

Editorial Note

It is with great pleasure that I write this editorial note to LOGOS: Sri Lanka Journal of Humanities and Language Studies, the first ever journal published by the Department of Languages after 28 years of her inception in 1995. Though much time has passed, and many students have benefitted from her, the department took a considerable time to illustrate her academic potential in this form. We were not in a hurry to come out with a publication of this nature since we were experiencing how our department was maturing with other challengers such as modernizing the syllabus, recruiting the necessary staff, obtaining postgraduate qualifications, starting postgraduate programmes, getting foreign exposure etc. to be a fully-fledged language department in the country. Now that the Department of Language is stronger and more eager to venture into a publication of higher academic nature, LOGOS will surely signify her glory and maturity to be unique amongst others.

We all, as members of this department, were impatiently waiting for this moment. LOGOS is therefore not just an academic achievement but a memorable milestone as well as a souvenir of one of the oldest departments of the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. To be the first editor in chief in that journal can be the biggest symbolic achievement for me in my career expanding from being a student as well as a staff member of that department.

LOGOS will function as a premier multilingual journal in Sri Lanka which publishes double-blind peer reviewed research and commentary open access in fields related to English, Sinhala, Tamil, Japanese, Chinese, Hindi, and German languages. The journal is calling for submissions from historical linguists, sociolinguists, dialectologists, and scholars in the field of languages. Topics covered by this journal include (but are not limited to) the followings: Pedagogy of Foreign Languages, Translation Studies, Language and Literature, Literary Theory, Sociolinguistics, Applied Linguistics, Language Philosophy, Semiotics, Language for Special Purposes, Discourse Studies, and Film Studies.

So far, the publication space was limited in Sri Lanka for the language researchers who publish their findings in their own languages or in the language that they engage in the teaching and evaluation process plus research. Even though Sabaragamuwa University Journal is published in Sinhala medium it is not devoted to language researchers. Hence, a multilingual journal of this nature was a long-felt need but the circumstances, as I mentioned before, did not allow us to introduce a platform like this within the last two and half decades.

This journal will surely help the postgraduate candidates of languages research. As we all are aware by now, the present MA in English and Education, which was initiated by Prof. Rajiva Wijesinha during the early 2000s in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages, is becoming popular among teachers and academics in the field of English Language Teaching. Since each year we enroll nearly a hundred candidates for the postgraduate diploma or for the MA programme, we can expect nearly hundred language oriented research annually. While undergraduate students also engage in publishable research under the supervision of our capable staff, the regular publication of this journal would never be a big challenge as far as the number of manuscripts entries are concerned. There would be a healthy competition to get an opportunity in this journal.

However, in the mid 2021, the AHEAD operational grants that were dispersed to the Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages suddenly wanted the Department to present a brief proposal about the latest requirements that she need to address. I, as the then Head of the Department, with the consent of other department members quickly designed a Departmental proposal which accommodated a journal for immediate implementation. Luckily, the AHEAD Project agreed to this new proposal, and we were asked to swiftly implement the proposed activities before the winding up of the project. What you see now is that quick outcome. If not for the AHEAD this could have dragged down further and cannot imagine when we would have started it.

Each paper published in this inaugural issue carries their own views, arguments, rhythms, and structure. In their own distinctive ways, they add scholarly contribution to the present pool of knowledge in the world. The themes diversely range from language studies to translation studies and even to modern semiotics. Maintaining this diversity in one language journal is a challenge by itself.

I thank all the contributors of this volume and encourage them to submit more manuscripts to our journal even in future. I very specially thank Dr. Niroscha Paranavitana who suggested the name LOGOS when we were struggling for a catchy and a suitable one. There is a very special thanks for the coordinating editor, Dr. Noel Dassanayake who immensely sacrificed his time and energy for the success of this issue during my physical absence in the department. He made all the official correspondence on my behalf and hardly troubled me except for some urgent cases. The present Head of the Department, Dr. Rohan Abeywickrama continued to extend his support to improve the quality of this journal when I stepped down from that position. It is with gratitude that I remember Dr. Samapath Fernando who came up with the idea of starting departmental journals for all the departments in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages which coincided with the proposal that was presented to the AHEAD. I also thank all the members of the Department of Languages who encouraged me to initiate this.

At the same time, I am privileged to be the editor in chief of this journal which is devoted to Prof. Rajiva Wijesinha, my teacher, supervisor, and mentor for the last twenty-two years or so. I am delighted and excited to write these few words in my note as someone who was a student when he was a teacher in the same department. However, he has laid a strong foundation for the long academic journey of many of us. The rigorous training and the scholarly exposure we acquired from his academic and administrative capacities may remain within us till leave this earth one day.

It is with much pleasure and gratitude that the Department of Languages presents the first issue of LOGOS as a felicitation to Prof. Rajiva Wijesinha. Prof. Wijesinha pioneered to modernize the language syllabus and the syllabi of the entire Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages. He has always been a key figure in the growth of our department, especially in introducing a syllabus structure that has been in place for the last two decades. He was not afraid of change and orient the graduates towards modern world of work. He properly understood the need of the country and created graduates in such fashion that they could be employed anywhere in the world.

Prof. Rajiva Wijesinha

Prof. Rajiva Wijesinha was born in the year 1954 to a wealthy and educated family in Colombo. He was the youngest child of Mr. Sam Wijesinha, the former Secretary General of Parliament and Mukta (Wickremesinghe) Wijesinha, daughter of Mr. Cyril Wickremesinghe who was a leading Civil Servant of the time. Young Wijesinha was a bright student in St. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia. Then he won an Open Exhibition in Classics to University College, Oxford when he was 16. After his first degree, which also led to an MA in 1977, he moved to Corpus Christi College, Oxford as an E K Chambers Student (Edmund Kerchever Chambers), and obtained a BPhil degree in English, followed by a PhD degree on the subject of women and marriage in the early Victorian novel. The thesis was subsequently published by the University Press of America under the title *The Androgynous Trollope*.

Prof. Wijesinha, as a visionary leader, incorporated most of the latest academic trends available at that time in the modern world into our language curriculum. Critical Thinking, Scientific Thinking, Personality Development, Current Affairs, Library Skills, Mathematics for Arts graduates were some of the new areas that Sabaragamuwa language students had to study other than the mainstream language courses. The above components were not only credited but compulsory for all undergraduates. In addition, IT literacy and Core English Language were also compulsory credited courses which aimed to enhance students' competitiveness, employability and innovations.

He is known as a writer in the postcolonial world, whose writings can be located within the broader canon of literature in which Sri Lankan experience becomes the focal point. His writings sweep across post-independent Sri Lankan existential paradigm to controversial political observations which always invite not only literary appreciation but deeper research insights.

He is also popular not only as a teacher in literature but has shown results as a teacher in English as a Second Language (ESL). His teaching style is remarkably significant in a postcolonial country like us since he believes in student's autonomy in the language learning process when the conventional teaching methodology heavily trusted on teacher-centred education.

Prof. Wijesinha was the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages and pioneered to introduce innovative and path-breaking course contents and subject combinations for Arts graduates. He was also instrumental in coordinating the Affiliated University English Diploma Programme in the mid 1990s which was considered as a sustainable solution for the youth unemployment at that time. Similarly, the popular pre-University General English Language Training (GELT) Course that aimed to improve English Language Skills of the university entrants was also his brainchild. He coordinated the English Language Programme for the Military Academy, Diyathalawa and a similar programme for the new entrants in the South Eastern University, Oluvil. He briefly taught at Peradeniya but resigned from his position in protest of the growing authoritarianism of the JR Jayewardena regime in the early 1980s. He joined Sri Jayewardenepura University and worked there for a shorter period of time before starting his career as a full time academic in the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka.

His fictional work *Servants* (1995) was translated to Italian and was awarded the second edition of the Gratiaen Prize in 1994. Prof. Wijesinha authored *An English Education* (1996), *Act of Faith* (1985), *Days of Despair* (1989), and *Lady Hippopotamus* (1991). As an author, he is best known within the sphere of Sri Lankan Writing in English and has produced several literature anthologies in that genre. He has marked his presence in education, active politics, literature, diplomacy, as well as in his critical thinking and writings.

Prof. Wijesinha is also an editor who has anthologized poetry and short fiction, noted for collections such as *A Selection of English Poetry* (1997), *Bridging Connections: Sri Lankan Short Stories* (2007), *A Selection of Modern Sri Lankan Poetry in English* (2006) and *A Selection of Modern Sri Lankan Short Stories in English* (2005), which was co-edited with Ms. Dinali Fernando. He has also served in the Editorial Panel of the English Writers' Cooperative (EWC) which he assisted the formation of, as a forum of promoting the work of Lankan writers and in building up a discourse of production and reception.

As a writer, Prof. Wijesinha has compiled two texts in memory of his close friendship with Richard de Zoysa who is known in the country as a radical revolutionary at that time. The first text was published as an anthology of his works in 2000 under the title *Richard de Zoysa: his life, some work ... a death*. Though *The Limits of Love* (2005) is a memoir that displays Prof. Wijesinha's close tie with Richard, it excavates Richard's profound socio-political concerns and involvements in Sri Lanka's post-independent radical politics while also not forgetting to disclose the darker paramilitary practices by the Sri Lankan government in the 1980s. This shows the political sensitivity and concern of Prof. Wijesinha in relation to what was unfolding before him in those bitter times.

Academically, the golden era of his university career belongs to the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka in which he could execute some of the most important ideas in relation to changing the Arts graduates in the university system. He changed the entire interface of English education in the contemporary university system, especially in the English departments. Before him, English education was confined to those who had an A/L English background, but he started encouraging students with non-English background to offer English. It was a large success and there are many graduates around the country serving the education system at various levels. He was not afraid to bring in changes and to expect positive results. He defended those who also want to bring in changes and to make innovations. He never hesitated to fight for what he believes right and to continue such struggles until the end.

He is a successful teacher because he could produce hundreds of students who could carry his legacy forward. He is a successful administrator because some of his changes are ongoing even after two or three decades. He is a successful counsellor because his words strongly resonate in our ears even after his absence. He is a successful author because what he has written are still impactful. Most of all, he is a successful human soul because there is a purpose to his life.

In that context, it is with much gratitude and honor that we present this issue of LOGOS as a felicitation volume for Prof. Wijesinha.

Mahesh Hapugoda