

Upcoming Changes in *Biolinguistics*

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This issue marks the completion of the 5th volume of *Biolinguistics*. In these five years, we have managed to produce a traditional journal-like publication — free of charge for readers and contributors alike, and open to all. The “traditional journal-like publication” is a journal that comes in volumes, one per year, with each volume further divided into regularly appearing issues. In the case of *Biolinguistics*, our four issues per volume correspond to the four seasons and have been scheduled to appear at around the same time each year.¹ (As an exception, since *Biolinguistics* first appeared in late 2007, the first publication was a single-issue volume.) Throughout volumes 2 to 5, we have been fortunate enough to receive contributions on interesting topics which we could thematically group into special issues, and for space and time reasons these counted as double issues, a practice we expect to continue in the future. Aiming for state-of-the-art research and the dissemination of cutting-edge ideas, within a variety of topics and even (sub-)fields in biolinguistics, we also try to ensure quality publication through a proper peer-review process for submitted articles and briefs.

However, this is about where the similarities to a “traditional journal-like publication” stop. We don’t have a publisher behind us, we don’t even have a financial support system that would allow us to contract professional editorial staff, so in sum, we don’t have much in terms of professional infrastructure that would allow us to emulate a “traditional journal-like publication” further. We’ve tried our best over the first few years but have reached our limit, most pressingly in terms of time. Leaving aside the review process itself, each issue costs us around 100 hours of working time formatting, proof-reading, and editing the material. Our resources do not allow this to continue, so we will be implementing some changes from volume 6 onwards, starting in 2012:

- (1) We urge all authors to follow the *Biolinguistics* style sheet to a dot, as we will simply be unable to spend all these extra hours formatting their contributions for them; this concerns in particular references for which we have a style sheet but which most often are not formatted or even listed properly, and which subsequently take up a fair amount of our copy-editing time. In the past we have routinely added references that the authors mentioned in their texts but failed to list in the reference sections, or corrected them. We simply won’t be able to do this anymore.

¹ This contrasts from other open-access journals that publish as articles are accepted and finalized for publication, where each article constitutes a separate issue, for example.



- (2) We urge all authors to ensure that their contributions to *Biolinguistics* are fully proof-read by native speakers and conform to general, high-quality academic writing in English concerning style, grammar, punctuation, etc. (especially as specified in the style sheet) — and in turn will not spend all these extra hours proof-reading and copy-editing contributions for authors.

Failure to comply with either (1) or (2) may constitute grounds to reject a fully reviewed, revised, and even otherwise accepted piece; that is, acceptance for publication in *Biolinguistics* is contingent on complying with the editorial policies of the journal. This will be stated clearly in due time on the journal's website at <http://biolinguistics.eu/index.php/biolinguistics> (or simply biolinguistics.eu).

We are aware that these policies may lead to some visual changes in *Biolinguistics*, namely, that the homogenous style and layout of the journal will not be as consistent as it has been up to now. But we believe that this is a small price to pay for a free-for-all journal without major professional infrastructure and financial support. It also reflects the collective spirit of the community a little better, which means that in order for *Biolinguistics* to be successful as a free, open-access journal, everyone needs to contribute.

On this note, we would like to remind our readers that the entire project can only be successful if the growing community of biolinguists chips in, that is, authors vis-à-vis submitters and peer-reviewers. It is an obvious fact that we depend on the submissions of articles and briefs to the journal if we want to reach our goal of publishing relevant cutting-edge and trend-setting research on a regular basis. But we also need to be able to rely on more reviewers who accept our requests for review positively and promptly, and then deliver in a timely fashion. As an online journal, we have the advantage of being able to publish very soon after acceptance, but it requires some effort on all parties involved.

Continuing this 'community spirit' theme, we would appreciate if potential reviewers would not approach *Biolinguistics* the way they may deal with more traditional journals in linguistics, but make it a priority to deliver on time reviews, following the practice in other fields.

On the positive side, we are delighted to announce that, thanks to the hard work of Charles Reiss and his team, especially Melinda Heijl, we will very soon be able to offer a LaTeX style sheet for *Biolinguistics* as well! It will be a close enough mirror of the rather intricate Word-formatted style sheet, which will also look a little different from volume 6 onwards.

Lastly, we're happy to announce our newly forged cooperation with EBSCO Publishing to disseminate the journal further. We are also participating in DOAJ, the Directory of Open Access Journals (<http://www.doaj.org/doi?func=openurl&issn=14503417&genre=journal>), and we recently applied for inclusion in Thomson Reuters products (among others, for the ominous 'impact factor'). Basically, we will continue to look for ways of improving the journal, and we welcome any suggestions and help in this domain.

It's time to turn the page, and very soon the calendar. Happy reading and a great start into 2012 — and thanks for all your support!