



Letter from the President

Hello Everyone,

We certainly are living in interesting times! Despite this (or maybe because of this), we do have some news to report.

First, I would like to thank Jeff Good for agreeing to chair the committee that is looking at membership and open access and to all of those who agreed to sit on the committee. This committee is addressing important issues related to challenges with current arrangements. We hope that the committee will be able to make good progress on these issues, and will keep you updated. Please see the report below for fuller information.

As we wrote earlier, the Executive Committee, working together with the team at the University of Texas Austin that is organizing the next ALT meeting, made a hard decision to postpone the meeting by a year, until December 2022. At the time this decision was made, we had no idea where things were with respect to vaccine development, and we still don't know what the availability will be like once it is finally approved, so this still seems to be the best way to go. We carefully considered the pros and cons of a virtual conference, and, in the end, decided that for many reasons it was better to postpone for a year, so that is what we will do. More details are given below. We appreciate the thought that the Texas team put into this.

I would like to add a few more words of thanks as it seems appropriate for the time of year that we are moving into.

Thanks are due to the LT crew, ably led by Maria Koptjevskaja Tamm, for keeping on top of the journal in these crazy times. See the report below. Of particular interest is the special issue that just came out. Congratulations on this very unusual publication!

Let me also say thank you to all of you who provide such stimulating reading on the list-serv – we are fortunate to have it.

One final thank you, this one to Ljuba Vesilenova, who, as Secretary, really plays a key role in making sure that things get done in a timely way.

All the best to everyone as we enter the holiday season. Let us hope for a different year in 2021!

Keren Rice

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1 Work on Membership and Open Access

The ALT Executive Committee has formed an ad hoc Committee on Membership and Open Access with the charge of making recommendations to the Association regarding updating its membership model and the development of an Open Access publication strategy for *Linguistic Typology*. The committee consists of: Nina Dobrushina, Camilo Enrique Díaz Romero, Jeff Good (chair), Dmitry Idiatov, Maria Koptjevskaja Tamm, Jeff Mielke, and Keren Rice.

Membership and Open Access are being considered together because of the connection that exists at present between membership fees and journal subscriptions, which means that ALT membership has long had an important role in supporting the journal. Therefore, shifts in how membership is handled and publishing models for the journal are interrelated concerns.

At present, the committee is exploring a membership model which would dissociate membership fees from journal subscriptions and allow a journal subscription (at a reduced rate) to be optional for members. It is also exploring a two-year membership model in order to align the membership cycle with the cycle for the biennial ALT Meeting in order to streamline collection of membership fees.

The committee is also working with the publisher of *Linguistic Typology*, de Gruyter Mouton, to arrive at a better understanding of the possibilities for increasing Open Access publications in the journal.

The committee welcomes input from ALT members, and they should feel free to contact Jeff Good (jcgood@buffalo.edu) with any comments and questions about membership management and Open Access as they relate to ALT and *Linguistic Typology*.

2 The Journal *Linguistic Typology*

The Editor, Maria Koptjevskaja-Tamm, presents highlights from the latest issues.

In the period after ALT Newsletter 57 *Linguistic Typology* has published two issues, the contents of which follow below. While 2020 (2) is a regular issue, LT 2020 (3) is a special issue on comparability, to a large extent stemming from the Panel on comparability at the ALT meeting in Canberra (December 2017) and adding a cross-disciplinary perspective to the central issue in typology. Note that this collection is the first special issue in the history of LT.



2.1 *Linguistic Typology 2020 (2)*

The TOC can be also examined [here](#).

Research Papers

Niklas Erben Johansson, Andrey Anikin, Gerd Carling and Arthur Holmer *The typology of sound symbolism: Defining macro-concepts via their semantic and phonetic features*

The Editor's choice: FREE ACCESS

Peter M. Arkadiev *Syntax in morphological guise: Interrogative verbal morphology in Abaza*

OPEN ACCESS

Pier Marco Bertinetto *On nominal tense*

Thomas Berg *Ordering biases in cross-linguistic perspective: The interaction of serial order and structural level*

Review

Jenneke van der Wal Review of *The Bantu Languages*, Second edition.

OPEN ACCESS Book Notices

Grammar highlights – 2019

2.2 *Linguistic Typology 2020 (3)*

The TOC can be also examined [here](#).

A special issue on comparability

Editorial

Nicholas Evans *Introduction: Why the comparability problem is central in typology*

Articles

Lindell Bromham *Comparability in evolutionary biology: The case of Darwin's barnacles*

The Editor's choice: FREE ACCESS

Matthew Spike *Fifty shades of grue: Indeterminate categories and induction in and out of the language sciences*

Erich R. Round and Greville G. Corbett *Comparability and measurement in typological science: The bright future for linguistics*

Ulrike Zeshan and Nick Palfreyman *Comparability of signed and spoken languages: Absolute and relative modality effects in cross-modal typology*



3 Conference update

As already announced, due to the current situation with the COVID19 pandemic, ALT14 has been postponed by one year. It will take place in person, in December 2022, at the University of Texas at Austin, USA. The decision was taken after a careful discussion on the part of the EC, who weighed out the pros- and cons- of a virtual conference vs. a conference in person and decided an in-person conference is more beneficial for all involved.

Updates about the call for papers as well as about relevant junior award competitions such as the Greenberg Award and the Georg von der Gabelentz Award will be posted as information becomes available.

Subsequent ALT conferences shift to even years, 2024, 2026 etc. A bid for possible hosts of ALT15 will be sent out shortly.