CHAPTER EIGHT

Ethnographic Research

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Why adopt an ethnographic approach to research in applied linguistics? The broad research questions you have in mind as well as your understanding of language, learning and communication shape your choice of methodology. If you see writing, reading, speaking and listening and language learning as primarily shaped by the social contexts in which they occur and you are interested in uncovering the meanings that participants in these processes bring to the communicative events in which they engage, then ethnography may be an appropriate methodology for your research project. As ethnography privileges the direct observation of human behaviour within particular 'cultures' and settings and seeks to understand a social reality from the perspectives of those involved in the observed interactions, it also has implications for the role of the researcher which will be discussed further below. If, moreover, you see your role as researcher as encouraging social change in the community within which you are carrying out your research, you may be more interested in what is known as *critical* ethnography (Talmy 2013).

Ethnographic work, as Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) point out, is labour-intensive and requires time, energy and resources. However, the rewards of prolonged engagement within a specific community and the richness of data generated via 'fieldwork' make it a methodology worthy of serious consideration by those seeking to engage in qualitative research. According to Harklau (2005) and Davis (2013), ethnography is currently one of the major approaches to research on second language learning and teaching. Moreover, ethnography is seen as distinct from other qualitative approaches; for example, one of the leading journals in the field, *TESOL Quarterly*, provides separate sets of substantial guidelines to authors

on conversation analysis, case studies and (critical) – their parentheses – ethnography (see Resources for Further Reading).

In this chapter, I consider the different strands or traditions and methodological assumptions that inform contemporary ethnographic approaches to applied linguistics research, including critical ethnography, and discuss various methods that are typically used. This leads to a discussion of ethical issues, particularly pertinent to ethnographic research. As the writing of ethnographic texts and the key role of the researcher have been topics of much discussion over the last two decades, I also provide explicit consideration of these two areas. The chapter concludes with an account of an ethnographic study of academic writing that I carried out at a South African university.

Underlying assumptions and methodology

Ethnography's home is within qualitative research as 'qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 3). However, as Watson-Gegeo (1988) pointed out, ethnography is not synonymous with qualitative research. Impressionistic accounts, fixed category observations, brief engagement or a study based on a few in-depth, semi-structured interviews should neither be considered ethnography nor ethnographic[1] (Lazaraton 2003).

According to Hammersley (1990, pp. 2–3), the key features of a broadly defined ethnographic method include studying people's behaviour in everyday rather than experimental contexts, gathering data from a range of sources chiefly by 'observation and/or relatively informal conversation' and collecting data that are not based on pre-set categories or explicit hypotheses but that arise out of a general interest in an issue or problem. Ethnographic research is typically small in scale and focused on a single setting or group. Prolonged engagement by the researcher in the research setting is also a defining feature of ethnography.

Whereas positivist researchers who use questionnaires and surveys assume that they already know what is important, participant observation, in contrast, makes no such assumptions. Researchers are encouraged to immerse themselves in the everyday activities of the group of people whose meaning-making (also known as 'emic' or insider perspectives) practices they are attempting to understand. Rather than testing preformed ideas or theories (as in deductive research), ideas are developed inductively from the observations. This is not to suggest that ethnography is atheoretical; rather, it is seen as hypothesis generating, with theory being *emergent*,[2] leading to the development of theorization and possible generalization (also called 'etic' or outsider perspectives) as the research progresses. Participant observation

therefore allows for the possibility of 'surprise' – that is the emergence of knowledge that is not predetermined by the original research position or paradigm (Willis 1980). For example, through Grimshaw's (2007) extended observation of Chinese students in a Chinese university setting, he was able to develop a set of arguments that draw on postcolonial theory to challenge commonly held views in much Western literature of 'the Chinese learner' as passive, uncritical and lacking in autonomy.

While these methods can be identified as 'core' characteristics of ethnographic approaches, the meanings attached to the status of the data collected vary according to different epistemologies and theoretical frameworks adopted by the researchers. It is therefore important that those embarking on ethnographic research have an understanding of the differing histories of ethnography that inform current approaches. In the section that follows, I provide an outline of this history and its implications as I understand them.

The origins of ethnography

Ethnography as a research methodology has its roots in the cultural and linguistic anthropology of the early twentieth century and certain branches of sociology and has, more recently, been adopted by educational researchers concerned about school failure of certain groups (Harklau 2005; Lazaraton 2003). While Western anthropology's object of study was distant, 'foreign' cultures, the sociologists, who practised ethnography in the West from the early twentieth century on, adapted anthropology's approach to understanding culture 'from the inside' to intensive observations of everyday urban environments, often studying 'subcultures' in economically and socially disadvantaged communities. From the 1960s, under the influence of Hymes's call for an ethnography of communication (Hymes 1972; Saville-Troike 1982) and the development of the broad field of sociolinguistics, ethnographic approaches have been embraced by some in the newer field of applied linguistics. Work that draws on the ethnography of communication has looked at teacher–learner classroom interactions and differences between home and school literacies (e.g. Cazden et al. 1972; Heath 1983) and, more recently, Duff (2002).

The use of ethnographic approaches has been encouraged by what has been called the 'social turn' in language study which has led to the desire to develop in-depth understandings of language learning and teaching events in the specific (and frequently unequal) social contexts within which they are taking place. The combination of long-term observation and the collection of diverse forms of data provide understandings of participants' perspectives and meaning-making practices within the complex sociocultural worlds they inhabit that more traditional methodologies may not have succeeded in capturing.

Applied linguists typically use ethnographic approaches to study language practices within communities and institutions that are familiar to the researcher rather than exotic and strange as in traditional ethnography. Applied linguistics is almost by definition interdisciplinary, and a number of applied linguists are now working collaboratively with colleagues in fields such as health, the workplace, organizations of various types, the justice system and education broadly defined, carrying out ethnographic work on the communication practices at these sites (see e.g. Sarangi & Roberts 1999). While acknowledging the diversity of perspectives and traditions that inform ethnography as well as the variety of sites that applied linguists may be asked to investigate, Rampton (2007) and colleagues (see Maybin & Trusting 2011) in the United Kingdom have developed what they call 'Linguistic Ethnography' – an interdisciplinary approach influenced by *inter alia* critical discourse analysis: the new literacy studies and interactional sociolinguistics (see *Linguistic Ethnography Forum* in Resources for further reading below).

While some stress the need for those embarking on ethnographic research to locate themselves within a 'tradition' (Harklau 2005; *TESOL Quarterly Guidelines* in Further Reading and Resources Below), others argue that the 'traditions' or 'perspectives' have always been characterized by their 'own cultural diversity' (Atkinson et al. 2001, p. 3) and encourage researchers to be aware of and open to this richness. Whatever alignments and identifications are ultimately chosen, Ramanathan and Atkinson's (1999, p. 48) claim in their study of ethnographic approaches and methods in L2 writing research that few ethnographically oriented L2 writing studies 'make their theoretical bases explicit' should be at the forefront of the researcher's thinking and writing (see also Lillis 2008, Peirce 1995, Starfield 2011).[3]

The impact of postmodernism – the researcher's role and authority

Postmodernism and post-structuralism (see Clifford & Marcus 1986; Harklau 2005), sometimes called the 'linguistic' or 'textual' turn in ethnography, have had a profound effect on the production of ethnographic texts, particularly with regard to undermining 'realist' accounts and focusing on the subjectivity of the ethnographer as the writer/producer of an ethnographic text (see van Maanen 1988). By realist accounts, I am referring to the belief that ethnography can provide 'holistic, richly detailed descriptions' (Watson-Gegeo 1988, p. 588) that 'present' an observed 'reality' or 'culture'. Watson-Gegeo's very useful account of ethnography in ESL does not problematize the role of the researcher in the construction of the ethnographic account – a central preoccupation of post-structural

approaches in which issues of identity, subjectivity and the production of multivoiced accounts come to the fore.

The original meaning of the term 'ethnography' is 'writing culture', highlighting the significance of both the textual nature of the ethnographic account and its construction by a researcher who is also a writer. The applied linguistics researcher who adopts an ethnographic approach needs to be aware that an extensive literature has discussed both representation and authority in ethnographic writing (see Van Maanen 1988). As Clifford (1986, p. 23) argued in his introduction to *Writing Cultures*: 'the grounds from which persons and groups securely represent each other' have been dislodged. This has led to what has been called the 'reflexive turn' in ethnographic writing. Reflexivity refers to the researcher/writer's ability to reflect on their own positioning and subjectivity in the research and provide an explicit, situated account of their own role in the project and its influences over the findings. Reflexivity is a counter to the positivist construct of the dispassionate, objective researcher who is absent from the account produced (see Foley 2002; Starfield 2013). Cameron et al. (1992) stress that textual representation is power as the writer/researcher is a member of a powerful social group who selects and mediates the talk and identities of the research participants in the act of writing.

The *TESOL Quarterly Qualitative Research: (Critical) Ethnography Guidelines* encourage writers of ethnographic studies to 'develop a mode of textual representation that suits your research experience, objectives, beliefs about the nature of ethnographic knowledge, and preferences' (see Resources for Further Reading). I would urge readers who have a desire to explore alternative forms of representation to examine recent issues of *TESOL Quarterly* and other relevant journals to assess for themselves the extent to which practice is following espoused theory in this instance. This said, Richardson's (2000) criteria for evaluating ethnographic research (see Resources for Further Reading) clearly indicate that it is not a case of 'anything goes'.

Critical ethnography

When Tara Goldstein (1997) sought to understand the meanings that particular language practices had for immigrant workers in a Canadian factory and how these related to their experiences of living in an ethnically stratified society, she chose a research approach that was not only ethnographic in the traditional sense of carrying out observation and describing the meanings language usage had for the workers but that would also take into account the influence of class, gender and power relations in a post-industrial capitalist society, both at work and outside the workplace. Her critical ethnography helps us understand why it is that many immigrant workers in Canada do not take up the English language courses on offer.

Critical ethnographic researchers therefore consider the social location of the group they are studying through 'examining their access to economic, political and cultural resources' (Carspecken 1996, p. 204) and consciously employ macro-perspectives such as sociological theory to examine 'micro' ethnographic data gathered by the researcher. In turn, the macro-theories may be challenged, refined and altered. For example, the detailed microethnographic analyses of classroom discourse carried out by Bloome et al. (2005) locate classroom language and literacy events within broader social and historical contexts. As in Goldstein's study, critical ethnographic research accounts acknowledge the complex relationships between social structures and human agency (Anderson 1989). For Brodkey (1987, p. 67), 'the goal of critical ethnography is always the same: to help create the possibility of transforming such institutions as schools.'

Motha's (2006) year-long critical feminist ethnography embodies these meanings of the term 'critical' in 'critical ethnography' and is located within a post-structural theoretical framework that draws on critiques of multiculturalism, whiteness studies, identity theory and the intersection of native speaker status, race and colonialism. She studied the racial meanings that student and teacher identities and language acquire in a North American school context. Race, whiteness and the status of native speaker teachers of English in linguistically and racially diverse classrooms are sensitive and complex issues that have been underexplored in applied linguistics. Her data were collected in a range of contexts and included classroom observation, interviews and regular 'afternoon teas' with the four novice teachers who participated in her research. She provided the teachers with drafts of all her writing, discussed her interpretations and representations of events with them and has also co-presented at conferences with them. Her work moves through the description of classroom interactions to interpretation and analysis to suggest implications both for pedagogies that seek to confront racism in the ESOL classroom and for the TESOL profession more broadly.

Validity and trustworthiness

In *Critical Ethnography in Educational Research*, Carspecken (1996, pp. 87–89) lists six techniques to support validity claims if qualitative researchers are to produce reports in which the findings can be considered sufficiently trustworthy for colleagues to rely on them in their own research. These are: using multiple recordings devices and multiple observers, using a flexible observations schedule, practising prolonged engagement, using a vocabulary in the fieldnotes that is not overly coloured by the writer's interpretations, using peer-debriefing and using member checking. Most of these techniques are self-explanatory I believe and should be part of the methods of those engaging in ethnographic research, however critical.

Member checking refers to sharing your fieldnotes and interpretations with the people one is studying. In what they called 'collaborative ethnography', Barton and Hamilton (1998) shared their interview transcripts and thematic analyses of participants' literacy practices with them, partly to check the validity of their own analyses. To the extent, however, that participants' involvement in the research process altered their self-understandings and empowered them to explore new literacy practices, the study can be seen to have achieved 'catalytic validity' (Lather 1991): a type of validity that many critical researchers would argue is an important outcome of the research process.

It could however be argued (and other chapters in this volume do so) that validity is a concern inasmuch as researchers still seek to justify their work in relation to the positivist paradigm. Rather than use the term 'validity', ethnographic research as with much qualitative research prefers to talk of 'trustworthiness'. Multiple methods of data collection are seen to contribute to the trustworthiness of the research (Maykut & Morehouse 1994). Triangulation or the collation of data from a range of sources and/or gathered through a range of research methods such as participant observation, informal and formal interviewing and document collection strengthens the validity (or credibility) of the analyses and interpretations (see Watson-Gegeo 1988). Triangulation is further used to ascertain participant's perspectives on their own meaning-making practices. These emic perspectives also contribute to the trustworthiness of the findings.

Clifford Geertz (1975) saw ethnography as being 'thick description': description that goes beyond simple description to include interpretation. Thick description can also be seen as providing greater trustworthiness and may also allow for 'transferability' of findings to different contexts. At the same time, generalizability as conceived of in quantitative research is not necessarily the aim of ethnographic research but rather to 'understand deeply, through a thorough, systematic, iterative analysis' (Duff 2007, p. 983).

Techniques and instruments

Ethnographic research methods of data collection include the techniques of observation through fieldwork, with participant observation (observation that entails interaction with those being studied) being commonly used, the keeping of fieldnotes, formal and informal interviewing of informants/participants, typically using either audio- or videotaping and the collection of relevant documents available at the site or archivally. These multiple methods help the researcher provide the thick description considered essential for ethnographic research and enable triangulation. As indicated earlier, one of the distinguishing features of ethnographic research is that

the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection. The awareness that the researcher gains through 'being present' in the setting brings a great richness of understanding. Goldstein (1997) writes that her role as an English teacher in the factory enhanced her access to the Production Departments as many of the workers were her students. This view would obviously run counter to views of the researcher as detached and objective. In the following section, I discuss participant observation and ethnographic interviewing in more detail as they can be seen to form the cornerstone of the ethnographic approach.

Participant observation and fieldwork

Participant observation is carried out through prolonged engagement by the researcher in a setting or field, hence the use of the term 'fieldwork'. Fieldwork aims to provide a description and interpretive explanatory account of what people do in a particular setting and what meaning their interactions have for them. Goldstein (1997) for example observed bilingual workers' interactions on the production line, at the t-shirt printing machines, in the warehouse, in the offices, in language classes, at breaks and at lunch over a two-year period. Her observation included details of the language choices made by the workers in these different contexts. She would stand next to the production line and note down the communication patterns in use, building up an extensive set of fieldnotes in the different settings. Her fieldnotes were both audio-recorded and handwritten, particularly on the noisy production lines. They also included sketches of where participants were standing at the time and a description of the activity being done.

These rich observational data in combination with data from thirty-nine audio-recorded ethnographic interviews enabled her to generate broad hypotheses about language choices on the shop floor which she was able to check with workers and employers. Goldstein's critical framework and commitment to transformation enabled her to understand why it was that many factory workers were resistant to English language classes when it would have seemed obvious that learning English would improve their life chances.

Ethnographic interviews

While numerous approaches to research utilize interviewing, ethnographic interviews can be distinguished by their duration, frequency of contact and, with the influence of post-structuralism and feminism, an awareness that the interview is itself a site of meaning construction and that the interview 'produces' a text for interpretation (Heyl 2001). According to Heyl (2001, p. 370), the core components of ethnographic interviews are

listening well and with respect; developing an ethical engagement with the participants at all stages; acquiring self-awareness of one's role in the co-construction of meaning; being aware of ways the ongoing relationship and broader social context affect participants, processes and outcomes; and acknowledging that 'dialogue is discovery' and that only partial knowledge is possible. More critical approaches recognize that many interview situations involve unequal power relations and are sites of identity negotiation. In multilingual contexts, a decision may need to be made as to whether to use an interpreter. In applied linguistics research, language is not only the medium of communication but frequently the topic of study as well, requiring perhaps an even greater level of reflexivity on the part of the researcher.

Ethical considerations

As Murphy and Dingwall (2001) point out, ethnographic researchers share the same minimal responsibility to protect participants from harm that all research with human participants requires with particular regard to anonymity, identification and informed consent that emergent research design may complexify. For example, it may not be possible to specify in advance who will be interviewed or what sorts of information or documentation will be sought as issues that emerge in the course of the research mean that fully informed consent was not possible at the outset (Fox et al. 2006).

While it should be evident that ethnographic research requires approval from a University ethics committee and that permission to conduct observation and interviews, particularly in classrooms, must be sought, Duff (2007, p. 977) points out that gaining permission may be difficult to obtain because of the 'perceived invasiveness' of such practices. Ironically, perhaps, newer technologies such as video recording may increase the perception of invasiveness in groups that may feel vulnerable. Furthermore, it is considered by many ethics committees that seeking informed consent from one's current students in order to carry out classroom-based inquiry is coercive (Duff 2007) as they are in what is termed a 'dependent' relationship with the researcher.

At all times, informed consent must be sought and most universities provide guidelines in this regard. Those new to the field should study the comprehensive and clear *TESOL Quarterly* Informed Consent Policy Statement and Release http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish/journals/tesol-quarterly/tesol-quarterly-research-guidelines/informed-consent-policy-statement-and-release, viewed 4 December 2013. Have you, for example, considered whether the participants in your study speak English well enough to understand the informed consent form? Would you consider making the form available in the participants' first language or perhaps using an interpreter? If the participants are not literate in any language, could you obtain oral consent?

A sample study

In this section, I discuss a year-long ethnographic study of students' writing development within a disciplinary context that I carried out at a South African university in the final years of official apartheid. My attempts to better understand why it was that black students who spoke English as an additional language and who were learning to write in a course called Sociology One were much less successful than their white peers led me to adopt a critical ethnographic perspective. As the research evolved, I became more aware of how broader socio-economic and political inequalities shaped the possibilities available to students to negotiate successful identities for themselves.

In my professional academic life, I was working in the field of student academic support and was concerned that generic academic writing skills were not helping the students sufficiently. I wanted to find out more about the lived experience of students learning to write within a specific discipline and knew that the Department of Sociology was concerned about the inequitable pass rates of black and white students.

As is common in ethnographic research, my initial question was broadly based. Drawing on Saville-Troike (1982, p. 2), it asked: 'What does a writer need to know to communicate appropriately within a particular discourse community and how does he or she learn?' As the research progressed, several more focused questions emerged, again fairly typical of ethnographic research:

- What is the nature of the written genres which students in Sociology One are expected to produce?
- How do students from apartheid schools learn and teachers teach these genres?
- What are the processes whereby students are initiated into the new discourse community?
- What are considered to be successful texts and what are the processes whereby students do or do not 'succeed'?

Eleven students participated in my year-long study. Nine of the students were African, three were women and two were white, one male and one female. They were all new to Sociology One. All of the African students were from socio-economically disadvantaged apartheid schooling backgrounds.

To ensure trustworthiness, I used a combination of observation – along the full continuum from non-participant to participant – within as many teaching and learning contexts as possible, in-depth semi-structured interviews and document collection, including copies of students' written texts. I triangulated by checking my evolving understandings of their reality

with the different participants as I built my thick description of the students' experiences of learning to write in Sociology One.

I collected data from multiple sites that included lecture halls, tutorials of different kinds, markers' meetings, weekly tutor briefings, one of the tutor's offices and corridor conversations. I took extensive fieldnotes.

In some respects, I was like a student. I attended all four weekly lectures in a hall with several hundred students, and one weekly tutorial of about thirty students. I read the materials included in the *Course Reader* which enabled me to trace different student interpretations (or misinterpretations) of the readings and develop the concept of what I called (after Bourdieu) 'textual capital' (see Starfield 2002).

Each student took part in a semi-structured interview of about one-and-a-half hours which included discussion of their essays and tests. Eight of the students took part in a second interview and some were interviewed a year later. In addition, I had numerous less formal conversations with the students in the course of the year. I collected copies of all eleven students' essays, tests and exams.

I conducted an in-depth semi-structured interview with all academic staff who taught on the first-year course of at least one hour. Some were later approached to review students' essays and exams that they had marked and to discuss criteria employed and feedback as part of the process of triangulation (Starfield 2002, 2004). I audio-taped and transcribed all interviews including the two markers' meetings that I observed.

I also collected relevant documents such as the student newspaper and political pamphlets distributed by the various student organizations on campus. I use some of this data in support of my analysis of the ways in which a student whom I called Ben negotiates his textual identity in his successful essay (Starfield 2004). I draw on arguments in favour of the anonymous marking of student essays to reduce perceived bias in the assessment of black students that appeared in the student newspaper.

I used critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992) combined with systemic functional linguistics (Halliday 1994) as my main analytic tool for textual analysis. I examined the linguistic and discursive resources students drew on as they wrote their assignments in order to create identities in written texts that were more or less successful. A critical discourse analysis of the *Student Handbook* enabled me to see how the department positioned and constructed students from disadvantaged backgrounds vis-à-vis students from 'mainstream' backgrounds. Thematic analysis of interview data provided insights into student perceptions of their experiences of success and failure which complemented the textual data. I was able to argue that successful texts were the outcome of complex identity negotiations (see Ivanič 1998) and that key academic genres were not 'fixed' or easily identifiable.

Data collected at one of the markers' meeting and analysed using the work of Bourdieu (1982) helped me develop a critique of the concept of discourse community as used in English for Academic Purposes – challenging my initial conceptualizations. I came to view academic discourse communities as being themselves sites of power and contestation: a view not reflected in much of the literature on the teaching of writing (Starfield 2001). While I had titled my project 'Making and sharing meaning', by the end of my year in Sociology One, I was to conclude that the effects of apartheid were such that meaning could not be shared equally by all.

Future developments in ethnographic research

The attention currently being paid to multimodal literacies and the ever-increasing impact of technology in schools, workplaces and other sites of communication is beginning to give rise to applied linguistics ethnographic studies of the multimodal communicative practices of their inhabitants (see e.g. Davies 2006; Scollon et al. 1999). Relatedly, the development of virtual communities facilitated by technology and the impact of globalization have the potential to produce ethnographic studies that call into question the notion of community as based in a single setting (see Slembrouck 2005).

Autoethnography – a blend of autobiography and ethnography – has become a popular approach in a number of fields including education (see Foley 2002). Will such studies begin to emerge in applied linguistics or will they struggle to be published? We may begin to see more attempts at different reporting formats (see Lee & Simon-Maeda 2006). Goldstein's (2003) ethnographic playwriting is a rare example of such an attempt. *Hong Kong*, *Canada*, a play that is included in an appendix to her book-length critical ethnography of a multilingual Toronto high school, invites readers to perform/read the play which creatively raises many of the issues examined in the research itself.

Of course, challenging the dominant genres in any academic field is potentially risky, but I would encourage readers of this chapter contemplating ethnographic work to read widely and consider how best to represent their work and the voices of those who participate.

Notes

1 The term 'ethnography' is contested. Educational researchers have been urged by many to not use the term unless studying a culture 'holistically', and critical researchers have problematized the notion of culture, cultural description and the impossibility of 'holistic' accounts. 'Ethnographic' is often a preferred alternative.

2 The theoretical perspectives derived from this data are sometimes known as grounded theory.
3 The sustained engagement in a 'field' that ethnographic work requires makes it a suit able methodology for a doctoral study. Journal articles that describe ethnographic work (often the outcome of such a study) are however typically constrained by length requirements to limit details of the methodological framework and methods adopted. It is therefore worth reading the dissertation in its entirety to obtain an understanding of the researcher's engagement in the field.

Resources for further reading

Ethnography and Education is an international, peer-reviewed journal. More information can be found at http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/reae20/current#.Up_vWL_q4cs, viewed 7 May 2014.

The Centre for Urban Ethnography, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, convenes the Ethnography in Education Research Forum, an annual meeting of qualitative researchers in education. See http://www.gse.upenn.edu/cue/, viewed 7 May 2014.

The Ethnograph is a software package that allows you to store, code, search data, write and store analytic memos. More information is available at http://www.qualisresearch.com/, viewed 7 May 2014.

The *Ethnography and Education* website: www.ethnographyandeducation.org, viewed 7 May 2014, is run by the group that started the journal and who host an annual *Oxford Ethnography and Education Conference*.

The Linguistic Ethnography Forum: www.lingethnog.org, viewed 7 May 2014. This website hosts the *UK Linguistic Ethnography Forum*, a Special Interest Group of the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL). There is information about participants; past and planned events and discussion papers they have produced.

Richardson, L 2000, 'Evaluating ethnography', *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 253–255.

Richardson, who describes herself as a 'poststructural ethnographer', shares five of the criteria she uses when reviewing papers or monographs. These are: substantive merit, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, impact and expressing a reality. The criteria are described in more detail in the article.

Scott Jones, J & Watt, S (eds), 2010 *Ethnography in Social Science Practice*, Routledge, London.

This is a very helpful introductory text for students interested in understanding ethnography as a research methodology within a broader social sciences perspective.

TESOL Quarterly Qualitative Research: (Critical) Ethnography Guidelines http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish/journals/tesol-quarterly/tesol-quarterly-research-guidelines/qualitative-research-%28critical%29-ethnography-guidelines, viewed 7 May 2014.

These extensive guidelines are essential reading for anyone beginning ethnographic research within the broad fields of language and education. They also offer an open-minded perspective on what they call the 'critical ethnography report', suggesting that the traditional Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion format of the research article embodies a positivist attitude to research that may not be appropriate for ethnographic writing when the researcher was not a detached 'objective' observer but an active participant.

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