Editorial

Elena Babatsouli and Martin J. Ball

Esse quam videri

Cicero, *De Amicitia*, 98

οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος, ἀλλ' εἶναι θέλει

Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes*, 590–592

An attention to detail without losing track of the bigger picture is generally a good indicator of work done in an expert manner.

The compartmentalization of the scientific study of speech into a number of fields, each working arduously of its own accord in pursuit of the tenets of and delineation of a generalizable theory of speech, has for some decades demonstrated that the above statement is easier said than done.

As a result of habit, inadequate expertise, or lack of time resources, individual research contributions tend to pigeonhole their findings within certain thematic slots, seeing them as pertinent and exclusive to specific distinct niches. Ultimately, this limiting approach tends to deter comprehensive scholarly initiatives to transcend the invisible but robust barriers that keep these niches apart. After all, for scientific results to hold and be convincing, all disparity in comparisons has to be contained – a principle that only serves to encourage the general tendency to keep things tidily arranged in separate drawers.

Consequently, child developmental speech data *should not* be directly compared with adult developmental speech data; a known theory in second-language acquisition (SLA) *may not*, it is argued, be used to unravel an enigma in bilingualism or vice versa; a typical speech error pattern *does not* de facto qualify as a potential revealing marker in clinical contexts; a breakthrough in syntax, morphology or semantics *will not* necessarily have repercussions for phonology; novel methodological approaches are slow to catch on across the

board; etc. But is it not evidence and the analysis thereof that facilitates scientific progress? And to this end are we not to consider all evidence, across contexts?

There is occasional acknowledgement by individual researchers, random publications, and within other scholarly endeavours, of the general lack of cross-field and cross-disciplinary collaboration, interaction and exchange of information in the study of speech, despite the fact that basic and applied research keeps on serving the scientific arena both enthusiastically and dynamically.

It is also often the case that innovative ideas and findings in one field inadvertently occur simultaneously in another field as a matter of course, or they may find their way across fields under different names and in different scenarios but presented as novel and original.

Such echoes are not readily recognized for what they are: across-the-board prototypes. Failure to recognize them as such wastes time and effort on account of replication and repetition throughout all the stages of the production of scientific knowledge on speech. This situation is ultimately detrimental to scientific advancement.

In fact, this type of recycling occurs not only synchronically but also diachronically – by and large addressing what is already known in order to elaborate on missing details and offer advances that are indeed more refined but also more ‘ecologically’ valid at the time. A downside of this current *need* to be ecologically valid is that citations in research articles are disposed to follow *trends*, and these trends do not typically go back beyond a few decades.

A tangible case in point is the relatively young discipline of *bilingualism* (with reference also to multilingualism and bi/multi-dialectalism), which is considered novel ground within what has traditionally been a vigorous research field on single linguistic codes (languages) in isolated use, i.e. *monolingualism*. Note that, similarly to the compartmentalization of research practices, it is one’s own experiences and viewpoints that will determine which of the following two definitions one finds more apposite: i) the manifestation since the era of early humanity of a largely multilingual practice in what is thought by a distinct majority to be a largely monolingual society, or ii) the manifestation since the era of early humanity of a largely monolingual practice in what is thought by a distinct majority to be a largely multilingual society.

Since ancient times – and this is represented in myths, legends and ancient texts – monolingual speech has coexisted with bilingual speech. Research nowadays provides evidence that bilingualism not monolingualism is the overwhelming norm on a worldwide scale. When this new *Journal of Monolingual and Bilingual Speech* was being proposed, it was suggested that ‘monolingual’ should be dropped from the title. Had this concession been made,

it would certainly have been the 'ecologically' valid choice favouring bilingualism as today's standard in accordance with contemporary global developments, but it would also renounce the existence of monolingualism, which still is the clear reality for a number of populations.

The term *speech* is used in this journal to mean oral rather than written language, and it is an umbrella term referring to both the physical and pragmatic aspects of the ability to speak/communicate as well as the cognitive aspects involved in the human linguistic faculty. Gestural (sign) language, i.e. the language of manual communication, is known to display, by and large, the same fundamental properties as spoken language, and as such it is a type of speech. Human speech may be crudely classified into two major categories:

- *Monolingual speech* (i.e. communicating in a single language/dialect/code), which includes variable degrees of aptitude depending on an individual's social status and education level, as well as variable degrees of aptitude in the dialects of that same language within a single country (e.g. standard British English and the Yorkshire dialect) or across several countries (e.g. European Spanish vs. Latin American Spanish varieties).
- *Bilingual speech* (i.e. communicating in more languages/dialects/codes than one), which includes bilingual and multilingual practice at variable proficiency levels and in such a large array of acquisition/learning and use or attrition settings that there is no exhaustive classification system to date.

The average person in our globalized society speaks at least one native language in its standard and/or dialectal forms. Also, the average person on a global scale speaks at various proficiency levels at least one more language which is acquired simultaneously or consecutively in immersion or instructional settings. The skill of speaking involves both a process of language learning and a process of language use, whereby the language(s) spoken is/are in a dynamic state of potential change instigated by changes in the linguistic environment to which humans are exposed throughout their life.

Maintaining linguistic fluency in any number of languages necessitates a sufficient amount of *input* (how much language one hears spoken and how well that language is spoken) and *output* (how much a language is spoken by someone). Also, language(s) or dialects in contact within the individual and among individuals in social and pragmatic settings may have both a positive and negative effect on each other synchronically, as well as diachronically, also affecting the general course of language as the human attribute of speech.

Thus, the systematic study of human language is the study of monolingual and bilingual speech in all its facets. Related research on monolingual and

bilingual speech involves understanding speech as the genetic, cognitive, social and cultural endowment present in a single individual, in different groups of individuals, in different populations, across different ages, on regional and national scales, as well as worldwide. The study of monolingual and bilingual speech is an interdisciplinary scientific field the aim of which is to construct a unified theory of human speech by identifying the overt and covert mechanisms that make it an attribute unique to humans. Such a study observes and describes human language(s) in childhood and adulthood aiming to find generalizable rules and representations of underlying structure, in order to draw conclusions about its general nature during its practice, and its development at any point in an individual's life and in humankind.

Paramount in ongoing research are scientific and experimental efforts to observe, document, describe and analyse the myriad different languages, dialects and contexts of language use, misuse and disuse as they manifest themselves on a global scale. On another level, research that attempts to decipher the physical mechanisms involved in the actual representation and neuro-cognitive processing of speech is also a key area of current research in this field.

Overall, questions on what human speech is, how it works, what its properties are, the role of universal characteristics and the brain, how languages in contact interact, the role of communicative contexts in language use and acquisition, etc. have driven the development of theoretical models about human speech over several millennia and, possibly, since the dawn of humankind. There are, however, still unanswered questions which, beyond their intellectual and academic purpose, also have humanitarian objectives, such as what the practical gain of this amassed knowledge is, and how it can benefit the evolution of humankind.

For instance, currently at the heart of the matter is a delineation of the common threads or differences implicated in the acquisition and use of language(s) by children and adults, and when different language combinations are involved. Similarly, a full grasp of the norms entailed in typical use and acquisition of speech cross-linguistically will eventually enable a more precise assessment and outline of speech disorder or language impairment. Deciphering the mechanisms involved in signed language(s) and how they compare to actual spoken language(s) is another vital string in research on human speech.

On a practical level, understanding the scientific aspects of human speech ultimately guides governmental policies with regard to several areas that affect people's quality of life, such as bilingual education, second/foreign language pedagogy, assessment and intervention in language pathology, translation, etc.

As editors, we have the distinct honour of launching the *Journal of Monolingual and Bilingual Speech (JMBS)* as a venue that welcomes scientific contributions on the study of human speech in all its likely manifestations. The

purpose of the journal is twofold: an intention to reach out primarily to scholarly circles and ultimately to society at large. Its scope is broad, being both multi- and interdisciplinary. It is also topical in that it has a focus on speech, i.e. oral (spontaneous or task-elicited) language and its interaction with literacy, rather than written language per se. It aims at hosting original research contributions on the use and/or acquisition of first-language, second-language, bilingual and dialectal speech, in children and adults, and in typical and atypical contexts which include minority, heritage, endangered, signed language(s) and disordered speech.

JMBS welcomes research across psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics, neurolinguistics, computational linguistics, educational linguistics, sociolinguistics, clinical linguistics, etc. on both a systemic level (phonology/phonetics, morphology, syntax, the lexicon and semantics) and a usage-based level (pragmatics and discourse analysis).

The ultimate goal of *JMBS* is to welcome multidisciplinary investigations and a multidisciplinary exchange of ideas as well as the application of new technologies in the study of human speech, its learning, and its sustenance in typical and atypical contexts. Contributions to the journal will be expected to specify inferences that advance current theories in terms of fresh stances on old, ongoing or new debates, novel perspectives and developments, inferences supported by new data sets from individual case studies, cross-sectional studies, fieldwork, etc. Thus, theoretical, experimental, observational and computational contributions are all pertinent.

By pooling together such diverse themes in a single forum, *JMBS* aims at encouraging investigations that cut across the dividing boundaries between these sub-fields and their various, often not indisputably classifiable, gradient types. Its intention is to kindle a more holistic viewpoint among researchers and cross-linguistically on the scientific study of speech which, as argued earlier, tends to be rather compartmentalized and mostly fails to enable cross-field associations and the identification of common threads. By and large, these sub-fields lack sufficient interaction with regard to theory, methodology and joint research.

The journal hopes to foster collaborations across the board and, ultimately, spark innovative thought and approaches that enhance our understanding of the human linguistic faculty. A first step towards this is to encourage the submission of descriptive and applied linguistics research in a variety of living and endangered languages/dialects and idiolects from scholars in research and university institutions worldwide.

Instigating research collaboration across the board should lead to thorough investigations of theoretical preconceptions in the various sub-fields. This holds true for specific theories (e.g. production theories), as well as

more general theoretical agendas in applied linguistics research (psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, etc.). Such an approach is likely to narrow these gaps, save research efforts overall, and expedite the development of breakthroughs in understanding what is involved in human speech, as the blend of genetic, cognitive, social and cultural assets that it is.

Beyond its theoretically driven research objectives, the journal ultimately aspires to promote academic work that links extant or new theoretical findings with hands-on approaches to language, thus simplifying the theoretical implications of research and making specific recommendations for practical use where this is indicated, such as in bilingual education, second/foreign language pedagogy, translation, or in assessment of and intervention with language pathology, etc. Currently, published scientific knowledge struggles to find its way beyond scholarly circles and into society.

Research in these topics has exploded in the past decade, reflecting methodological advances and groundbreaking discoveries, mainly due to the increasing numbers of doctorate degree recipients and researchers. The number of submitted research articles has increased substantially, attested by decreasing acceptance rates which, in established journals, have decreased by 10% in the last five years. We expect the integration of the many themes covered by *JMBS*, cutting across disciplines in a multi-perspective fashion, to result in a high-impact, high-visibility and high-circulation journal. This has been proved to be true in the field of medicine where general medicine journals have higher impact factors and visibility than speciality journals.

In aiming at establishing this, we are most grateful to the 42 members of the *Journal of Monolingual and Bilingual Speech* Editorial Board, who have encouraged this initiative, nurtured it from onset to delivery, and for their continuing support. *JMBS* is proud that its Editorial Board comprises leading experts in their fields, whose affiliations represent 25 countries (including, across Asia and the Pacific Rim, Australia, China, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Korea, as well as Canada, Europe, South Africa, South America and the United States).

The *JMBS* inaugural issue comprises six original research articles and offers advances on different aspects of monolingual and bilingual speech, constituting a first attempt to bridge gaps across fields. The articles are listed next in alphabetical order of first author's name:

A Unified Model Of Mono- and Bilingual Intelligibility:

Psycholinguistics Meets Pedagogy

John Archibald, University of Victoria, Canada

Equitable Evaluation of Bilingual Children's Language Knowledge Using
the CDI: It Really Matters Who You Ask

Annick De Houwer, University of Erfurt, Germany

Language Proficiency, Use, and Maintenance among People with
Vietnamese Heritage Living in Australia

*Sharynne McLeod, Sarah Verdon, Cen Wang and Van H. Tran, Charles
Sturt University, Australia*

'I have three years old': Cross-linguistic Influence of Fixed Expressions
in a Bilingual Child

Elena Nicoladis, University of Alberta, Canada

Speech Acquisition in Monolingual Children Acquiring isiZulu in Rural
KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Michelle Pascoe and Zenia Jeggo, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Spanish-English Bilingual Children's Relative Use of English Tense and
Agreement Morphemes

Irina Potapova and Sonja L. Pruitt-Lord, San Diego State University, USA

It is our expectation that subsequent issues will comprise articles covering cross-disciplinary topics on monolingual and bilingual speech, thus fulfilling in the long run the journal's aim. We hope that in this way the *Journal of Monolingual and Bilingual Speech* will serve the international academic and professional community in its best interests.

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Founding Editors