BAAL Corpus Linguistics Special Interest Group

Business Meeting held at King's College, London
12.30 10th September 2004
Chair: Paul Thompson
Present: Tilly Harrison (minutes), Verena Jung, Alison Sealey, Martin Edwardes, Gerlinde Mautner, Jill Lake, David Oakey, Fiona Barker, Crayton Walker, Haihua Wang, Minako Yamada, Martin Wynne

1) Minutes of Previous Meeting
   The minutes of the previous meeting of 16th April 2004 have been available on the Internet. No objections were raised.
2) Matters Arising
   No matters arising.
3) Chair's Report on SIG Activities and outcome of BAAL EC discussion of SIG issues
   PT reported that the Corpus Linguistics SIG report has been submitted to the EC and the SIG has now been formally recognised. A committee and a constitution should now be created.
4) Discussion of Draft Constitution and Coordinating Committee's Roles and Responsibilities
   The Linguistic Ethnography SIG have already written a constitution which could be used as a template. Since the EC already know this document it would make it easier to get it approved. A draft constitution and Roles and Responsibilities of CL SIG Coordinating Committee Members (drawn up by PT on 2nd September 2004) was circulated with the meeting agenda.
   ACTION New Committee to finalise wording of constitution and roles and responsibilities of Coordinating Committee Members
   PT suggested that a formal statement of what the SIG is for will be useful both internally (for BAAL members) and externally (for relations with outside bodies). It should state what is distinctive about the SIG, answering the question why there should be a Corpus Linguistics SIG (when all areas of interest to BAAL members can potentially use corpora.)
   JL commented that it would be good if the SIG had input from computational linguists and corpus developers as well as those who are researching given corpora.
   TH suggested that a benefit to members could be 'training workshops' where such experts could be invited to share their knowledge, perhaps as part of SIG meetings.

PT commented that members of the SIG seems to fall into two groups – those who are hoping to learn about corpus linguistics and those who already are fairly expert and seek to discuss theoretical issues at a high level with peers who have similar interests. It was agreed that at this stage it was good for the SIG to encourage membership from all levels of expertise.

Issues of the SIG's identity at the conference was raised since for some it was not clear whether the Corpus Linguistics track and the SIG were the same thing. PT reported that it was felt that SIGs should have either a Colloquium or a track but not both. One problem at the conference was that Colloquia and Tracks seem to be 'sealed' and thus draw participants away from stand alone papers. The programme should remain more flexible and 'swappable'. Colloquia and Tracks at present do not seem to be particularly different (papers are presented on a similar theme) except that Colloquia allow for a panel discussion at the end and participants can contribute as well as ask questions.

It was agreed that the SIG Statement should reflect the open nature of the SIG.

ACTION New Committee to draft formal statement

5) Election of Officers

PT explained that as the SIG was starting up, posts on the committee would be for different terms (one year or two years) to allow for a rolling membership and continuity in future.

The posts were filled as follows (none of the posts were contested so no elections were required)

Two Year Posts

Convenor – Paul Thompson (nominated by Gerlinde Mautner and seconded by Verena Jung)

Treasurer – Tilly Harrison (nominated by Paul Thompson and seconded by David Oakey)

Ordinary Member – Verena Jung (nominated by Martin Wynne and seconded by Martin Edwardes)

One Year Posts

Communications Secretary – David Oakey (nominated by Tilly Harrison and seconded by Alison Sealey)

Meetings Coordinator – Susan Hunston (nominated by Paul Thompson and seconded by Martin Edwardes)

Ordinary Member – Fiona Barker (nominated by Jill Lake and seconded by Alison Sealey)

6) Spring Meeting

PT asked whether members wanted more than one Spring Meeting – perhaps a few members could meet intensively on an issue and report

back to the SIG. The Meeting could also be used as a chance to collaborate with other organisations.

GM raised a comment about the naming of the Spring Meeting – if it was renamed as a Conference or Symposium it would be easier for some members to gain funding to attend.

A possible title was suggested by PT 'Methodological Issues in Analysing Multiword Units'. It was not yet decided whether this would be a separate meeting or part of the Corpus Linguistics Conference held in Birmingham in April.

VJ raised the issue of the differing interests of those who work on monolingual corpora and those who are interested in bilingual corpora and translation issues – perhaps separate workshops could be arranged?

ACTION New Committee to finalise dates and content of Spring Meeting

7) AOB

PT raised the issue of where SIG issues are best discussed – on the e-mail list or on a Discussion section of the Website. ME suggested that past e-mail discussion should be made available on the website. PT reported that the archived version is being kept at University of Reading and can be linked to the website. It is at present password protected. It was suggested that parts of the previous discussions could be put up on the website, with the originators' permission. The Communications Secretary would need to coordinate this. Overall it was felt that discussion should continue on e-mail at present.

PT reported that Eurocall have recently set up their own Corpus SIG. It was agreed that it would be good to link up with them for possible future collaboration.