

MINUTES OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION AGM

THURSDAY 24 July 2008

6:05pm The Annual General Meeting was opened by Cecilia Colombi, out-going Chair of ISFLA.

ATTENDEES

Cecilia Colombi, Wendy Bowcher-Vervenne, Zhongshe Lu, Huang Guowen, Estela Moyano, Peter Wylie, Elena Sheldon, Helen Jenkins, Peter White, Alexanne Don, Deb Coleman-George, Jill Kealley, Derek Irwin, Tom Bartlett, Alison Moore, Ivan Berachny, Eija Ventola, Canzhong Wu, Abhishek Kumar, Francisco Veloso, Christian Matthiessen, Susanto, Masa-aki Tatsuki, Makoto Sasaki, Masamichi Washitake, Toru Fujita, Jose Duran, Helen Tebble, Anne Isaac, Hua Guo, Sandhya Gopalakrishnan,, Gopal Ramparihar, K. Ratna Shiela Mani, Sukhdev Singh, Pattama Jor Patpong, Adriana Pagano, Louise Ravelli, Kazuhiro Teruya, Stella Neumann, Christina Boccia, Gabrina Pounds, Jim Martin, Sue Hood, Natalia Ignatieva, Estela Moyano, Mick O'Donnell, Susan Hoadley, Rosemary Huisman, Sabine Bartsch Frances Christie (50)

Apologies were noted and are listed below.

APOLOGIES

Leila Barbara, Fang Yan, Mary Schleppegrell, Brad Smith, Geoff Williams, Elke Teich, Honglin Chen, Beverly Derewianka, Pauline Jones, Susan Feez (10)

Minutes from Previous AGM

Rosemary Huisman moved that the minutes be accepted pending executive approval (as they were unavailable during the meeting, but had been available for 10 months on the ISFLA website)

This motion was seconded by Frances Christie. The motion was carried.

Chair's Report

Cecilia thanked everyone for attending the conference, and expressed her general thanks for help and support during her term as Chair of the ISFLA executive committee.

She said that the past three years had been productive in establishing new contacts, and enabling new scholars to attend the ISFC.

Elections for New Executive Committee

Cecilia outlined the process of the elections. There has been a nominating committee chaired by Geoff Williams, and every three years the chair, the deputy chair and the recording secretary rotate. The committee tries to rotate between different regions. This year the positions of Chair, deputy chair and recording secretary will be changed.

The nominations committee chaired by Geoff Williams proposed the following nominees:

- Chair: Geoff Thompson
- Deputy Chair: Huang Guowen
- Membership Secretary: Mick O'Donnell (to continue)
- Recording Secretary: Derek Irwin
- Treasurers: Treasurers from the various regions are to remain the same except for the Australian treasurer Brad Smith (now in Singapore) to be replaced by Honglin Chen. (Europe: Robin Fawcett, North America: Mary Schleppegrell)
- The International Committee Members:
 - Rosemary Huisman (Australia)
 - Bernie Mohan (North America)
 - Elke Teich (Germany)
 - Masa-aki Tatsuki (Japan)
 - Tom Bartlett (UK)
 - Zhu Yongsheng (China)

There was a call for any other nominations.

Christian Matthiessen raised the possibility of expanding the international committee in line with the expanding countries and regions in which SFL is now represented.

Cecilia noted that Gillian Moss (representing the Latin American region) was not up for re-election as her three year term started two years ago.

Cecilia noted that we have the possibility of expanding and that that was one of the things that had been voted on. Up to nine regions could be represented on the international committee. It is important to find ways to stimulate interest from the emerging regions.

Eija Ventola mentioned that since the Nordic group is organising itself, perhaps we could add someone from that region.

Wendy Bowcher-Vervenne mentioned that she thought that this point had previously been discussed and that we had come up with the idea of rotating regional representatives because it could become quite unwieldy with a lot of members.

Cecilia mentioned that she understood that if the region was strong enough it could be represented.

Frances Christie mentioned that Africa could be represented, and that it has been suggested a couple of times but no-one has yet been nominated. She said that she felt that the general view was that there was a strong enough presence in Africa.

Abhishek Kumar noted that regions could make nominations to the committee.

Robin Fawcett mentioned that he understood that the executive committee has the power to appoint a representative from a region if the region does not come up with somebody. It would be within our powers to consider appointing a representative from an area such as Africa, or the Middle East or the former USSR.

Mick O'Donnell felt certain that the constitution does not stipulate that the executive committee can appoint someone without the person's permission. (To which Robin replied that that was not his intent) He did say, however, that the nomination does not have to be made by the region but that there can be nominations from the floor or by members of the executive for any representative from any region.

Mick O'Donnell said that the idea of rotating international members seems like a good idea. He suggested that Europe could be represented on a rotation basis (currently there is a permanent

Representative from Germany and one from the UK), and that the Asia region could be represented on a rotation basis by a representative from China or Japan, or from other Asian countries.

He also suggested that the members of the international committee could be increased to 12.

Robin Fawcett suggested that it would be a good idea to briefly outline how the international committee works. He said that between AGM meetings issues come up, and the Chairperson puts a question to the committee via email and the committee responds, and not everybody responds on every issue. He does not feel that there is a problem with 'too many' representatives on the committee. He suggested that the new (incoming) committee could nominate more members so that we have a better worldwide representation.

Frances Christie formally moved that the nominations put forward from the nominating committee be accepted as the incoming committee.

Mick O'Donnell seconded the motion.

The motion was carried.

Frances Christie moved a motion that the incoming committee investigate the possibility of more nominations to the international committee from different regions.

Robin Fawcett seconded this motion.

The motion was carried.

Masa-aki Tatsuki raised the question of whether the international committee member has the responsibility to hold the conference in his/her region. He also put to the floor that perhaps a conference in somewhere like Africa would be a financial burden on the representative's university or region.

Frances Christie responded that membership on the international committee carries no particular implication of that. On the other hand it would be wonderful if someone did propose a conference in the regions represented, such as Africa.

Cecilia Colombi then passed the meeting over to the incoming Deputy Chair Huang Guowen.

Huang Guowen expressed his appreciation for the work of the past committee.

Upcoming Congresses

2009 – Beijing
2010 – Vancouver
2011 – Lisbon
2012 – Australia

- Congress in 2012

With regard to the Congress in 2012, Huang Gouwen said that the location had not yet been voted on, so he invited Peter White to say a few words with regard to this.

Peter White said that he would be planning the 39th ISFC at the University of Adelaide. He noted that there is a core of systemicists in Adelaide, and that SFL is taught in teacher training courses, and that all ESL teachers in South Australia take courses in SFL. He suggested that these teachers would likely be interested in attending the conference.

He noted that late July would be the most likely time of the conference.

The AGM voted in favour of holding the conference in 2012 at the University of Adelaide.

- Congress in 2013

With regard to the 2013 congress Huang Guowen mentioned that the suggestion has been to hold the conference in Asia. He then asked for any suggestions about conference hosts.

Jim Martin said that some colleagues in Indonesia have expressed an interest in holding the conference there.

Huang Guowen noted that Thailand has also been mentioned as a possibility.

Dr. Patpong reported that a Congress in Thailand has been discussed, but she needs to check whether it will be a possibility as she needs to find out if it will clash with any other international conferences being held at her university that year. She did say that every year her university has to hold an international conference.

Sukhdev Singh mentioned that India could be a possibility.

Mick O'Donnell said that we needed a solid proposal of a university not just a region.

Huang Gouwen suggested that we put forward these suggested locations at the next congress, because this would be decided on in 2009.

Treasurer's Report

Robin Fawcett gave the report on behalf of all three international treasurers.

(see treasurer's report – hard copy)

- ISFLA European Account

A small payment was made to Mick O'Donnell from the European ISFLA account in gratitude for his work. Some money went to the presents given to organisers of the 2007 congress to thank them for their efforts.

Robin reported that to help the European Association due to a great loss on a conference, the international association helped by giving £300 and the European Association hopes to be able to pay that back. The international association also gave quite a large advance to the Odense organisers for the conference in 2007, and this has now been repaid with more added to the balance (about 2,300 USD extra). This has helped to build up ISFLA European-held account.

Balance: About 7,240 GBP

- ISFLA Australasian Account

This account shows the return of some of the money from Odense.

Balance: roughly 19,000 AUD

- ISFLA North American Account

There has been no movement in that account.

Balance: About 2,000 USD

In total about 36,000 USD in the combined ISFLA account.

We have a responsibility to make sure that if something were to happen, such as a terrorist attack, or a conference had to be cancelled, then we must be in a position to pay off any debts.

Robin invited any comments on the treasurer's report.

Fran Christie thanked Robin for a well-prepared report. She also commented that she had convened an international conference that lost a large amount of money (Melbourne 2000), due to the Olympic Games being held around the same time. In the case of ISFC2000, the university absorbed part of the loss, but this cannot be assumed, and we do need to be prepared for any financial difficulties that may arise. She noted that we do need to be judicious about how we spend finances.

Jim Martin commented that one reason we are in such a good financial position is that the conference fees are very high. This has the negative effect that a lot of students cannot afford to attend. He noted that food, travel and housing of conference guests are very expensive. He said that we need to think about the problem of excluding students in the future.

Robin suggested one way of getting around that was to waive the fees for locals in the form of scholarships. At the Cardiff conference we had about 30 scholarships. Some were full scholarships for someone from India, while others were simply in the form of waiving the conference fees.

Frances Christie mentioned that there are plenty of precedents for doing such a thing (e.g. Singapore and Melbourne).

Robin raised the possibilities of other initiatives that we could take. He first summarised some of the previous initiatives that have been taken.

- 1) We've supplied the funds for regional meetings to take place, e.g. in Latin America, which was followed by a very successful ISFC Congress.
- 2) Paid for Chris Nesbitt to go to Nigeria to do some presentations.

We have had a request from Ernest Akerjola regarding provision of books to Africa. He said that the cost of sending books can be quite expensive. Robin suggested that the ISFC funds could be used to send books to Africa or any other country that we discover is in need.

Robin asked for any other ideas.

Christian Matthiessen made the following suggestions:

- digitised SFL material such as Jim Martin's publication is a good way of making material available
- make some copies of key publications available if copyright permits
- table an approach that draws on the success in regions

Robin asked Jim Martin about the costs of making his materials available.

Jim said that it was the result of many hours donated by students.

Christian said that if people are willing to donate time then these things can be done, but this may not be generally possible.

Mick O'Donnell said that Jim's papers are scanned so they take a lot of memory and therefore time to download. He suggested that it would be good to get publications, and key references 'ocr'ed such as Halliday items that are out of print, but which he (Halliday) may be willing to have made available. He said that we need to find out what is owned by publishers or authors, and/or whether we can provide electronic versions.

Cecilia Colombi said that now there are many electronic versions of publications available, so we could purchase those e-versions.

Mick said that if they available on the web, then they would be freely available for everyone.

Robin said that one resource already available is the e-publications on the ISFLA website.

Susan Hoadley suggested there is always the potential of asking companies to donate or to co-operate with our goals.

Frances Christie noted that the treasurer's report still needed to be approved by the members.

Frances Christie moved to accept the treasurer's report as presented by Robin Fawcett.
Cecilia Colombi seconded the motion.

The motion was carried.

Reports on the Pre-Congress Institute and ISFC 2008

Huang Guowen invited Kazuhiro Teruya to report on the Pre-congress institute and Christian Matthiessen to report on the Congress.

- The Pre-Congress Institute

Kazuhiro Teruya reported that the pre-congress institute was originally supposed to be held at University of NSW but was changed to Macquarie University due to the clash with the Catholic World Youth Day events (UNSW was closed during WYD). He reported that the institute was a great success due to the participants and lecturers, and that thanks to CLSL they received a good discount on the venue. They offered about 10 scholarships in the form of fee waivers. He is not yet sure if the institute made any money or not.

- ISFC2008

Christian Matthiessen reported that although the congress was not yet over he could report on a few matters:

- The organising committee was a council-like committee with subcommittees. (i.e. not a top-down approach)
- Brad Smith had to withdraw from the committee as his PhD was in the final stages.

- The committee was young, energetic and many languages and regions were represented.
- One innovation was to have a regional sub-committee to liaise with regional associations (if they existed) to ensure we had an up-to-date mailing list and a way of promoting the congress. He said that we are yet to find out how successful this methodology was.
- The committee decided not engage professional conference organisers due to the higher costs this would have imposed.
- There was a concern with the cost of the Congress, so the committee members volunteered their own time to keep costs down.
- The higher AUD worked against us.
- The conference theme (Voices Around the World) was chosen to be maximally inclusive and maximally interpretable.
- Another innovation was to introduce the proceedings in time for the conference. Christian felt that this was a success, as it has an ISBN and can be cited/reported by participants when applying for future funding to conferences.
- T&I day was new.
- Regional Research Networks – this was an important inclusion in the program to put in place a mechanism to involve people who routinely can't go to conferences.
- Because of exchanging the year with the 2009 Beijing Congress announcing the plenary speakers was necessarily delayed.
- With regard to the plenary choices we tried to represent regions, each category of area of research, and to include men and women.

Susan Hoadley reported that the fees were set not to make a profit but to be financially responsible/feasible. There is only so much that can be done before a conference goes into major deficit.

Fran Christie noted that the fees were on par with those of the Odense congress.

Mick O'Donnell noted that the fees have gone up, particularly since Japan, where they were relatively cheap.

Wendy Bowcher-Vervenne commented that the fees for the Japan conference in 2004 were perhaps too cheap.

Christian Matthiessen noted that choosing plenary speakers for ISFC2008 involved collaboration with the 2009 China Congress organisers, and that there had been a lot of support from the 2009 Congress organisers.

Jim Martin commented that the free linguistics conference that was announced earlier in the day today is a challenge to what's happening to junior colleagues and students, and we have much to learn from them as they are managing to organise the conference for free to participants.

Huang Guowen thanked Kazuhiro and Christian for their reports. He also thanked the organisers for their efforts.

Report on the ISFC 2009 Congress in Beijing

Professor Lu of Tsinghua University reported on the 2009 ISFC.

She expressed her gratitude to Christian Matthiessen and his team for taking over the organisation of the 2008 congress after the postponement of the Beijing Congress due to the clash with the lead up to the Olympic Games.

Professor Lu welcomed everyone to Beijing in 2009, which will be co-hosted with Hong Kong City University. She reported that the Pre-conference Institute will be at Beijing Normal University.

She said that the plenary speakers have been finalised.

The website is currently working and the Call for Papers is already there, so participants are welcome to submit their abstracts early if they so wish.

Some parts of the Congress such as the program are not available yet.

2009 European Conference

Tom Bartlett invited members to the European Conference 8-10 July 2009. Information regarding the conference is on the ISFL website.

2008 Symposium on Language

Frances Christie reported that the Symposium on Language (sequel to the 2004 conference (dialogue between Bernstein and Systemicists)) convened by Jim Martin, Carl Maton and Fran Christie would be held December 8-10 2008, and that the closing date for abstracts is September 12th 2008.

Final Thanks and Closing

Huang Guowen expressed his thanks to the previous executive committee chaired by Cecilia Colombi and to the convenors of this year's congress and institute.

The meeting was declared closed at 7:09 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Wendy Bowcher-Vervenne.