



EDITORIAL

Dear *JALDA* reader,

JALDA can be recognized as an attempt to put into realization what applied linguists call solving real world problems in/through language studies, disregarding of which should be seen as going astray. According to some linguists, spending many years on studying Chomsky's mental theory of language, for instance, to write an intuitively-held grammar of Farsi has not been fruitful because it has resulted at least in the forgetfulness of other Iranian languages, some of which have been on the verge of extinction due to lack of attention to them. One may question the significance of Chomskyan linguistics in the study of native American languages in the same way. Ali Mohammad Haghshenas, the late outstanding Iranian linguist, author and literary critic, in an interview on revising the trend of linguistic and literary studies in Iran, says:

At present, linguistics has actually turned into a field for conceptualization. It is so all over the world and more in Iran. And it causes linguistics to shrink under its own confinements. It loses contact with other areas and gets weaker every day. (2006/1386: p. 51) (*My translation*)

Haghshenas' solution is worth considering:

We ourselves make such subjects [as linguistic and literary theories] decorative and ornamental, whereas most theories have, as a matter of fact, been attempts to solve some problems in the beginning. But, unfortunately, theories get away gradually from the main issues and turn into mental activities quite far from action. If that is linguistics, it has no uses or effects. But if theoretical frameworks are employed to solve linguistic and non-linguistic problems of society, then linguistics would be useful without ornamental reflections. (p. 52) (*My translation*)

What seems necessary to be added to Haghshenas' views is that theories are of historical nature and culture-bound. The theoretician does not stand at a point above time and space; s/he has her/his feet on the ground and, if her/his theory has emerged from the necessity to tackle a problem, which is supported by Haghshenas, then it should be of a local nature. Is it extendable to other people with different cultures, tendencies and problems, then? Theories should be studied with a sharp view of to whom and for what purposes they are to be applied.

Haghshenas approaches literature from a similar perspective. (For an applied literature perspective of literary studies, see Behin in this issue.) And applied linguistics confined to imported concepts and theories from overseas is expected to,

to use Haghshenas' terms, shrink every day to activities and exercises that are simply of ornamental nature with no tangible effects or benefits for society. The *JALDA* view is that most researches inclined to solely quantitative study of variables isolated from context of situation cannot be considered useful authentic findings. As a remedy, Haghshenas (p. 52) suggests both doing interdisciplinary studies and, more importantly, throwing oneself into the unknown and the darkness of the world, instead.

JALDA, therefore, would like to show inclination towards the view that the reality of the world is not a fixed entity standing out there to be measured by our pre-fabricated 'scientific' instruments. In line with Haghshenas' argumentation, not only can theories and instruments shrink to ornamental entities but also they can turn into what Karl Popper calls pseudo-science, knowledge of an 'ideological' rather than of a 'scientific' nature (see Fuller, 1996). The knowledge based on positivism is prone to shrink to pseudo-science, for instance, because it is knowledge based solely on natural phenomena and their properties and relations that are accounted for according to man-made networks of laws. Any biased insistence upon such knowledge and hostility towards what lies outside the network, the darkness of the world, an experience of the recent politico-scientific history of the world, should push what was expected to be 'scientific' towards 'pseudo-science.' *JALDA*'s policy is to see its pages colourfully arrayed with findings and views from even the darkest corners of the world, where things are seen in ways quite different from the ways we are used to seeing them.

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