Susanne Maria Reiterer | Julia Festman

Editorial

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This special issue, *Multilingual brains: individual differences in bi-and multilinguals*, reflects the results of a workshop that we organized in October 2010. The specialized workshop was held within the context of a larger linguistic conference entitled *Multilingual individuals, multilingual societies* at the University of Hamburg (http://www.mims.uni-hamburg.de/workshops.php).

It is an attempt to connect two fields of research that traditionally do not have any bonds, but hopefully will grow closer together in the future. The fields are (a) *bilingualism and multilingualism research* including the classical *second language acquisition (SLA)* and *language learning and teaching research*, on the one hand, and (b) 'brain imaging' on the other. Brain imaging has increased tremendously over the last 10 years – due to rapid technical advancements and massive brain power cross-fertilizing the areas of psychometrics, signal analysis, statistics and biomedical imaging.

Given these 'new tools', the area of brain research of bi- and multilingualism/language acquisition that emerged as a special subfield within the cognitive neurosciences and between 2000 and now has developed a substantial and rich body of research with completely new insights into basic language learning mechanisms on the one hand and with results consolidating or contradicting classical SLA literature on the other.

The collection of selected papers in this Special Issue should exemplify what is going on in this new emerging field and provide interested readers with insights into these topics, methods, results and, finally, the added value thereof. In addition to the admittedly 'eclectic' glimpses into brain research of multiple language learning, it should serve as a good overview, since some of the collected articles also review a substantial body of primary research literature and a variety of works implying theoretical advancements.

At this point, we want to thank the sponsors of our workshop who financially facilitated the invitation of those speakers to the workshop to deliver their talks from which the papers of this issue followed. In particular, our thanks go to the Science Foundation *Jung Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Forschung*, Hamburg, the company *BRAIN PRODUCTS: solutions for neurophysiological research*, the publishing house *DE GRUYTER MOUTON*, Berlin and, last but not least our host, the DFG-funded *SFB 538 Mehrsprachigkeit* at the University of Hamburg and the SFB 833 *The Construction of Meaning* at the University of Tübingen, Germany.

As guest editors, we say 'thank you' to each author-contributor of this issue and the reviewers of each manuscript, the talk contributors at the workshop, the sponsors and host of the workshop, the *International Journal of Bilingualism* as host of this issue and finally to David W. Green for

introducing the single papers in his foreword to this issue; we say 'enjoy' to the present and future readers of this special issue.

Sincerely,

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