THE EDITOR'S DEPARTMENT

Annual Report

As one of my annual obligations as editor, I am asked, on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America in January, to file a report with the LSA Executive Committee in which I detail and discuss activities and issues pertaining to the running of the journal, highlight any new developments of note, and generally address any matters that either the Executive Committee or I myself consider to be important or noteworthy in some respect. Following what has become my usual procedure for fulfilling this obligation, I give below, in place of my more usual editorial comments in this section of the journal, my fourth 'State of the Journal' report, summing up the events of my fourth year on the job. The version given below is essentially the form in which the report was submitted to the Executive Committee in January, though I have taken the liberty of adding some informational updates in footnotes, correcting some errors, and embellishing and elaborating here and there as appropriate.

Brian D. Joseph
Columbus, Ohio
April 15, 2006

THE EDITOR'S REPORT

Preamble

During 2005, the fourth year of my seven-year term as editor of *Language*, I passed the halfway mark of my editorship, and thus I am now on the downhill slope, so to speak, of my service. Even with the start of this downward trajectory in the second half of the year, however, I did not experience a let-down of any sort nor any diminution in the intensity—or excitement—of serving as editor. Indeed in most respects it was a typical year with the journal, that is to say, interesting, stimulating, at times frustrating, but overall very rewarding, and ultimately most satisfying.

In what follows, as is my custom, I survey the events of the year as far as *Language* is concerned, keeping in mind, as always, just how privileged a position I hold, being associated with such a fine publication.

Language: A numerical overview (and then some)

As in my past reports, I start with a statistical summary of volume 81, '*Language*-by-the-numbers' as it were, adding some commentary where appropriate. As in any year, four issues of *Language* appeared, and again, as was the case last year and actually so since the September 2003 issue (79.3), all four issues appeared on time, not only being posted electronically with Project Muse but also being mailed out to subscribers by approximately the middle of each month in which they were designated to appear (March, June, September, and December). We now have our part in the production process, with its main phases of collecting and finalizing publishable versions of papers, copyediting the papers, printing them into *Language*-formatted pages, and proofreading them, down to a science almost, and we are reaping the rewards of this efficiency in the continued on-time delivery of the finished product. The stream of fine papers into the journal offices (see below for details) continues unabated, so that even as the current issue, volume 81.4 for December 2005, is about to appear as I sit writing this report, all of the papers for the March 2006 issue (volume 82.1) are in production, the June 2006 issue is already full, and the September 2006 issue is half-spoken for, to be filled

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by the next two final versions of accepted papers that authors send in.[1] There is no shortage of excellent material for the journal, so I anticipate being able to keep the journal appearing on time for the years to come.

These four issues contained 1,056 pages, with 641 pages devoted to 18 articles, 45 to 3 review articles, 80 to 8 discussion notes, 8 to 1 obituary, 100 to 30 reviews, 107 to 148 book notices, and 75 to other sorts of material (letters: 14 pages for 10 letters; Editor's Department columns: 20 pages for 4 pieces, including the annual Editor's Report; Recent Publications lists: 19 pages; index: 21 pages; correction: 1 page). The distribution of types of items published and the rough ratios of the different types to one another are comparable to past years, but overall the volume was substantially longer than the annual target length of 900 pages, and longer even than last year's longer-than-usual volume, which at that point was the longest volume of my editorship. This greater length reflected a conscious choice on my part to add pages, and was made possible by the Executive Committee's recognizing the legitimacy of my request for more pages; this request was necessitated by a backlog that has been building up of book reviews and book notices that needed to be put into print but also reflects a desire to get as many articles into each issue as possible so that there would not be a significant lag between acceptance and actual publication for research papers. Even with the added pages, the backlog in reviews and notices continues and the time-to-publication for accepted articles is increasing. These issues are revisited below.

The average length of an article this past year was 35.6 pages, up quite a bit from last year's length (32.44) and from that of the previous year (33.75 pages), and far greater than the norm in the 1960s and into the 1970s. The greater length seems to result from several factors: a need for authors to cover an ever-increasing body of literature relevant to the topics they write on, a greater use of statistical methods of analyzing data and the concomitant display of results in tables and figures, and perhaps also simply less attention by authors to being concise in their papers with regard to their formulations of research questions, analyses, and solutions. As I have stated before, this greater length may not be a negative but it does put greater pressure on the standard 900-page volumes of recent years. Moreover, relatively few of the papers that are submitted to the journal these days are under 25 pages in length in manuscript form; in fact, most continue to be in the 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 this volume was thus 3.74 : 1 this year (774 pages : 207 pages), as compared with 3.43 : 1 last year, meaning that 21.1% of the pages in 2005 were book reviews or notices, quite similar to last year's distribution of 22.5% (down considerably from the 31.2% figure for 2002). I must say I am happier with this ratio than with the 31.2% figure of three years ago, and am pleased that the figures for last year and this year are fairly close in this regard. Both types of pieces (article-type and review-type) 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.

Many of the items printed have an interactive nature (here I am borrowing the very apt characterization of recent issues of the journal imparted to me by Michael Silverstein

[1] And, at the point now of preparing this report for publication, the September issue is full and the December is already half-full; *Language* marches on!

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(p.c. 9-2-05)), a feature which I have been promoting, to be sure: the number of letters published is comparable to last year's total (10 this year as opposed to 11 last year) and there are more discussion notes in this volume (8 this year as opposed to 4 last year). All in all, I consider this aspect of the journal to be moving exactly in the direction I would want it to be.

I turn now to details about papers submitted and papers acted on in the past year. Using our twelve-month reporting period of November 1, 2004 to October 31, 2005 (with these dates allowing for a reasonable and accurate tally to be made within the reporting deadlines), I again can report that the *Language* office saw considerable activity in terms of the numbers of papers received and the number decided upon—the relevant figures are given in Table 1. These figures include the review articles, as such submissions are subject to refereeing and can in principle be rejected (as indeed one was in the past year), 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, 2004	115
Papers acted on since November 1, 2004	126
Accepted	31
Returned for revisions with an invitation to resubmit	21
Rejected outright	73
Withdrawn	1

TABLE 1. Papers submitted and acted on Nov. 1, 2004–Oct. 31, 2005.

(Note that while there is overlap between the papers submitted and the papers acted on, the numbers do not (and could not) match—some (indeed most) submitted within the past twelve months were acted on within that period, but some are still in the review process; moreover, some acted on had been submitted in the previous year.)

In an average month last year, therefore, *Language* received 9.6 papers, and 10.5 final decisions were made; these numbers are up from last year's average of approximately 8.5 submissions per month and 10 decisions. Last year, in the face of a slight downturn in these numbers from the previous year, I was inclined to consider the lower numbers as a mere statistical 'blip', and the upturn this year confirms (for me) that assessment.

Using these figures for final decisions made, the acceptance percentage is 24.6% 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, I attribute this higher acceptance rate for the reporting year in large part to the fact that a substantial number of the papers acted on were resubmissions from previous 'revise-and-resubmit' decisions; resubmissions are invited only if a paper stands a good chance of being accepted after recommended revisions are carried out, so that they arrive in the office with an expectation that the author is moving the paper towards ultimate acceptance (though it must be stressed here that not all resubmitted papers are accepted). Also playing a role in this 24.6% figure is the fact that this past year saw a larger than usual number of discussion note, short report, and review article items submitted and acted on (11 such submissions in all: 3 review articles, 1 short report, and 7 discussion notes, of which all but one review article were accepted), which, though carefully and rigorously screened, are judged by somewhat different criteria from those used for regular research article submissions (since they have a different purpose—and note that these review articles were commissioned pieces); without those 11, the rate drops to 18.3%. Averaged

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over the four years of my editorship, the percentage of acceptance is still a quite low 19.7%; thus, the figures point to a highly selective review process and high standards for publication, as has always been the case for *Language*.

This year, as in past years, the submitted papers covered a broad range of areas within the overall field of linguistics, though the representation continues to be heavily concentrated in the traditional core areas of modern linguistics. The breakdown of areas is given in Table 2, based on an assessment made in the editorial office (not by the authors) of the primary area a paper fell into. These categories represent identifiable groupings emerging from the set of submissions and are not intended to define our field overall in any way. In many instances, these assessments are somewhat arbitrary, as many papers could legitimately be classified in more than one area (e.g. a paper on the acquisition of phonology by children could be called phonology or language acquisition). This tally is an imperfect measure at best, but I trust it is still somewhat instructive.

Syntax	41
Semantics	13
Phonology	12
Morphology	8
Historical Linguistics	7
Discourse Analysis	6
Language Acquisition	4
Language Typology	4
Psycholinguistics	4
Language Contact	3
Computational Linguistics	2
Pragmatics	2
Sociolinguistics	2
Cognitive Linguistics	1
Conversational Analysis	1
Creole Studies	1
English as a Second Language	1
Metrics	1
State of the Field	1
Sociology of Language (Lang. Endangerment)	1

TABLE 2. Submitted papers by area of specialization.

Although this year's numbers are up a bit overall from last year's, the general topical distribution is roughly comparable to that of last year, with slight increases in morphology and phonology, and the absence of anything on sign languages per se, but nothing to suggest any trends, given the rather small numbers involved.

Similarly, among the 126 papers acted on, the breakdown by topic is as in Table 3, with the same process of assessment as to topic being used as with the submitted papers, with the number of acceptances, revise-and-resubmits (R&R), and rejections for each topical category.

With regard to book reviews and book notices, two points must be made before any relevant numbers are given.

First, a change in the review editorship is in the offing; the current review editor Stanley Dubinsky decided in the late summer to step down from that position at the end of the calendar year to devote more time to his own research. In a separate memo,[2]

[2] Not included here.

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	RECEIVED	ACCEPTED	R&R	REJECTED
Syntax	41	15	8	17[a]
Phonology	13	5	4	4
Semantics	12	2	3	7
Historical Linguistics	11	3	0	8
Morphology	8	1	1	6
Language Acquisition	7	2	2	3
Discourse Analysis	6	0	1	5
Language Contact	4	0	0	4
Language Typology	4	0	0	4
Psycholinguistics	4	1	2	1
Sociolinguistics	3	0	0	3
Cognitive Linguistics	2	0	0	2
Computational Linguistics	2	0	0	2
Pragmatics	2	0	0	2
Conversational Analysis	1	1	0	0
Creole Studies	1	0	0	1
English as a Second Language	1	0	0	1
Metrics	1	0	0	1
Sign Language	1	0	0	1
State of the Field	1	0	0	1
Sociology of Language (Lang. Endangerment)	1	1	0	0

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

[a] + 1 withdrawal

I offer a nomination for someone who can take his place in January 2006. In anticipation of this change, a few steps were taken in the autumn to smooth the transition as Stan wound down his involvement. First, Stan agreed to continue handling e-mail pertaining to reviews and the like until January 10, when a new review editor will presumably have been confirmed by the Executive Committee and can assume duties.[3] Second, in anticipation of the change in the review editorship but faced with uncertainties in the late summer as to when a new review editor could be found and could take charge of the review operations, we decided to move the physical handling of the books for review to the LSA Secretariat and to have the Secretariat for the time being, until the transition is complete, update the database by which we track where books are in the review pipeline. Finally, in order to keep the transition as trouble-free as possible (there were technical issues with the database software, for instance, that occasioned much expenditure of energy and gnashing of teeth), we decided to be very cautious about the assigning of books for review, and especially for book notices, a situation that was affected by a second further factor.

In particular, this additional relevant factor impinging on the matter of book reviews and book notices and slowing down that aspect of *Language*'s operations is a decision taken by the Executive Committee at its January 2005 meeting to have the LSA develop an electronic venue. This electronic entity, tentatively called *eLanguage*, and possibly to be an adjunct to *Language* though possibly a separate entity, would, among other

[3] That indeed did happen, and though it presumably is already well known, inasmuch as I mentioned it in my March 2006 Editor's Department (*Language* 82.1.5–8) and his name now appears on the inside cover of the journal, I nonetheless state for the record in the official venue of this report that Dr. Gregory T. Stump of the University of Kentucky has taken over as the new review editor for *Language*.

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things, include the book notices as a regular part of its content, thus relieving the pages of the print journal from a commitment to publishing these short, largely descriptive notices.[4] Part of my year was thus spent engaged in planning the development of *eLanguage*; some of the details are given in a separate report.[5]

Against this background, the numbers concerning book reviews can now be considered. The number of publications received by the journal was as high as ever: 559 items in all (versus 619 last year, with the number of journals received being smaller than last year owing to our having encouraged publishers not to send journal issues—it simply was not clear that this long-standing practice was to anyone's benefit in an era in which the internet provides a ready source of information about journals, inasmuch as journal issues are never the subject of reviews or notices). Even with this number of books coming into the *Language* offices, the number of assignments made for reviews and notices was down quite a bit from last year: 158 in all (47 reviews and 111 notices). The reduction was inevitable, given the circumstances: as noted above, uncertainty about what would happen with book notices and the phasing in of a transition to a new review editor led to a halt in making assignments at about mid-year. Moreover, it seemed wise to hold off on generating more book notices as it was not certain when—or even if—they would start appearing in electronic form in *eLanguage* (we did not want to hold out the promise of publication of the book notice in print if we were going to be moving soon to electronic publication, as the venue and mode of publication seem to matter to some potential reviewers). The last book notice list was posted on LinguistList in February 2005, so that there are now three quarters worth of publications received waiting to be placed on a book notice list. Review assignments for books slated for full reviews (as opposed to book notices) have been resumed as of this writing, but the book notice list will not be posted for another few weeks at least.[6]

On the receiving end, a total of 203 items were received, logged in, and processed in the review editor's office: 37 reviews and 166 notices. Again, this number was affected by the fact that from June till November, only 7 reviews and notices were assigned; similarly, in a period of uncertainty, the usual bi-annual reminders to delinquent reviewers did not go out in July as they would normally have. Still, with the matter of a change in the review editorship about to be resolved and more definitive plans for the book notices soon to be made as the LSA presses on with *eLanguage*, my expectation is that book review operations will resume at a more normal pace soon.[7]

Thus this was a year with some important changes for the journal, in personnel and in prospective modes of publication. Still, no major changes in policy or general direction for the journal were effected. There were, however, other turns in the road for *Language*, in the form of initiatives undertaken, initiatives set aside, and initiatives continued and extended. I turn now to those in the next section.

[4] The most important development postdating this report is the Executive Committee's decision to make *eLanguage* a separate and distinct entity from the print journal. This and other relevant aspects are discussed in my March Editor's Department, and in that issue as well there appears a 'Request for proposals' from prospective editors of *eLanguage*.

[5] Not included here.

[6] A book notice list covering books received since February 2005 was posted in February of this year, with the proviso that any notices generated from that list would not appear in print but rather would be published in electronic form.

[7] As indeed they now have.

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Some miscellaneous initiatives to report on

First, I am working as always to get the length of the review process under control. The average time (4.79 months overall, but close to 6 months for papers undergoing a full review) has crept up somewhat due to a few extremely wayward referees whose inaction delayed a couple of papers far beyond what is acceptable; while I should perhaps have dealt with them differently, the fact is that I allowed them to 'string me along', so to speak, resulting in a few outlier cases that took far longer than desirable and which raised the average length of the time-to-decision. Still, the vast majority of papers (some 70%) see a decision within six months of receipt of the paper in the *Language* office, the point at which the review process can officially begin 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.

Second, progress is being made on the updating and correcting of the *Twentieth-century index*, with the initial round of reconstituting and correcting the first third of the index (vols. 1–25) complete at the time of this writing, and work continuing on the second third.

Third, a number of legal matters that were raised first a year ago still remain unresolved and in some instances unaddressed—these are revisited in a separate memo that needs the Executive Committee's attention.[8]

Fourth, no progress has been made on the *Language* obituary project that I announced this past year in my annual report of a year ago; I remain committed to the idea of collecting all the obituaries and death notices published in the pages of *Language* as a source book in the history of the field, but the exigencies of other *Language*-related matters have relegated this project to a backburner for the moment.

Fifth, what might be termed 'public editorial activities' on my part continued, in particular through 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 last January's LSA Meeting and another such gathering is planned for this coming meeting. Moreover, the web-based mailing list for linguistics journal editors, maintained by me at The Ohio State University, has more than doubled in size, now linking well over one hundred journal editors and providing a venue for on-going discussion of timely topics that affect journal publishing in linguistics. It remains a light-traffic list but with interesting issues raised and solutions proposed. This list offers opportunities for communication and cooperation among editors that can prove useful and productive for all concerned. My mentioning it here should be taken as an open invitation to all journal editors in our field to join the mailing list if they are interested (contact me at joseph.1@osu.edu).

Summing up, and some necessary acknowledgments

Producing a high-quality journal four times a year, not to mention producing it on time, takes a considerable amount of effort on the part of many individuals working in various spots around the country. As always, thanks are thus in order for the hard work of these people, and acknowledgment of their effort is called for.

First, there is my team of associate editors. My job as editor would not be possible without the valuable assistance that they offer. They provide me with guidance by reading and assessing papers, recommending reviewers, and offering additional general advice when called upon to do so. All of them do a great job and deserve special thanks; I thus mention them by name here: William Davies, Kirk Hazen, James McCloskey, Norma Mendoza-Denton, Jaye Padgett, Janet Pierrehumbert, Shari Speer, Donca Steri-

[8] Not included here.

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ade, Gregory Stump, Natsuko Tsujimura, and Thomas Wasow. Since Jim, Norma, Janet, Donca, and Greg are all moving off the board as of January 6, 2006, new appointments will be made for the coming year, to be announced once they are officially approved.[9]

Support of a logistical and personal nature comes in steady doses from the hard-working and dedicated individuals who work at the LSA Secretariat; on an almost daily basis, Maggie Reynolds, Mary Niebuhr, and Rita Lewis patiently deal with not only my own questions but also others that I receive but end up directing their way. They are generous with their time and are always good-natured. They thus merit special thanks in this report. Frances Kelly and my editorial assistants also deserve particular recognition for their excellent copyediting as they whip articles and other material into the strict *Language* format guidelines, readying them for the printers.

I have already mentioned the fine work of the *Language* review editor, Stanley Dubinsky, and his efforts on behalf of the journal, the Society, and the field at large not just last year but also over the past four years, demand special mention; I thus officially thank Stan on behalf of the LSA for his tireless work on the book review operations.[10] It has been a pleasure working with him these four years, and as his legacy, his successor will inherit a well-oiled machine that ought to be up and running smoothly early in 2006.

As with each previous year, so too this year a special acknowledgment is needed to recognize the extraordinary work of my office staff here in Ohio: editorial assistants Hope Dawson and Audra Starcheus continued their remarkable, though mostly invisible, work for the journal, work that has proven so essential to keeping operations running efficiently and to bringing the journal out on time. They have gone far above and beyond the call to duty on occasion after occasion, and they thus offer incomparable service to the journal, the Society, and the profession. It is no exaggeration for me to say that I could not have managed this year without them.

Although this may not be a venue for getting too personal, two developments involving them, one completed and one coming up, need to be mentioned. Audra's work this year was interrupted, briefly, by the birth of her third child, a daughter (who became the littlest member of the *Language* office 'staff' on those times when she accompanied her mom to the office in the fall). Subbing for Audra on an occasional basis this fall was Helena Riha, who joins the Columbus *Language* team in January on a regular basis as an editorial assistant. The reason for Helena's joining in January is the upcoming development I referred to: after three and a half years of truly stellar service, Hope Dawson, now Dr. Hope Dawson (having completed her Ph.D. in March 2005), is leaving her position as my editorial assistant. Although she will continue to help with copyediting and proofreading and will be available to offer advice and assistance with any tricky matters that arise, her day-to-day contributions to getting the office work done efficiently and effectively will now be history. Her mastery of all aspects of the complex set of tasks involved in producing the journal has been a marvel to witness, and I came to rely heavily on her sound judgment in all matters pertaining to the journal. Her steady hand here will be missed, but we as a field, and I as an editor, can be grateful for her outstanding service to us all for so many years.

And, finally, last but certainly not least, it is essential once again to recognize the reviewers and their role they play in the journal's success. The professionalism and

[9] Here is as suitable a place as any for an official announcement of the new associate editors, the nominations of whom were approved by the Executive Committee after the filing of this report; they are: Farrell Ackerman, Jennifer Cole, Nicholas Rollo David Evans, and Laura Michaelis.

[10] Moreover, the Executive Committee at the January meeting approved a resolution of thanks recognizing Stan's important contributions to all of us in the LSA.

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expertise that they exhibit never cease to amaze me, and it is a rare case indeed where I do not learn something from the insights that they provide on papers that often are far from my own 'comfort zone' of knowledge and expertise. The typically thoughtful and careful reports they offer routinely give me exceptional guidance with a wide range of papers. Their important service to the journal and to the field deserves public recognition and thanks, so I hereby acknowledge the contribution of the following referees, 116 in number, who submitted reports to our office between November 1, 2004 and October 31, 2005. Some referees submitted reports on two papers, indicated with an *, and in a rare feat of service, one referee reported on three papers, indicated with **.

Farrell Ackerman
Alexandra Aikhenvald
Adam Albright
John Anderson
Arto Anttila
John Ole Askedal
R. Harald Baayen
Mark C. Baker
José Benki
Deborah Berkley
Renee Blake
Juliette Blevins
Kathryn Bock
Ellen Broselow
Eugene Buckley
Daniel Büring
Joan Bybee
Mark Campana
Gregory N. Carlson
Johanneke Caspers
Yiya Chen
Brady Zack Clark
Charles Clifton, Jr.
Bernard Comrie
Ellen Contini-Morava
Ann Copestake
Greville G. Corbett
William Croft
William Davies
Hope C. Dawson
Mark Donohue
Wolfgang Dressler
David Eddington
N. J. Enfield
Daniel L. Everett
Ronald Feldstein
Caroline Féry
Robert Frank
Stefan A. Frisch
Elena Gavruseva
Donna Gerdts*
Nikolas Gisborne
Anthea Fraser Gupta
Heidi Harley
Silke Hamann
Michael Hammond
Robert Hartsuiker
Martin Haspelmath*
Kirk Hazen*
Henriette Hendriks
John Hewson
Caroline Heycock
Andrew Hippisley
Paul Hopper
Malka Rappaport Hovav
Elizabeth Hume
Richard Janda
Keith Johnson
Christina Kakava
Ron Kaplan
Adam Kendon
Michael Kenstowicz
Hideki Kishimoto
Robert Kluender
William A. Kretzschmar, Jr.
Mohamed Lahrouchi
Julie Legate
Philip LeSourd
Beth Levin
Rochelle Lieber*
Martin Maiden
Gary Marcus
Joyce McDonough
Richard P. Meier
Armin Mester
Miriam Meyerhoff
Laura Michaelis
Line Mikkelsen
Bettina Migge
Shigeru Miyagawa
Benjamin Munson
Ilana Mushin
Donna Jo Napoli
Frederick Newmeyer
Michael Noonan
Rachel Nordlinger
Geoff Nunberg
Derek Nurse
Richard Oehrle*
Joe Pater
William Philip
Martin Pickering
Paul Pietroski
Paul Portner
William J. Poser
Christopher Potts*
Keren Rice*
Elizabeth Ritter
Tom Roeper
Ivan Sag
Emanuel Schegloff
Daniel Schreier
Peter Sells**
Yasuhiro Shirai
Carlota Smith
Gregory Stump
Anna Szabolcsi
Sali Tagliamonte
Sandra Thompson
Lisa Travis
Ans van Kemenade
Spyridoula Varlokosta
Gregory Ward
Thomas Wasow
Amy Weinberg
Kie Zuraw

Respectfully submitted,
Brian D. Joseph
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December 10, 2005

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