Editorial

Languages: An International Multidisciplinary Open Access Journal

Usha Lakshmanan

Department of Psychology (Brain and Cognitive Sciences Program) and Department of Linguistics, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Carbondale, IL 62901-6502, USA; E-Mail: usha@siu.edu

Languages are an integral part of everyday life; they define our interactions with other people as well as the physical and mental spaces we inhabit over time. Since ancient times, languages have fascinated humans. Scholars across cultures have contemplated and studied language, from its "external manifestations" to its "internal workings", in individuals and societies. Historically, the constant migration of peoples and the need for cross-cultural communication in social, educational and work contexts have spurred the learning of new languages. Today, English and a few lingua francas (e.g., Mandarin Chinese, French, Arabic, Spanish, and Russian) dominate the global landscape. However, in many parts of the world (e.g., South Asia, South East Asia, Africa and Central America) bi/multilingualism is a natural aspect of everyday life across the lifespan, with diverse languages (indigenous and international) being woven seamlessly into the fabric of conversational encounters. We are now in the midst of the Internet Age, where accessibility to information on the Internet has become increasingly important. Although there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Internet users worldwide, numerous peoples in rural and even urban communities continue to lack access to the world of digital information. Language, therefore, while a universal to the human experience, has become one of the several barriers responsible for the digital divide. There is a pressing need for developing literacies and facilitating translation across and between the many natural languages to help bridge the digital divide.

I am pleased to introduce *Languages* (ISSN 2226-471X), a new international multidisciplinary open access journal published by MDPI (Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute). My decision to accept the position of Founding Editor-in-Chief was influenced partly by the implicit plurality in its title (*i.e.*, Language-s) and partly by its potential to foster multidisciplinary approaches to the study of languages from around the world. Over the past several decades, research has advanced our understanding of the universal linguistic properties and cognitive processes underlying the human capacity to acquire and use languages across the lifespan. Since the 1990s, advances in neuroimaging technology have led to new and renewed cross-disciplinary collaborations on the study of languages. At the same time, the rich diversity of languages and contact situations in different societies and

understudied regions of the world, still remain largely untapped. They need to be brought to bear on fundamental questions concerning language (and languages) that continue to fascinate scholars across disciplines. The journal *Languages* seeks to present discussions and developments of multidisciplinary research and thereby generate broad and practical applications for the study of languages in the world of today. A central concern of the journal, therefore, is the promotion of understanding of the diverse aspects of the world's languages along the spatial, temporal and interactional dimensions.

(i) Languages in Space (including geopolitical, sociological, psychological, neurobiological and educational perspectives);

(ii) Languages in Time (including evolutionary, real-time processing, acquisitional and life-span developmental perspectives);

(iii) Languages in Interaction (including perspectives from research on translation, language mixing, cross-language and cross-modal influences and cross-cultural communication).

Languages publishes original research articles, reviews, commentaries and short communications and welcomes contributions from scholars and researchers working within any linguistic and theoretical approach. We seek the submission of manuscripts on topics within any area that falls within the journal's scope, including, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, language acquisition, translation, bi/multilingualism, and languages and the media. We also seek proposals on an annual basis for guest editing special issues. Our Editorial Board, which comprises a panel of international leading scholars and scientists, has expertise in areas that reflect the multidisciplinary scope and thrust of the journal. We are firmly committed to ensuring a high quality journal, with a strong potential for broader impact across disciplinary boundaries, through the use of a rigorous and ethical peer-review process. The journal's online format ensures a quick turnaround time between acceptance of an article and its preparation for online publication. Unlike print journals, there is also no requirement that an issue be "filled" before publication of an article can occur.

MDPI, the publisher of *Languages*, is based in Basel, Switzerland and has additional offices in Beijing and Wuhan in China. MDPI has been publishing peer-reviewed full open access journals since 1996 and *Languages* will draw upon MDPI's broad scientific support and publishing experience. All MDPI journals are covered by Google Scholar and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). MDPI aims to have *Languages* included in the Social Sciences Citation Index in the near future. For the first two years (2015 and 2016) publication of articles in *Languages* is free of charge. Subsequently (*i.e.,* from 2017), a relatively modest article processing charge will be in place for each accepted article, to support open access publication. Open access peer-reviewed publications are freely and immediately available (via the internet) without any subscription or price barriers and without any press delays or restrictions. Authors retain all copyrights and published material may be re-used without permission, as long as proper citation of the original publication is provided. As the full text of published research articles can be readily queried and retrieved using all search engines, published articles can be quickly added to databases, facilitating higher visibility and possibly, more frequent citations as well. The online and open access format facilitates the sharing of research results with researchers from around the world, including individuals and groups who may have limited or no access to academic journals.

I hope you will consider *Languages* as a venue for sharing your work and I look forward to receiving your submissions soon. I also welcome suggestions and proposals for Special Issues.