

## Introducing Special Issues in *Biolinguistics*

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It is our pleasure to introduce a new 'feature' in *Biolinguistics*: the special issue. Other than the big inaugural issue (*Biolinguistics* 1, as representative of the entire year's volume, published in December 2007), it is the set goal of this journal to appear four times per year, roughly as the Winter issue 1 (at the latest at the end of March), the Spring issue 2 (by the end of June), the Summer issue 3 (by the end of September), and the Fall issue 4 (by the end of December). While we will make all possible efforts to bring these issues out just a little earlier than our own set 'deadline', the present issue should welcome you right on the mark: *Biolinguistics* 3.2–3 stands for the Spring/Summer double issue, and thus falls on the right edge of the set dates!

The present double issue is a themed, guest-edited special issue, so we will spell out a few general, and then some more specific, points on this new feature.

This double issue is a carefully selected sub-set of presentations given at a conference, and this is certainly one possibility for *Biolinguistics* special issues. As such, we appeal to all interested conference organizers to bear this in mind and get in touch with us for future collaboration. However, we will not publish more than one such special issue per volume, which means that in the future, we will be even more selective. Other potential special issues could be themed independently of relevant conferences, ideally through a call for papers. Topics should be in line with the general aims of the journal (see also Boeckx & Grohmann 2007) and might range from biolinguistic explanations in linguistic theory to evolution of/in language to genetic aspects of language, and many more. Again, we urge potential guest editors to contact us well in advance.

Whatever the background of a special issue, we will impose the usual selection criteria of *Biolinguistics*. This means that all submitted manuscripts will be peer-reviewed by (at least) two external referees. Our experience assembling the present special issue leads us to announce from the outset that future guest editors will also be asked to get a little bit more involved in the selection and editing process. We will communicate our policy on special issues to interested colleagues on request, of course, which includes setting a strict timeline in order for forthcoming issues to be planned ahead accordingly.

To introduce the present issue, we are extremely happy that the organizers of *BALE 2008*, the conference held at the University of York in July 2008 with the full title *Biolinguistics, Acquisition and Language Evolution* (at the time of writing, still available under <http://www.york.ac.uk/conferences/bale2008/index.html>), identified *Biolinguistics* as the right kind of platform to share the results of this stimulating event with the larger community. When we accepted our participation,



thereby introducing the first set of ground rules for *Biolinguistics* special issues, we made clear to the (then) York co-organizer, Nanna Haug Hilton, who became the special issue's guest editor (see her Guest Editorial on the next two pages) that we do expect high-quality submissions. In other words, even though a themed special issue may originate in a conference, this is no excuse to publish anything for the sake of publishing. We thus distance ourselves from the term 'conference proceedings' — at least, without the modifier 'highly selective'. In this case (and we see no reason for not doing so in the future), all manuscripts were sent to two anonymous reviewers with full disclosure of the purpose (i.e. a special issue from a conference) — and thus authorship (after all, the conference information is public, so it would be easy for any potential reviewer to extract this kind of information anyway). As a result, several submissions had to be rejected and we are pleased to see the current selection in print.

If readers still take issue with (parts of) this selection, we would like to encourage everyone, as with anything else published in *Biolinguistics*, to submit commentary and criticism in the form of Forum contributions, if not full-fledged articles.

With all of this out of the way, please enjoy this *Biolinguistics* special issue, generate ideas for future (special) issues, and check regularly the journal website at <http://www.biolinguistics.eu> for news and updates!

## References

- Boeckx, Cedric & Kleanthes K. Grohmann. 2007. The *Biolinguistics* manifesto. *Biolinguistics* 1, 1–8.

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