

## EDITORIAL

A new editor of the *Journal of Child Language* has one reason above all others for writing an Editorial: to acknowledge the outstanding contribution made to the study of child language by David Crystal, who founded the Journal when the discipline was in its infancy, and edited it for twelve years, during which time the study of child language and the Journal have blossomed together. In 1974 there were few full-time practitioners of the study of child language, while today there are many; in 1974 the Journal had 341 pages, in 1984 it had more than doubled to 725. This growth of research into child language and of the Journal owes much to David, who not only edited the Journal at a standard universally acknowledged to be consistently high, but who also at the same time found time to write many books and articles of his own. Our thanks also go to his Associate Editors, Mike Garman and Paul Fletcher; Mike assisted from the beginning and Paul from 1975.

The new Associate Editors cover a fairly wide area in their expertise. I myself have special interests in phonetics and intonation, Peter Lloyd in peer communication, comprehension failure, and metalinguistic awareness, and Katharine Perera in grammatical development, school-age acquisition, and reading and writing. But with the growth of specialist work in many sub-areas of child language, we will inevitably depend very much on the process of peer review in the assessment of submitted articles. Members of the Editorial Board will of course play a special part in this, but we will also rely on help from many people outside the Board; such help will be formally acknowledged in the Journal at the end of each year.

With the Journal at such a high standard, I have no thoughts of revolution (despite the change of cover) but evolution of course there will be. When the early volumes of the Journal were being published, there was still a paucity of descriptive data and presentation of basic facts was bound to be a strong preoccupation. But today, at least for the early years, and for phonology and syntax, we have a lot of data. While remaining basically data-driven, I would hope therefore that in such areas the Journal can now look to rather more in the way of explanations as well as descriptions. On the other hand, in other areas we do continue to lack basic descriptive data. This is true, for example, of my own field of interest, intonation, and probably true also for later production (including the early school years) and for crosslinguistic comparisons. In particular I would like to see comparative data (both across languages, and across different cultures within one language) used to reveal differences, similarities, and possible universals.

The name *Journal of Child Language* does not include the name of any academic discipline, and for that reason must not become exclusively associated just with any one discipline. While a majority of contributions are

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bound to come from psychology, linguistics, and speech science, I hope to receive contributions from other disciplines (e.g. anthropology and ethnology). Nor should the standard format of four sections – Introduction, Method, Results, Conclusion – be considered sacrosanct, particularly for articles which are more theoretically rather than empirically based.

I am confident that research into the expanding field of child language will continue to flourish; I hope that the Journal will reflect that intellectual vitality.