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Abstract

Although best known for his work on world Englishes, Braj Kachru was a truly original thinker, whose academic writings included influential publications on English linguistics, Indian languages, but much else besides, including applied linguistics, bilingualism and multilingualism, code-mixing and switching, cross-cultural communication, language policy, linguistic variation, literary creativity, sociolinguistics, and the politics of language. Braj B. Kachru was a renaissance scholar of immense stature, whose work brought together Indian and English linguistics with the cultural perspectives of both Asia and the West, and inspired scholars worldwide to adopt fresh perspectives on so many language issues.

1 | INTRODUCTION

As all the articles and tributes in this special issue bear witness, Braj Kachru made a singularly outstanding contribution to scholarship in the fields of English linguistics, Indian linguistics, sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. His academic vision was as broad as his intellectual range, which included world literatures as well as world languages, and much else besides. The bibliography below attests to a hugely impressive range of intellectual interests as well as a prolific output of publications, including 20 book publications, 12 journal special issues, 52 book chapters, 48 journal articles, three encyclopedia entries, and 24 book reviews. As is widely recognised, Kachru rose to prominence in the 1980s and 1990s through his advocacy for a paradigm shift in world Englishes, but it would be erroneous to believe that his academic pursuits were limited to English linguistics and world Englishes alone. Indeed, as the bibliography below shows, throughout his career, Kachru maintained a keen engagement with research on Indian linguistics and literature, with particular reference to Kashmiri, as many of his publications from the late 1960s until the recent past demonstrate. His ongoing interest in Indian linguistics also informed and inspired his work (together with Yamuna Kachru and S.N. Sridhar) in compiling and editing the landmark reference work, *Language in South Asia*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2008.

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However, Kachru's research was neither just about only Indian linguistics or English linguistics or both, but spoke – often in innovative and pioneering form – to a wide range of issues in linguistics of multidisciplinary provenance. Indeed, many of the linguistic debates expressed in recent discussions of such topics as critical discourse analysis, English as a lingua franca, linguistic imperialism and translanguaging are anticipated to varying extents in a number of Kachru's articles of the 1980s and 1990s (including Kachru 1986c, 1996a, 1991, 1978a). Again, it is almost impossible to overstate the diversity and innovativeness of Kachru's intellectual interests concerning so many aspects of language and linguistics.

For younger researchers (as well as established scholars) wishing to explore of the range and depth of Kachruvian linguistics, there is no better place to begin than the set of *Collected works of B.B. Kachru* (2015), which was compiled and edited by Jonathan Webster. This three-volume set includes a total of 33 important journal articles and book chapters written by Kachru between 1976 and 2001, and anthologizes many of his writings on such key issues as 'non-native varieties of English,' 'the power and politics of English,' 'non-native literatures,' 'linguistic sacred cows' (Volume I); 'new Englishes,' 'world Englishes,' 'transcultural creativity,' 'English as a lingua franca' (Volume II); and 'code-mixing,' 'bilingualism,' 'language policy,' 'multilingualism and multiculturalism' (Volume III). In this context, we would again seek to highlight the range and diversity of Kachru's scholarly writings. Although Braj was arguably best known for his ground-breaking work on varieties of English worldwide, and the Kachruvian oeuvre bequeathed to us and to future scholars of linguistics is a rich treasure trove of writings on such topics as applied linguistics, bilingualism and multilingualism, code-mixing and switching, cross-cultural communication, language policy, linguistic variation, literary creativity, sociolinguistics, and the politics of language. Another key point to appreciate when sampling Kachru's writings is the sheer *originality* of much of his work, given that many of his key ideas later influenced many others working in the fields of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics. As many of his publications demonstrate, Braj B. Kachru was a renaissance scholar of immense stature, whose work brought together Indian and English linguistics with the cultural perspectives of both Asia and the West, and, in the process, inspired scholars everywhere to look at language, linguistics and many related issues with fresh eyes, new insights and heightened cross-cultural awareness.

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