

THE EDITOR'S DEPARTMENT

Annual Report

Every year, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America in January, the editor is asked to prepare for the LSA Executive Committee a report on the past year, covering activities and issues pertaining to the running of the journal, highlighting any new developments of note, and addressing any matters deemed important by either the Executive Committee or the editor himself. As is now the custom, appearing here in place of my more usual editorial comments in this section of the journal is my third 'State of the Journal' report, in which I sum up the events of my third year on the job. What is printed here is essentially the form in which the report was submitted to the Executive Committee in January, though with a footnoted informational update, the correction of errors, some embellishment and elaboration where appropriate, and some minor editorial and typographical adjustments.

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Columbus, Ohio
March 10, 2005

THE EDITOR'S REPORT

PREAMBLE

I am now at the end of my third year at the helm of *Language* and the mantle of the editorship fits quite comfortably now; whatever high points and low points I—and the journal—have experienced in the past year and in the previous two years have all given me greater confidence in my decisions and a better sense both of what needs to be done and what needs not to be done. The routines that have been established for processing papers and producing issues of the journal are moving along like a proverbial well-oiled machine for the most part, though I am the first to admit that there is always room for improvement.

In what follows, I survey the *Language*-related events of the past year, ever cognizant of how important a task the publication of the journal is. At the same time, I also appreciate how downright interesting it is to work on the journal, and consider myself to be truly privileged to be associated with it.

Language: A NUMERICAL OVERVIEW

I start with *Language*-by-the-numbers, a statistical summary of volume 80 with a bit of commentary. As is the norm for *Language*, four issues appeared; I am pleased to be able to report that all four issues appeared on time, being posted electronically with Project Muse and being mailed out to subscribers by approximately the middle of the month in which they were designated to appear (March, June, September, and December). The production cycle that we developed last year, whereby we begin production (via the copyediting process) four months in advance of the target date for mailing an issue, has enabled us to keep to our timetable, aided by some streamlining we have effected in our copyediting and proofing procedures. There is a continuing steady stream of fine papers (see below for details) so that even as the December 2004 (volume 80.4) issue is close to coming out as I write this report, we have all the papers for the March 2005 issue (volume 81.1) in production, and the June 2005 issue is already almost full. Any new acceptances at this point will most likely be designated for the September 2005 issue. This steady flow of papers and our ability to adhere to our production cycle should keep the journal on time for the years to come.

These four issues contained 934 pages, with 584 pages devoted to 18 articles, 15 to 1 review article, 34 to 4 discussion notes, 27 to 3 obituaries, 71 to 22 reviews, 121 to 173 book notices, and 82 to other material (letters: 15 pages for 11 letters; Editor's Department columns: 24 pages for 4 pieces, including the annual Editor's Report; Recent Publications lists: 19 pages; index: 23 pages; slippage: 1 page). In many ways, these figures are quite comparable to those of the previous year in terms of the distribution of types of items published, but overall the volume was longer—by choice, partly to catch up on a large number of reviews and book notices that needed to be included but also reflecting the fact that the previous two years' volumes were somewhat shorter (each less than the typical target of 900 pages). As noted in previous reports, these totals are roughly comparable in gross terms to those of several years past (see Mark Aronoff's final Editor's Report in *Language* 78.2.394–97, 2002), where the average volume contained 20 articles that took up on average 564 pages and the average number of pages was 48 for reviews and 178 for book notices. However, the comparisons break down in detail and there is enough variability from year to year in the types of items included in various issues (so that, for example, not all volumes have obituaries or review articles or discussion notes) to make comparisons less revealing than might be hoped for.

The average length of an article this past year was 32.44 pages, down a bit from last year's length (33.75 pages) but far greater than the norm in the 1960s and into the 1970s. As I have stated before, it is not clear to me that this newly emerging standard for article length (in the 30-page range for several years now) is a negative, and in any case, it is certainly true that not very many of the papers that are submitted these days are under 25 pages in length in manuscript form; in fact, most are in 40-to-60-page range.

The ratio of 'substantive' pieces (articles, review articles, discussion notes, and obituaries) to review pieces (book reviews and book notices) for volume 80 was thus 3.43 : 1 (660 pages : 192 pages), as compared with 3.67 : 1 last year, meaning that 22.5% of the pages in 2004 were book reviews or notices, quite similar to last year's distribution of 21.4% (down considerably from 31.2% for 2002). I am happier with this ratio than with the 31.2% of two years ago, and am pleased that the figures for last year and this year are fairly close in this regard. Both types of pieces (articles and reviews) clearly serve useful functions, and any resulting ratio between them for a volume is perhaps more a matter of chance occurrences than careful planning—the ability of the author whose article has been accepted to make needed revisions in good time, for instance, plays a role in whether more or fewer book reviews and notices are placed in a particular issue.

One point the above numbers reflect is the rapid development of the Letters to *Language* section. With 15 pages for 11 letters, a few of which were substantial squib-like statements on the field or comments on material published in the journal, the growth of the section has been phenomenal. It seems to offer a forum that many authors are drawn to, as I had hoped it would, and informal comments I have received from readers suggest an appreciation of the sometimes quite lively discussion the letters provide.

As in past years, the twelve-month reporting period, covering November 1, 2003 to October 31, 2004 (as before, using these dates to allow for a reasonable and accurate tally to be made within the reporting deadlines), has seen considerable activity in the *Language* office in terms of the number of papers received and the number decided

upon; the relevant figures are given in Table 1. These figures include two review articles, since such submissions are subject to refereeing and can in principle be rejected, but do not count the three obituaries received and accepted in the period. Obituaries are commissioned and not subject to formal review by anyone other than the editor.

Papers submitted since November 1, 2003	102
Papers acted on since November 1, 2003	120
Accepted	29
Returned for revisions with an invitation to resubmit	21
Rejected outright	69
Withdrawn	1

TABLE 1. Papers submitted and acted on Nov. 1, 2003–Oct. 31, 2004.

(Note that while there is overlap between the papers submitted and the papers acted on, the numbers do not (and could not) match—most papers submitted within the past twelve months were acted on within that period, but some are still in the review process; moreover, some of those acted on had been submitted in the previous year.) On average therefore *Language* received 8.5 papers per month, and 10 final decisions were made; these numbers are down from last year's average of approximately 11 submissions per month and 11 decisions. I do not see this downturn as anything other than a statistical blip; I have no reason to attribute it to any particular factor, any more than the higher number last year over the previous year could have been attributable to any specific fact about the journal, journal policies, or the field at large.

If one works with the figure for final decisions made, then the acceptance percentage is 24% for all papers acted on, a figure that is far higher than last year's (very low) acceptance ratio of 12% accepted and higher also than that of the year before (16%). The higher acceptance rate for the reporting year is due, I believe, to the fact that a larger number of the papers acted on were resubmissions from previous revise-and-resubmit decisions. Such resubmissions come with an expectation that the author is moving the paper towards acceptance; indeed, an author is not invited to resubmit if the paper does not have a good chance of publication, though I stress here that not all resubmitted papers are accepted. Averaged over the three years of my editorship, the percentage of acceptance is still quite low, at 17%, so that the figures point to a highly selective review process, in keeping with the high standards towards which *Language* aspires.

As is usual, the submitted papers spanned a broad spectrum of areas within the overall field of linguistics, though the representation is heavily concentrated in the traditional core areas of modern linguistics. The breakdown of areas is given in Table 2, based on our assessment (not the authors') in the editorial office of the primary area a paper fell into. These categories are not intended to define the field in any way, but rather they represent identifiable groupings emerging from the set of submissions. Many papers could legitimately be classified in more than one area, such as syntax or psycholinguistics for a paper on the processing of argument structure, so this is an imperfect measure at best, but I trust it is still somewhat instructive.

Though the numbers are down a bit overall, the general topical distribution is roughly comparable to that of last year, with the only real surprise being the absence of papers classifiable as phonetics this year (versus four last year); this may be a function more of our classification, since a couple of the papers treated here as phonology had significant phonetic content.

Syntax	33
Historical Linguistics	10
Semantics	10
Phonology	8
Language Acquisition	5
Contact Linguistics	4
Creolistics	4
Discourse Analysis	4
Morphology	4
Psycholinguistics	4
Cognitive Linguistics	3
Pragmatics	3
Sign Language	3
Language Typology	3
Sociolinguistics	2
Language Evolution	1
Second Lang. Acquisition	1

TABLE 2. Submitted papers by area of specialization.

Similarly, among the 120 papers acted on, the breakdown by topic is shown in Table 3, with the number of acceptances, revise-and-resubmits (R&R), and rejections for each topical category.

	RECEIVED	ACCEPTED	R&R	REJECTED
Syntax	36	10	7	18 ^a
Phonology	14	3	4	7
Semantics	14	2	2	10
Historical Linguistics	9	2	2	5
Psycholinguistics	7	3	2	2
Pragmatics	6	2	0	4
Discourse Analysis	5	0	0	5
Language Acquisition	5	1	2	2
Creolistics	4	2	0	2
Sign Language	4	1	1	2
Contact Linguistics	3	0	0	3
Cognitive Linguistics	2	0	0	2
History of Linguistics	2	0	0	2
Language Typology	2	1	1	0
Morphology	2	1	0	1
Language Evolution	1	0	0	1
Metatheory	1	0	0	1
Phonetics	1	0	0	1
Second Lang. Acquisition	1	0	0	1
Sociolinguistics	1	1	0	0

TABLE 3. Papers acted on by area of specialization and decision.

^a + 1 withdrawal

Continuing with *Language-by-the-numbers*, I turn now to book reviews, based on figures supplied by my book review editor extraordinaire, Stanley Dubinsky of the University of South Carolina. In what proved to be another busy year for *Language* book reviews, the following activity was recorded: altogether, 619 items were received, consisting of 110 journals and 509 books. Of these items, 398 were assigned for some type of review (up from 376 the previous year); 85 full reviews were commissioned (up from 78 the previous year), and 313 book notices (up from 298). As for traffic into the review office, in all 300 reviews and notices were received, logged in, and processed,

47 of which were reviews and 253 were notices (the number of reviews up dramatically from the previous year's total of 27, but the number of notices down somewhat from last year's total of 288).

A few nonnumerical points about reviews can be made as well. In particular, from a procedural standpoint, we are now getting most of our review submissions electronically, rather than on paper, a step that has made for greater efficiency and for better record keeping. Moreover, we have smoothed out some details of the arrangements with certain publishers for working with their announcements of their books, with shipping of the physical books being done only after reviewers are identified. Finally, we feel that the quality of the reviews has been exceptional, and this pleases us greatly; our aim was to make the review section of the journal into a part that would attract readers, and we consider our selection procedures, both for books and for reviewers, to be working well towards that end.

Summing up the year for *Language* of course goes well beyond the numerical breakdowns. In terms of policies, procedures, and production of the journal, this was a year of tweaking and fine-tuning elements of overall operations (e.g. decisions to italicize book and journal titles in reference lists to make them more readily discernible and to begin steps towards a discipline-wide accepted standard style), so there is little to report on in that regard (and some of these changes are covered in any case in my September 2004 Editor's Department (*Language* 80.3.381–83)). However, several developments involving the journal in one way or another came up during the course of the past year that deserve comment.

ELECTRONIC PROCEDURES AND TIME/COST SAVINGS

Language is moving, albeit slowly, into the twenty-first century in one regard: we are expanding our use of electronic forms of submissions. While we do not take article submissions in electronic-only format—hard copies are still invaluable in many respects—we do ask for electronic versions of all papers so that we can send pdf files to associate editors and to referees who request papers in that form. For nonarticle submissions, especially for letters but also for some brief discussion notes or for obituaries where there will not be extensive external review, we are now working exclusively with electronic versions of the documents in question. Although this requires some printing out in the *Language* office, the gains in speed of handling, as well as the more tangible savings in reduced mailing costs to referees and associate editors, more than offset the quite minor printing costs.

We are using electronic versions of papers now for delivery of proofs to authors, for those interested in receiving proofs in this form. There is a minimal cost in editorial assistants' time, but electronic versions cut down on mailing and handling costs that the printers previously charged to *Language* for sending hard copies of the proofs to authors, and it speeds up the process considerably. Hard copy is still sent to authors who request it. We do this now only for articles, as the savings with regard to book reviews and book notices do not seem to be as great (and time is less of the essence with the proofing of review pieces).

Working with electronic versions of papers accepted for publication also allows us to pay more attention to minor formatting issues and to take care of them ourselves in the *Language* office before papers are sent to the copyeditors. This step generates some cost to be sure, for the additional work done by editorial assistants, but it has had the beneficial consequence of reducing considerably the need for costly corrections at the proofing stage, thereby yielding substantive and measurable savings on our bill from

the Maryland Composition company, on the order of perhaps as much as \$1500 per issue (based on a comparison of the billing for postcomposition adjustments for the 79.1 issue (March 2003), where the older procedures were still used, and those for the 80.1 issue (March 2004), with the newer procedures in place for preparing manuscripts for copyediting).

On the subject of cost saving, one other, nonelectronic, initiative can be mentioned, namely a review of the exchange policy for the journal that was undertaken this past fall. For years, the LSA has been sending free copies of *Language* to various institutions and publishers in exchange for publications of theirs, but it is not clear that this practice has yielded any significant benefits for the LSA or the journal, especially since in some cases no materials have been received in exchange for years. Some institutions that would clearly benefit from the free access to *Language* will continue to receive it, but several 'exchanges' can be eliminated, thus effecting some savings for the LSA.

COMPENSATION FOR ASSOCIATE EDITORS

The associate editors, as I have noted in the past and recognize officially below, do invaluable service to the journal and to the LSA, and thus to our field. In recognition of this contribution, we have for two years been paying associate editors a token honorarium for their efforts. At the suggestion of a departing associate editor last year, Dr. Donna Gerdt, the compensation options for associate editors have been expanded to include a credit towards life membership instead of money. It is now possible for an associate editor, if he/she so desires, to become a life member after serving for three years, in lieu of monetary compensation. This simple but meaningful step will not only increase the number and visibility of LSA life members but will also continue to offer a just reward for the services rendered by our associate editors.

A 'STATE VISIT' AND RELATED PUBLIC EDITORIAL ACTIVITIES

Although in my capacity as a faculty member at The Ohio State University I am often invited to give talks at other institutions, one invitation in the past year deserves special mention here, as it was prompted by my role as editor of *Language*. At the invitation of Jan Terje Faarlund of the University of Oslo (Norway), I paid a visit to the Centre for Advanced Study at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and to the Graduate Program in Languages and Linguistics at the University of Oslo in early October. Although I gave two research-related talks while there, the main purpose of my visit was to give a lecture on journal publishing from my perspective as editor of *Language* and to offer commentary on five graduate-student papers in the light of journal publication criteria in linguistics I discussed in my lecture. Both the lecture and the 'master class' were a great success in terms of number of attendees, the level of discussion afterwards, and the apparent benefits for the students' development of their papers. I was pleased to be able to represent the journal in what felt like a 'state visit' on behalf of the LSA.

In a similar vein, let me mention my participation in a group meeting of editors of linguistics journals at the annual LSA meeting; for the past two years and continuing at the upcoming meeting, journal editors who are in attendance and are able to come have met for an hour or so during the annual meeting of the Society to discuss issues we all face in common. In addition, a web-based mailing list, maintained at The Ohio State University, links some fifty journal editors, providing a venue for ongoing discussion of timely topics that pertain to journal publishing in linguistics. Though a light-traffic list at present, it offers opportunities for communication and cooperation among

editors that can prove useful and productive for all concerned. I mention it here as an open invitation to all journal editors in our field to join the mailing list.

THE *Language* OBITUARY PROJECT

Finally, I would like to signal my intent of taking up the suggestion, made by Executive Committee member Stephen Anderson in regard to my discussion of *Language*'s obituary policy, that a collection be made of all obituaries in the journal from its inception in 1925, as a contribution to the history of the field and of the LSA. This idea had occurred to me independently, as it had to others working in the history of linguistics apparently, and it has led me to some concrete thinking on the matter. In particular, by way of gently embarking on such a project, *Language* editorial assistant Hope Dawson and I presented a paper at the January meeting of the North American Association for the History of the Language Sciences entitled 'A forgotten genre, the academic obituary, and the *Language* obituary project', in which we survey the history of obituaries in the journal and announce the beginning of a project to produce an annotated compilation of all obituary notices in the pages of *Language* and the *LSA Bulletin*. I have every reason to believe that such a volume would be an interesting and useful contribution to the history of linguistics in the twentieth century, and preliminary discussions with some publishers have been encouraging and promising. A fuller proposal will be forthcoming for a later meeting of the Executive Committee but agreement in principle of the viability of such a project would be appreciated at this point.

SUMMING UP, AND SOME NECESSARY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Producing a high-quality journal four times a year, on time, takes considerable effort on the part of many working in various spots around the country. Thanks are thus in order, and acknowledgment of this effort is called for.

My work as editor would not be possible without the valuable assistance of the associate editors, who guide me by reading and assessing papers, recommending reviewers, and offering additional advice when called upon to do so. All of them deserve special thanks, and so I mention them by name here: Stephen Crain, Adele Goldberg, Kirk Hazen, James McCloskey, Norma Mendoza-Denton, Richard Oehrle, Jaye Padgett, Janet Pierrehumbert, Donca Steriade, Gregory Stump, and Natsuko Tsujimura. Since Steve, Adele, and Dick rotate off at the end of 2004, new appointments are being made for the coming year, to be announced once they are officially approved.¹

As in years past, a number of hard-working and dedicated individuals offer invaluable assistance and through their efforts are able to make the journal a success. The LSA Secretariat provides support of both a logistical and personal nature on an almost daily basis, and thus Maggie Reynolds and Mary Niebuhr, and now Rita Lewis, deserve special thanks in this report. The efforts of Frances Kelley and Mary Niebuhr, as well as my editorial assistants, merit particular recognition with regard to copyediting; they whip articles and other material into the strict *Language* format guidelines. Finally, Priscilla Mullins provided able proofreading assistance this year, as before.

Like last year too, special mention as well must be made of the extraordinary work of my office staff here in Ohio: editorial assistants Hope Dawson and Audra Starcheus continued their remarkable, mostly invisible, work that is so essential to keeping the

¹ The rotation of associate editors occurs only when the Executive Committee approves the new slate submitted by the editor. Thus as a post-January 2005 addendum, I am pleased to announce that the new appointments have been approved: William Davies, Shari Speer, and Thomas Wasow have now joined the associate editor ranks.

journal's operations running smoothly and on time, going far above and beyond the call to duty on occasion after occasion. They continue to offer incomparable service to the journal, the Society, and the profession. I am not exaggerating when I say that I could not have managed this year without them. I have already mentioned the fine work of the *Language* review editor, Stanley Dubinsky, but his efforts can stand to be recognized once again; similarly, the general support from his assistants Claudia Heinemann-Priest and Lan Zhang has been invaluable.

And, finally, last but certainly not least, it is essential to recognize the reviewers and their role in the journal. I continue to be impressed with the professionalism and expertise that they exhibit—in many cases, when faced with a paper on a topic that is far from my own training and experience, I know I can rely on the typically thoughtful and insightful reviews by my referees to guide me on a path towards understanding. Their enormous service to the journal and the field merits public thanks, so I hereby acknowledge the contribution of the referees, 116 in number, who submitted reports to our office between November 1, 2003 and October 31, 2004 (an asterisk indicates that the individual was responsible for more than one report).

Barbara Abbott	Michael Foote	John M. Lipski
Judith Aissen	Marios Fourakis	Feng-hsi Liu
Adam Albright	John Frampton	Joan Mascaró
John D. Alderete	Mirjam Fried	Yo Matsumoto
Raúl Aranovich	Stefan A. Frisch	John McCarthy*
Mark Baltin	Donna Gerds	James McCloskey
Robert Bayley	Ted Gibson	Ken McRae
Dorit Ben Shalom	Talmy Givón	Jason Merchant
José Benki	John Goldsmith	Detmar Meurers
Catherine Best	Takao Gunji	Laura Michaelis
Christina Bethin	Samuel Gutmann	Philip Miller
Manfred Bierwisch	Mark Hale	Lesley Milroy
Jonathan Bobaljik	Mary Hare	Scott Myers
Chris Brew	Steve Harlow	Lynn Nichols
Joan Bybee	John A. Hawkins	Richard Oehrle
Anna Cardinaletti	Kirk Hazen*	Jaye Padgett
Gregory N. Carlson	Randall Hendrick	Eric Pederson
Jennifer Cole	Jane H. Hill	Rob Pensalfini
Bernard Comrie	Junko Ito	Maria Polinsky
Jeff Connor-Linton	Laura Janda	Shana Poplack
Peter Culicover	Richard Janda*	Paul Postal*
William Davies	Keith Johnson	Pilar Prieto
Hope C. Dawson*	Kyle Johnson	Ellen Prince
Kordula De Kuthy	John E. Joseph	Terry Regier
Michael Dickey	Aravind K. Joshi	Catherine Ringen
Holger Diessel	Edward Keenan	Craig Roberts
Mariapaola D'Imperio-Piternann	Michael Kenstowicz	Christine Roemer
Matthew S. Dryer	Satoshi Kinsui	Mamoru Saito
Eva Ejerhed	E. F. Konrad Koerner	Joseph C. Salmons
Jeff Elman	Manfred Krifka	Lawrence Schourup
Sheila Embleton	Manfred Krug	Roger Schwarzschild
Joseph Emonds	D. Robert Ladd	Julie C. Sedivy
N. J. Enfield	Ronald Langacker	Michael Silverstein
Thomas Ernst	Geraldine Legendre	Carlota Smith
Nicholas Evans	Robert Levin	Shari Speer
Hana Filip	Stephen C. Levinson	Andrew Spencer
William Foley	Marcia Linebarger	Edward Stabler

Thomas Stroik
Robert van Rooy
Robert D. Van Valin, Jr.

Dieter Wanner
Thomas Wasow*
Don Winford

Sandra K. Wright

Respectfully submitted,
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