NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES
Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore

NIAS Consciousness Studies Programme
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cordially invites you to a

Public Lecture

on

"The World of a Multilingual: Implications of the Indian Experience for Models of Cognitive Science and Sociolinguistics"

By

Prof S.N. Sridhar
SUNY Distinguished Service Professor of Linguistics & India Studies
Director, Center for India Studies, Stony Brook University

Chairperson: Prof. Sangeetha Menon

Date: **Monday, 16th June, 2014**
Time: **4.00 p.m.** (Coffee/Tea 3.30 p.m.)
Venue: **Lecture Hall**, National Institute of Advanced Studies,
       Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore 560012

Abstract: The effortless ease with which multilinguals weave in and out of languages is a wondrous cognitive feat. This phenomenon, involving intricate grammatical patterning and sociolinguistic sensitivity, raises fascinating questions for cognitive science, such as: Is multilingualism but an extension of monolingualism? How are the languages represented in the multilingual mind (and brain) and how do they interact in acquisition and processing? What are the cognitive mechanisms, costs and benefits? How are sociolinguistic constraints incorporated into a mental model? What are the limits and possibilities of current paradigms of research on the acquisition of multilingualism?

Conceptual breakthroughs, drawing on insights from multilingual communities in Asia and Africa, demand a convergence of linguistics, sociolinguistics, second language acquisition studies and cognitive science. These have made this phenomenon of central interest to a broad array of fields, including linguistics, sociolinguistics, stylistics, historical linguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, first and second language acquisition, and second language teaching. In this lecture, I shall analyze some of these developments and propose some potentially fruitful directions of research.

This talk explores the linguistic, social, and cultural context of language contact in South Asia and to outline its implications for an adequate theory of language use. One of the concrete examples I explore is the proposition that Indian English cannot be accounted with reference only to English. It is well-known that there is an apparently accelerated tendency to bring in material from Indian languages while using English in India. This is witnessed in a wide range of domains – domestic and coffee-house conversations, radio disc jockey banter with callers, print advertising copy, bilingual bill boards, television talk shows, commentaries, news copy and commercials, newspaper and magazine interviews and articles, Internet chat rooms, SMS texts, and so forth, not to speak of academic, legal, and legislative discourse. The Indian language material

inserted is not so limited that they can be considered instances of nonce borrowings, nor are they so established (eg., attested in dictionaries) that they can be considered regular borrowings. It is beyond that, they involve extensive cases of code-weaving or code-gliding (more fluent, continuous, non- discrete, frequent and spontaneous than the traditional terms, code-mixing and code-switching, would suggest). This interweaving of languages serves a wide range of sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and stylistic functions – for example, signaling a hybrid identity encompassing the local and the global, traditional and modern, regional and cosmopolitan, crude and refined. I shall complement this with an analysis of language intercalation from Kannada literature ranging over a thousand years.

I shall argue that only a "rich analysis"– one that recognizes that a language in a multilingual culture is used in a rich multilingual ecological context where all the languages in the repertoire potentially contribute value to the transaction – each enhancing the speaker's expressive versatility and adding to its lexical, morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and stylistic richness – can insightfully account for the power, the complexity, and popularity of the use of English in India. "Rich Analysis" of multilingual discourse calls for more sophisticated theoretical concepts (eg., a notion of a syncretic multicompetence , rather than conjoined unicompetences) and methodological tools (eg., cross-linguistic variable rules and discourse rather than sentence units). Such an analysis also has implications for theories of how languages are represented and processed in multilinguals (as opposed to segregated models), for the target of language acquisition – first and second – in multilingual cultures, a re-calibration of language competence required of native speakers of world languages when they interact with speakers of indigenized varieties, to name a few.

About the speaker: Professor S.N. Sridhar is SUNY Distinguished Service Professor, Professor of Linguistics and India Studies, and Director of the Center for India Studies at State University of New York, Stony Brook. He received the B.A. (Honors) in English in 1969, and the M.A. degree in English and Linguistics in 1971 in First Class, with the First Rank, both from Bangalore University, India, and Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1980. He has been on the faculty of Stony Brook since 1980.

Professor Sridhar's research relates to several areas of linguistics: theoretical linguistics (syntax of dative subjects, grammatical relations, morphology of agglutination, prefixation, level ordering, productivity), descriptive linguistics (reference grammar of Kannada), applied linguistics (language use, language acquisition, language teaching, and literary stylistics; the scope and relation to linguistic theory), psycholinguistics (cross-linguistic experimental study of cognitive universals of sentence production, models of bilingual processing), sociolinguistics (code-switching and code-mixing, language modernization, language spread), historical linguistics (acquisition of subjecthood, contact-induced language change, linguistic convergence), history of linguistics (contributions of the Indian grammatical tradition to modern linguistic theory and methodology), bilingualism (borrowing, language contact and convergence), second language acquisition (contrastive analysis, implications of language acquisition in non-native, multilingual settings for second language acquisition theory), and World Englishes (structure and functions of Indian English and other non-native varieties of English, methods and materials for teaching English as a second language in India). He discusses these issues with reference to Kannada, a major language of South India, and Indian English, and the dynamics of multilingualism in South Asia, employing a multidimensional theoretical perspective that seeks to explore the interaction of language form and language function. Currently, he is working on (a) Indian English as it relates to representation of multilingual competence in linguistic theory and (b) a stylistic analysis of the 15th century classic Kannada poet Kumara Vyasa, author of the Kannada Mahabharata.

Professor Sridhar is author of three books (Kannada: Descriptive Grammar (Routledge, 1990, repreinted as Modern Kannada Grammar, Manohar, 2010), Cognition and Sentence Production: A Cross-Linguistic Study (Springer Verlag, 1986), andIndina Kannada: Rachane mattu Balake ("Contemporary Kannada: Structure and Function," Kannada University, 1995, reprinted by Abhinava, 2009). He is co-editor of two reference books (Ananya: A Portrait of India, with Nirmal K. Mattoo, AIA, 1997), and Language in South Asia (with Braj B. Kachru and Yamuna Kachru, Cambridge University Press, 2008, and CUP India, 2011) and six special issues of research journals. He has published numerous journal articles, book chapters, and encyclopedia entries.

Professor Sridhar's research has been supported by grants from the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, and Senior Faculty Research Fellowships of the American Institute of Indian Studies. He has been designated Senior/Superior Scholar in the Humanities by the National Endowment for the Humanities. He was appointed SUNY Distinguished Service Professor in 2011. Professor Sridhar teaches courses on Bilingualism, Second Language Acquisition, Indian Civilization, Language and Society in South Asia, and Great Books of India, among other topics. Professor Sridhar is a co-founder of South Asian Languages Analysis (SALA) and organized its international conferences at Stony Brook in 1983 and 2004. He has also organized or co-organized conferences on Kannada Culture and Literature, Dravidian Linguistics, India Studies, the Teaching of Linguistics, and Teaching of Asian Languages. He founded and directed Stony Brook's Summer Study Abroad Program in Bangalore, India from 2004-2008. He co-directed the Winter Institute in Kannada Linguistics at Kannada University, Hampi, in 1995. He has been a plenary or keynote speaker at many international conferences, member of editorial board of journals, evaluator of Linguistics and Asian Studies programs for funding agencies.

Professor Sridhar spearheaded the faculty committee for Asian Studies and served as the founding Chair of the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies from 2002-2008. With the help of students, faculty, administration, and the generous support of the Indian American community on Long Island, he initiated the India Studies Program and the Center for India Studies at Stony Brook (inaugurated in 1997), served as its founding Director (1997-2002) and has been serving as Director since 2008. The Center offers courses, sponsors a lecture series, performing arts series, a Study Abroad program in India, a rich Outreach Program, and offers scholarships and runs a India Reference Library. Professor Sridhar is also active in the community. He founded the India Society of Stony Brook in 1989 and served as its first President until 1994. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Association of Indians in America and of the American Institute of Indian Studies. He has served as a member of American Civil Liberties Union's National Committee on Academic Freedom. He lives in Stony Brook with his wife and colleague, Kamal K. (Meena) Sridhar.

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All are welcome

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For further details, please contact Prof. Sangeetha Menon prajnanata@gmail.com

K S Rama Krishna