

Editorial

Welcome to a new cognitive science journal. The interest it has aroused already makes us confident that serving as one reasonably representative international forum for your research is not going to be a problem. However, the race for citation index inches is not one that we have signed up for. Our goal is to widen the scope of the unusual conversation that gave rise to the idea of this journal.

That conversation, in the cognitive science community in India, has now taken the concrete form of a networked set of projects. This cognitive science “research initiative,” as the government funding agency ended up calling it, on *Brain Organization in Normative Multilingualism*, took off in 2009 at universities and institutes in ten Indian cities simultaneously, on the basis of an unprecedentedly freewheeling and rigorous series of conversations that took three years to attain that outcome. Our enterprise draws on expertise in psychology, philosophy, biology, medicine, physics, linguistics, statistics, computer science, and approaches that I cannot hope to characterize by mentioning the conventional discipline in which some individual began his or her scientific journey. This collective brainstorming came up with the idea of launching this journal as – at least – a forum where our unique exercise of comparing notes would continue, hopefully with a larger set of conversation partners. To emphasize the fact that we are trying to launch a conversational forum, we tried to elicit discussion by several authors of one of the papers accepted for this issue, the paper by Edmondson. In part because we are a new journal, it has been possible only to elicit one, crucial, comment on this paper – the comment by Hudson – but we hope that publishing the paper with this comment piece will serve to whet your appetite for more extensive discussion of this sort.

There is a risk that readers will imagine that a linguist editor is going to impose a linguistics bias. So I begin by saying that, when I was part of the proto-team giving shape to the University of Hyderabad’s cognitive science programme, I advocated, as the overall research goal for cognitive science in our time, the development of what I called a “simulated natural intelligence” paradigm. I proposed that we should try to build bridges between the formal and computational tradition of

“artificial intelligence” and the direct study of intelligence in humans and other natural organisms. One way to increase everybody’s motivation, I suggested, was for AI workers to set themselves the long-term goal of copying nature’s organizational successes in this domain in order to improve AI devices and processes. This would mean that formal and computational colleagues would keep pressing for rigorous characterizations of natural intelligence, and that computer simulations would throw up ideas that help accelerate progress in the direct study of natural intelligence.

I mention this only to stress the idea that none of us in cognitive science can afford to confine our interest to one narrowly defined discipline. This editorial board has been functioning as a multidisciplinary team from the very start of our gestation period. Please join the conversation to make this venture a success. Cognitive science needs you.

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