

EDITORS' NOTE

The aims and purpose of this journal are explained in the statement of intent which has been published in a leaflet and on our website (<http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk/Journals/JNLSCAT/ell/ell.html>). Here is the relevant passage:

English Language and Linguistics, published twice a year, is a new international journal which focuses on the description of the English language within the framework of contemporary linguistics. The journal is concerned equally with the synchronic and the diachronic aspects of English language studies and will publish articles of the highest quality which make a substantial contribution to our understanding of the structure and development of the English language and which are informed by a knowledge and appreciation of linguistic theory. *English Language and Linguistics* will carry articles and short discussion papers or squibs on all core aspects of English, from its beginnings to the present day, including syntax, morphology, phonology, semantics, pragmatics, corpus linguistics, and lexis. There will also be a major review section including from time to time articles that give an overview of current research in particular specialist areas. Occasional issues will be devoted to a special topic, when a guest editor will be invited to commission articles from leading specialists in the field.

Good intentions on the road to *ELL* are turning into reality as publication approaches. Articles in this issue and in the pipeline for future ones are indeed 'of the highest quality'. The justification for *ELL* is not that alternative outlets would have been hard to find, for there are a number of excellent journals which accept different subsets of the range of topics we cover. In turn these journals mix them with a different range of topics, anything from European literature to theoretical linguistics. And that is the point. There has until now been no one journal which covers the range that *ELL* is intended to cover, a 'natural class' of research interests which deserves to be treated in one place, and at the highest level. *English Language and Linguistics* exists to promote knowledge and enquiry in the interlocking fields of its title. We hope that *ELL* will prove so useful that authors will come to regard it as their first choice for submission, while readers turn to it readily because they know it is bound to contain work of value and interest.

Well, we would say that, wouldn't we? Any journal editor would. But if *ELL* is successful in that way, it will permit the fulfilment of a wider ambition too, in that the natural class of research interests will foster a sense of (international) community among the scholars who share those interests. This is already the case for many workers in the field of historical English linguistics, largely because of the successful and continuing series of International Conferences on English Historical Linguistics initiated by Charles Jones at Durham in 1979. However, not everyone can attend these conferences, all of which so far have taken place in Europe, and only once every two or three years. There is no organization outside the conferences, and participants have never had a natural outlet for articles other than ICEHL papers.

The position is in some ways worse for scholars interested in the present-day English language, since they have no comparable conference series and likewise no

association. True, there are important groupings like ESSE (for English studies in Europe), or ICAME (for corpus studies), or the various associations concerned with the teaching of English; there are journals which examine the current language at a more popular level or in its worldwide variety; and there is a huge academic industry which treats English as a test-bed for the development of linguistic theory. But for those who wish to explore Present-day English at a sophisticated level of enquiry and not *merely* to advance theory, *ELL* may help to engender a sense of scholarly community. Two overlapping groups, then, may come to find in *English Language and Linguistics* a focal point for their interests. That is our hope.

As the journal gathers momentum we shall no doubt become wiser in the demands of editing, and perhaps the focus of the journal may alter a little in the light of experience. We hope to convene as many as possible of our Editorial Board in August 1998 to hear their views. Comments are welcome before then from anyone interested in the fields covered by *ELL*, and we welcome also suggestions for topics for (and editors of) special issues.

The journal could never have got even this far without a great deal of help from friends and colleagues. Valerie Adams has taken on single-handed the major task of editing book reviews. We are grateful too for the support and advice of our other Associate Editor, Doug Biber, of our Editorial Board, and of several people formerly or currently at Cambridge University Press, including Judith Ayling, Trevor Burling, Susan Chadwick, Jenny Potts, and, especially, Penny Carter. Thanks are due to everyone who has taken the trouble to submit a paper: a journal is self-evidently nothing without authors. A peer-reviewed journal cannot operate without referees either. Ours have already made an enormous contribution, guiding authors to revision of papers, and guiding *us* towards the kind of standard we should demand. At the completion of each volume of *ELL* we shall thank by name the referees who have acted for the journal; at this stage we thank them warmly, but anonymously.

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