Editorial Statement

We are very happy to present to you the fifth volume of the Journal of South Asian Linguistics. The volume consists of two papers: the paper by Ashwini Deo on aspectual contrasts in Middle Indic and the paper by Vasishth et al. on information structure and word order in Hindi-Urdu. These papers exemplify a fruitful trend in contemporary linguistics which combines traditional tools of linguistic analysis with data from a wider range of empirical domains. In the case of the first paper, the data comes from historical texts and in the second, the data comes from eyetracking studies. The combination of formal linguistic tools with new sources of data leads both papers to conclusions that challenge the existing consensus.

A careful examination of the semantics of tense/aspectual forms in Middle Indic leads Deo to the surprising conclusion that the forms hitherto analyzed as marking tense should actually be analyzed as marking aspect. This means that the aspect based system of Modern Indic goes back all the way to Middle Indic. Vasishth et al. study the role of clefting, word order and information structure in Hindi-Urdu using data from eyetracking. They find that the processing complexity introduced by syntactically complex structures such as clefts and non-canonical word orders can be mitigated by a processing preference for given-new orders over new-given orders. This leads the authors to the result that non-canonical word orders are not inherently harder to process; in fact in the appropriate context, non-canonical word orders can be processed more easily than canonical word orders.

Unfortunately, the 2012 issue does not include a descriptive paper. We would therefore like make a point of highly encouraging potential submissions that focus on a hitherto less described language and discuss interesting structural properties of this language.

Finally, we would like to thank Sebastian Sulger for continuing to maintain the journal website and Julika Winter for helping with the production of the volume. As ever we also thank Dikran Karagueuzian of CSLI Publications for his role as a continually outstanding and supportive publisher.

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