THE EDITOR'S DEPARTMENT

Language and practicality

Those who know me, and I include here any regular readers of this column that there might be, know that there is little about the journal that I have not had something to say about over the past five years: our style sheet, our contents, our policies, and changes in our format, to name just a few, are all among the items that have been fuel for my word processor. Indeed, it is hard for me to let any aspect of *Language* go uncommented upon, especially when there is a shift in some part of our operations or some new feature to report on. As it happens, this issue has something new in it that, to my mind, deserves some explanation.

Language has accepted advertisements for many years; the first ad, as best I can determine, appeared in *Language* 45.2, the June 1969 issue, and was placed by Cambridge University Press. That was an appropriate beginning, as indeed, over the nearly forty years of advertising in the journal, virtually all of the ads have come from publishers of linguistics books and journals. Such ads, of course, serve many purposes, but among them is keeping the journal's readership informed about developments that are themselves of a nonscientific nature but that nonetheless are salient and relevant to professional linguists and their scientific interests. In that sense, even though ads also generate a small amount of income, they primarily play a very practical role, having an informational function for readers. In that spirit, but also to fulfill another practical function, in this issue we are beginning to run ads for linguistics jobs around the country. This decision was spurred by the change in the publication mode for the *LSA Bulletin* and an unintended consequence occasioned by that change.

First, though, a bit of history about the *Bulletin* is in order. As discussed in a previous column (*Language* 81.3, September 2005), following a decision by the LSA's Executive Committee, the *Bulletin* is now published only in electronic form, after a long and venerable tradition of appearing in print. The *Bulletin* had been published since December of 1926, at the end of *Language*'s second year, when No. 1 came out, entitled *Survey of linguistic studies: Opportunities for advanced work in the United States* and authored by Roland Kent and Edgar Sturtevant. The next several *Bulletins* were devoted to announcements or records of Linguistic Institutes, with No. 2, *Record of the Linguistic Institute: First session July 9 to August 17, 1928*, appearing in September of 1928 and marking the first Linguistic Institute, held at Yale University with Edgar Sturtevant as the director. By No. 2, the *Bulletin* was officially designated as a 'Supplement to *Language*, Journal of the Linguistic Society of America', and in that way was a publication of the LSA on a par with the series of *Language dissertations*, designated as a supplement from 1929 on, starting with No. 5 of that series, and *Language monographs*, designated as a supplement from 1930 on, starting with No. 6 of that series (the dissertation series and the monograph series were two distinct series, though the first four monographs are not available to me to clarify the relation between the two at the outset). The *Bulletin* was published twice a year (March and September) from March 1929 (No. 3) to 1931 (No. 8) and then was on hiatus for four years (1932–35), reemerging in 1936 (No. 9) and appearing once yearly thereafter until 1969 (No. 42). Beginning in 1970, the *Bulletin* came out four times a year. The June 2005 *Bulletin* (No. 188) was the last one to appear in print format, and since October 2005, as noted above, the *Bulletin* has been available exclusively through the LSA website (www.lsadc.org).

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2006.0205 Published online by Cambridge University Press

So what does this change in the delivery of the *Bulletin* have to do with advertising in *Language*, and what practical aspect is involved? One function that the *Bulletin* had served was as a venue for the publication of advertisements for jobs for linguists, officially labeled as 'job opportunities'. This practice began with *Bulletin* No. 101 (October 1983). In a sense, it was a logical extension of one type of information regularly reported in earlier *Bulletin*s, namely announcements of grant and fellowship opportunities, and to some extent as well of reports in the 'Notes and Personalia' section, which graced the pages of *Language* from the very first issue in various forms into the 1960s,[1] of who was taking which academic positions in our field.[2] Publication of ads in the *Bulletin* got the word out about vacancies in the field.

However, publication of an advertisement in print also served an important practical purpose by satisfying regulations of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS, formerly known as the Immigration and Naturalization Service) about searches to fill such positions. That is, in order to be able to hire a non-US citizen, departments have to be able to demonstrate that a national search was undertaken, and the means of demonstrating this has been the appearance of an advertisement in a print venue that reached a national audience; the *Bulletin*, as a widely distributed print organ of the major national (and international) professional association for linguists, fit the bill, allowing departments advertising in it to declare truthfully, if asked, that a search of national scope had been undertaken. Interestingly, sending out fliers to all departments announcing the job did not satisfy the regulations, even though it could be argued that such a move offered a way, perhaps even a more effective way, to get the word out nationally. Interestingly too, the more recently available means of electronic 'papering' of departments or of posting job ads on websites (including the LSA's own website) also do not seem to count as satisfying the regulations, despite their effectiveness.

With the move to electronic publication of the *Bulletin*, therefore, a suitable venue for this official purpose was lost. Accepting job ads in *Language* provides a good—and practical—solution to an unfortunate and unintended result of change with the *Bulletin*. It thus seems to be an appropriate step to take, one entirely consistent with the journal's interest in serving the needs of the members of the LSA.

Language exists in the real world, and thus it has to serve not only the linguistic public but also the public at large, as represented by laws and regulations of relevant governing bodies (such as the USCIS). Until such time as it is no longer necessary or useful for *Language* to do so, therefore, we will accept such ads.

Brian D. Joseph
Columbus, Ohio
November 13, 2006

[1] The 'Notes and Personalia' section became simply 'Notes' in *Language* 16.3 (1940), and continued in that form through to the end of 1969, last appearing in *Language* 45.4.

[2] The first such announcement was in the second issue of *Language*, vol. 1.2 (1925), where on p. 68 it was reported that 'Miss Else M. Saleski, Assistant in German at the University of Wisconsin, has accepted a call to Milwaukee-Downer College as Professor of German'.

https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2006.0205 Published online by Cambridge University Press