Annual Report

My yearly duties as editor include the filing of a report with the LSA Executive Committee for its consideration during the annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America in January. This report surveys and discusses activities and matters pertaining to the running of the journal, highlights any new noteworthy developments, and generally brings to light any issues that either the Executive Committee or I myself might consider important for some reason. My fifth 'State of the Journal' report, reviewing *Language*'s past year, is given below, taking the place of my more usual editorial remarks in this section of the journal, in accordance with what has become my usual procedure for fulfilling this duty. The version here is essentially the form the report took when submitted to the Executive Committee in January, though I have added some informational updates in footnotes, corrected some errors, and embellished and elaborated in a few places as appropriate.

Brian D. Joseph
Columbus, Ohio
April 23, 2007

THE EDITOR'S REPORT

Preamble

This past year, 2006, was the fifth year of my editorship of *Language*. With twenty issues of the journal under my belt, I am beginning to feel comfortable in the job and to have a sense that I know what I am doing. I can only hope that *Language*'s readership has a similar sense. This position continues to be an intense but exciting one; the levels of interest, stimulation, and frustration that the position occasions remain as high as ever, but so does the feeling of reward and satisfaction that it brings.

In what follows, I continue my custom of surveying the relevant events of the year that pertain to *Language*, just as I continue to feel privileged to hold the position I do and to be associated with such an excellent publication and a superb supporting cast.

Language by the numbers

As in my past reports, I begin with a statistical overview of volume 82, offering as well some commentary where needed. In 2006, the customary four issues of *Language* appeared, and once again, as has been the case since issue 79.3 (September 2003), the four issues appeared on time, being posted electronically with Project Muse and being mailed out to subscribers by approximately the third week of the month in which they were slated to appear (March, June, September, and December). I am confident that we can maintain this record, since we have a good handle on the routine for the production of an issue. Moreover, as I noted in an earlier Editor's Department column (from *Language* 79.4, December 2003), the past, present, and future come together in our office continually, since typically one issue is coming out (the past) as we begin to work on the new current issue (the present) while at the same time laying the groundwork for the issue after that (the future). Indeed, even as the December 2006 (volume 82.4) issue is off to the printers at this very moment, papers for the March 2007 issue (volume 83.1) are in production, and the docket for the June 2007 issue is about to be filled with the next paper I accept (most likely next week).

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The four issues of volume 82 contained 991 numbered pages, with 552 pages devoted to 18 articles, 16 to 1 short report, 84 to 5 discussion notes, 21 to 1 review article, 12 to 1 obituary, 115 to 36 reviews, 118 to 168 book notices, and 73 to other sorts of material (letters: 15 pages for 9 letters; Editor's Department columns: 19 pages for 4 pieces, including the annual Editor's Report; Recent Publications lists: 13 pages; index: 24 pages; *eLanguage* call for proposals: 1 page; slippage: 1 page).

The distribution of types of published pieces and the rough ratios of these types to one another are comparable to, though interestingly somewhat different from, those of past years. Overall the volume was substantially longer than the current annual target length of 900 pages. This greater length was made possible by the Executive Committee's temporary expansion of the page count to allow us to deal with the backlog that has been building up of book reviews and book notices needing to be put into print; this move was in advance of the decision (see below) to do electronic-only publishing of all book notices after September 2005 via *eLanguage*. Although we did not use the entire allocation that the Executive Committee had granted, we made great strides toward getting into print most of the remaining book notices—by this time next year, the print book notice will be a thing of the past as far as *Language* is concerned.

In volume 82, the average length of an article was 30.67 pages, down quite a bit from the average of last year (35.6) and from even that of the year before (32.44 pages); this is a somewhat 'healthier' figure, as most observers, myself included, have worried about articles becoming too long (discussed briefly in my Editor's Report from last year, published in the June 2006 issue, *Language* 82.2). Whether it is a trend or just a statistical anomaly is hard to tell at this point. It is still the case, though, that most papers submitted to *Language* these days are in the 40-to-60-page range in manuscript form, and some are considerably longer.

For volume 82, therefore, the ratio of 'substantive' pieces (articles, short reports, discussion notes, review articles, and obituaries) to review pieces (book reviews and book notices) was 2.94 : 1 this year (685 pages : 233 pages), as compared with 3.74 : 1 last year. This figure means that 25.4% of the pages in 2006 were book reviews or notices, somewhat higher than last year's distribution of 21.1% (and than that of the previous year, 22.5%), though still below the 31.2% figure for 2002. This ratio reflects a conscious push to get more reviews (including notices) into press, by way of relieving the large backlog of review material that had accumulated over the past few years.

Many of the items printed continue my overt desire for material of an interactive nature, for example, the continued robust number of letters published and the several discussion notes (five this year, higher than the average over the past several years). I note too that this volume contains the first 'short report' in my editorship; short reports constitute an underutilized type of submission, but I am pleased to report that another has been accepted for the June 2007 issue.[1] These have also been called descriptive reports in the past, but it was decided once and for all this year to use the label short report, a more apt designation since some such items over the years have not focused on language description per se; such is the case also with the one coming up in the June issue.

The listing of numerical facts about *Language* would not be complete without details about the numbers and types of papers submitted and papers acted on in the past year.

[1] And there is yet another coming out in the September issue (83.3); more strong short submissions of this sort are certainly welcome.

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As before, the twelve-month reporting period runs from November 1, 2005, to October 31, 2006 (inasmuch as these dates allow for a reasonable and accurate count that can be reported in time for the annual meeting of the Executive Committee).

While the *Language* office saw considerable activity in terms of the numbers of papers received and the number decided upon, it must be noted that the numbers are down from previous years, strikingly so in fact. The relevant figures, given in Table 1, include the review article, as such submissions are subject to refereeing and can in principle be rejected (rarely so, but one was two years ago), but do not count the one obituary accepted in the period, as obituaries are commissioned and not subject to formal review by anyone other than the editor.

Papers submitted since November 1, 2005	89
Papers acted on since November 1, 2005	83
Accepted	19
Returned for revisions with an invitation to resubmit	14
Rejected outright	49
Withdrawn	1

TABLE 1. Papers submitted and acted on Nov. 1, 2005–Oct. 31, 2006.

(There is overlap between the papers submitted and the papers acted on, but the numbers do not (and could not) match—some (indeed most) of those submitted within the past twelve months were acted on within that period, but some were still in the review process at the end of the reporting period; further, some papers acted on had been submitted in the previous year.)

In an average month last year, therefore, *Language* received 7.4 papers, and 6.9 final decisions were made; as noted, these numbers are down considerably from last year's average, and indeed the average of the past several years, of approximately 10 submissions per month and 10 decisions. It is not clear to me if there is anything systematic or ominous to be read into this downturn of submission activity;[2] I try to make it as clear as I can and in as many ways as I can that *Language* is open to submissions from all areas of linguistics and that there is no hidden agenda governing patterns of acceptance by area within our field; the sole criteria I apply are quality and relevance to the generalist mission of the journal. Any help that the Executive Committee can offer in spreading that message to colleagues would be appreciated.

Using the above figures for final decisions made, the acceptance percentage for the year is 23% for all submissions acted on, a figure that is about the same as last year's 24% but far higher than the previous year's (very low) acceptance ratio of 12% accepted and higher also than the year before that (16%). As with last year's rate, this higher acceptance rate can probably be attributed to the fact that a substantial number of the papers acted on were resubmissions from previous 'revise-and-resubmit' decisions; since resubmissions are invited only if a paper stands a good chance of being accepted after recommended revisions are carried out, they arrive at the journal with an expectation that they are moving toward ultimate acceptance (though it is the case that not all resubmitted papers are accepted). Still, averaged over the five years of my editorship, the percentage of acceptance is a quite low 19.9%, showing that *Language* during this

[2] Indeed, a quick count at the six-month mark of the reporting period for 2007 (November 2006 through April 2007) suggests that the numbers are moving up again, so that last year may well have been a statistical anomaly.

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period, as always in fact, is clearly subject to a highly selective review process and to high standards for publication.

As in past years, so also in this reporting year, submitted papers ranged broadly over a number of areas within the overall field of linguistics, although the representation continues to be heavily concentrated in what may be thought of as traditional core areas of modern linguistics. The breakdown of areas is as given in Table 2; the assessment of the primary area a paper fell into was made in the editorial office (not by the authors). These categories represent identifiable groupings that emerged from the overall submissions and are not intended to define the field in any way. It should be emphasized that to some extent, these assessments are arbitrary, and many papers realistically could be categorized in more than one area (e.g. a paper on historical morphology could be called morphology or historical linguistics). Thus this tally is an imperfect measure to be sure, but still, I trust, somewhat instructive.

Syntax	21
Semantics	14
Phonology	10
Morphology	7
Sociolinguistics	6
Historical Linguistics	5
Applied Linguistics	4
Language Contact	4
Psycholinguistics	4
Pragmatics	3
Anthropological Linguistics	2
Discourse Analysis	2
Language Acquisition	2
Phonetics	2
Language Evolution	1
Language Typology	1
Sign Language	1

TABLE 2. Submitted papers by area of specialization.

Though this year's numbers are down overall from last year's, the general topical distribution is roughly comparable to that of past years; there seems to be nothing to suggest any trends, given the rather small numbers involved.

Similarly, among the 83 papers acted on, the topical breakdown is as given in Table 3; the process of assessment as to topic is the same as that used with the submitted papers.

With regard to book reviews and book notices, a few points must be made before there is any mention of relevant numbers. This was a year of transition for the book review section of *Language* operations. Gregory Stump took over in January as review editor, succeeding Stanley Dubinsky. Moreover, the emergence of concrete plans for an electronic network of 'co-journals' linked through a central website, to be known as *eLanguage*, under the direction of Stephen Anderson and Dieter Stein (see http://www.lsadc.org/info/pubs-elang-rfp.cfm), makes the planned electronic publication and concomitant phasing out of print book notices (discussed in last year's Editor's Report—see *Language* 82.2, June 2006) ever closer to a reality. In the transition period, therefore, book notices were commissioned but not processed for publication. Thus, with regard to publication of book notices, we concentrated only on the backlog of

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	RECEIVED	ACCEPTED	R&R	REJECTED
Syntax	31	7	6	17[a]
Semantics	14	3	2	9
Phonology	9	2	2	5
Morphology	6	3	0	3
Applied Linguistics	4	0	0	4
Language Contact	4	0	0	4
Psycholinguistics	3	2	0	1
Sociolinguistics	3	0	2	1
Language Typology	2	1	1	0
Anthropological Linguistics	1	0	0	1
Discourse Analysis	1	0	0	1
Historical Linguistics	1	0	0	1
Language Acquisition	1	0	1	0
Phonetics	1	1	0	0
Pragmatics	1	0	0	1
Sign Language	1	0	0	1

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

[a] + 1 withdrawal

those that had accumulated in the office over the past few years. Similarly, a concerted effort was made to get into print the book reviews that had been languishing in the production queue.

Gregory Stump's first year on the job was highly successful, even with the steep learning curve that accompanies new routines to get accustomed to and new policies to implement. The relevant activity is summarized in what follows.

The number of publications received by the journal fell during the year, to 354 items in all (versus 559 last year), a drop perhaps attributable to the transition to a new review editor (and potential confusion as to where publishers should send books). Still, an impressive number of assignments for reviews and notices was made: 292 in all (59 reviews and 233 notices).

On the receiving end, a total of 186 items was received, logged in, and processed in the review editor's office: 35 reviews and 151 notices.

With space freed up in future issues from the shifting of book notices to electronic publication, we plan to expand somewhat the number of book reviews commissioned so as to offer more reviews per issue than have appeared in general during my editorship, though filling the extra space with an additional article per issue will be considered too, based on the availability of manuscripts ready for production.

One final numerical to add into the mix is the length of the review process. I am trying to get that under control but I seem to be fighting a losing battle. The average time (5.17 months overall, slightly less if two egregious outliers, delayed due to wayward and dilatory reviewers who held the process up, are excluded, but closer to 6 months for papers undergoing a full review) has continued to creep up somewhat despite my best efforts and good intentions. Still, I am pleased to be able to report that for the vast majority of papers (over 80% if the outliers are excluded, just under 80% with them), a final decision is reached within six months of receipt of the paper in the *Language* office, the point at which the review process officially begins in our reckoning. I am the first to admit that this is one area where improvement is still needed, and I will continue to work on it in the months to come.

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Besides this strictly numerical round-up of the year for *Language*, there are several events, initiatives, occurrences, decisions, and the like to report on. I turn now to those in the next section.

VARIOUS *Language*-RELATED HAPPENINGS

First, progress continues to be made on the updating and correcting of the *Twentieth-century index*, as work continues on a volume-by-volume basis, cross-checking the items in the *Index* for completeness and accuracy. It is expected that this process will be finished by the end of calendar year 2007.

Second, the various 'public editorial activities' that I am engaged in continued, most notably my ongoing involvement in a now-annual group meeting of editors of linguistics journals at the annual LSA Meeting. About twenty of us met at the January 2006 LSA Meeting, and another such gathering, our third in consecutive LSA meetings, is planned for the January 2007 meeting. A planned feature of that meeting is a presentation by Paul Newman on intellectual property and copyright issues affecting journal publishing; he is Professor Emeritus of Linguistics, Indiana University, but more notably for this purpose, he is a J.D. (Indiana University) and now serves as Intellectual Property Specialist at the Hatcher Graduate Library of the University of Michigan. I note too that the web-based mailing list for linguistics journal editors, which I maintain at The Ohio State University, has continued to grow; it now links well over one hundred journal editors and provides a venue for ongoing discussion of timely topics that affect journal publishing in linguistics. I renew my open invitation from past years to all journal editors, review editors, and associate editors (or the like) in our field to join the mailing list if they are interested (contact me at joseph.1@osu.edu).

Third, another type of public activity can be mentioned: there were two visits by groups of linguists to the *Language* editorial office, the first in June made by some thirty out-of-towners who had come to Ohio State for the 25th annual East Coast Indo-European Conference, and the second in November by members of Ohio State's club for undergraduate linguistics majors, minors, or others interested in linguistics (known as Underlings). The Indo-Europeanists were especially interested in the William Dwight Whitney desk (see http://www.lsadc.org/info/pubs-lang-pics.cfm), and the Underlings were fascinated by Ohio State's involvement in the early days of the LSA and of *Language* (on which see *Language* 80.4.651–57, December 2004).

Fourth, a sad event presented a special opportunity for the journal: on January 24, 2006, Peter Ladefoged died. He had submitted a paper to *Language* for my consideration just a few weeks before his death, and review of the paper had already begun at the time of his death. The preliminary reports on the paper indicated that it would be well worth publishing, and knowing that book reviews on two books of Peter's were in the works and that he himself had submitted a review of a book by Gunnar Fant, and having commissioned an obituary on him, I developed a plan (originally suggested by Stanley Dubinsky) to put all of the Ladefoged-related material together in a single issue and to dedicate that issue to him. This plan is proceeding well, and the March 2007 issue will contain these materials. I trust it is a suitable official recognition of all that Peter did for the LSA.[3]

Fifth, an opportunistic innovation deserves mention: job ads in *Language*. The decision that was made a few years ago to move the *LSA Bulletin* to electronic-only publica-

[3] The March issue dedicated to Peter made its appearance on time, and represents, I believe, a fitting tribute to a great man and a great linguist. I thank everyone involved in the effort to produce it.

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tion occasioned a change in the utility of the *Bulletin*'s job ads for satisfying the federal regulations on how a department interested in hiring a non-US citizen can demonstrate that it conducted a search of national scope. Without a print *Bulletin*, *Language* offered a ready print venue for such ads, and this minor adjustment to the nature of advertising in the journal (from mainly publishers to now publishers and employment opportunities for linguists), for the time being at least, serves all relevant parties well (see my Editor's Department in *Language* 82.4, December 2006, for details).

Sixth, another opportunity that arose and was seized upon is the decision to take advantage of the expanded production capabilities of the company, Maryland Composition, that has been doing the composition of pages for the journal for the past several years. One of Maryland Composition's affiliates is now able to handle the printing, mailing, and storage of the journal, tasks that had been in the hands of another company for several years. Moving these tasks to Maryland Composition should streamline some aspects of the production of each issue, at the very least by unifying the process under one roof, and should also eliminate some recurring problems we have encountered in recent years with mailing (especially missing issues, particularly with overseas subscribers) and printing (e.g. a dropped page and a miscut cover).[4]

Finally, a large task looms for the near future, coordinating with *eLanguage* regarding book notices. The switchover to publishing book notices electronically via *eLanguage* will bring about changes in the routines for dealing with book notice assignments and especially with the end stages as the notices are completed by authors. We have begun to discuss this matter with the *eLanguage* editors and staff to determine the most efficient way of handling the electronic production of the notices, the extent of involvement of the *Language* office in the process, and other details. We expect to have these issues ironed out within the next year and to begin electronic publication of book notices, starting with those that have been accumulating during the past year, as soon as *eLanguage* is ready to take them.

Summing up, and some necessary acknowledgments

The work involved in producing four issues per year of a high-quality journal, and getting each issue out on time, takes enormous effort on the part of many individuals working in various locales around the country. My gratitude to all involved is immense, and I publicly thank these people here, as an acknowledgment of their good efforts on behalf of the journal, the LSA, and our field.

[4] The successful appearance of the March issue shows that this change in production has been accomplished smoothly. One small error that will be corrected in this current issue and all subsequent ones is worth mentioning because it may be a piece of *Language* trivia for the ages: the spine is printed upside down compared with the norm from (most—see below) previous issues, with volume and page numbers at the top and month and year at the bottom, instead of the usual reverse placement. Normally I might not mention such a gaffe (which the printers did acting on their own, thinking that it would be a service to us, inasmuch as most journals that include that information on the spine have it as on the March issue), but Geoffrey Pullum, in his 'Topic . . . Comment' column 'Stalking the perfect journal' (*Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 2.261–67, reprinted in *The great Eskimo vocabulary hoax and other irreverent essays on the study of language* (University of Chicago Press, 1991, pp. 59–66)), drew attention to a similar state of affairs in an earlier issue. He stated, in his usual gently whimsical way, that among the questions that are on the lips of 'the broad mass of the linguistic public' was 'Why . . . the spine of *Language* vol. 51, no. 4 (December 1975) [was] printed upside down, i.e. from top to bottom, unlike every other issue in the last decade' (p. 60). Although I don't know for sure what happened in December 1975, my guess (using the present to explain the past) is that a similar printer's lapse led to that anomaly.

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First, my associate editors deserve mention. I rely heavily on the fine advice and valuable assistance that they offer, and they make my job as editor that much easier. They offer guidance through their evaluations of papers, their recommendation of reviewers, and their general advice on a variety of matters associated with the journal. They all do a great job and deserve special thanks; I thus mention them here by name: Farrell Ackerman, Jennifer Cole, William Davies, Nick Evans, Kirk Hazen, Laura Michaelis, Jaye Padgett, Shari Speer, Natsuko Tsujimura, and Thomas Wasow. Since Kirk, Jaye, Shari, Natsuko, and Tom are all rotating off the board as of January 5, 2007, I will be making new appointments for the coming year, to be announced once they are officially approved.[5]

Logistical and personal support comes in steady doses from the dedicated staff of the LSA Secretariat; on what seems like a daily basis, Maggie Reynolds, Mary Niebuhr, and Rita Lewis deal patiently with my questions and with various requests from others that I receive but direct their way. I appreciate their generosity with their time and their always-pleasant demeanor. They deserve my special thanks in this report. Frances Kelly, Hope Dawson, and Audra Starcheus also merit particular recognition for the excellent copyediting they do, whipping articles and other material into *Language*'s rather strict format guidelines, and thus readying them for production.

As in the past, so too this year as well I must make a special acknowledgment of the extraordinary work of my office staff here in Ohio: editorial assistants Helena Riha and Audra Starcheus continued to provide remarkable, even if mostly invisible, work on behalf of the journal, work that is crucial to keeping everything running efficiently and to bringing out issues of the journal on time. They go far above and beyond the call to duty again and again, and in this way they offer incomparable service to the journal, the LSA, and the field at large. I can truthfully say that I could not have managed this year without them. I must also here recognize the extraordinary service that Dr. Hope Dawson has provided again this year; fortunately for me she was still in Columbus this past year, and drawing on her several years' experience as editorial assistant, she was always ready with an answer about formatting or style and continued to be a trusted advisor on matters of policy.

And, finally, I must once again publicly acknowledge the outside reviewers of papers, for their role in the journal's success cannot be overestimated. They exhibit professionalism and expertise in ways that never cease to amaze me, and I always learn something from the insights that they provide on papers that typically extend well beyond my own 'comfort zone' of knowledge and expertise. The thoughtful and careful reports they routinely offer allow me to make the decisions that I do. Their important service merits both public recognition and thanks, so I hereby acknowledge the contribution of the following 107 referees, who aided the journal, the Society, and the profession with their fine reports submitted between November 1, 2005, and October 31, 2006 (* indicates that the individual was responsible for more than one report).

[5] The title page of the March issue, as indeed of this issue, makes it clear who the new associate editors are, but for the record, the Executive Committee approved adding Mark Baker, Cleo Condoravdi, Edward Gibson, D. Gary Miller, Joe Pater, and Sali Tagliamonte to the roster. This total of six new associate editors is one more than the number that rotated off as it was felt that the workload and areal distribution within the group of associate editors warranted one additional person.

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David Adger
Adam Albright
Artemis Alexiadou
Mark Aronoff
Ash Asudeh
Peter Auer
R. Harald Baayen
David Beck
Thomas Berg
Judy Bernstein
Douglas Biber
James P. Blevins
Hans C. Boas
Željko Bošković
Chris Brew
David Britain
Ellen Broselow
Daniel Büring
Brady Zack Clark
Sandra Clarke
George Nick Clements
Jennifer Cole
Wes Collins
Cynthia Connine
Greville G. Corbett
Elizabeth Cowper
William Croft
William Davies
Kenneth de Jong
Matthew S. Dryer
David Eddington
Jan Edwards
David Embick
N. J. Enfield
Thomas Ernst
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Monica Macauley
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Kari Nahkola
Terttu Nevalainen
Frederick Newmeyer*
Irina Nikolaeva
Orhan Orgun
Carol Padden
Matthew Pearson
Carl Pollard
Eric Potsdam
Christopher Potts
Adam Przepiorkowski
James Pustejovsky
Malka Rappaport Hovav
Judith Rosenhouse
Joseph C. Salmons
Chilin Shih
Dan I. Slobin
Margaret Speas
Andrew Spencer
Erik Thomas
Graham Thurgood*
Hubert Truckenbrodt
Peter Trudgill
John Trueswell
Ken Turner
Andrew Wedel
John Wenzel

Let me close by reiterating the decision I announced to the Executive Committee last May that much as I have enjoyed the job, I would not be seeking another term as editor; in light of this decision, I am pleased to see that developing a call for nominations and applications for a new editor is on the agenda for the Executive Committee's January 2007 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian D. Joseph
Columbus, Ohio
December 10, 2006

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