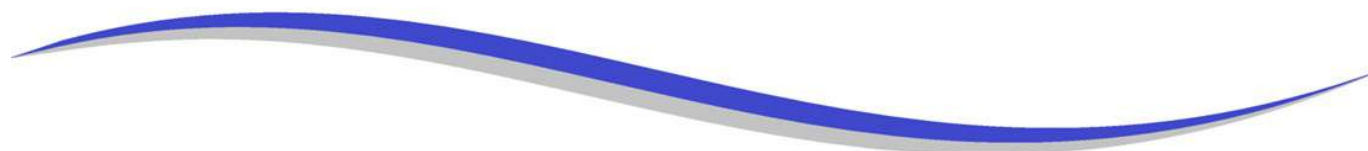


BAAL News

Issue 128
Autumn 2026



British Association for Applied Linguistics

Promoting understanding of language in use.

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to Issue 128 of *BAAL News*, which comes hot off the heels of BAAL's 2026 [Annual Conference](#) at Aston University. As a member of the Local Organising Committee it was wonderful to see so many BAAL members in attendance – if you were among them, I hope you enjoyed the conference.

In this issue's **BAAL Executive Committee Update**, BAAL Chair **Caroline Tagg** reports on initiatives supporting equality, diversity and inclusion, researcher development, solidarity memberships and the wider visibility of applied linguistics. As always, Caroline and the BAAL Executive Committee are keen to hear your feedback on our activities – if you have any thoughts or suggestions, [get in touch](#).

Our **Member Reports** include an update on the recent activities of the Coalition for Language Education by **Lucy Henning** and reports from two BAAL-Cambridge University Press seminars: **Natalie Braber** and **John Bellamy** report on *The sociolinguistics of industry: Perspectives on the language of mining, manufacturing and agriculture* and **Katie Webb** and colleagues report on *Beyond the Default: rethinking pseudonymisation in Applied Linguistics research*. We also hear from **Cara Penry Williams** and colleagues reporting on their recent BAAL Researcher Development Workshop *How do they do it? Discourse Analysis for insights into practices: An interdisciplinary showcase*.

This issue features three [Special Interest Group \(SIG\) Reports](#) – firstly, **Tomasz John** reflects on a PGR Research Dialogues event recently hosted by the Language, Education and Social Justice SIG. For the Language Policy SIG, **Abhi Sharma** reports from the 5th Language Policy Forum (and the first to be held outside of the UK) and **Jane Andrews** provides an update from the Research Involving Children SIG's annual conference on the theme *What's special about ethics in Applied Linguistics with children?*

We also remember **Professor Deborah Cameron**, with thanks to those who contributed their personal reflections on Debbie's life and career.

Our **Book Reviews** section features two reviews of recently published applied linguistics books. Thanks as always to our Reviews Editor **Argyro Kanaki** for coordinating the reviews, and to this issue's reviewers: **Sharif Alghazo** and **Sharon Freeman**. If you are interested in reviewing a book for a future issue of *BAAL News*, please [get in touch](#).

Robbie Love

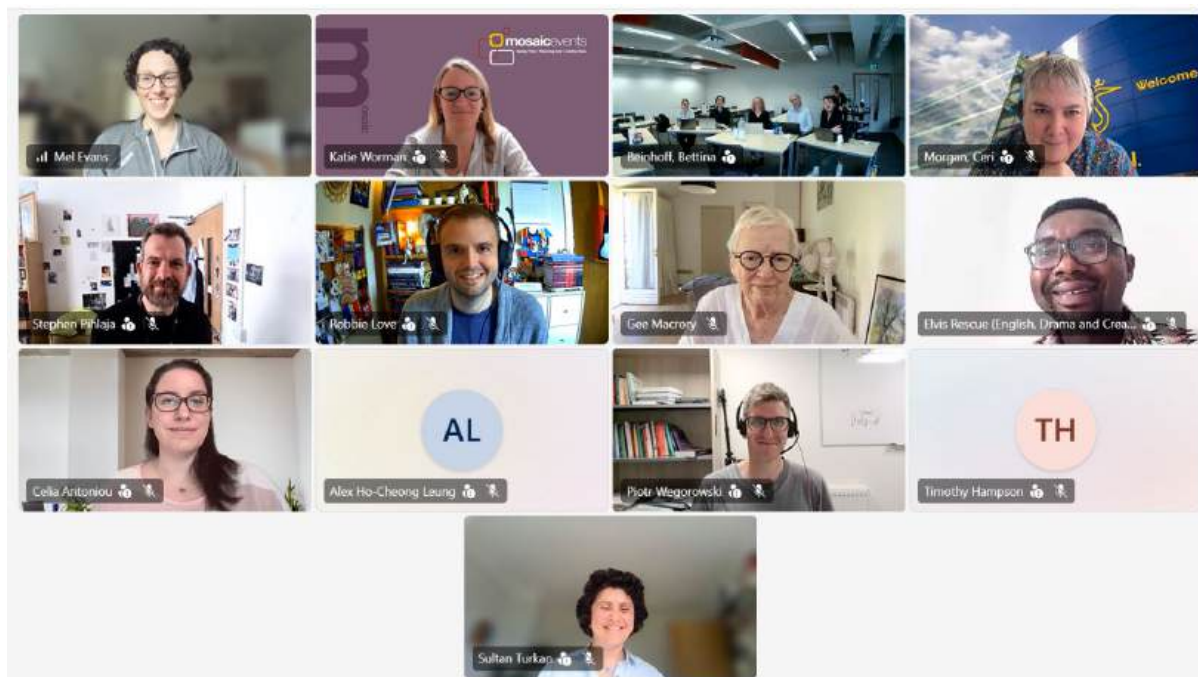
Editor, *BAAL News*

BAAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

August 2026

Caroline Tagg, BAAL Chair

baalchair@baal.org.uk



End of year update from your EC

Greetings from the BAAL Executive Committee (EC)! We held our EC hybrid meeting on Teams and at Anglia Ruskin University on Wednesday 3rd June to discuss our respective activities and plans. From the above screenshot, taken as ever by our Social Media Coordinator, Mel Evans, you probably can't make out who was in the room together but I can assure you we had biscuits. I wanted to use the newsletter to update you all on what the EC has been doing since the last edition in February.

Following approval at the AGM 2025 and a competitive process, Nahal Khabbazzbashi (University of Bedfordshire) has been appointed **BAAL EDI coordinator**, 2026-2027. Nahal joins the BAAL EC as a co-opted member to carry out an audit of our structures, practices and processes and how they shape representation and opportunities across the association. Nahal shared two calls with members on BAALmail for expressions of interest in joining the BAAL EDI task force; and supporting the audit through paid work as a PGR research assistant, and we look forward to the response.

We are delighted to announce that three applied linguists joined the **Academy of Social Sciences** as **AcSS Fellows** this year. A huge congratulations to Professor Suzanne Graham (University of Reading), Professor Antonella Sorace (University of Edinburgh) and Professor Luke Harding (Lancaster University). BAAL will be making further nominations ahead of next year's deadline in December 2026, and we welcome recommendations from members.

For the third year running, we have offered **Solidarity Memberships** to colleagues in applied linguistics who are based in a low- or middle-income country, have refugee status or do not have institutional affiliation or



secure work. We are pleased to announce that we were able to offer 12 memberships this year and plan to run the scheme again next year. Thanks to ordinary member Elvis ResCue for leading on this.

We were blown away by the huge response to our [Applied Linguistics Fund](#) call and the quality of the applications received. This is testament to the ambition, relevance and determination of the applied linguistics research community. Applicants have been notified and the winners will be announced shortly by organiser and BAAL ordinary member, Peter Browning.

The first [BAAL Leadership in Applied Linguistics Programme](#) ran from March to June 2026, involving 13 mid-career participants and, coincidentally, 13 speakers. The organising committee were delighted at the engagement, participation and insights provided by all involved and the degree to which we all learnt from each other. We intend to run the programme again, so please watch this space.

We're delighted to announce that UWE undergraduate student Frah Mohamed won the BAAL prize in the CLiE **National Video Competition 2026**. Please find a moment to watch their beautiful personal [reflection](#) in response to the question, 'What is linguistics?'

And finally, at the time of writing, [BAAL 2026 at Aston University](#) is shaping up to offer a mind-blowing insight into the depth and breadth of established and cutting-edge BAAL research. There are no less than 20 SIG tracks, from Asian Language Education in Global Contexts (ALEG) and Corpus Linguistics to Research Involving Children (RICH) and Vocabulary, lightning talks, poster presentations, the [BAAL book prize](#) ceremony, and a mentoring opportunity for postgraduate and early career researchers. There are colloquia on applied linguistics and the arts, English Medium Instruction, language in the school curriculum, diversity in applied linguistics research, early English language teaching, and of course the Committee for Linguistics in Education (CLiE) Forum on boosting our profile in schools. We hope to see many of you there!

We hope you have managed to take a break over the summer and can return somewhat refreshed for the new academic year. We look forward to working with you in 2026-2027!



MEMBER REPORTS

Special Issue of *Hillary Place Papers*

Huahui Zhao and Diana McCray (University of Leeds)

The School of Education at the University of Leeds has released its Special Issue of *Hillary Place Papers*, focusing on the often overlooked but critical role of **Pilot Studies in Educational Research**, edited by Dr Huahui Zhao, Dr Diana McCray and the PGR editorial team. This special issue brings together **supervisors' key messages** alongside rich, **reflective accounts from seven doctoral researchers** in education who conducted pilot studies as part of their research journeys.

The collection shows how pilot studies strengthen research design, sharpen methodological decision-making and foster reflexivity in early-career researchers. Together, these contributions reveal the practical, methodological and ethical value of pilot studies, reminding us that robust research grows from thoughtful, well-designed processes as much as from final findings.

You can access the open-access issue through our website: [Special Issue Ten - 2026 | Hillary Place Papers](#) or via [Special-Issue-Published-Version.pdf](#). If you have any enquiries, please contact Dr Huahui Zhao (h.zhao1@leeds.ac.uk) or Dr Diana McCray D.Mazgutova@leeds.ac.uk.



Annual Linguistics Research & Advances Conference (ALRAC 2026)

3rd-4th December 2026, online

Nataliia Gach (L&D initiatives)

Nataliia Gach Education Centre “L&D initiatives”, based in Kanton Zurich, Switzerland, is pleased to invite you to the **Annual Linguistics Research & Advances Conference (ALRAC 2026)**, which will take place **online** on **December 3-4, 2026**.

The conference provides a dynamic platform for scholars, researchers, and practitioners from around the world to share their work and exchange ideas in the field of linguistics. It aims to foster interdisciplinary dialogue and promote the exploration of current theoretical and applied issues in language research. Participants will have the opportunity to present their findings, engage in academic discussions, and establish connections with colleagues from the international linguistic community.

The conference programme includes plenary sessions, section meetings, and workshops, and we invite contributions from, but not limited to, the following fields:

- Theoretical linguistics (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics)
- Lexicography and terminology studies
- Applied linguistics and language education
- Pragmatics and discourse analysis
- Sociolinguistics
- Psycholinguistics and language acquisition
- Dialectology

- 
- Cognitive and neurolinguistics
 - Historical and diachronic linguistics
 - Corpus linguistics
 - Computational linguistics and natural language processing (NLP)
 - Linguistics of AI-generated language
 - Forensic linguistics
 - Interdisciplinary linguistics

The agenda may be adjusted based on the applications received.

Participation

Conference language – English.

To participate in the conference, please fill out a registration form on our [website](#) by **October 5, 2026**.

The confirmation of conference participation will be sent **within two weeks from the submission date but not later than October 19, 2026**.

Conference fee: € 120.

For participation in the conference both speakers and listeners will be **awarded with ECTS credits (1 ECTS credit for speakers and 0,5 ECTS credit for listeners)**, which will be stated in the certificate of attendance.

Certificates of attendance will be issued to all participants, including speakers and attendees, contingent upon their physical presence at the conference.

Requirements for speakers

Agenda: plenary speeches – 30 minutes, section speeches – 20 minutes; discussion time – 10 minutes.

Publication of abstracts

All conference participants may submit abstracts for publication. Abstracts will be published in the **e-Book of Abstracts containing ISBN and DOI numbers**. The language of publication is English. The deadline for abstracts submission is **October 5, 2026**. Abstracts must be downloaded in the registration form on our website.

All submitted abstracts will be subjected to the double-blind peer review process. The editorial board reserves the right to decline papers that contain plagiarized content or do not conform to the norms and subject matter of the conference.

Enquiries

For any questions concerning the conference, please contact *Dr. Nataliia Gach* at info@ld-initiatives.ch or by phone: +41 78 340 32 13.

Join us to explore new perspectives on language, exchange innovative ideas, and contribute to advancing research and collaboration in the field of linguistics!

Keynote speakers will be announced soon.





Coalition for Language Education Update

August 2026

Lucy Henning (The Open University)

[The Coalition for Language Education](#) was formed in 2024 from representatives of different fields and sectors in language education, including BAAL. We aim to facilitate collaboration between these groups who have all signed a [founding statement](#) of shared principles and priorities. The Coalition is represented on the [Committee for Linguistics in Education](#) and the editorial group of the [Languages Gateway](#). Over the past year we have continued to advocate for change in language education in accordance with our founding principles and in collaboration with the breadth of signatories to the Coalition Founding Statement.

Response to the Curriculum Assessment Review

The Coalition worked with committees and organisations concerned with language in education to contribute to and support responses to the Curriculum and Assessment Review for England, which published its final report in November 2025. As well as producing our own response, we collaborated with CLiE to produce [a digest of the responses of 19 expert language organisations to the Review's initial Call for Evidence](#), demonstrating areas of broad agreement across sectors. The Coalition also published a [response to the final report](#) on its website in January 2026. This response recognised positive advances in the Review, including greater emphasis on language diversity, oracy and media and digital literacies. However, there were also some significant areas of criticism. We noted the failure to imagine classroom language that extends beyond Standard English, the omission of any references to EAL in the final report, and the need to ensure that the proposed new oracy framework take account of linguistic diversity and multilingualism. Our response also raised concerns about proposals for inclusion of AI literacy in the curriculum. We argued that children and young people need support in order to critically appraise AI outputs and that this might involve drawing on sociological and communicative understandings as well as knowledge about language.

Day event March 2026

We held our [second symposium](#) on March 28th, entitled *Going Local in Language Education: Cities as Sites for Cross-sectoral Connection*. This brought together practitioners, researchers, community members and policymakers. The event was organised in collaboration with UCL's Platform for Linguistic and Epistemic Justice. Presenters included Steven Fawkes (Newcastle City of Languages) on grassroots festival initiatives in the North-East; Andy Green and Saif Osmani on Modern Cockney as a model for the recognition and development of non-standard Englishes; Clare Allison (NCLE Language Networks) on cross-city network development; Yongcan Liu and Anke Friedrich (CRiCLE and Cambridge Bilingual Groups) on integrated heritage language planning in Cambridge; Becky Winstanley (English for Action) on ESOL collaborations in Tower Hamlets; and Jelena Čalić, Eszter Tarsoly and Ramona Gönczöl (PLEJ/PROLang, UCL SSEES) on arts-based, community-centred work at the interface of modern and heritage/community languages. The symposium was successful in fostering cross-sector dialogue around emerging principles for locally driven, inclusive, and critically informed approaches to language education. Jelena Calic and Viktoria Magne's full report on the event can be found on the [Coalition website here](#), and there is follow-up on the conference in a forthcoming issue of the *EAL Journal*, which we will be widely available.

Response to UK Parliament's Call for Evidence on the proposed changes to the immigration system

In January 2026 we published [a response](#) to the UK Parliament's call for evidence on proposed changes to the immigration system. Our response expressed serious reservations about the language used throughout the call for evidence, and the way in which language competency is considered as a requirement for settlement



and citizenship. We emphasised that Integration is a two-way process, where the responsibility for good relations and social cohesion lies both with migrants and the settled population, and we pointed to widespread commitment in civil society to supporting migrants and refugees with English language learning, telling a story about hospitality, of communities willing to come together, and of local resilience against attempts to stoke hatred and division. This is in stark contrast to policies which have created a crisis in ESOL and EAL provision and an overall lack of UK wide direction on English language teaching for migrants, despite policy differences across the four nations. The response concludes:

In place of obliging migrants to undertake years of stressful high-stakes English language assessments, the UK needs effectively organised provision [...], supported by enhanced models of language teacher education that equip teachers with the confidence and tools to make the migrant language classroom a place of belonging, where issues of social justice, citizenship, and inclusion can be addressed and explored.

The Parliamentary committee has just published its [report](#), and cites the Coalition's comments on the lack of coherent policy across the four nations in Chapter 5.

Continuing work

As well as ESOL and immigration policy, we will continue to monitor ongoing school curriculum reform and to respond to DfE consultations, we are hosting a Round Table on "Language in the School Curriculum" at the 2026 BAAL conference, addressing future directions for multilingualism and interdisciplinarity, Media and AI literacy, EAL, and languages other than English. More generally, we have been building cross-sectoral connections by bringing different groups together, inviting them to tell each other about their work, and this has proved very energising. But we are now also exploring the scope for a more systematic comparison of the different disciplines in language education, collaboratively mapping sector-specific perspectives, priorities and challenges, recognising that coalitions are strengthened by an understanding of differences as well as similarities.

To join us and contribute to the work of the Coalition, is very straightforward – go to [our website](#) where you can join our mailing list and/or become a signatory to the Coalition's founding principles.



The sociolinguistics of industry: Perspectives on the language of mining, manufacturing and agriculture

BAAL-Cambridge University Press Seminar 2025-26

17th June 2026, Nottingham Trent University

Natalie Braber (Nottingham Trent University) and John Bellamy (Manchester Metropolitan University)

In June 2026, we were pleased to host the BAAL-CUP seminar on *The sociolinguistics of industry: Perspectives on the language of mining, manufacturing and agriculture* at Nottingham Trent University. The seminar was delivered in hybrid format, both on campus and with an online interactive livestream. The seminar explored directions in sociolinguistic research on the language of industry, bringing together scholarship in an area that to date has predominantly been researched as separate, discrete projects rather than as part of a coordinated collaborative specialism. Some key examples are Millar et al.'s (2014) linguistic research amongst traditional Scottish fishing communities, Leach's (2018) study in Stoke-on-Trent and Pecht's (2021) project in a mining community in Limburg, Belgium. With an audience of around thirty participants attending in person, together



with further participants joining via the online livestream, the seminar comprised a diverse group of academics, early career researchers and practitioners from museum and heritage organisations. The following objectives underpinned the event:

1. To foster collaboration, networking and knowledge exchange amongst researchers and practitioners who share a common interest in language in industrial contexts (including post-industrial).
2. To nurture fresh lines of enquiry to advance our current understanding of the sociolinguistic dimensions of industry and its linguistic heritage, especially for directions that progress beyond industrial contexts that are Western-centric or situated mainly in the Global North.
3. To establish meaningful links between research and practice in this specialist domain, so that findings can be constructively integrated into cultural projects and institutions, including museums, local heritage groups and civic regeneration efforts.
4. To encourage participation from early career researchers and PGR students who are working on topics in connection with the Sociolinguistics of Industry.

The seminar was prompted by the recognition that many common threads run through existing research in this area which would benefit from a broader comprehensive view. These threads include specialised registers of language, historical developments (including oral history), linguistic endangerment, cultural heritage, dialectology and multiple intersections with identity (including regional, intergenerational and worker solidarity). The event was timely because the British government has recently ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and is considering how to implement it. Furthermore, many linguistic practices related to industry are at risk of dying out, creating an urgency behind developing collaborative research practices to tackle such linguistic endangerment. The linguistic analysis of industrial practices has been undertaken from many angles, including phonological (Devlin 2014), morphosyntactic (Pecht 2021) and lexical (Braber 2022). The seminar engaged with historical trajectories (Bellamy and Braber forthcoming), the contemporary commodification of dialect (Beal 2009) and approaches from oral history (Braber 2025). Building on the broad geographical scope in the special issue by Cornips and Muysken (2019) on 'Language in the Mines', the seminar sought to expand the scope beyond the mines to embrace linguistic practices across other industrial sectors and regions, forming the wider specialist domain of 'the sociolinguistics of industry', and to encourage research from industrial and social contexts internationally, many of which have been largely overlooked in sociolinguistic research on industry.

The programme opened with a welcome and introduction by Natalie Braber and John Bellamy. The first contribution was given by Benjamin Price, Senior Learning Officer at *Big Pit National Coal Museum* in Blaenavon, Wales. He reflected on the part played by museums in supporting learning with schools and how the museum can foster engagement through a focus on the experience of coal children. His talk covered lexical variation and intersections with the Welsh language, folklore and local oral history collections. The second contribution was given by Colin Hyde of the *East Midlands Oral History Archive*, who presented on aspects of linguistic analysis undertaken by the archive, along with projects such as *Village Voices* and *Knitting Together*. He surveyed the different collections of *Industrial Memories*, including language in Leicester's shoe industry, together with glossaries such as the *Getting the Coal* book. He also spoke about the Science Museum's Congruence Engine, underlining how important cataloguing information and metadata are for heritage collections. The third contribution, delivered by Natalie Braber addressed the recently ratified 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In this context, language tends to be recognised 'as a vehicle' for heritage rather than language itself being recognised. She drew on the example of the [Nottingham Lingo website](#) in her talk.

The keynote was delivered by Rajend Mesthrie (University of Cape Town), who focused on Fanakalo (also Fanagalo), a language of South African miners. The name of the language, Fanakalo, means 'do it like this'. His talk included observations of a potential Cornish influence on the language and discussed the role of Fanakalo in [the Marikana massacre](#), where the call by the striking miners 'Let's speak Fanakalo' was a



powerful gesture of solidarity. The keynote stimulated discussion of a number of further questions, including whether the usage of Fanakalo as a solidarity marker has broadened to include domains beyond mining.

After a networking lunch break, the afternoon began with a workshop for ECRs and PGR students, where key topics around sociolinguistic data collection and working with heritage organisations were discussed. The workshop was led by two core questions:

1. How to integrate sociolinguistic data into the provision of museums of industry? What types of data lend themselves well to museum exhibitions and displays, and/or visitor experiences?
2. How might sociolinguistic research and researchers support museums of industry, and vice versa?

The workshop was designed to bring together an in-person group and an online group, with a half-hour of discussion in groups followed by a half-hour of feedback and joint discussion. Participants included doctoral students at different stages of their PhD and working on a range of topics related to industry and sociolinguistics.

The seminar closed with a roundtable on language, industry, museums and heritage, in which practitioners and researchers discussed the links between language, industry and heritage. The discussion was structured around three questions:

1. The potential challenges, pitfalls and ideas for improving collaboration between museums of industry, archives and UNESCO and academics
2. How sociolinguists and museums of industry, archives and UNESCO understand 'heritage', including convergences and divergences
3. What are next steps?

Some of the key points emerging from the final section of the seminar were the role of co-production in this area of research and best practices for museums to collaborate. Participants reflected on what the 'end product' of such collaborations might be, noting that the output for academics might be different from what museums are striving for. Themes that frequently arose in this final section were the intergenerational dimension of industrially-influenced language, performative masculinity and intersections with other forms of culture in industry, such as brass bands and poetry. The seminar sought solutions on some of the practical matters, for example what happens when funding stops, how to overcome potential disconnects between grant writing and what museum practitioners need, as well as ways of forming effective, mutually-beneficial partnerships across different sectors.

Overall, the seminar demonstrated the value of bringing together the sociolinguistic study of industry as a co-ordinated collaborative specialism spanning mining, manufacturing and agriculture, and of pairing researchers with practitioners from museum, heritage and UNESCO contexts. The keynote on Fanakalo exemplified the comparative, international dimension that the seminar aimed to encourage, moving the conversation beyond the Western-centric, mainly Global North contexts that have predominated in this field. The discussions pointed to valuable intersections across disciplines, methodologies and analytical approaches, including with migration, policy, ecology and the environment. We are grateful to BAAL and Cambridge University Press for the opportunity to host this seminar.

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Beyond the Default: rethinking pseudonymisation in Applied Linguistics research

BAAL-Cambridge University Press Seminar 2025-26

13th July 2026, University of Warwick

Katie Webb,¹ Kathryn Sidaway,² Marianna Patrick,¹ Nusrat Gulzar¹ and Yanyan Li¹

¹University of Warwick; University of Bedfordshire²

We are delighted to report on the successful hosting of the BAAL/Cambridge University Press Seminar, *Beyond the Default: Rethinking Pseudonymisation in Applied Linguistics Research*, at the University of Warwick on 13th July.

Rationale

The use of pseudonyms to protect participants' identities is widely recognised as standard practice in qualitative and Applied Linguistics research (Guenther, 2009; Heaton, 2022; Wang et al., 2024). However, precisely because pseudonymisation has become such a taken-for-granted aspect of research practice, the assumptions and rationales underpinning naming decisions often remain unexplored (Guenther, 2009; Wang et al., 2024). The seminar therefore sought to create a reflective space to explore the ethical complexities of naming, examine how pseudonymisation shapes participants' voices and researcher-participant relationships and support researchers in moving from procedural compliance to reflexive ethical practice.

Participants and format

In total, the event featured 17 short talks, a plenary discussion, and several interactive sessions, bringing together both online and in-person participants. The 18 presenters joined either remotely or on site from a diverse range of locations, including London, Glasgow, Graz, Saudi Arabia and New York. Sessions were delivered in a hybrid format, enabling in-person attendees to engage with both face-to-face and online presentations, while remote participants could join dedicated online sessions. This approach ensured broad participation and accessibility throughout the event. We were particularly pleased to welcome participants

from London, Nottingham, Leicester, Graz and Tunisia, whose attendance was made possible through scholarships generously funded by BAAL.

The event

We welcomed attendees from a range of countries and universities. The focus and tone of the seminar were set as soon as delegates arrived and discovered that they would be choosing a pseudonym rather than wearing the traditional name badge.

Reactions quickly moved from surprise to deep thought as attendees realised that this was not an easy choice to make; how did they want to present themselves to others? Did any of the names sufficiently represent their identity either real, imagined or desired? The range of reasons behind the decision-making process was shared and discussed as part of the first activity. As this was a relatively small event, we wanted to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to contribute their viewpoints, and to do so, we aimed to create a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere. This informed our decision to facilitate a 'Find someone who...?' mingling activity, where everyone moved around the room asking questions to get to know each other and share their pseudonyms. Delegates then returned to their tables to share their answers and reflect on how it felt to be addressed by the pseudonym that were using.

This activity was followed by the first parallel sessions, 1A and 1B. Session 1A explored when and whether researchers should pseudonymise or name participants. Drawing on intercultural learning research, social media journalism in authoritarian settings and university ethics committee experience, the talks questioned assumptions that anonymisation is always the safest or most ethical option. Discussions highlighted the importance of considering participant visibility, political risk and context-specific ethical responsibilities, while calling for more flexible, theoretically grounded decision-making.

Session 1B offered a critical perspective on pseudonymisation across healthcare and educational settings. Presenters framed naming as an evolving ethical practice shaped by researcher agency, power relations, institutional constraints and questions of identifiability. The talks and discussion moved beyond viewing pseudonymisation as a one-off procedural decision, instead emphasising the relational and ethical complexities involved in protecting participants while ensuring appropriate and authentic representation.

Following this were parallel Sessions 2A and 2B. Session 2A focused on participant naming practices in qualitative language learning research and the role of collaborative pseudonymisation in shaping participant representation. Drawing on research with Japanese learners of English and British learners of Mandarin Chinese, both speakers highlighted how participants engage with naming processes in different ways, with some using pseudonym choice as a means of self-expression and identity representation, while others preferred greater distance from the process. In parallel, Session 2B comprised three online talks focused on the importance of identity representation and the risk of pseudonymisation erasing and silencing participants, particularly when someone has already chosen a name for themselves away from the research or when a researcher chooses a pseudonym without considering its potentially negative connotations.

Session 3A examined pseudonymisation through the lens of individual research relationships. Drawing on fieldwork in contexts ranging from ESOL classrooms in England and linguistic anthropological research with Italian executives to a participatory study of expert teachers in India, speakers reflected on tensions between institutional constraints, participants' own wishes about how they are identified and the ethical



Participants and their pseudonyms

responsibilities involved in representing real people on the page, with one speaker describing a decision to forgo pseudonymisation entirely.

Session 3B highlighted the need for a nuanced and reflexive stance towards naming practices. Presenters discussed the role of researcher discretion in shaping participant agency through self-selected pseudonyms, how identifiability can persist through contextual and relational details, and the challenges of preserving meaningful aspects of identity while balancing risks of deductive disclosure in small research.



Plenary discussion with Steve Mann, Ema Ushioda and Maggie Kubanyiova

The plenary session was a discussion between Professors Ema Ushioda, Maggie Kubanyiova, and Steve Mann, moderated by Dr Katie Webb. What made the session particularly memorable was its spirit of candour. The speakers reflected honestly on their research careers, acknowledging that they had used many of the approaches discussed throughout the day, from generic labels, such as Participant 1, to pseudonymised names and places, and that, in retrospect, identifiability had sometimes been more illusory than real. Context, voice and circumstance often meant that those close to the research could still identify participants. The format of the seminar was especially well suited to this kind of exchange. The intimate scale created space for established scholars to speak not from a position of authority but from lived experience, sharing the uncertainties, missteps and evolving thinking. Attendees were able to engage with them directly and informally in ways that a larger conference rarely allows.

The final activity for in-person attendees focused on ethical dilemmas. Each of the five organisers shared a naming dilemma from our research experience, which attendees discussed in small groups and reported how they would deal with the challenge with the wider group. This provided everyone with the opportunity to reflect and draw on everything that had been presented and discussed throughout the day, illustrating the real-world practical applicability of the seminar.

Takeaways and Implications

Several key themes emerged. Many researchers reflected that, in hindsight, they would have made different decisions about naming and representation, underscoring that there is rarely a single “right” or “wrong”



approach. As Maggie Kubanyiova argued, naming participants is only one way of recognising their contributions, and not all contributions need to be represented in the same way. This perspective encourages researchers to move beyond binary approaches and adopt context-sensitive practices that reflect participants' preferences and project needs. As such, ethical decision-making should be viewed as an ongoing, reflective process that evolves throughout a research project, rather than as a one-off decision made at the outset.

Discussions also highlighted the role of institutional ethics processes. While ethics committees are essential for protecting participants, the binary options often built into ethics application forms can reinforce established practices rather than encourage consideration of a broader range of ethical possibilities. More flexible processes could better support nuanced, context-specific decisions that balance participant autonomy, recognition, and protection.

Feedback

Two strands of feedback informed the evaluation of the event: real-time participant reflections captured through Mentimeter and post-event feedback. Mentimeter was utilised throughout the day for interactive activities. It offered a space for participants to reflect on and share their impressions on naming practices. Using the polling and word cloud features, they responded to warm-up questions about pseudonymisation, participant identity and ethics, generating thought-provoking responses.

What is the biggest emotion you feel when thinking about confronting your university ethics board about creative or collaborative pseudonymisation?



Answers from one of the Mentimeters

Post-event feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. Respondents praised the thoughtful conception and organisation of the event, the variety of perspectives, and opportunities to engage in detailed discussions with other delegates. Online attendees also noted that the hybrid format did not diminish the sense of connection or the quality of the scholarly exchanges.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to BAAL and Cambridge University Press for generously funding this event. Without their support, it would not have been possible. We are also grateful to our plenary speakers and presenters for their insightful and thought-provoking sessions, and to all participants for their engagement, contributions, and valuable sharing throughout the day.



Seminar organisers, presenters and in-person attendees

Full abstracts and details of all sessions are available [here](#).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Katie Webb at **k.webb@warwick.ac.uk**.

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How do they do it? Discourse Analysis for insights into practices: An interdisciplinary showcase

BAAL Researcher Development Workshop 2026

23rd June 2026, University of Derby

Cara Penry Williams, Hannah Valenzuela, Jennifer Marshall and Maria Urbina Montana (University of Derby)

With the support of the BAAL funding, we were able to offer a free practical workshop that explored a range of applications of discourse analysis using different approaches. We believed that researchers, particularly in the early stages of postgraduate study or a career, may feel confused or even overwhelmed by the differences in theoretical perspectives and methods. Even those with experience in one approach may feel unclear about others and how they contrast. The day aimed to do the following:

1. Showcase a range of approaches to discourse analysis in interdisciplinary settings
2. Provide hands-on opportunities to 'try out' Corpus Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis or Conversation Analysis in a supportive atmosphere and with guidance
3. Enable discussion about what each approach does and does not do, including beyond the most usual uses
4. Provide opportunities for participants to reflect on current or proposed projects and how the different approaches might be helpful or appropriate
5. Build new connections and networks amongst participants

We welcomed participants to the Kedleston Road buildings of the University of Derby. After some initial socialising over coffee and pastries, the morning began with an overview focussed on contrasting discourse analysis research approaches with [Dr Cara Penry Williams](#). This was followed by four short showcases of methods-in-practice:

- Conversation Analysis: *Multilingual learners' co-construction of learner identities* led by [Dr Hannah Valenzuela](#) looked at data gathered as part of a linguistic ethnography and demonstrated a step-by-step model for analysing talk
- Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis: *Conformity through fear: Covid-19 information adverts* led by [Dr Henry Lennon](#), in which he talked through his analysis published in CADAAD (Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines) (Henry is at the Open University now so presented via Teams)
- Critical Discourse Analysis: *Using Critical Discourse Analysis to understand the use of Generative AI in Latin American Journalism* led by [Dr Maria Urbina Montana](#), which overviewed her approach on some of her ongoing work on this topic
- Corpus Linguistics: *Using a corpus to identify relationships between word usage and academic achievement* led by [Dr Jennifer Marshall](#), discussed some of the complexities of decision-making processes and procedures in corpus-based projects



Dr Jennifer Marshall during her morning showcase presentation (photo: Cara Penry Williams)

Particular attention was paid to the selection of an appropriate approach, its practical application, the conduct of the analysis and the ways these choices generated insights into practice.



Dr Maria Urbina Montana leading her afternoon workshop (photo: Cara Penry Williams)

In the afternoon, there was time for discussion of participants' current and future research plans, choices being considered and questions about different possibilities. This led into participation in one of three hands-on workshops, led by the organisers along with [Dr Carrie Childs](#), using active data sets so that participants could experience the opportunities and challenges of either Conversation Analysis, Corpus Linguistics or Multimodal/Critical Discourse Analysis.

Fourteen participants, from 12 institutions in England and Northern Ireland, and of different career stages, braved the heat travel to participate in the day. With the funding, we were able to support PhDs and ECRs that travelled the greatest distances (using public transport) splitting this bursary to partially cover costs from a wider number of people rather than paying for just a few.

It was terrific to see how much networking and discussion there was amongst those who came, many of whom had felt alone in the problems they were considering. The very positive feedback suggested that our aims for the day were met. Comments on the feedback form or in thank you emails included:

- *I feel so much more confident and informed to move into my next steps of data analysis*
- *Really practical and helpful, probably the best workshop day I have attended. Thank you for being approachable and open to all our questions!*
- *the welcoming atmosphere and excellent organisation contributed to making the event so engaging*

All participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statements 'I feel more connected to a community of researchers' and 'I gained new insights relevant to my research'.



Everyone talking over lunch (photo: Yi Kan)



A PhD candidate in Psychology at the University of Derby, who joined BAAL to attend the event, offered us the following reflection:

[...] I found the breadth of information during the BAAL Researcher Development Workshop very valuable. Although my specific form of discourse analysis was not covered in this workshop, I am now well equipped to defend my methodological approach over others. A PhD can often feel like a lone journey, but through attending events like this, I have been able to forge a sense of belonging within our academic community. [...] Becoming a BAAL member has meant I also have access to online resources and have been invited to several free of charge online talks. I would have no hesitation in recommending BAAL workshops and events to my peers.

-- [Sarah Mason](#)

Several participants would have liked to attend more of the afternoon workshops. It may be that future stand-alone hands-on methods workshops might be useful to continue developing researchers' skills.

We are very grateful to BAAL for allowing us to run this free event and support the BAAL community around discourse analysis, and so pleased by the response and convivial atmosphere on the day. Thank you also to our undergraduate student volunteer Sophie Cureton who helped out on the day and to Notts and Derby buses, who gifted travel to the campus. We hope to run similar events in the future, given that this does appear to be an area where researchers are interested but need some support.



SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP REPORTS

Language, Education and Social Justice (LESJ) SIG

PGR Research Dialogues 2026: critical, collegial and energising doctoral conversations

Tomasz John (University of Strathclyde), LESJ SIG Communications Officer

On Thursday 23rd April 2026, the BAAL Language and Education for Social Justice SIG hosted its first online PGR Research Dialogues, bringing together postgraduate researchers working across the intersections of language, education and social justice. The event was designed as a supportive and collegial space for doctoral researchers to present work-in-progress, share ideas and engage in critical dialogue with peers and senior colleagues.

The afternoon opened with a plenary talk, “Beyond the Default: Rethinking Pseudonymisation in Applied Linguistics Research,” delivered by Katie Webb, Yanyan Li and Kathryn Sidaway. Connected to their BAAL Cambridge Seminar-sponsored project, the plenary invited participants to rethink pseudonymisation not simply as an ethics-procedure requirement, but as a deeply consequential representational practice. Through interactive discussion, the speakers foregrounded questions of naming, voice, identity and researcher responsibility, asking what is at stake when researchers make decisions about how participants are represented in applied linguistics research. This provided a powerful conceptual opening for the event, reminding participants that methodological choices are also ethical and political choices. The plenary was a taster of the group’s main seminar on 13th July at the University of Warwick and a good opportunity to encourage early career researchers to join the event that aimed to provide a reflective space for exploring the ethics of how we name research participants, move beyond mere compliance, and deepen reflexive ethical practices in linguistics.

The main part of our PGR Dialogues event featured twelve PGR presentations across three concurrent breakout rooms, showcasing the breadth of doctoral research currently being undertaken in language, education and social justice. Several presentations explored how language education can reproduce or challenge inequality in specific policy and classroom contexts. Camila Marchant Orellana’s paper on English teaching and the reproduction of inequality in Chile opened up questions about language, power and educational stratification, while Ingrid Nanne Lippmann’s presentation on bilingual language education policy in Mayan languages in Guatemala highlighted the complex relationship between language rights, policy implementation and Indigenous linguistic justice.

Other papers focused on multilingualism, identity and transitions across educational settings. Haixin Zhou’s work on Chinese students moving from schools in China to international schooling in Dubai brought attention to translanguaging, mobility and educational transition, while Han Dong’s presentation on adolescents’ voices in family language policy used a raciolinguistic perspective to examine how young people experience and negotiate language practices within families. The programme also foregrounded community-based and





minoritised language education, including Mitchell Culhane's work on community language schools as sites of social (in)justice, as well as questions of inclusion and pedagogy through Misha May Khalaf's presentation on queering ESOL through co-production and LGBTQ+ inclusion in Scotland.

A further set of presentations extended the conversation into curriculum, ecology, literacy and classroom language ideologies. Aiman Jamilah Abdul Rahman considered language education as a pathway to empowerment, transformation and social justice, while Ari Setyorini's work on ecofeminist approaches to EFL materials development brought environmental and gender justice into conversation with language pedagogy. Zoleikha Malekpoor's presentation on literacy, materiality and social justice invited participants to rethink literacy otherwise, and Areej Alhejely's research-in-progress on translanguaging and English-only orientations in a UK ESOL classroom raised important questions about structure, agency and classroom language ideologies.

One of the strongest features of the event was its emphasis on dialogue rather than performance. The short presentation format, followed by dedicated discussion, created space for rigorous but supportive exchange. We set up a dedicated [PGR Dialogues Padlet](#) where all participants were able to leave comments about their presenters' research. Participants particularly valued the researcher sessions, the five-minute discussions after each presentation, and the final summary. Feedback described the event as "a very positive and encouraging exchange," with several participants noting that they enjoyed meeting other PhD researchers working in similar areas. Other presenters reflected that, although it was their first full ten-minute presentation, they felt supported throughout and appreciated the opportunity to share their work.

The concluding reflections drew together several key threads: the importance of theoretical framing, the need to account for research limitations, and the value of writing towards the tensions in one's data rather than away from them. Across the afternoon, the PGR Dialogues demonstrated the value of creating scholarly spaces that are critical, generous and intellectually energising. The event did not simply showcase doctoral research; it modelled the kind of community the BAAL LESJ SIG seeks to nurture, one committed to equity, reflexivity, collaboration and the transformative possibilities of language education. Encouraged by the success of the format and by subsequent interest from colleagues and members in future activities, the BAAL LESJ SIG committee is already planning to continue the PGR Research Dialogues next year and to develop further events that respond to the needs of its growing community of early career researchers.



Language Policy SIG

Brief report on Language Policy Forum 2026

Abhi Sharma (Jawaharlal Nehru University), Language Policy SIG Communications Secretary



The BAAL Language Policy Special Interest Group (henceforth 'SIG') organised the 5th Language Policy Forum 2026 on the 22nd-23rd May 2026, at Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain. The Forum focused on the theme 'Benefits and Challenges of Language Policy in the 21st Century' and featured Plenary Addresses by Andrew Shorten (University of Limerick, Ireland) and Lily Chimunya (Covenant University, Nigeria). Xavier Vila Moreno, Minister of Language Policy, Government of Catalonia was the Guest of Honour.

The Forum was a resounding success with 66 delegates in total from 23 countries and four continents, and a number of other visitors including a cohort of students for the plenary addresses. There was also an Advice Panel for Early Career Researchers to learn about 'achieving impact', comprising panelists from academia, government, and media – listed on the [conference website](#). Slides of the Plenary Addresses, the Conference Programme and the Abstract Booklet can be accessed through the SIG's [website](#). Videos of the plenaries are linked in the programme.

This was the first time the LPF took place outside the UK, and the BAAL Language Policy SIG Committee expresses its gratitude to Javier Moreno-Rivero (Universidad Complutense de Madrid) and his team of student volunteers for hosting the event and ensuring that the event ran efficiently. The SIG Committee also sincerely thanks the diverse delegates for making the effort to travel to the venue as well as for their insightful and informative presentations.

After the Conference, delegates were asked for feedback. 42 per cent of the delegates responded, and the SIG is pleased to announce that the Conference was given an average overall score of 8.6/10. The SIG was also heartened by the positive comments from delegates about the welcoming atmosphere and the quality of the contributions. This bodes very well for the future!



Plenary – Andrew Shorten



Advice panel

The LPF was beneficial for the SIG membership, as many conference delegates joined the SIG as new members. The SIG welcomes its new members and would like to use this report as an opportunity to remind fellow policy researchers that the BAAL Language Policy Group's mailing list is a place to share any and all news about language policy around the world – new research, emerging policy developments, job opportunities, other related conferences and queries one may have about anything in the field of language policy. This list is a resource for us all; please feel free to send anything of interest to langpol@jiscmail.ac.uk

The BAAL Language Policy SIG would like to conclude this Report by expressing its gratitude to all for their support to the SIG and the Forum and would also like to inform everyone that the [call for hosts for LPF 2027](#) is still open, with a deadline of 13 May. Please consider hosting us! Some pictures from the Forum are added below.

Sincere thanks from the BAAL Language Policy SIG Committee

- Leanne Henderson (Co-Convenor)
- Dave Sayers (Co-Convenor)
- Hao Zhang (Treasurer)
- Abhi Sharma (Communications Secretary)
- Vasilica Mocanu (Membership Secretary)
- Tetyana Lunova (Conference Secretary)
- Aziz Moummou (Events Secretary)
- Michele Gazzola (External Liaison Secretary)
- Rozitah Abu Samah (Ordinary Member)
- Oluwafisayo Atanda (Ordinary Member)
- Javier Moreno-Rivero (Local Chair for LPF 2026)



The SIG at work

Research Involving Children (RICH) SIG

Report from BAAL RICH SIG 2nd Annual Conference on “What’s special about ethics in Applied Linguistics with children?”

Jane Andrews (University of the West of England), RICH SIG Ordinary Member

The BAAL Research Involving Children SIG (RICH SIG) held its second annual conference online on Tuesday 9th June 2026 and the focus was on “What’s special about ethics in Applied Linguistics with children”. Thirty-eight attendees joined the event which started with an opportunity for us to network together and share current research. We then welcomed a keynote address from Dr Afua Twum Danso Imoh (Associate Professor in Global Childhoods and Welfare, University of Bristol) on the topic of “Troubling Understandings of Childhood Competence in Research Ethics Governance Processes and Implications for Research with Children and their Families”. This was followed by a panel discussion in which Dr Afua Twum Danso Imoh, Professor Annamaria Pinter (University of Warwick) and Professor Jane Andrews (University of the West of England) explored these questions, along with contributions from the attendees:



1. Do you think ethics guidelines always take into account different ways of understanding childhood and communication?
2. What advice would you give to someone preparing their first ethics application for work with children (and young people)?
3. What do you find to be the most challenging aspect of working ethically with children and young people? What kinds of considerations support your decision making when negotiating these challenges?
4. Do you feel that ethical concerns for working with children have changed over your career?

The afternoon session was divided into four presentations from RICH SIG members as follows:

- Dobrochna Futro (University of Glasgow): *Co-researching with children by using art practice-as-research*
- Weizhao Gong and Junjie Li (affiliated with the University of Warwick): *Creative approach as ethical praxis in qualitative longitudinal research with children: Insights into microethics*
- Fatma F. S. Said (Zayed University, UAE): *Co-constructing linguistic worlds: The ethical imperative of including young multilingual children's voices*
- Zoe Welsh (University of the West of England): *What's love got to do with it? A participatory action research project on enriched provision for newly arrived refugees and asylum-seekers in primary schools in England*

The RICH SIG committee is very grateful to the speakers for their engaging perspectives on ethics and research with young children in applied linguistics and to attendees who supported our second annual event. We look forward to continuing the conversation on ethics and broader issues related to research involving children in the 2026-27 academic year.



OBITUARIES: DEBORAH CAMERON (1958-2026)

In January, the BAAL community mourned the loss of Debbie Cameron, who held the Rupert Murdoch Professorship in Language and Communication at the University of Oxford from 2004-2023. Debbie's association with BAAL includes her plenary at the 25th BAAL Annual Meeting in 1992 and BAAL's recognition of her book *Verbal Hygiene* (1995) which was awarded the 1996 BAAL Book Prize. We are grateful to colleagues from The Open University for offering their personal reflections on Debbie's life and career.



Recollections from the Open University, UK

Sharon Goodman, Ann Hewings, Janet Maybin, Barbara Mayor, Philip Seargeant, Joan Swann (The Open University)

Debbie Cameron was a brilliant academic. She helped define the field of language and gender and was influential way beyond this. *Verbal Hygiene* is a prime example of her insistence on taking everyday ideas about language seriously, and subjecting these, as well as academic ideas, to critical scrutiny.

Each of us would say that, in one way or another, Debbie shaped our ideas on language, and the applied linguistic study of language. But equally significant was the clarity and sharpness of thought that she brought to the discipline. She was a brilliant communicator. She made complex ideas accessible and relevant within and beyond academia – you only have to look at her wonderful blog [Language: a feminist guide](#) to see this in action. This public engagement was a vital part of her contribution to the fields in which she wrote.

At the Open University, over the years we have drawn on many aspects of her work in our course materials, e.g. on readings from *Verbal Hygiene*, *Good to Talk*, the collaboratively authored *Researching Language: Issues of power and method*. Debbie gave us an impressive interview on 'Performance and performativity', clarifying the potential of two rather abstract concepts. She was one of a number of experts offering insights on language in an early TV programme, *An A-Z of English*. In this tightly constrained format, she was incredibly clear and concise.

We were grateful when Debbie agreed to be the External Assessor for our Level 2 English Language module. And not a little daunted – we knew of her directness, if not, on occasion, acerbity! But what shone through was her collegiality. She shared the OU ideal of openness (to people, places, methods, and ideas) and was tremendously supportive of our work. Her extensive and critical knowledge of the field, including new and emergent voices, enabled her to advise on materials that would stand the test of time. As an educator, she was consistently hands-on and student-focussed. Her guiding principles were realistic expectations of students and the best pedagogic solutions for teaching the basics of any subject.

Debbie was always highly engaged. She rolled up her sleeves, she got stuck in. The most vivid memory we have was her suggestion about some quite radical restructuring that would streamline the content to make the whole module more coherent. We're not sure many other externals would have made this type of bold suggestion - but a danger in producing teaching materials is often a desire to cover far too much, so this sort of intervention was very helpful. And it was based on her own experience of and commitment to writing accessible but academically rigorous books.

As a (later) external examiner Debbie was meticulous, determined to ensure fairness and justice for students.

Academic reputations are built on ground-breaking research and contributions to theory – and Debbie did this in spades. But academic fields are also constructed and reconstructed in teaching, and in testing academic ideas beyond the confines of academia. Debbie's innovative and practical academic and pedagogic

contributions across the breadth of applied linguistics will remain long after her too soon departure. Researchers and teachers will build on them to inspire new generations of students to observe, study and critique the language we use.

Deborah Cameron – my DPhil supervisor

Kristina Hultgren (The Open University)

My first encounter with Debbie's work was in 1998 when I was writing my master's thesis at the University of Copenhagen on language and gender. If Debbie's work I drew on there, on the performative nature of gender, had shaped the direction of my thesis, her subsequent work *Good to Talk* (2000) inspired me to embark on a PhD. I am unsure if I had become an academic had it not been for Debbie. Debbie's book *Good to Talk* critically dismantled how communication, the very object of our discipline, had been co-opted by market forces that pretended to value it while in effect exploiting it for commercial purposes.

I plucked up the courage to approach Debbie and ask her if she would supervise me for a proposed PhD on the gendered and regulated nature of communication in the service economy. I was delighted when she agreed. As a supervisor, Debbie's feedback was often minimal. I didn't understand this at the time; I do now. I think she set me tasks with quiet purpose: a reader's report, ostensibly simple, actually designed to make sure I'd read the foundational literature properly and to see how I made sense of it. Very early on, she told me a thesis needs a core argument. When I pushed back, keen to see where my findings took me before settling on an argument, she paused and reconsidered: 'Hmmm, okay, maybe you're right', indicating that she was not rigid. Her advice nevertheless helped me decide on an argument earlier than I probably would have otherwise, helping me not only stay focused and complete on time but also be clear on my purpose and core contribution to knowledge. To be clear about your key contribution and argument is advice I now give routinely to my own research students. Always in awe of Debbie's clarity of writing, I was startled when she once revealed that she wrote at least twenty drafts of everything she produced: her prose always seemed to arrive fully formed, lucid and confident in a way I've spent my career trying to emulate.

Apart from her clarity of writing, another thing I strive to carry with me from Debbie is to always question everything. The world is how it is because of power, dominance and vested interests. And it can be undone and changed if enough people are willing. That Debbie saw these interests, named them, and built an entire critique around them is testament to her analytical acuity and uncompromising nature. But Debbie's integrity also meant that she was not always easy. She had no patience for small talk, even at conferences, and she made that clear. Nonetheless, she was also unexpectedly present in small, human ways, including when I fell pregnant and contracted pre-eclampsia during the last stages of my thesis, at dinners at her place and mine, and at the many invitations she generously accepted to give talks and lectures in Danish academic circles.

I could not improve on what I wrote to Debbie in my thesis acknowledgements, so I will simply repeat it here: her clarity of thought, her precise style of writing, and her refusal to swim with the current have fundamentally shaped my professional career and personal trajectory and will continue to be an inspiration to me.



Debbie in 2008 at the University of Oxford, opening a bottle of wine to celebrate my successfully passed DPhil viva



BOOK REVIEWS

Book review: *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Systemic Functional Linguistics*

Jonathan J. Webster, David Butt, Federico Navarro, Carol Webster (Eds.) (2026)

Bloomsbury Academic, ISBN 978-1-3501-9431-1, 400 pages

Reviewed by: Sharif Alghazo, University of Sharjah / The University of Jordan

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a theory of language developed by Michael Halliday in the 1960s–70s. It views language not as a set of rules but as a social semiotic system — a resource people use to make meaning in context. In this meaning-making resource, “each element is explained by reference to its function in the total linguistic system” (Halliday, 1994, xiv). SFL is distinguished from many other linguistic theories by its explicit commitment to social relevance and practical application. As Yu (2026, p. 18) argues, “[o]ne major concern of SFL is to address real-life practical problems, hence making SFL an ‘applied linguistics’”. This orientation is not incidental but foundational to the theory itself: Halliday designed SFL as a meaning-centred framework precisely because understanding how language functions in social contexts has direct implications for education, professional communication, and beyond. This broad applicability has inspired a rich and growing body of scholarly literature, with numerous books and studies dedicated to exploring, extending, and applying SFL across a wide range of disciplines and contexts. *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Systemic Functional Linguistics* is a case in point. It is a substantial and timely second edition of a volume first published in 2009, now reconfigured for a field that has expanded considerably in theoretical reach and descriptive scope. Unlike some handbooks that merely catalogue established concepts, this volume attempts to present SFL as a living intellectual project: a theory of language, a theory of meaning, a theory of social semiotic action and, crucially, a theory whose value lies in its capacity to illuminate real instances of language use. Its central achievement is that it neither reduces SFL to a set of analytical labels nor treats it simply as a method for discourse analysis. Rather, it foregrounds the deeper Hallidayan proposition that language is a meaning-making resource, a system of choices through which human beings construe experience, enact social relations and organise discourse.

The handbook contains twelve chapters arranged into three parts: foundations, applications and explorations, and mapping the field. The editors’ introduction is particularly effective in establishing the volume’s governing rationale. SFL is presented as “the theory of choice” (p. 1) for students of language, but the phrase is meaningful in two senses: SFL is a theory centred on choice, and it is also presented as a preferred theory for those interested in how language works in actual social life. The introduction rightly emphasises Halliday’s commitment to description rather than abstract theorising for its own sake. This is one of the strengths of the volume: theory is repeatedly shown to matter because it enables a more powerful description. This is SFL at its best: theoretically ambitious, descriptively grounded and socially consequential.

Part I is the conceptual centre of the book. Halliday’s chapter gives the volume its strongest theoretical anchor. It reminds readers that SFL is not simply a grammar of English but a general theory of language as a system, an instance, and a potential for meaning. Hasan’s chapter on context is equally important because it resists treating context as an external background. Context is theorised as a systemic category, not as a vague sociological surround. This is crucial, since much applied work that invokes “context” often fails to specify how contextual variables relate to semantic and lexico-grammatical choices. Hasan’s contribution remains



one of the most rigorous correctives to such looseness. Martin's chapter on discourse studies extends this contextual orientation into register, genre and discourse semantics. It shows why SFL has been so influential in education, literacy studies and multimodal discourse analysis. Painter's chapter on language development and Jones's chapter on education further strengthen this pedagogical dimension. The inclusion of education is especially appropriate because SFL has always been unusually attentive to the relationship between language, learning and social access. The volume, therefore, avoids the common separation between linguistic theory and educational practice. In SFL, such a separation is never absolute: pedagogy feeds theory, and theory refines pedagogy.

Part II is narrower but valuable. Butt and Lukin's chapter on stylistic analysis shows how literary meaning can be examined through patterns of lexico-grammatical choice without reducing literature to mechanical linguistic description. The chapter's strength lies in its insistence that stylistic analysis requires interpretation, not merely the labelling of transitivity, mood or cohesion. Achugar and Pérez's chapter on critical discourse studies is one of the most politically engaged contributions. It demonstrates how SFL can reveal the semiotic construction of contested social meanings such as motherhood, militancy, testimony and political trauma. Low's chapter on television commercials extends the volume's semiotic range by showing how verbal, visual, spatial, and temporal resources are orchestrated in multimodal meaning-making.

Part III is perhaps the most ambitious and, in some respects, the most demanding part of the book. Matthiessen's chapter offers a vast cartography of SFL's expansion. Its value lies not only in summarising developments but also in asking what kind of future SFL should have. The chapter recognises developments in big data, machine learning, network science, impact-oriented research, multilingual studies, and metalingual phenomena. Matthiessen's important distinction between analysis, description, comparison and theory is especially useful. He argues that SFL training has often privileged text analysis, whereas the field also needs stronger preparation in language description, comparison, and theory-building. The "Keywords" chapter, based on Halliday's definitions and accompanied by visual representations, is a useful conceptual resource. It gives readers access to key terms such as system, structure, realisation, rank scale, semiosis, context, cohesion, metaphor, probability and function. O'Donnell's resources chapter is also practical and welcome, especially for newcomers trying to locate courses, software, bibliographies and networks in the field. These final chapters make the handbook useful not only as a scholarly reference but also as an entry point into the international SFL community.

The volume's major strength is its fidelity to SFL's foundational insight: language is not a self-contained formal object but a social semiotic system. This gives the book intellectual coherence. Across chapters, language is consistently treated as functional, stratified, meta-functional, contextual and probabilistic. The volume also succeeds in showing that SFL's relevance is not confined to clause grammar. It moves from grammar to context, from discourse to development, from education to film, from literary stylistics to multimodal advertising, and from established concepts to future directions. However, the book also has limitations. First, its selectivity is both a strength and a weakness. The compact structure makes the volume easy to read, but some important areas receive limited attention. Translation studies, corpus linguistics, forensic linguistics and artificial intelligence are not given the sustained chapter-level treatment that one might expect in a handbook published in 2026. This is particularly noticeable given the rapid expansion of SFL into multilingual, computational and multimodal domains. Second, while the volume rightly emphasises the Hallidayan tradition, it is less dialogic with other linguistic theories than it could be.

The volume is intellectually rich, but it remains largely inward facing. It explains SFL powerfully to those already sympathetic to its assumptions, but it does less to stage a sustained encounter with cognitive linguistics, corpus-assisted discourse studies or interactional linguistics. A handbook of SFL need not subordinate itself to external paradigms, but it can benefit from more explicitly showing where SFL converges with, diverges from, and challenges them. For advanced readers, such internal debates are not distractions; they are part of the field's theoretical vitality. A more explicit discussion of contested concepts such as genre, appraisal, multimodality, and the social semiotic scale would have made the volume even stronger. The



strength of the handbook lies in its editorial coherence. Rather than assembling disparate chapters under a loose thematic umbrella, the editors structure the handbook around a clear intellectual trajectory: from core principles (Part I) through applied demonstrations (Part II) to panoramic field mapping (Part III). This tripartite architecture is not merely organisational — it enacts the very SFL principle it explicates, namely that meaning is simultaneously ideational, interpersonal, and textual.

Despite these minor limitations, this is a powerful and meaningful contribution. Its importance lies not simply in updating a previous edition, but in reaffirming the intellectual seriousness of SFL at a time when linguistic inquiry is increasingly pulled toward computational abstraction and decontextualised models of language. The handbook reminds us that language is not merely a pattern, a prediction, or a form. It is meaning in social life. It is a choice under contextual conditions. It is grammar as a theory of experience. It is discourse as social action. For students, the book offers a demanding but rewarding introduction to core SFL concepts. For researchers, it provides a map of the field's foundations and future directions. For applied linguists, it demonstrates why SFL remains one of the most productive frameworks for connecting linguistic description with education, discourse, ideology and multimodality. The book is not flawless, and its coverage is necessarily selective, but it is intellectually serious, theoretically grounded and deeply useful. It deserves to be read not only by systemic functional linguists, but also by applied linguists, discourse analysts, literacy researchers and scholars interested in how language organises human experience.

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Book review: *Researching Multilingually: Conceptual and Methodological Failures, Struggles and Successes*

Bridget Goodman, Brian Seilstad (Eds.) (2025)

Multilingual Matters, ISBN 978-1-78892-568-6, 318 pages

Reviewed by: Sharon Freeman, University of Leicester

This timely book examines what ‘researching multilingually’ means in practice and theory. It presents a rich collection of testimonies from scholars from a wide variety of contexts. These diverse researchers outline their choices, challenges and sometimes failures encountered in trying to conduct multilingual research, tying these to existing theories. These honest reflections on issues affecting many of us in applied linguistics research are refreshing and make for an excellent read.

The book is divided into three main sections: revisiting and reimagining multilingual approaches to research, wrestling with the complexity of researching multilingually, and embracing the challenges of researching multilingually. It offers a rich tapestry of experiences from different parts of the world and displays a commitment to creating new contexts, opportunities and understanding of, and for, multilingual people.

Across the first section of the book, contributors repeatedly challenge the monoglossic assumptions and ideologies found and embedded in academia and research practice, by introducing new multilingual and heteroglossic approaches. With studies ranging from Algeria to Japan, post-monolingual and translanguaging positions are explained. Researchers share their experiences of using their multilingualism as “a resource for research itself” (Liddicoat and Derivry-Plard, p.17) advocating for constant reflection on how, what and with whom we research, and how we present and communicate our findings. Singh and Li argue that to normalise societal multilingualism we should utilise multilingual thinking tools in research to decolonise knowledge production (p.31). Language teachers explore translanguaging through autoethnography leading to a chapter with “messy authenticity” (Muller and Adamson, p.71). Meanwhile, the concept of transknowledging is introduced by Nguyễn who argues that doctoral students, who may have conceptual knowledge from their multilingual repertoires, are limited by the questionable monolingual assumption of universities that original contributions to knowledge must be in Tiếng Anh (English). This section is particularly effective in demonstrating how multilingual methodologies can unsettle dominant epistemological assumptions.

The second section of the book highlights the tensions and challenges of researching multilingually. It offers tentative support on how to work through these issues, whether in an emerging EMI context, in researcher identity, through the notion of ‘failure’, or by taking a flexible, heteroglossic approach to allow for participants to engage more fully. The reader is encouraged to “recognize, and draw each others’ attention to, the full linguistic landscape” of our research contexts (Goodman and Almukhambetova, p.115). We are also reminded by Back that our research is often “just a blip in our participant’s lived experiences” (p.145), so if we experience “failure” we can take comfort from language learners’ own agency to shape their multilingual life, negotiating languages and identities. Meanwhile, Park and Im (p.147) share how they moved from a focus on accuracy, to an understanding that successful interaction and communication were far more important. Finally, in this section, we are reminded that encouraging use of primary language “doesn’t inevitably lead to richer data” (Racelis et al, p.166). This section clearly illustrates the complexity, diversity and depth of thinking needed to undertake multilingual research effectively.

The final section embraces the challenges of such research, suggesting novel approaches and creating space and possibilities between cultures and identities, whilst not being afraid to elaborate on ‘pockets of discomfort’ for researchers and participants. Yumarnamto shares how they feel about serving “two masters”,



as they translate into English to reach a wider academic audience, but are troubled that they have betrayed their Indonesian audience (p.193). Subsequently, Willans and Prasad reflect on how language choices can empower or disempower and question to what extent research participants really do participate (p.196). The dilemma of researcher positionality is considered by Sari, pointing out that insider/outsider identities are not necessarily binary opposites (p.233). Meanwhile, Said considers the challenges and strategies of working with multilingual data in sociolinguistics, questioning how we “shift the field to view multilingualism as normal” (p.251). This section clearly demonstrates how the hegemony of English “hovers” over most of the contributors in the book (Jacobs, p.268).

Many of the researchers in this edited volume comment on how monoglossic ideologies present barriers to their own research and to deeper engagement with multilingual people. The contributors demonstrate their attempts to overcome these barriers and humanise the research process, enabling greater understanding and empathy. The hegemony of English is questioned throughout, whilst the tension of having to write in English for this volume and academic journals is acknowledged. Reflections on this hegemony and suggestions to contest it at all stages of the research process are shared. Positionality and the fluid negotiations required to develop intra- and inter-cultural communication and understanding are also discussed.

One potential limitation of the book is that its breadth of contexts perhaps comes at the expense of sustained depth. However, by foregrounding the complexity and messiness of researching multilingually, this collection offers glimpses of what should be considered and what is possible. It encourages researchers to engage with such approaches themselves, while recognising that it can often be an imperfect and evolving process.

This important volume reflects on the complexities of researching multilingually and wrestles with the practicalities of challenging hegemonies and ideologies. It proposes new ways of understanding multilingual research and best practice, through researchers’ reflections on their methodological struggles, practice and positionality. This approach makes it an invaluable read for others grappling with similar issues in their own work and challenges us to consider how we could conduct our own research differently, to ensure “social equity, inclusion and justice” (Goodman and Seilstad, p.312).





Books available for review

The following books are available for review. If you would like to review one of them, please contact the Reviews Editor, **Dr Argyro Kanaki**, School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law, Division of Education and Society, University of Dundee (a.kanaki@dundee.ac.uk). Your review should be submitted as an email attachment in MS Word within two months of receiving the book.

If you wish to review a book that is not included on this list, a review copy or digital edition may be available from the publisher. Please send the full bibliographic details of the publication to the Reviews Editor for consideration.

Ahlgren, K., & Molina, C. (2026). *Languages we live by: Exploring sociolinguistic trajectories*. Multilingual Matters.

Bao, D., O'Reilly, D., & Barnes, M. (Eds.). (2026). *Diversity and inclusivity in English language education: International perspectives*. Multilingual Matters.

Banerjee, J. V., & Tsagari, D. (Eds.). (2025). *Contemporary second language assessment*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Burns, A., & Dikilitaş, K. (Eds.). (2026). *The Routledge handbook of language teacher action research*. Routledge.

Farr, F., & Murray, L. (Eds.). (2026). *The Routledge handbook of language learning and technology* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Imaz Agirre, A., & Arias-Hermoso, R. (Eds.). (2026). *Insights into disciplinary literacies: Multilingual perspectives across educational levels*. Multilingual Matters.

Lankiewicz, H. A., & Wąsikiewicz-Firlej, E. (Eds.). (2026). *Multilingual repertoires in mobility: Navigating between language, culture and identity*. De Gruyter Brill.

Leung, C., & Lewkowicz, J. (Eds.). (2026). *The Routledge companion to English studies* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Marcet, E. (2026). *Developing L2 pragmatic competence: A cognitive approach to oral interaction*. Multilingual Matters.

Mesthrie, R., & Makoni, S. (Eds.). (2025). *The De Gruyter handbook of language diversity*. De Gruyter Brill.

Pérez-Milans, M. (Ed.). (2025). *The De Gruyter handbook of language and globalization*. De Gruyter Brill.

Philippakos, Z., Katsarou, E., & Sipitanos, K. (Eds.). (2026). *Artificial intelligence in literacy education: Foundations, practices and innovations*. Routledge.

Pladevall-Ballester, E. (Ed.). (2026). *Peer interaction in the foreign language classroom*. Multilingual Matters.

Samata, S. (2025). *Cultural memory of language*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Selvi, A. F., & Galloway, N. (Eds.). (2026). *The Routledge handbook of teaching English as an international language*. Routledge.

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- updates on BAAL Special Interest Group activities
- discussion pieces
- contributions to our *Multilingualism in Focus* section, written in any language other than English
- book reviews (please contact the Reviews Editor, Dr Argyro Kanaki: a.kanaki@dundee.ac.uk)

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Please submit all material by email, with the subject line 'BAAL News', to: r.love@aston.ac.uk

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