

# Editorial

## Sadhna Saxena

The objective of this special issue is to start a discussion on questions related to language and education such as the role of language in learning, and acquiring and shaping knowledge. In order to achieve this objective, there is a need to engage with "language across disciplines" such as social sciences, physical sciences, economics, history, literature and literacy; each of these disciplines also has a multi-layered relationship with language. As the papers started coming in, it became clear that each author's interpretation of the theme was different, ranging from "language of the discipline" (as physical sciences, mathematics and literature) to learning a discipline in a specific language be it the language of the market or standard language or language of the people (social sciences). Reading comprehension and reader response, including questions about spoken language/mother tongue of the reader is another area that has been discussed at length. As the guest editor of this issue, I am happy to share that we received some very interesting papers, though we have not been able to include all of them in the current issue. The theme is multidimensional and it certainly cannot be covered in a single issue. Provoking the reader to seek further knowledge in these and many other related areas and hoping for a continuous engagement is the purpose of this special issue. Therefore, I am sure the papers that are not included here will find place in subsequent issues of the LLT.

While finalizing the manuscript, I remembered a study conducted by a women's group on slum women who had undergone tubectomy. Many women reported multiple physical problems post their surgery. The doctors dismissed their problems saying that they were imagining them as the description (linguistic and cultural) of the problems did not fit their text book language and knowledge. Finally, it was found that some of the surgeries had indeed been botched up. That is when I realized that there should have been a paper by a doctor from a government hospital, working with people belonging to different classes, cultures and speaking different languages to understand the disconnect between the people, the medical text and language.

The issue of language across disciplines opens many possibilities of engagement with a variety of crucial issues related to people's knowledge and its marginalization; universal knowledge across disciplines and its articulation in different standard/mainstream/English languages; language, literacy and multilingualism; fixity or fluidity of language/knowledge; language as a means of coding-decoding information/knowledge and constructing/shaping knowledge; language and power; language as power, and so on. As already stated, we have tried to cover some of these topics through the papers in this issue, but this is just the beginning. There is no finality to any of the issues raised, the debates will continue and may even remain unsettled in many cases.

The interview with Shobha Sinha helps us to understand early literacy from a developmental perspective, the additive model of learning in multilingual classrooms and the crucial role played by research in understanding children, their language and culture. In this context she elaborates that the roots of emergent literacy lie in cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, literacy theory and developmental psychology. Sonika Kaushik's paper is about the significance of Language Learning Approach in the early learning years. She advocates using children's experiences for making the transition from home language to school language and from oral language to written language. In her paper on critical literacy, Nishevita Jayendran tries to outline the strategies that can be deployed in the classroom to enable critical literacy among students.

In his paper on mathematics and language, Hriday Kant Dewan explores the commonalities between mathematics and human language acquisition. He argues that mathematics is not like a human language, even though there are some common features that they seem to share. Writing on mathematics and language, Haneet Gandhi writes about how a language promotes a disposition towards mathematical thinking/reasoning. In the Landmark section, C. N. Subramaniam tries to trace the historical roots of the resistance demonstrated by social science teachers to allow students to write the answers to questions in their spoken languages. In this context, he discusses the Brahminical traditions around the purity and fixity of knowledge written in Sanskrit, the language of power. He contrasts this with its rival Buddhist contention of conditioned and transient nature of everything, including truth and language. The author talks about the challenges posed by marginalized languages to professional social science writing, citing the examples of Kabir's oral literature which is open to interpretation, and the language of Dalit literature. Manish Jain tries to understand the relationship between the Social Sciences and language by examining different perspectives of their meaning and nature.

The paper on Science by Deepika Bansal examines the different ways in which language, science, and gender come together, and in the process impact and change each other, the effect of which are detrimental to both science and society. Sayan Chaudhuri writes a reflective account of his pedagogical engagement with a student from a Hindi-medium school background. In her paper, Payal Yadav writes about an experience that touches upon different aspects of language from a sociolinguistic perspective to understand the relationship between language and society. In his paper on the teaching of Economics in schools, Arvind Sardana argues that the pedagogy of economics is enriched when it is rooted in ordinary language that allows for engagement with ideas and perspectives.

This issue has three Book Reviews written by Neema Chaurasia, Veena Kapoor and Prachi Kalra; a Report by Chhaya Sawhney and Classroom Activities by Jayatri Chawla.