

## Editorial

The *Journal of French Language Studies* is celebrating its 20th birthday! This seems an opportune moment to give a brief snapshot of its first 20 years, and outline some of the changes it has witnessed over this time.

The Association for French Language Studies (AFLS), an international association based in the UK whose goal is to promote research and teaching of French Language and Linguistics in Higher Education, first identified the need for an academic journal devoted solely to research in French language and linguistics. At the time in the UK context, French Studies in Higher Education was heavily dominated by literary studies, and specialists in linguistics felt rather marginalised. Richard Towell and Gertrud Aub-Buscher, the then AFLS President and Secretary, led the creation of the journal, having, first of all, to persuade the membership of AFLS that setting up a journal was a good idea, as it represented a departure from its primary activities, and from its focus on language teaching.

The next step involved convincing Cambridge University Press that *JFLS* was a viable proposition, and this also took time, as they needed reassurance that there would be an audience of library purchasers, and that all 300 AFLS members would subscribe. This is why a subscription to the journal became an integral part of the AFLS membership fee.

Once the journal was set up, there was no turning back, and it went from strength to strength. A gap in the market had clearly been identified, and, after a somewhat bumpy start, submissions soon started coming in steadily and the journal quickly gained a strong reputation for the quality of its scholarly articles on all aspects of French linguistics. The fact that the journal publishes in both French and English gave it an international audience that other French linguistics journals might not have had.

The first Editors of the journal were Jacques Durand, Anthony Lodge and Carol Sanders, with Richard Towell and Roger Hawkins as Associate Editors and Gertrud Aub-Buscher as Reviews Editor, and the journal was based at Salford University. The editorial team worked tirelessly at making the journal widely known, for example by organising conferences and encouraging participants to put forward submissions.

If the 1990s were characterised by the establishment and strengthening of the journal in the UK, the 2000s witnessed the spreading of its wings outside the UK. Bernard Laks (France) was the first editor to be appointed from outside the UK in 1998, and was followed in 2002 by William Ashby (USA). Editors since then have been based in a range of countries: France (Francis Cornish), Canada (Douglas Walker), the USA (Julia Herschensohn; Linda Waugh) and Switzerland (Marie-José Béguelin). This has had a major impact on the geographical distribution of the journal, and the vast majority of submissions nowadays are from outside the UK.

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The journal is now based at Newcastle University in the UK, and has maintained its strong links with the Association for French Language Studies, mainly through its representatives on the association's executive committee, currently Nigel Armstrong who is both *JFLS* production editor and AFLS treasurer.

On behalf of all editors past and present, I wish *JFLS* a very happy birthday and a very bright future for the next 20 years and longer!

Florence Myles,  
Co-ordinating Editor