Editorial Statement

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General Editors

It is a great pleasure to present the first issue of Language Dynamics and Change. LDC welcomes papers on all aspects of historical linguistics, including submissions bridging the gap between historical linguistics and other disciplines, such as the study of human evolution, archaeology, genetics, and computational modeling.

The journal seeks to fill a void that has been growing during the last few years, where many important contributions to historical linguistics in the broad sense have been scattered over multi-disciplinary journals or a variety of physics, biology, and computer science journals, in addition to the more traditional linguistic outlets. The good news is: never before have the history and evolution of human languages fascinated scholars in so many different disciplines. The bad news is: the tendency for existing linguistics journals to rarely publish papers infused with the ideas and methods of other disciplines probably reflects a barrier between the ancient philological heritage of linguistics and the ‘hard’ sciences. One of the goals of LDC is to contribute to removing this barrier.

We cover all traditional aspects of the study of language change, as well as new aspects. There is no restriction on the languages discussed, as long as the analyses bear on topics that are also of theoretical interest. We are open to all new developments in the field, including new types of quantitative approaches to language history. Moreover, we welcome papers on the evolution of language, archaeology and linguistics, human genetic and linguistic prehistory, and the computational modeling of language dynamics.

We would like to see linguistics becoming a somewhat ‘harder’ science, where quantitative statements about tendencies and frequencies are statistically validated as a matter of course, where predictions are not just presented but also tested (for instance through simulations), and where methods are evaluated by their performance rather than by their popularity over time. At the same time, we recognize that methodological rigour can also take on more qualitative
forms, for example through the careful application of the comparative method or via critical examination of the connections between specific linguistic and sociohistorical facts.

Additionally we would like to contribute to making historical linguistics a faster science by reducing the amount of time devoted to peer reviewing and production without sacrificing the quality of either. Articles are typically reviewed by three highly competent referees, and each referee is given a maximum of three weeks to deliver a report. Through early online publication readers are given access to papers shortly after the conclusion of the editorial process even if a full issue may not yet be ready.

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