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**Theme: Language and Communication**

## **Editorial**

Language is recognised as a primary means of communication. However, the issue of communication encompasses topics that go beyond transference of information from one individual to another. Building on Chomsky's concept of linguistic *competence* – the ability of all adult human beings to successfully use language – Hyme's in 1971 developed the concept of *Communicative Competence* – the ability of a competent adult to successfully communicate via language, of which linguistic competence is a part. The process of language acquisition is not only a process of learning words and grammars of a language, but also a process of learning how to use those resources and under what circumstances. Communication requires a knowledge that goes beyond basic word and grammar. It requires a sociolinguistic and pragmatic knowledge. Study of bipartite system second personal pronouns in some European languages (for example *tu* and *vous* in French) by Brown and Gilman (1960) and study of address terms system in different languages by Susan Ervin-Tripp (1969) show that use of language can mirror ideological structure of the society. For example a society in which non-reciprocal usage of T (as in French *tu*) and V (as in French *vous*) is prevalent, is most likely a society where power is distributed by birth right (as in feudal societies). The field of pragmatics deal with language in use. Studies in speech act theory (Austin 1962, Searle 1969) show that speaking, in most cases, is an act of doing something, rather than stating something. Grice's (1975) maxims on conversational implicature reveal that there may be a lot more that is communicated through conversation that what is stated.

This very short and incomplete survey of different theories centred on the issue language and communication indicates the diverse and versatile nature of the topics that may be included under this theme. The papers included in this volume also do justice to the versatility. Probal Dasgupta's article offers a formal analysis of address term (or titles) usage in Bengali and use of

titles of literary works in conversation. B N Patnaik's article looks at the issue of miscommunication with examples from literature and everyday interaction. Aadil Amin Kak's article illustrates how events like war impact language by presenting an inventory of terms which came into use or acquired new meaning due to Iraq War. Zeinab Ibrahim's article reports the results of a questionnaire based study, which investigates intercultural interpretation of language usage among heritage students and instructors of Arabic. Finally Ajit Baishya and Bashisha Shabong's article demonstrates the loan words in Khashi and their modifications.

In the students' research section we have three papers. Nivedita Mitra attempts an analysis of the 'eat' expressions in Bengali and Oriya (Odia) language. Basudha Das explores code-switching as a communication strategy with examples of Bangla-English code-switching. Chavvi Garg's article discusses the language of the New Media.

In the commentary section Uday Narayan Singh's 'rough notes' brings in a number of issues ranging from variation in communication processes in different medium or channels, issue of translation, art, literature, cultural – linguistic diversity, oral and tele-communication. Mina Dan's paper presents a brief history and description of Esperanto – a language designed by Russian scholar Zamenhoff for international and interlinguistic communication. Romesh Chaturvedi and Shruti Mehrotra's paper presents the results of a study conducted on a section youth on the use of language in television.

In the book review section Syeda Nadia Ali reviews 2001 publication *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader* edited by Magarett Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor and Simeon J. Yates. Jayati Chatterji reviews the 1978 classic *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* by Roger Brown and Stephen C. Levinson. Rajib Chakraborty reviews *Foreigners and Foreign Languages in India: A Sociolinguistic History* by Shreesh Chaudhary.

In the documents section we have UNESCO's 1996 Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights and The official Languages Act of India 1963 (as amended, 1967).

I thank all the contributors for their interest in this issue and for their valuable contributions. I also thank the reviewers for taking time out of their busy schedule to evaluate papers for this issue. I am extremely fortunate to receive frequent voluntary assistance from my friends and colleagues. I am grateful to Professor B N Patnaik for his kind advice and inputs, especially for

the book review section. I am grateful to Professor Mina Dan, Dr Jayati Chatterji, Mr. Santwan Chattopadhyay and Ms Syeda Nadia Ali for their help at various stages. Finally I must thank Professor Saumendranath Bera and the editorial board for allowing me to explore the theme of 'Language and Communication' for this issue of Global Media Journal – Indian Edition.

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