia, who also participated in the live videochat. This enabled questions to be put from the USA or Germany and answered by speakers who were physically or virtually present. The seminar importantly provided an opportunity for home postgraduates, and the PhD bursar Dong Ye from Southampton University, to participate academically and socially in a high-level conference in an atmosphere less intimidating than larger-scale symposia. Everyone present felt that the unique combination of intimate discussion and global participation

offered an environmentally and academically friendly model for future research-based events. Participants agreed that the extensive discussions helped to redefine the dimensions of research into the spoken elements of virtual language learning, and should be published soon in written form.

In the meantime, the entire seminar (including plenary speaker abstracts) can be viewed at <http://www.open.ac.uk/baal-cupseminar2007-sole/>.

Plenary abstracts

Theory, Research and Practice in Spoken Online Learning Events: Towards New Understandings
Cynthia White

Research into spoken online learning events has entered its second decade, and we now have a clearer sense of the affordances and constraints of different online mediums for developing spoken interaction. How we now think about language teaching and learning, and the activities, experiences and processes which support the development of interactive competence have also been transformed by virtual learning opportunities. In this paper I identify predominant research paradigms and directions in online spoken interaction and critically evaluate what we have gained and what we may have overlooked in using such approaches. Key challenges include reducing the distance between research and

pedagogical practice, identifying ways of enhancing the research-practice nexus, and developing a research agenda based on such ongoing interrelationships. I then propose a number of questions, methodologies and research tools aligned with that agenda. In the latter part of the paper I also explore three diverse 'problems' in spoken online learning - curricular congruence and articulation, intercultural competence, and assessment - to illustrate how new approaches to research and teacher development can bring together the worlds of theory, research and practice. To conclude I argue that while a number of factors work against the development of links between research and practice, closing the gap between them is valuable for all participants in spoken online learning events - researchers, teachers and learners - as a means of developing an informed understanding of what we think we may know, what we may need to know and what we do.

A Tall Order for SOLE: Expectations ranging from enhanced oral proficiency to cross-cultural understanding

Dorothy M. Chun

As noted in a recent special issue of *Language Learning & Technology* on "Oral Language Development" in 2005, research on the uses and effects of technology for developing and improving oral proficiency is in its infancy. Earlier studies have

shown, for example, that synchronous written chat sessions were more effective in preparing learners for whole-class oral discussion than asynchronous discussion or small-group and pair-work activities in a F2F classroom (Abrams, 2003). Payne and Whitney (2002) found that the spontaneous production of text in a chatroom seemed to develop the same cognitive mechanisms underlying L2 speech. With the rapid advances and widespread availability of asynchronous online voice boards, as well as synchronous audio conferencing (e.g., (Hampel & Hauck, 2004; Hauck & Hampel, 2005) and videoconferencing (Wang, 2004), the new research questions revolve around whether virtual F2F interactions have beneficial effects on developing L2 oral proficiency. In this presentation, I will first revisit the underlying principles of interactionist SLA and then discuss how the interaction that takes place in audio or video conferencing is similar to, yet different from, F2F encounters. As Barr et al. (2005) and Volle (2005) suggested, of interest are which aspects of L2 oral skills, ranging from articulation and pronunciation to pragmatic and discourse levels of engaging in meaningful communication, can best be addressed by spoken online learning tools and programs. Time permitting, I hope also to examine the possible role that virtual F2F conversations might play in developing L2 learners' intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997), while also questioning

the assumption that they would automatically lead to cross-cultural understanding (Kramsch & Thorne, 2002).

Designing Pedagogies in Spoken Online Learning Events

Glenn Stockwell

The widening accessibility of online communication technologies has resulted in a diversification of ways in which language learners engage in technology-based oral tasks. As is often the case when new technologies emerge, preliminary work tends to place more emphasis on the features of the technology itself, as opposed to the development of sound pedagogies where the most appropriate technologies for achieving specified learning goals are selected (Stockwell, 2007). This phenomena is also evident in recent SOLE research, and in order to make sound judgements as to how technologies for speaking can best be used teachers need to be aware of the specific features of the available technologies and the learning environment, such as the synchronicity of the communication, the nature of the participants, the learning goals, and the place of the online learning event within the overall environment. An event may be synchronous, as in audio- or video-conferencing (e.g., Wang, 2004), or it may be asynchronous, as in studies described by Volle (2005) and Felix (2003). Participants may all be learners within a single class, or learners may be

paired with native speakers who may or may not be aware of the language learner status of the participants (see Colpaert, 2006). Alternatively, the participants may be communicating with partners who are not human at all, such as a pronunciation tutor (e.g., Carey, 2004) or a chatbot (e.g., Fryer & Carpenter, 2006). The role assigned to technology will also differ depending on the nature of the language learning environment. In a predominantly face-to-face environment, technology may take on a more peripheral role where it is used as a support for in-class activities (e.g., Levy & Kennedy, 2004), while in a distance learning environment, technology may become the main forum for oral interaction (e.g., Hampel & Hauck, 2004). Each of the factors described here is important in defining how technologies are used in oral language development, and in this paper, I will explore some of the considerations that need to be kept in mind when designing pedagogies in spoken online learning events which reflect the many complexities involved.

2. Communicative Competence Revisited: Multilingual, Multicultural and multidisciplinary perspectives

June 25th, 2007.

Organiser: Jean-Marc Dewaele
Department of Applied Linguistics,
Birkbeck, University of London

This one-day seminar was organised in order to evaluate the concept of

Communicative Competence (CC) from a multilingual, multicultural and multidisciplinary perspective and to explore the relevance and applicability of the concept in an age of globalisation and fast changing information-communication technology. Methodological issues in the study of CC in applied linguistics and other related disciplines were discussed. The seminar brought researchers from different backgrounds together and allowed the creation of a network for future research projects on CC.

There were ten contributions: two forty-five minute keynote talks, and eight paper presentations lasting twenty minutes each. Three of the presenters were postgraduate students: Yan Jiang (Newcastle University), Ping Ping Liu (University of Southampton) and José Aguilar (Sorbonne Nouvelle). The seminar was opened by a short presentation by Professor Li Wei on the issue of CC. He thanked BAAL and CUP for their generous support for the seminar. He also made a few concluding remarks after the end of the general round table discussion. Thirty-six participants attended the seminar, including Dr Martin Edwards representing the BAAL Executive Committee.

A wide selection of recent books published by CUP were prominently displayed in the room.

The keynote speakers were Professor

Mick Perkins (University of Sheffield) and Professor Constant Leung (King's College London). Both speakers considered the concept of CC from different perspectives, with reference to monolinguals and multilinguals. Professor Mick Perkins focussed on communication breakdown in conversational interactions of a monolingual English child. He demonstrated how disparate areas of language such as syntax, lexis and discourse structure are integrally linked, and also dependent on non-linguistic factors such as memory, attention, auditory perception and eye-gaze. He made a methodological point that to understand the extent of the integration, the contributions of both the child and his interlocutor need to be taken into account. He argued against the common assumption that an atypical communicative behaviour is a direct reflection, or symptom, of a specific underlying deficit. Instead, he proposed that compensatory adaptation plays a key role in all communication disorders, and that CC is the complex outcome of interactions between linguistic, cognitive, motor and perceptual processes, both within and between communicating individuals – i.e. it is an 'emergent' phenomenon.

Professor Constant Leung addressed the criticism that despite the original claims that the notion of CC is grounded in the ethnography tradition, in practice it often poses a decontextualized idealization of language use. He

proposed a situated theory of CC that supports the notion of an abstracted ideal with a wide range of non-static local manifestations. The constitutive significance of speaker authority/intention, content selection and sociocultural context was examined. He illustrated his argument with references to work on academic discourse, with particular reference to written discourse and English as a lingua franca. Theoretical and pedagogic implications of this pluralist view were explored with reference to language norms, speaker/writer identities and curriculum benchmarks.

Two paper presentations focused on communication among children:

- Amelia Church (Universities of Southampton and Melbourne) explored four-year-old children's CC in context of spontaneous verbal disputes with peers. Using a conversation analysis approach, she found that adversative discourse shows that markedness is indicative of outcome. Explicitly, preferred or unmarked turns shapes (ie turns that are short, direct and produced without delay) elicit continuing opposition in disputes. Mitigation (ie markedness) proves essential if disputes are to be brought to a mutually acceptable close.
- Yan Jiang and Zhu Hua (Birkbeck) considered the development of intercultural CC among 11 year-old children in a multi-cultural summer camp. The researchers focused on

the linguistic strategies children from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds use to communicate with each other when there is disparity in the proficiency of their shared language (in this case, English). Children were found to employ a range of communicative strategies (e.g., code-switching, questioning, translation) to understand the rules of the activities and negotiate and achieve agreement on action despite the diversity in their linguistic abilities.

The focus of the following papers was on CC in L2 instruction:

- Jose Ignacio Aguilar Rio (Université de Paris 3, Sorbonne Nouvelle) found that during EFL lessons in Paris and Glasgow teachers shifted from their role as L2 experts to that of participants, in charge of presenting learners with L2 communicative models. These shifts lead to momentary tensions in the classroom, which may influence the learning process.
- Ping Ping Liu (University of Southampton) argued that CC cannot be achieved without reference to the larger social world in which L2 learners live and use the language for social purposes. She looked at how the knowledge of the target culture affects L2 learners' opportunity for learning in a study-abroad context. The data of the study came from six NS-NNS casual conversations recorded in

naturalistic settings. She found that the sociocultural knowledge gap between the two groups had influenced the extent to which the Chinese NNS created and responded to the opportunities to achieve conversational involvement.

- Christine Raschka (University of East Anglia) asked whether NNS need to be syntactically competent to be communicatively competent. She used a single case study of a highly communicatively competent bilingual Chinese/English speaker who acquired this competence not through formal learning but in the context of everyday social interactions. She argued that it is not the grammatical knowledge but the way in which this and pragmatic knowledge are used in real situations that matters.
- Jean-Marc Dewaele (Birkbeck) investigated the question whether the knowledge of more languages is linked to increased levels of self perceived CC. Using a database constituted through an on-line questionnaire with open and closed questions, to which of 1,459 multilinguals contributed, he found that pentalinguals, quadrilinguals and trilinguals (in decreasing order) scored significantly higher on perceived CC in all their languages compared to bilinguals.
- Penelope Gardner-Chloros (Birkbeck) looked at code switching through the lens of CC. She pointed out that in plurilingual settings,

audience design often means adapting to an interlocutor whose relative competence in the relevant varieties differs from the speaker's. She argued that the relative neglect of the accommodative function of code-switching, springs from a broader neglect of intra-individual variation in code-switching: code switchers do not always combine their languages in the same way in different circumstances.

The last paper, by David Block (Institute of Education), was more theoretical in nature. He revisited Hymes's early discussion of CC, relating it to some of Hymes's other views, for example, those he held about possible future directions for sociolinguistics research. Despite the accepted view of CC today, namely, that it is multidimensional, he argued that CC still seems to be bound very strongly to the notion that language and its 'appropriate' use are what communication is by and large about. There is a need to move beyond this language-centric approach to CC, to reorient the construct so that it can take on board a broader more multimodal/semiotic view of communication.

Participants Members of staff and research fellows from Birkbeck: Dr Benedetta Bassetti, Dr Angelica Bonci, Dr Malcolm Edwards, Professor Li Wei, Dr Maria-Elena Placencia, Dr Lucia Rottava, Penny Sewell. Members of staff from other universities: Helga Adams (The Open University), Dr

Martin Edwardes, Dr Gibson Ferguson (Sheffield), Dr Margaret Nicolson (The Open University), Dr Gaelle Planchenault (Simon Fraser University, Vancouver), Dr Müge Satar (The Open University).

Postgraduate students from Birkbeck:

Seonaid Bell, Mariana Bono, Leila Chargui, Marcin Lewandowski, Gong Li, Heather McDowell, Jennifer Sia, Alissra Sinclair-Knopp, Margreet van Koert.
Postgraduate students from other universities: Dr Alessia Cogo (King's College London), Chao-Jung Wu (Newcastle University).

Full list of papers:

Professor Mick Perkins: What communication disorders can tell us about communicative competence: An emergentist account

Amelia Church: Closings in young children's disputes

Yan Jiang & Zhu Hua: Children's interactions in a multicultural setting

Jose Ignacio Aguilar Rio: Developing learners' communicative competence: L2 teachers' search for complicity

Ping Ping Liu: 'I don't know what to talk about with native speakers' – Redefining the cultural boundary of L2 learning at a discursive level in a study-abroad context

David Block: Communicative Competence: Revisited or reoriented?

Christine Raschka: What is communicative competence in a multilingual setting?

Jean-Marc Dewaele: The impact of multilingualism on self-perceived

communicative competence

Penelope Gardner-Chloros: Code-switching and Communicative Competence

Constant Leung: Communicative competence in English as an Additional/Second Language: beyond reification

Outcomes

We are considering a special issue in an international journal with a selection of papers presented at the seminar.

Implications for Applied Linguistics

We have brought the topic of Communicative Competence back on top of the agenda. It is clear that this concept remains fundamental in a wide area of subdomains within applied linguistics, including research on communication disorders, foreign language learning and teaching, and foreign language use.

I am delighted to announce that Prof Alison Wray has been elected as an Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences, following nomination by BAAL. (If you would like to see the names of other Academicians, please go to <http://www.acss.org.uk/about5.htm>.) Congratulations, Alison.

Susan Hunston

Dr Katie Scott has joined the Applied Linguistics section of the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University as Lecturer in Applied Linguistics and TESOL.

Paul Seedhouse

‘What do you read, my Lord?’ Some reflections on the role of literature in language teaching

If language learning is an ‘epiphenomenon of communicative interaction’ (Smith & Halibut 2003: iv), then the nature of that interaction must necessarily play a central role in determining learning outcomes. One key parameter, widely discussed since Otto Gabalunzie’s seminal paper (1984), is that of transparency. Broadly speaking, the more clearly specified and objectively interpretable the input to which learners are exposed, the more narrowly their possible responses are constrained. Conversely, the more the input lends itself to multiple interpretations, and the less learners are in a position to adjudicate between such interpretations, the broader their response-potential. In other words, input transparency is inversely proportional to communicative freedom, without which there is no scope for stretched output and consequent interlanguage restructuring (Gummiband & Carambo 1998). At one extreme, where the input consists primarily of the highly artificial and over-specified discourse samples found in the typical language coursebook, learner output ‘may effectively be reduced to nothing more than repetitive crypto-regurgitation’ (Frikadeller 2003: 19, 23, 26, 42, 89, 121, 342, 706). At the other end of the scale, well-chosen literary texts can provide precisely the level of input subjectivity which, by fostering maximally unconstrained output, offers optimal potential for interlanguage development.

Every poem is a dialogue to which the reader is invited to bring at least as much as the writer. When the poet says that the evening mist rising from the fields reminds him of lost love, the reader enriches the poem with a memory of city bus stops in April. When the poet describes his early deflowering in a Worcestershire cowshed, the reader, brought face to face with his unbearable failure to pay off his mortgage, goes and hangs himself. Truly, the artist bears a heavy responsibility. (Bunnahabhain 1993: 960)

Drama, with its multiple levels of discourse, is particularly rich in its provision of opportunities for individual interpretation, as Arapaho & Bejasus argue persuasively in their discussion of Hamlet (2001: 19).

The play’s centre – its ‘still turning point’ – is the moment when Polonius asks ‘What do you read, my Lord?’ and Hamlet replies ‘Words, words, words’. Here we have the clearest possible statement of the hyperdimensionality of drama: of the instantiation of its logos at one and the same time in a representation of an action, the mimetic process which embodies that representation, the text which encodes that process, and the intersecting reflections and refractions of all three. There are indeed at this point no less than five superimposed discourses: Polonius’ internalisation of his own utterance, Hamlet’s internalisation of Polonius’ utterance, Hamlet’s

internalisation of his reply, Polonius's internalisation of Hamlet's reply, and our, the eavesdroppers', distinct and separately valid internalisations of the verbal interaction. Now, with Polonius' multiply ambiguous response: 'What is the matter, my Lord?', ...

In responding to literary texts, the language learner in fact enjoys a unique advantage (Vachercher 2000). Unconstrained by built-in linguistic preconceptions, a non-native reader is open to interpretations which pass the native speaker by, and which can enhance the intrinsic opacity of a text in rich and unpredictable ways. Some striking examples are reported by Pinbottom (2003) in his account of an action research project carried out with a class of Samoyedic bus conductors, during which his 15 intermediate learners worked through a range of English classics. One of Pinbottom's subjects, for instance, perceived the 'two vast and trunkless legs' of Shelley's Ozymandias as belonging to an obese traveller named Stone who had lost his luggage. (How much more productive this response is, as a platform for task-based discussion or creative writing, than the standard 'Booking a hotel room' or 'At the lost property office' scenario.) Another student, confusing Ophelia with Othello, produced a novel and gripping interpretation of Hamlet which was further enhanced by her belief that her tutor's mention of the hero's 'tragic flaw' referred to the flagstones in the Elsinore chapel.

The linguistic creativity often manifested in literary texts also serves to liberate learners from the notion that there are fixed 'norms' on which their own production must converge. As corpus research is making increasingly clear (Petersilie et al 2005), the dividing line between formulaic and constructed language is neither clearly defined nor static, and strategic phraseological competence can be greatly enhanced by appropriate consciousness-raising activities. Shadrach and his colleagues (2007) report interesting results from a study in this area, in which they took Shakespeare's creative imagery as a platform for metaphor-generation by advanced non-native-speaking accountancy students. Some of their subjects' more valuable contributions to the English phraseological lexicon included the expressions *to nail one's trousers to the mast, as happy as a yoghurt pot, to jump off the rainbow, wind-surfing in the bath and she farts like a trooper*.

Although there is general agreement on the value of having a significant opacity quotient in input material, opinions on the question of total incomprehensibility are somewhat divided. While texts which cannot be understood at all offer maximum scope for individualised personal response, the exclusive study of such material is seen by some scholars as having certain disadvantages, well summarised by Zippo (2000). One is the fact that learners' processing of the input may move them towards the development of idiosyncratic and impenetrable 'litlects' (Pif 1998; see also Swan & Walter 1982 for a similar problem arising in other circumstances). On the

other hand, as Angst & LaTrouille point out (2004), the ‘referential white-out’ characteristic of impenetrable texts renders them ideal as vehicles for exploring aspects of morphosyntax. Dylan Thomas’s work, for instance, can usefully be mined for aspects of adverb formation:

Altarwise by owl light in the
halfway house
the gentleman lay graveward with
his furies

or -ing forms:

On field and sand
The twelve triangles of the cherub
wind
Engraving going.

Article use in maximally opaque texts can be particularly illuminating for language learners. Consider for example the following well-known lines from Eliot’s *Burnt Norton*:

Garlic and sapphires in the mud
clot the bedded axle tree.
The trilling wire in the blood
sings below inveterate scars
appeasing long-forgotten wars.

Here the poet uses the definite article – the grammatical signal that interlocutors are on common referential ground – as a way of counterfeiting shared experience, subliminally fooling the reader into believing that he or she knows just what mud and axle-tree, which trilling wire and whose blood are under discussion. Language learners, of course, are chronically in the position of having to pretend that they are on common ground with their speech partners, when in fact they may have no idea at all of what is being talked about. To discover that one of the most eminent of twentieth century poets operates on precisely the same lines as they do (and

furthermore, to identify at last a practical use for the definite article) is enormously empowering.

Conventional approaches to teaching can easily give learners a negative view of the gap between their own private, intramental language worlds, and the social, intermental interpretations and uses sanctioned by native speakers. All too often they are told that they have ‘misunderstood’ what they hear or read, or are made to feel inferior because their own utterances are interpreted in varied and contradictory ways by their interlocutors. Literature-based language work can help learners to see the communicative nexus in a different and altogether more positive light. Through study of this kind they come to realise that they are in principle in exactly the same position as other language users, from the supermarket shelf stacker to the greatest names in the history of literature. They belong by right, that is to say, to a vast linguistic and cultural community, no two members of which understand, or are understood, in the same way, to the extent indeed that they understand anything at all. Literature, as one of Shadrach *et al*’s subjects might have put it, is a level golf course.

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Michael Swan
swanmic@gmail.com

Language Networks: the new Word Grammar. By **R.A. Hudson**
Oxford: Oxford University Press. xii + 275 pp. 2007.

Language Networks is an ambitious book. It starts from the premise that language is basically a lexical network, and explores some of the areas that open up when we take this metaphor seriously. The argument put forward is that the network metaphor is much more powerful than people usually take it to be, and that a number of syntactic, morphological, semantic and sociolinguistic features of English and other languages can be accounted for in a very parsimonious way by simple network models. Specifically, in Chapter 2, Hudson argues that regular morphology can easily be described in terms of networks, and that these descriptions provide natural accounts for irregular morphology as well. Networks provide a natural and economical way of describing derivation and inflection in many languages, compounding in English, morphological structures, speech errors and clitics. In Chapter 3, networks are used to describe agreement, dependency types, and some problems arising from elliptical forms in English. Chapter 4 provides an elegant account of why gerunds in English are both noun and verb forms. Chapter 5 examines network approaches to semantics and sociolinguistics - notably, aspects of the behaviour of quantifiers, politeness forms and code switching phenomena.

This brief description will probably leave most readers gasping. How can a simple network approach explain so

many problems which have baffled linguists for many years, and how can they all fall to the same elementary structural analysis? The answer is that the solutions offered by *Language Networks* are not quite as straightforward as they appear to be at first sight. The main problem is that the underlying structure of the networks is rather difficult to pin down. At first, it looks as though the networks we are working with are essentially lexical networks, with words as nodes joined together by arcs which represent a small set of fundamental semantic relationships - perhaps as few as half a dozen. "Spreading activation" is what makes these networks deliver: activating specific nodes causes other nodes in the network to become active as well, and the result is - well, it's not at all clear what the result is. The activation spreads until it dissipates, so presumably the output of the network is a sequence of nodes which have become temporarily activated by the initial activation. The problem is how we interpret these sequences, and relate them to observable phenomena.

My own experience with writing computer programs that model the behaviour of networks suggests that they are much more tricky to handle than you would expect. Put together a set of 50 nodes, link each node to just a couple of other nodes, and you already have a network whose behaviour is full of surprises. Build a network of several thousand nodes, allow very dense connections of several different types between each node, and you have a model whose real properties are almost impossible to predict in any meaningful

sense. Most models of this type are inherently unstable, and the way they perform is full of unexpected, emergent behaviours - systematic high-level properties that appear spontaneously from the interactions that take place between low-level units in the network. It would be very difficult to build a large scale model which showed only the simple network relationships that *Language Networks* illustrates. Add to this a seriously underspecified spreading activation principle, and we have a model which is not sufficiently constrained to be really useful.

Worse, the networks described in *Language Networks* turn out to be much more complex than our initial description implies. The networks are not just lexical nodes connected by arcs that correspond to semantic primes. We also have nodes which are temporary, nodes which are created on the fly, nodes which correspond to abstract theoretical constructs, nodes which reflect sentence structure, nodes which reflect the status of speaker and hearer, nodes which correspond to the phonological segments of words and so on. The result is that the elegant simplicity which is promised in the introduction is seriously compromised. *Language Networks'* analysis of FARMERS, for example, contains eleven abstract nodes and fifteen differently labelled arcs, and takes up half a page, as well as the expected lexical and morphological nodes. I'm still not sure whether this is really an elegant account of the relevant morphology, but I am sure that scaling this network up to cover a relatively small vocabulary of, say, only a

thousand words would spawn a monster lexicon of humungous proportions. It's not surprising that the networks used as illustrations in *Language Networks* are partial and particular: the real complexities arise when we attempt to join these partial solutions into a comprehensive network that is not limited to just a single problem.

I am quite sure that the language as network metaphor is fundamentally correct. However, what is lacking in this book is a consideration of how you might set up computational models which would make these ideas work in practice. In a sense it's very easy to represent a problem as a network once you start thinking in these terms, and since there are few constraints on what can serve as a node, and even fewer constraints on the types of arc which can connect these nodes, it is not difficult to get to a "solution" for any specific problem - especially when you are able to choose the problems that you get to solve. But really this is going about things in the wrong way. What I would like to see is a more constrained type of modelling which put less emphasis on top-down solutions, and worked in a more bottom-up, suck-it-and-see kind of way. *Language Networks* frequently refers to L1 acquisition data, so why not set up a network model which contains a couple of hundred word-nodes, linked by a small number of arc types, and see what it does? Never mind the complexities of gerund constructions in English: can a model this simple do anything interesting at all? If not, what additional complexities would we need to build in before the network started to behave in a "realistic" or "interesting"

way? How would spreading activation work in a network of this type? What behaviours would it generate? Questions of this sort imply a very spare and minimalist approach to modelling which is seriously lacking in the analyses presented here.

In short, *Language Networks* is something of a tease. It promises a lot, but only offers you tantalising glimpses of a much larger whole. Don't let this review put you off reading it, though. The glimpses, brief though they are, are well worth the effort.

Paul Meara

University of Wales Swansea.

Forensic Linguistics: An introduction to Language, Crime and the Law
By John Olsson. London: Continuum
2004. ISBN: 0-8264-6109-3. £21.99
(paperback).

Although the term 'forensic linguistics' was originally coined in 1968 by Jan Svartvik, after his analysis of statements made by the executed 'killer' Timothy Evans led to his posthumous pardon, little happened in this field until work carried out by the acknowledged father of forensic linguistics, Malcolm Coulthard, in the early 1990s. Coulthard revealed the extent to which linguistics could be of service to the law by helping those who had suffered injustice, in particular the eventual pardon of the unjustly hanged Derek Bentley. Since then forensic linguistics has developed into several disciplines and sub-disciplines. The author, a former student of Coulthard's, points out how any text or item of spoken language

is potentially forensic evidence, adding how theoretically not only a will or a thesis but also a parking ticket might be a cause for examination. In practice, however, the forensic linguist will deal with a limited type of text including forged wills, plagiarised texts and false statements.

Areas dealt with in this title include authorship identification, which obviously seeks to discover who wrote what and how much of it. Less obvious is mode identification which works on ascertaining whether a text was produced by speech, writing or some combination of both, e.g. part self-written, part dictated, perhaps under duress. *Forensic Linguistics* also looks at the analysis of transcribed verbal statements in order to assess levels of completeness and bias, as well as statement analysis for veracity, and forensic phonetics which looks into speaker identification. Other areas such as language rights and courtroom discourse are, for reasons explained, ignored.

Before discussing the author's treatment of any lines of inquiry we perhaps need to know who might be a forensic linguist. The answer is almost anyone who deals with language, apparently. Voice identification might appeal to phoneticians, while emergency hoax calls might be of interest to the conversation analyst. Those with a background in psychology might be concerned with discovering what it is that separates genuine from simulated texts, while a foreign language specialist might be required to analyse an English language forensic text produced by

speakers of that foreign language. Teachers of young language learners might be involved in studying children's response to adult questions, what their answers might mean and their degree of reliability as witnesses.

The author has a specialist interest in forensic investigations stemming from his own postgraduate studies into the case of Derek Bentley, a tragedy referred to often in detail throughout this intriguing book, the first six chapters of which deal largely with authorship, the most central topic in forensic linguistics. Chapter one looks at previous authorship studies, including disputes over Shakespearian and biblical works. It details early scientific and statistical analyses before moving onto the use of computational linguistics in the 1980s in which powerful computers were first used to attempt to locate authorship algorithms and individual styles. The author draws on work by McMenamin (1993) and the 'Mrs Brown' case concerning attributing authorship of a questioned diary in a murder inquiry to show how examinations of punctuation, misspellings and the use of profanities revealed the true identity of the diarist.

Although referred to above, the author devotes chapter two to dispelling what he feels is little more than popular myth about the possibility that each of us has the potential to produce a linguistic fingerprint with which our texts might be located. He states of what he terms 'as yet unproven ideas': "...the proof of its existence is notable for its absence." The third chapter outlines briefly how courts in various countries perceive expert

evidence, ranging from interpretation of the Daubert criteria in the USA and the related acceptance of evidence by experts only if they have academic stature, to countries such as England and Wales where since the Woolf report in the 1990s 'the calling of expert-evidence should be under the complete control of the courts.

The general reader might like to jump the author's rather technical outline in chapter three of how Popperian and Baconian philosophy might be used for disproving theory, and move swiftly onto authorship inquiry in the following chapter, one which is much more likely to concern and interest the language teacher. In this, the author demonstrates how he approached a case involving attribution in which the president and other senior committee members of a dog club in the mid-west of the USA had received vicious anonymous letters. Examination of several potential orthographic markers, such as supernumerary punctuation items, led the investigation to believe the treasurer was responsible for the text.

Later chapters look at sampling and authorship and then single text inquiries, both of which involve more than just a little quantitative analyses and hypothesis testing using standard deviation. Beyond this Forensic Linguistics begins to deal with the much more interesting matter of putting together an author profile by analysing texts such as those stemming from the anthrax scare in 2001 following terrorist attacks on targets in the USA, and detecting plagiarism, a sin, according to the author, even Martin Luther

King Jr was apparently very often guilty of.

Chapter nine on analysing and categorising witness statements in order to assess the degree of veracity would be of immense value to studies in discourse analysis, and it is here that examination of the statement made by Derek Bentley reveals the mixture of register which pointed to the likelihood that the account was not fully his own, but mingled with that of the arresting officers too. Chapter ten is concerned with investigative linguistics and text types such as emergency calls, ransom demands and other threatening communications, suicide letters, final death row statements plus confessions and denials by public figures.

Forensic Linguistics is a timely text; until recently few courses in this area existed. It is intended for undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as non-specialists involved in law enforcement, such as solicitors, barristers and magistrates. As this is a textbook for students, prior to dealing with other more specialist topics like statement analysis and plagiarism, the author suggests working through the several exercises in each chapter, for each of which model answers are helpfully provided at the end of the book.

Wayne Trotman

Izmir Institute of Technology
Turkey.
waynetrotman@gmail.com

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The following books have been received for review. If you would like to review one of these books, please contact Dr Guoxing Yu, the Reviews Editor, at Guoxing.Yu@bristol.ac.uk (Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, 35 Berkeley Square, Bristol, BS8 1JA).

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Information for Contributors

Copy deadlines for the rest of this year

Please submit your contributions to *BAALNews* by the following dates:

Summer 2008: May 16th

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Please submit all material by email if at all possible to: n.w.groom@bham.ac.uk

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Annual Conference Overseas Scholarship	£1,000	1	31 March	BAAL Meetings Secretary
Applied Linguistics Activity Fund	£250	4	25 Feb 25 June 25 Sept	BAAL Secretary
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Chair (2006-2009)

Susan Hunston
Department of English
University of Birmingham
Birmingham B15 2TT
email: s.e.hunston@bham.ac.uk

Membership Secretary (2007-2010)

Lynn Erler
Department of Education
University of Oxford
15 Norham Gardens
Oxford OX2 6PY
lynn.erler@education.ox.ac.uk

Membership administration

Jeanie Taylor, Administrator
c/o Dovetail Management Consultancy
PO Box 6688
London SE15 3WB
email: admin@BAAL.org.uk

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British Association for Applied Linguistics

c/o Dovetail Management Consultancy Ltd
PO Box 6688, London SE15 3WB
admin@BAAL.org.uk

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