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Problematizing Language Studies. Cultural, Theoretical and Applied Perspectives. Essays in Honor of Rama Kant Agnihotri

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Reviewed by *Ghanshyam Sharma*

In the face of stiff competition from highly specific publications, bringing out a Festschrift to honor an eminent scholar is increasingly becoming a most challenging task. Scientific publications in almost all branches of human knowledge have become so technical and specialized (thus sectorized) that any non-specialized publication risks being easily ignored or ridiculed. Yet in spite of being fully aware of all the risks, S. Imtiaz Hasnain & Shreesh Chaudhary (Editors, hereafter) have admirably undertaken the task to honor the highly esteemed Indian linguist Professor Rama Kant Agnihotri for his services to applied linguistics in general and sociolinguistics in particular.

This 601-page Festschrift is entitled *Problematizing Language Studies* and is divided into three broadly-defined sections, namely Cultural Perspective, Theoretical Perspective and Applied Perspective. Beginning with a scholarly Foreword by Professor Rajesh Sachdeva, it is a collection of 36 contributions from 38 scholars spanning not only all the major branches of theoretical and applied linguistics but also covering Indian History, Urdu literature, and Indian culture. A caveat regarding the organization of our following discussion thus is in order: given the widely diverse nature of the papers, I prefer to organize my discussion by author rather than attempt to rearrange the articles by topic, assuming that the Editors must have had their reasons for arranging the volume into broad categories rather than well-defined topics. I also feel it necessary to specify that, again because of the vastness of the volume's content, I do not possess a specialist's knowledge of all of the topics and thus in my discussion of several articles I can do no more than rely on my general knowledge alone. I therefore offer my sincere apologies to any authors who find my comments on their work inappropriate.

Section A: Cultural Perspective

Full of detailed and highly informative notes yet lacking in accurate references (it is not at all clear, for example, which book by Bangha the author refers to in note 43 on page 32, or what the name of the publisher is in note 29 on page 31, to mention just a few inaccuracies), *Sanskritic vs Syncretic: Sir William Jones and Indian Pluralism and Plurality* by Michael J. Franklin (13–34) cleverly opens up the often ignored question of the contribution made by the Orientalists working in the East India Company in the eighteenth century. The Orientalists, Franklin reminds us, are unfairly accused of having a presumed bias towards the Hindu past of India. The author makes a concerted effort to stress the need to reconsider works by the Orientalists like Sir William Jones. He calls our attention to their firm commitment not only to discover works relating to the Hindu past of India but also to that devoted to the prophets of the so-called ‘syncretic’ culture and communal harmony in India, including Amir Khusro, Akbar the Great, Dara Shikoh and many others. Needless to say, no other contribution devoted to cultural syncreticism could have done better than this one does.

In spite of some superfluous notes (e.g. note 1) and inconsistencies in references (“see McGregor 2003, 1984, 1968”), the essay entitled *Braj Reinvented: Some Colonial Approaches to Hindi Dialects* by Arthur Dudley (35–47) concisely describes the divergence between the colonial approach to different terms viz. Hindi-Hindustani-Urdu-Braj and the indigenous speakers’ perception of these languages or dialects. The paper thus very insightfully describes “how colonial research into vernacular languages turned Braj Bhasa into a synecdoche for all non-Islamicate vernaculars in northern India.” (p. 42).

In *The Language of Love: A Study of the Amorous and Erotic Associations of Urdu*, Tariq Rahman (48–75) guides us through the erotic and amorous garden of Urdu literature, providing us with a detailed, accurate and vivid description. While describing the historical development of Urdu literature, Rahman rightly observes that its amorous and erotic associations were “suppressed in the wake of the political urgency and identity politics of the Pakistan movement and then the perpetual struggle the Pakistani ruling elite waged against the ethnic elites of Pakistan on the one hand and the Western and Indian ‘Other’ on the other.” (p. 71). However, to understand the development of the Urdu literary tradition of amorous and erotic poetry described by Rahman, perhaps it would also be have been useful to compare it with two other traditions of the amorous and the erotic in the Indian literature: the amorous in classical Sanskrit literature and the amor-

ous-erotic in so-called *riti* poetry in Hindi where one can easily notice poet's above mentioned proclivity to the themes of romantic love, separation, fidelity on the part of lover, and indifference and fickleness on the part of the beloved. The theme of boy love, however, is unique to Urdu literature and can exclusively be put down to the influence of Persian and Turkish Muslim cultures.

Analyzing statistical data on language change and shift in Pahari, Mandiali and Garhwali speech communities – the three prominent speech communities in the Himalayan region of India – *Himalayan Languages, Hindi and English: Contentment or Containment?* (76–82) by Mahendra K. Varma poses some real sociolinguistic questions regarding the position of the minority languages of the Himalayan region vis-à-vis major languages such as Hindi and English: should the language shift – i.e. from native tongue to Hindi and English – in these speech communities be considered a case of speakers' contentment or language containment? Varma leaves it to further sociolinguistic and/or ethnographic research to find out what language policy to adopt, but invites the State to take some action lest these languages should disappear for ever. Although I accept the author's careful analysis of the phenomenon, according to which "The smaller languages, with no literacy tradition and no state support, are beginning to appear more as symbols of past heritage encapsulated in folk-lore" (p. 80), and share his concerns as a linguist, I do not think, however, that any State should intervene to revert the process. Furthermore, would not such an intervention be counter to the natural sociolinguistic phenomenon of language-shift? There are countless cases of language shift and containment the world over, certainly not limited to the three speech communities in question.

Well supplied with important and detailed notes (56 in total) and an almost complete list of references, and extensive citations, *English in India and the Role of the Elite in the National Project* by Annie Montaut (83–116) provides an accurate in-depth analysis of the role of the Indian Elite and their weapon-language –English – in the making of modern India. Montaut correctly observes that although it is spoken by a minority of eight to eleven percent of all Indians (I would put this figure even lower since not all those who claim to speak it can be said to do so) as a second language, it is an official language of India and is accredited with much more power than it should be. English consequently has created what she calls a 'schism' within Indian society. Montaut rightly quotes Krishna Baldev Vaid in saying that English has created an 'enchanted circle', imposing a mode of communication on Indians which keeps the majority of them out.

Needless to say, this process will inevitably produce what she calls some 'dramatic consequences' not only for the vernacular languages of India but also for the nation as a whole since "without acknowledging (and first knowing) what is going on intellectually and culturally outside the enchanted circle, there will be no scope for a true dialogue (in equal terms) with the West. The prerequisite for the international dialogue is of course the inner dialogue, which means, in the matter, gapping the schism created by English". (p. 104). As far as the reciprocal alienation of Hindi and Urdu is concerned, I fully agree with Montaut's endorsement of Agnihotri's analysis that due to standardization of Hindi and politicization of these two varieties "a new generation had grown up: unfamiliar not only with Ghalib and Faiz but also with Kabir and Premchand; nor could they understand Prasad or Nirala (...); the staple diet was Bombay film Hindi. The damage that inevitably accompanies the loss of literary sensitivity in a community is there for everyone to see."

In his well-written article entitled *Has Globalization Given a New Legitimacy to Diversity?* (117–133), Paroo Nihalani investigates the question of pedagogical standards in the teaching of English at a time of globalization throughout the world. Following his first-hand experience in the teaching of English as a second language, Nihalani endorses the observations made by other researchers in the field of world Englishes, namely: "In recorded history there has never been a language to match the present global spread and use of English.... There has never before been a language that has been spoken by more people as a second language than a first". (p. 118). Nihalani rightly argues that it is not necessary to stick to teaching 'received pronunciation' since, as he puts it, "the so-called received pronunciation (RP) was indeed adopted fifty years ago by the BBC for use by its newsreaders and remains still valid as the foundation of a model for imitation abroad. R.P., to my mind, is a dead horse in the 21st century, and I hate to beat the dead horse." (p. 126). However, in his lengthy conclusion, he recommends "the 'top-down' approach in which emphasis is shifted from the teaching of segments to the teaching of supra-segmental features" (p. 129) and suggests that it may be rewarding for the learner to be exposed to many varieties of pronunciation, including native and, more importantly, non-native as well, in order to enrich his repertoire. Although Nihalani's recommendation that "we must abandon the teaching of Phonetics of English *per se*", is acceptable to certain extent, it is difficult to agree with him when he says that "a sound grounding in General Phonetics will create more space and help learners with broadening their perceptual skills, which I may call 'multi-dimensional view of intelligibility.'" (p. 131). I believe that the

teaching of General Phonetics without providing any direct reference to some sort of standard pronunciation of English – be it RP or any other accepted ‘standard’ pronunciation – will never ever achieve the desired result. Like it or not, the teaching of the distinctive features of the English sound system will have to remain there in the field of TESL.

Hindi, Urdu, Hindustani: Evolution of the Language of a People (134–159) by Shreesh Chaudhary is a well-documented and informative research paper. After analyzing carefully the abundant historical facts and sociolinguistic data on Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani, Chaudhary amazingly comes to the following ‘emotional’ conclusion: “Here [in the case of Hindi-Urdu, interpretation is mine] it is one and the same language made two by the choice of script. Different scripts are keeping this language from occupying its rightful place, with one script it may become the mass language of unprecedented reach and can truly be called ‘the language of India’. It may truly become the most preferred second language for most Indians if it adopts a script of wider and greater reach. That will obviously make Roman script the first choice, followed by Devanagari and Arabic in that order.” (p. 154). Needless to say, S. K. Chatterji (1960) too made a similar proposal and advocated the use of Roman script for Hindi so that Hindi could be read by all Indians easily. However, given the present state of affairs, I do not think Chaudhary’s dream can ever be realized unless India compels its citizens to accept the Roman script.

Ayesha Kidwai in her research paper entitled *The Case for Hindustani Revisited* (160–168) rightly questions the Hindi-Urdu-Hindustani continuum and provides some data in support of her claim that Hindi and Urdu are two separate sociolinguistic identities – two different registers used by their speakers for different purposes. Unlike Chaudhary, Kidwai believes though that “... even as there can be no doubt of the validity and the necessity of the task of cultural recovery, to place its entire burden on the reconstruction of a quasi-mythical common core is mistaken. (p. 166).

Similar to M. K. Varma’s contribution, *The Politics of Multiculturalism* by Tanmoy Bhattacharya and Haobam Basantarani (169–184) discusses the case of minor languages spoken in the North-Eastern state of Tripura. The authors’ in-depth knowledge of political theories in general and the political situation in the state in particular, together with a careful analysis of the data on the minor languages, depict a very pessimistic and unfortunate picture of the linguistic situation in the state of Tripura. Nevertheless, I believe that their plea for State intervention to support minority rights in a democratic system may leave these minorities in an even more dramatic political situation.

In his paper entitled *Contextuality, Critical Discourse Analysis and Structuration Theory: Sociological Basis for Analyzing 'Heavenly Ornaments'* (Bihishti Zewar) (185–200) S. Imtiaz Hasnain makes a strong case for analyzing a text in its social context. The author carefully examines *Bihishti Zewar* (i.e. Heavenly Ornaments) – a text written in the early nineties by Maulana Ashraf 'Al-Thanawi – who sought to improve the quality of Islamic education, increase personal piety, and to spread the observance of Islamic law more widely among Muslims in India and feels the need to do that in the light of the usefulness of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), as developed by Halliday, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) since both provide, as he puts it, 'contextualization of analysis'. After analyzing the above-mentioned text, Hasnain comes up with the following suggestion for both SFL and CDA: "...CDA and SFL must not only incorporate the notion of chains of practices but should also explore the elements of intercontextuality for looking at the way every social practice interrelates with other social practices." (p. 198).

In his short essay entitled *On "Puri Boli"* (201–211), B.N. Patnaik considers the meaning of some taboo words in a number of expressions of a dialect spoken in the city of Puri in Orissa. These expressions, so the author informs us, can deliver different meanings depending on the context. He discusses various expressions used during the annual Chariot procession when taboo words carry different connotations. Without providing any linguistic arguments to justify an urgent need for an analysis of Puri Boli texts, he nonetheless seems to persuade researchers to undertake an analysis of the dialect.

Well equipped with a long list of the author's unpublished materials, the article entitled *On Unearthing a Civilization* by Ranjit Singh Rangila (212–233) discusses sophistication and efficiency in the discourse of the Jenu Kuruba tribe which inhabits the jungles of the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border. The Editors inform us that according to Rangila's investigation "Once a verb is realized as an act, then all the extensions of the verb in this language start showing up as extensions of the act. Jenu Kuruba people can match act for act with sophisticated dramatic performances like *Yaksha Gana*." (p. 5).

In spite of incomplete references (one cannot know the identity of the persons when she refers to Neil McCarthy and Steven Raymond on page 255, for example), the article entitled *From Margin to Mainstream the Growing Domain of Language Switching and Mixing in Contemporary South African Television Drama* by Kay McCormick (234–259) well describes a situation of code switching and mixing between Afrikaaner, Zulu

and Xoso in the South African television drama. The author tells us how the popular television programs in South Africa try to play with tribal loyalty and national loyalty using the tools of code-mixing and code-switching. After analyzing different cases of code-mixing and code-switching in present-day South Africa, the author comes to the following conclusion: “Taking together all that has emerged from documents, interviews and observations, I would say that, although it clearly occurs for a variety of reasons – some idealistic and some mundane – the flexible weaving of languages in South African tv drama is an index of a new ‘imagined community’.” (p. 256).

Full of interesting excerpts from Indian English newspapers, *Code Switching and the Politics of Nostalgia* by Rakesh M. Bhatt (260–275) deals with an increasingly popular aspect of code-mixing (not code-switching as the title inadvertently suggests!) in English and comes to the following conclusion “...the use of Hindi in English is arguably strategic: it activates historical-cultural memory in contemporary modern linguistic practices animating a politics of nostalgia, closely intertwined with Hindi-language/ Hindu-religion as its cultural expression.” (p. 274). While one can easily agree with Bhatt’s analysis of the evident influence of Hindu fanaticism attested in the terms borrowed from the dominant Hindu culture and the Hindi language, it seems quite difficult to sustain his claim that the tendency for code-mixing can exclusively be put down to Hindu fanaticism. There are, I believe, many additional reasons as well (e.g. inappropriateness of English idiomatic expressions with local culture and an urgency to express subtle nuances, hard to express otherwise) which equally contribute to the trend of code-mixing in Indian English newspapers.

Section B: Theoretical Perspective

Confessions of A Minor Morphologist: Some Remarks on ‘Morphological Complexity’ by Rajendra Singh (279–285) succinctly raises several key points in the theory of morphology. The foremost question in morphology is whether the notion of ‘morphological complexity’ has any important role to play. Following the new line of research developed under the title Whole Word Morphology (cf. Singh 2006), Singh answers it categorically saying that: “What is needed is NOT ‘morphological complexity’, inheritance, right-headedness, or percolation but an account of the interplay between variables and constants, which play their game of word formation-strategies in which they figure.” (p. 284). He proposes that the notion of

'length' (or 'weight') is sufficient to account for what is normally called morphological complexity. Not that Singh's task is an easy one, particularly when we see all sorts of so-called sophisticated morphological theories around which aim to provide a consistent one-to-one mapping between all types of forms and functions (and consequently remain trapped in their own technical jargon!), he puts forward a radically different theory which intuitively seems to fare much better than other theories which intend to deal with the question of 'morphological complexity'. I believe that his WWM theory, which is supported by his own research on Hindi morphology (Singh and Agnihotri 1987, Singh and Neuvel 2003, among others) and draws on ideas developed by Patanjali and Bhatrhari, could have a much bigger role to play in morphology than might be appreciated at first blush. I firmly believe that further research in cognitive and brain sciences could provide tangible scientific proof to determine whether the complexities of many so-called sophisticated morphological theories have any cognitive basis or are just the product of linguists' analyses.

In his short research note (comprising 19 concise paragraphs yet claiming to be based on "detailed statistical data") entitled *The Hindi Long Vowel Problem: A Substantive Approach*, (286–291) Probal Dasgupta critically examines the case of the Hindi long vowel in morphological alternation. He does so taking into consideration Singh & Agnihotri's (1997) proposal to consider the long vowel problem from the morphological point of view. Without going into the details of Dasgupta's proposal, however, I can certainly raise some doubts about his claim (paragraph 19, page 290), namely, "My informants have absolutely never heard anybody say /dvtiiyaa, tritiiyaa/ with a long /ii/." (p. 290). I believe that he may have to withdraw such a strong claim.

It has long been established that lexical stresses and accents are not as functional in Indian languages as they are in European languages such as English, French, Italian and others. In her very well-documented yet poorly formatted (see (13) for example on page 304) research paper entitled *Indian Languages as Intonational 'Phrase Languages'*, Caroline Féry (292–316) convincingly argues that a new intonational category should be introduced which could account for phrase level phonetic properties of languages such as Hindi, Bengali, Tamil and Malayalam which, Féry authoritatively claims, "show common intonational properties.... belong to a group of languages called *phrase languages*, which have no lexical stress and also no pitch accent." (p. 313). The paper gives me abundant fresh food for thought since it clearly establishes that the above mentioned languages: "... organize the tonal pattern of their declarative sentences on the basis of

phrase tones, which are anchored at the level of the prosodic phrase. Lexical items do not project any tones. Very few pragmatic meanings are conveyed by changes of tones, though manipulation of pitch range may be a more common device, requiring in-depth studies.” (p. 314).

Exploring the line of research followed by Singh & Agnihotri (1997), Gisbert Fanselow in his well-written paper entitled *More Freedom on the Left* (317–331) proposes a reconsideration of the formation of nominal compounds in German which, in his view, is a productive morphological process. However there are, he warns, some syntactic constraints which can be accounted for if dealt with at the syntactic rather than morphological level. After a very careful analysis, Fanselow comes to the following conclusion: “The strong lexical restrictions we observe here do not disappear in non-head context. This suggests that these constraints are due to lexicon-internal regularities. We have speculated that AN compounds do not arise from the standard merge operation, but rather due to word formation strategies in the sense of Agnihotri and Singh. If correct, this implies that recursive structures can indeed arise by two different mechanisms in natural language.” (p. 329). A list of abbreviations (e.g. AN, PN, QN, etc.) would have been helpful for the reader to follow the discussion without much difficulty.

In his paper entitled *Morphosyntax of Hindi Infinitives*, Rajesh Kumar (332–346) proposes a two-tier treatment of Hindi infinitives. A Hindi infinitival phrase, Kumar observes, has both VP and NP structure inside it and thus has to be treated differently. According to the author, the infinitives have a NP structure externally, but a VP structure internally. However, I find it difficult to identify what theoretical and empirical questions the ‘exocentric structure’ of infinite phrase he is referring to in his conclusion (p. 345). A careful proofreading and style-check would have saved the paper from many typos and wrong alignments (e.g., see example 35) that are present throughout.

Compositionality in Complex Predicates (347–371) by Achla M. Raina deals with complex predicates in Hindi/Urdu and Kashmiri. In her careful syntactic analysis, she very ably takes into consideration different aspects and forms of complexities attested in verbal predicates of the languages in question. In spite of considering some marginal data ((27a) and (32a), for example) and not checking the draft correctly (31a is not followed by any 31b, just to mention only a few), Raina thoroughly analyses the phenomenon and proposes a compositional account of complex predicates. She discusses the constraints on complex predication and offers a semantic type-based explanation for them.

Despite poor proof-reading (Lakoff is repeated in References, for example) *Limits to Compositionality of Meaning: Some Notes with Reference to English and Hindi* (372–386) by Rajneesh Arora is a fine attempt to show the limits of the theories which aim to provide a compositional account of meaning. Arora seems to be a fervent proponent of D. A. Cruse's account (1986, 2000) of the phenomenon in question. He analyzes data from Hindi to prove that it is not enough to look merely at the constituent parts to arrive at the real meaning of an utterance as a whole. Context, speech acts, conversational implicatures and metaphors play the most important role in establishing the ultimate meaning of an utterance.

On the Nature of Reason in the Present-day Academic Research (387–397) by Pramod Pandey is a short yet highly thought-provoking article. Its overly ambitious plan to provide an account of the entirety of present-day 'academic research' (I fail to understand what precisely he means by this) by undertaking cases simply from linguistics, and exclusively from Chomsky's famous book *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin, and Use* (1986) – which is missing from the References – is not a good starting point, I fear. Dichotomizing all scientific endeavors along an 'A versus -A' line is nothing but mystifying the current state of linguistic research. It is customary among scholars in India to ridicule any theory by simply referring to some special kind of 'reasoning' from the 'East'. Pandey says "Considering the negligible role of developing countries from the East, such as India, where knowledge has not been based on such a mode of reasoning, it appears plausible to characterize -AR as Western, albeit purely in the socio-historical sense of having to do with the modern times." (p. 394). He does not consider it necessary though to explain to the reader which 'mode of reasoning' in India he is talking about. I assume that he has the classical Indian philosophical mode of reasoning in mind, but to my knowledge there has never been only one single way of thinking.

The essay entitled *Towards Branding Indian Linguistics, A Linguistic Destination Next* by Shailendra Kumar Singh (398–418) contains the author's reflections on the current state of linguistic research in India. After considering various aspects of linguistic research, the author concludes by saying that "... neither the linguistic canon of the West has to be domesticated nor foreignized, but interventionist options have to be reinvented to energize the capacity of recognizing the [...between], which is occupying the space of [...third]." (p. 418). Singh ends his reflections by mystifying them even further: "Whether we welcome or denounce it, it is undeniable that linguistic temptation interrogates drastically many time honored linguistic myths and, in return, may therefore also offer us alternative ways of

negotiating the place of Indian Linguistics in the transitory and often distorting competency of the West.” (p. 418).

As the title itself suggests, *Rough Notes* by Udaya Narayana Singh (419–429) roughly describes some empirical facts and expresses some worries about ‘monolingualism’ and ‘linguistic purity’. Yet in spite of its inclusion in the theoretical section of the present volume, I have failed to find any theoretical points made.

‘*How Do I Know that You are not a CBI Agent?*’ *Examining the Identity of Researcher in Sociolinguistic Fieldwork* by Rizwan Ahmad (430–439) describes the author’s own field work experience in the city of Delhi. The author informs us that the notion of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ in sociolinguistic research is complex in that, as he puts it, “Different social, political, and other contextual factors go into the construction of an identity of the researcher.” (p. 437). As a conclusion to his account of sociolinguistic fieldwork in Delhi, Ahmad has the following very obvious advice to give to any scholar interested in field work: “... the best way to win the trust and confidence of the community you want to study is through establishing contact with key personalities in the community”. (p. 437).

Section C: Applied Perspective

Using the Mother Tongues for Learning and Teaching Other Tongues: Theory and Practice by A. L. Khanna (443–456) discusses different aspects of the role of the mother tongue (L1) in learning a second or foreign language (L2). Some second language teaching theorists advance the idea that L1 should be completely banned from L2 teaching. Khanna presents a good summary of the discussion on swings and roundabouts of using the L1 while teaching the L2. After an evaluation of different language teaching and learning theories, Khanna comes to support the idea that the mother tongue should be perceived as a rich resource in the initial stages of learning the L2. “A judicious use of the mother tongue both by the teacher and learners instead of causing an obstacle may help learners to achieve their goals faster in the target language and also make them cognitively richer and more mature.” (p. 452). Khanna contends that “Simply increasing exposure to the target language may not yield the desired result particularly with the lower-level student. They may benefit more by explanation in L1 than immersion in the TL.” (p. 453).

On the Teaching of Indian Language and Literatures Abroad by Omkar N. Koul (457–465) describes the current situation of the teaching of Indian

languages and literatures abroad, focusing mainly on the teaching of Hindi and Urdu abroad. He provides some guidelines regarding “framing clear-cut objectives, devising of learner-centered need-based courses, preparation and selection of instructional materials including print and audio-visual materials, developing of online courses, use of different suitable language teaching methods, administering of language tests in measuring the achievement levels.” (p. 465).

In her article entitled *Teaching English to Young Learners: How Far Have We Come? How Far Can We Go?* (466–478), Rama Mathew deals with the question of the teaching of English to adult learners. She suggests that both languages (i.e. L1 and English) can go hand in hand because “The *additive bilinguals enrichment principle* and the *interdependence or common underlying proficiency principle* (Cummins 1981) suggest that when students add a second language to their intellectual toolkit while continuing to develop conceptually and academically in their first language, there is substantial linguistic, cognitive, or academic growth.” (p. 475).

S. R. Prahlad in his article entitled *Restructuring General English Language Curricula at the Tertiary Level: Issues and Possibilities* (479–504) expresses anxiety over not taking into account learners’ wants and needs in the preparation of language teaching materials. After discussing at length different cases of language teaching materials and demonstrating the need for a renewal of the English curriculum, he establishes some principles for designing sourcebooks.

In his paper entitled *English at the Primary Level: A Study of Teaching Vocabulary* Panchanan Mohanty (505–513) undertakes the case of an *English Reader* published by the Andhra Pradesh State Government to be introduced at class IV all over the state. To judge the suitability of the book in question, Mohanty uses three criteria, namely language and cultural distance, pronounceability and use of basic vocabulary, and finds it unsatisfactory. Unfortunately, the paper itself has some linguistic flaws (the first sentence in the Conclusion, for example).

Well in line with anti-Chomskian ideas, Mohammad Aslam, in his very informative article entitled *Communicative Language Teaching and Large Classes Conflicts and Convergence*, (514–525), begins his discussion of ‘Communicative Language Teaching’ (CLT) method by referring to Dell Hymes’s objection to Noam Chomsky’s famous distinction between language competence (knowledge of grammatical rules necessary to understanding and producing language) and language performance (production of actual utterances). Following Hymes, Aslam contends that Chomsky’s *competence* restricts itself to the grammatical well-formedness or correct-

ness of the native languages, whereas *communicative competence*, as he puts it, ‘moves beyond grammar and defines the use of language as a vehicle for negotiating meaning and meaningful communication.’ This is so because *communicative competence* includes grammatical, lexical, discourse, strategic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competencies. However, I do not remember Chomsky ever advocating his concept of *linguistic competence* as the basis of any language teaching methodology. Attacks on Chomskyan ideas apart, CLT method has both merits and demerits which have long been discussed in the literature. I have personally witnessed CLT’s effectiveness in my classes over a period of 20 years. Nevertheless, I believe that different elements of language require variegated methodologies to be dealt with properly. Just one methodology – be it CLT or any other – does not deal properly with all the topics to be taught in classrooms. Thus, in teaching certain elements of language, I have found going back-to-basics much more helpful than any other deemed to be superior methodologies. When it comes to the language teaching in large classrooms in India, though, I entirely agree with the guidelines and suggestions provided by Aslam.

Process of Learning English EFL vs. ESL: A Study of Errors in Acquisition vs. Learning (526–537) by Vaishna Narang & Mi Yang Cha analyses errors of Koreans learning English as a foreign language (EFL) and second language (ESL). Through analysis of errors made by students learning English in Korea (i.e. EFL) and students learning English in Delhi (i.e. ESL), the authors show that in the case of EFL it is ‘learning’ whereas in ESL it is ‘acquisition’.

In his paper entitled *Kashmiri-English Contact: Some Phonological Issues* (538–555), Aadil A. Kak analyzes abundant data to highlight the phonological difficulties Kashmiri speakers face while learning English. Needless to say his main concern is to find phonological differences between Kashmiri and English. He notices that due to the ‘English influence’, the English /f/ has entered Kashmiri phonology. He concludes by saying that “The increase in status of English, its global value and greater dependence on it in many spheres indicates that the influence of English on Kashmiri and the level of assimilation is going to increase, rather than decrease, with the passage of time.” (p. 555).

Lexico-Semantic Features of Indian Pidgin English by Priya Hosali (556–573) clearly depicts the nature of Indian Pidgin English. After her careful analysis of the Indian variety of pidgin English, she concludes by saying that “... pidgins / creoles as repositories of man’s innate ‘communicative competence,’ have proved themselves indispensable in socio-

historical contexts. The study of these linguistically poor relations of great language families, bred in harsh and limiting conditions, may yet have much to tell us about the nature of human interaction – from the first halting attempts at communication to the ultimate recognition of a shared identity.” (p. 572).

The article entitled *Globalization and English Language in India: An Overview* by Raj Nath Bhat (574–580) views the importance of the English language to India in the present globalizing world. He recommends that ways and means should be found to bring English within easy reach of all as it is and will remain the main official language of the union government and of many states. He concludes by saying “As of date, the future of English in India and the world stands unchallenged and the Indian higher education has the potential to make best from it.” (p. 580).

In the copy of Festschrift I have received, *The study of Lexical Phrases Among Proficient Users of English* by Anju Sahgal Gupta & Madhu Gurtu (581–592) does not read well at all and requires a thorough editing. However, the title suggests that the paper intends to highlight the important role played by ‘lexical phrases’ in language acquisition.

An addendum in the end of the volume entitled *Rama Kant Agnihotri: Publications, Awards, Current Projects and Activism* (593–601) lists the honoree’s publications, current projects as well the awards bestowed on him by different scientific organizations.

To sum up then, as mentioned in the beginning of this review, the Editors have accomplished an arduous task. They have attempted to summarize the contributions in their Introduction, which is a useful guide for anyone who wants to have a glimpse of what the different contributions are all about. However, when it comes to the organization of the volume they seem to have set neither a rigorous editorial plan nor any scientific requirement for inclusion in the Festschrift; probably taking extra-scientific factors into consideration. They have failed, I believe, in accommodating the contributions in their rightful places, thus unjustifiably devising three arbitrary sections in the volume as if to promote a three-in-one mixed-bag. Needless to say, if one publishes a paper by Albert Einstein on the theory of Relativity and a poem by Charles Baudelaire together, one does justice to neither (both get applause at their proper places only!), nor even to the reader who gets completely lost in this amalgam. Similarly, their choice of the title *Problematizing Language Studies* is, in my view, itself problematic since it does not accurately relate to the actual meaning of the term ‘problematizing’. The Editors take no pains to explain how these pieces cohere together and can be seen as constitutive of the problem they see as

uniting them. They express their customary thankfulness to the ‘meticulous copy editing’ (p. 8), but there is hardly any page free of typos and other mistakes, grammatical and otherwise. A simple word processing search-and-replace tool would have saved many typos. Some contributions require a close and critical reading while others need editing by a competent English speaker. The last two contributions (i.e. 34 and 35) do not read well because of misplacement of pages. The paper by Anju Sahgal Gupta & Madhu Gurtu is missing entirely. Although they fail to discharge their technical and intellectual responsibility, South-Asianists in India must be grateful to S. Imtiaz Hasnain & Shreesh Chaudhary for keeping the tradition of *Festschrift* alive. I hope to see other initiatives of this type to honor other eminent Indian linguists. I have found in the volume useful discussions of many topics I must brush up my knowledge on, and I have no doubt that South-Asianists will find the volume equally useful, no matter which fields of linguistic or literary enquiry they are engaged in.

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