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## Introduction

### Bilingualism and beyond:

### Critical thinking and innovative practices to address the complexity of multilingualism

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While bilingualism and multilingualism are neither rare nor new, they are receiving increasing attention in civil society as well as in research (Edwards, 2013). One reason for this growing interest is the emphasis on market globalization, mobility, and communication in today's neoliberal economic context (Beacco & Cherkaoui Messin, 2010; Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Flores, 2013; Jaspers, 2018; Marshall & Moore, 2018). Questioning monolingual paradigms, so strongly anchored in the societies of the global North since the nineteenth century (Coste & Simon, 2009), foregrounds the value of language practices that already existed, but were often obscured or marginalized (Faltis, 2022; Wei & Kelly-Holmes, 2021).


What has been termed the *Multilingual turn* (May, 2014a) in applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, and education began in the late 1990s and gained momentum in the 2000s, in the wake of the manifesto, "A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures" by the New London Group (1996), and the publication of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001). The multilingual turn is a paradigm shift that posits multilingualism as a social norm rather than the exception to the monolingual norm. This movement aims to deconstruct the conception of languages as distinct units to be taught in a vacuum, as well as the idea that plurilingual skills should be compartmentalized and assessed according to idealized monolingual standards (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; May, 2014a; Meier, 2017). Van Mensel and Hélot (2019) summarize their understanding of the multilingual turn as follows:

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Ce tournant multilingue fait référence à des recherches qui envisagent le multilinguisme d'un point de vue différent, qui remettent en question des notions telles que celles de langue maternelle, locuteur natif, langue première et langue seconde, bilinguisme additif, etc., soit une conceptualisation réifiée des langues qui ne prend pas en compte la fluidité des pratiques linguistiques, leur dimension sociale, les questions identitaires et les pratiques translangues si courantes parmi les locuteurs plurilingues. (p. 9)

According to this perspective, multilingual practices, in their many conceptualizations and diverse manifestations, are no longer seen as problems to be managed, as per Ruiz (1984), or signs of linguistic deficiency (Marshall & Moore, 2018; Otheguy, 2016). Rather, they are understood as social practices that reflect the linguistic, social, and identity dynamism and complexity at the heart of human connections (Coste & Simon, 2009; Edwards, 2013; García & Sylvan, 2011; Hawkins, 2018; Marshall & Moore, 2018; Meier, 2017; Sabatier, 2010; Stratilaki-Klein, 2022).

As May (2014a, 2022) explains, this ideological turn certainly undermined the monolingual paradigm, but it did not replace it. The multilingual turn, through its critical approach, has fostered an awareness of the ethnocentrism, the colonial thinking, and the limited historical perspectives that characterize research in applied linguistics, education, and language policy (Edwards, 2013; Flores, 2013; Lotherington, 2011; May, 2014a; Patrick, 2012). Advances have thus been observed, among other examples, in the critical deconstruction of the native speaker ideology (e.g., Chen & Tsou, 2021; Jenks & Lee, 2019; O'Rourke et al., 2015; Ramjattan, 2019; Slavkov et al., 2022), in the theorization and growing adoption of the linguistic repertoire conceptualization (e.g., Busch, 2017; Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Piccardo & Galante, 2018; Sabatier, 2010), in the development of multiliteracies pedagogy (e.g., King, 2015; Lotherington, 2011; Reyes-Torres et al., 2021; Taylor, 2008; Warriner, 2012), and in further understanding the multimodal nature of communication (e.g., Bezemer & Abdullahi, 2020; Dagenais et al., 2017; Hawkins, 2018; Liu & Lin, 2021).

However, many still believe that research and practice in the fields of language policy, second language acquisition, and second language teaching, remain fundamentally marked by the monolingual paradigm, Anglo-Saxon hegemony, and the maintenance of colonial practices (to name a few, see Beacco & Cherkaoui Messin, 2010; Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Flores, 2013; Jaspers, 2018; May, 2014b; Meier, 2017; Paulsrud et al., 2020; Stratilaki-Klein, 2022; Van Mensel & Hélot, 2019; Wei & Kelly-Holmes, 2021). It remains difficult to implement the changes brought forth by the multilingual turn in practices and discourses, let alone inform or influence governmental decisions on language and culture (Jaspers, 2018; Sabatier, 2010; Wei & Kelly-Holmes,

2021). Much remains to be done not only to convince people of the merits of this approach but also to recognize its limits, even its drawbacks (Jaspers, 2018; Makoni & Pennycook, 2012; May, 2022). Such limits are exemplified in the resistance to implementing plurilingual approaches in the classroom (e.g., Ballinger et al., 2020; Chen & Tsou, 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Jaspers, 2018; Marshall, 2019; Prasad, 2015) and, when they are implemented, in the difficulty of doing so without reproducing social inequalities (Flores, 2013; Ramjattan, 2019; Stratilaki-Klein, 2022).

Moreover, the multilingual turn will need to move away from the neoliberal values that it is often associated with when it comes to languages and language teaching (Coste & Simon, 2009; Flores, 2013; Jaspers, 2018) as they limit its ability to support social justice, social cohesion, as well as the empowerment of students and teachers who identify themselves as minority, invisibilized, marginalized or discriminated groups (Coste & Simon, 2009; Faltis, 2022; Meier, 2017; Piller, 2012). This will require significant, even radical, changes in ideology, discourse, policy, and practice (Bouamer & Bourdeau, 2022; Faltis, 2022; Flores, 2013; Jaspers, 2018; Liu & Lin, 2021; Ramjattan, 2019); changes that will go *far beyond valuing bilingualism and multilingualism*.

### ***A few words on the Canadian context***

In keeping with global trends, Canada has entered a new era in its thinking and actions regarding the role and impact of languages in its complex and diverse social fabric. Indeed, the country has, in addition to its two official languages, more than 70 languages spoken by First Nations, Metis, and Inuit populations (McIvor, 2018; Sarkar & Lavoie, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2017a). Furthermore, the country continues to be enriched with diverse languages by the immigration influx, as close to 23% of Canadians report having a language other than English or French as a mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2017b). In the wake of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of French-English bilingualism, the Government of Canada has launched consultations on modernizing the Official Languages Act and has announced a significant investment to implement a free learning and maintenance program for French and English. Yet, many voices have long been denouncing the country's colonial language policies (Boutouchent et al., 2019; McIvor, 2015), which have grown louder in light of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). Claims insist on the urgency of a greater recognition and protection of Indigenous languages to foster their revitalization, their transmission, and to counter, if not reverse, the dramatic effects of the residential school system (Boutouchent et al., 2019; McIvor, 2018). These protests finally triggered public consultations and the subsequent

passage of the Indigenous Languages Act (2019).

In the field of education, it is important to highlight the initiatives and progress that have been observed in favour of the inclusion of Indigenous languages and their perspectives in curricula despite several challenges inherent to this process that persist (Boutouchent et al., 2019; Campeau, 2021; Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2021; Kim, 2017; McIvor, 2015; Patrick, 2012; Sarkar & Lavoie, 2014). The fight against linguistic and racial discrimination against Indigenous people, as well as against various racialized groups in the country, is now an unavoidable issue in the Canadian education system (see examples in Madibbo, 2021; Ramjattan, 2019). These claims for greater social justice make it necessary to question official Canadian bilingualism, with all its implications in terms of pedagogical practices and policies.

Research and efforts continue to support the paradigm shift from monolingualism to multilingualism in Canada. Much of the research that addresses linguistic diversity in educational contexts, from the primary to the post-secondary level, calls on educators to revisit practices and policies to foster academic inclusion and success for all students (Armand et al., 2008; Ballinger et al., 2020; Cummins et al., 2015; Dagenais et al., 2017; Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2021; Hamel et al., 2021; Jean-Pierre, 2017; Levasseur, 2020; Lotherington, 2011; Marshall, 2019; Prasad, 2015; Spiliotopoulos, 2018; Taylor, 2008).

However, the multilingual turn has been slow to take hold in Canadian schools, whether at the elementary, secondary, or post-secondary levels, and in both the English and French sectors. There are a number of reasons for this resistance, including: the prevalence of a monolingual ideology; the widely held belief that languages of instruction must remain separate; the minority status of languages other than English; the representations of, and values attached to bilingualism and multilingualism; teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and pedagogical approaches; logistical limitations; the lack of pre and in-service teacher training; and the lack of pedagogical resources (e.g. Ballinger et al., 2017; Ballinger et al., 2020; Cummins, 2019; Dagenais, 2017; Haque, 2012; Lotherington, 2011; Spiliotopoulos, 2018). Therefore, more research is needed in this area and many articles of this volume are addressing these questions.

### ***Introduction to the volume***

This volume of the *OLBI Journal* brings together peer-reviewed papers selected from the 2021 Canadian Centre for Studies and Research on Bilingualism and Language Planning (CCERBAL) conference, hosted online in May 2021 at the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute of the University of Ottawa. Under the broad theme of *Bilingualism and Beyond*:

*Advancing the Thinking on Pedagogies, Policies and Practices*, over 275 participants gathered to explore bilingualism in all its complexity. The articles selected for this volume illustrate the authors' desires to share critical research and innovative practices, which are crucial to the process of moving the multilingual turn beyond its known limitations.

Jim Cummins's article "Pedagogical translanguaging: Examining the credibility of unitary versus crosslinguistic translanguaging theory" opens the volume. It analyzes the credibility of unitary translanguaging theory (UTT) and crosslinguistic translanguaging theory (CTT), two conceptions of pedagogical translanguaging theory. UTT, as the author explains, holds that the bilingual's cognitive system is unitary and undifferentiated, whereas CTT is based on the premise that there are indeed language-specific features in the bilingual's cognitive system. As a result, UTT rejects theoretical concepts that CTT considers as theoretically credible, including additive bilingualism, academic language, the common underlying proficiency, and teaching for crosslinguistic transfer. Cummins presents evidence to support the credibility of these concepts and concludes that many of UTT's theoretical claims are logically flawed and unsupported by empirical evidence. Consequently, UTT's claims risk undermining important contributions made by pedagogical translanguaging.

The following research articles have been grouped under two broad themes: 1) Challenges and opportunities for pluri/multilingual speakers, and 2) Innovative practices in second language education. The articles will be briefly described below.

### **Challenges and opportunities for pluri/multilingual speakers**

In the article "Centring multilingual learners and countering racism in Canadian teacher education," Antoinette Gagné, Jeff Bale, Julie Kerekes, Shakina Rajendram, Mama Adobea Nii Owoo, Katie Brubacher, Jennifer Burton, Elizabeth Jean Larson, Wales Wong, and Yiran Zhang focus on how mainstream teacher candidates in pre-service programs in Ontario are being prepared to support K-12 multilingual learners. It is argued that to best serve multilingual learners it is vital to identify who they are and the different types of support they require. It is also shown that countering racism and equipping teacher candidates to support multilingual learners is a complex task that can be better addressed through an enhanced collaboration between different education programs and school districts.

Shelley K. Taylor, Kate Paterson, and Yasmeen Hakooz, in their article "Meeting invisibilized needs: Youth refugees' language and literacy development at the tertiary level in Canada," explore the pedagogical challenges and systemic barriers that prevent youth refugees from receiving

the services they need to succeed in their postsecondary studies. The authors point out that benevolent intentions are not enough to bring about meaningful change to better meet the refugees' language needs and to promote their well being. They conclude with a call for coordinated and informed actions to be implemented by governments, post-secondary institutions, and faculty.

In her article "La fabrique de l'étranger au niveau stato-national: la langue comme indice du degré d'altérité," Iris Padiou focuses on the construction of otherness in the French nation-state context. By employing a historical approach and relying on legislative texts on residence permit and naturalization, she shows that the "figure of the foreigner" has historically been inextricably linked to the mastery of the French language. Padiou proposes that *language* and *integration* should be considered as state categories of thought that are closely linked to the definition of the nation and non-national foreigners, thus participating in the gatekeeping of the national community.

In the following article, "'Their Greek goes to waste': Understanding Greek heritage language teachers' language ideologies and instructional practices," Emmanouela Tisizi presents a narrative study on Greek heritage language (HL) teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards their students and colleagues in primary and secondary Greek schools in Montreal and Toronto. In addition to the necessity of the change in their attitudes from monolingual ideologies to pluralism to accept learners' diverse linguacultural backgrounds, the findings also indicate more practical needs to enhance Greek HL education in Canada, e.g., reducing class size and providing teacher training.

John Wayne N. dela Cruz, in his article entitled "Plurilingual or not plurilingual? Plurilingual competence and identity of Canadian EAL peers in a francophone post-secondary context," presents his research conducted at a French-language post-secondary institution in Quebec, where he examined the linguistic identities of additional English language learners involved in tutoring. The results of the research show that tutors had a greater adherence to a plurilingual and pluricultural identity, while tutees tended to adopt a bilingual or monolingual identity. Dela Cruz emphasizes the importance of teachers recognizing, protecting, and supporting the development of their learners' emerging plurilingual competencies and identities.

### **Innovative practices in second language education**

Josée Le Bouthillier and Renée Bourgoïn's article, "Communication orale et évaluation formative pour l'apprentissage dans les centres de littératie en immersion française," explores second language assessment practices during the implementation of oral language tasks in literacy centers. The data show that it can be difficult for teachers to collect tangible evidence in a structured way to assess oral tasks. However, the results suggest that several

strategies, including the establishment of concrete, explicit, and specific learning outcomes, greatly facilitate this evaluation work.

Farhad Roodi and Nikolay Slavkov's article, "Gamification in L2 teaching and learning: Linguistic risk-taking at play," introduces their research project with the Linguistic Risk-Taking (LRT) passport, a game-informed learning tool that contains a list of authentic tasks they developed for English and French learners on the bilingual campus of the University of Ottawa. The analytical study compares the paper version of the LRT passport with the digital app, concluding that the paper version has the strength in interactivity with others, while the app can provide immediate feedback even though it is scripted.

In the article, "Investigating the dynamics of change in second language willingness to communicate," Shahin Nematizadeh explores factors which cause changes in willingness to communicate (WTC) of Farsi learners of English at Canadian universities. In line with the shift from the fixed view of WTC to the dynamic WTC, the author designed a study with a monologic speaking task and a stimulated recall interview. The analysis highlights the fluctuating patterns of the participants' WTC and factors that influence their WTC changes during communication in a second language.

The integration of French-speaking cultures in Grade 9 Core French classrooms in Ontario is the focus of Rochelle Guida's article "Approaching French-speaking cultures in the FSL classroom: The *salade niçoise* recipe." More specifically, the article reports on the results of an exploratory case study investigating how non-native French-speaking educators introduce both visible and invisible cultures in their teaching in order to engage their students. The findings of the study suggest that how cultural interaction is experienced in hybrid, face-to-face, and online classroom settings should be reexamined through a pluricultural perspective.

Reza Farzi and Olga Fellus conducted a case study on an intensive language program offered to students at a postsecondary institution in Canada. Students were admitted on the condition that they improve their English language skills, which were deemed unsatisfactory at the time of admission. The results of this research, presented in the article "Mission possible: Incorporating academic literacy and readiness into an English intensive program curriculum," focus on the development of academic literacy in an internationalized context. The authors argue that it is possible, and indeed essential, to include an academic literacy component within the intensive English program, particularly through the mobilization of multiliteracies pedagogy.

The article "Plurilinguismes, paysages linguistiques et constructions identitaires : une approche éducative pluri-située et multi-sites" by Raquel Carinhas, Maria Helena Araújo et Sá, and Danièle Moore presents the results

of a collaborative study on the use of plurilingualism as an asset for the creation of various new experiential learning sites, both at school and beyond its walls. The results of the study show that the participation in plurilingual activities based on social interaction and collaboration encourages children to be active agents in their learning and to reconstruct their plural identities. The authors suggest that more emphasis needs to be placed on the training of educators (teachers and museum mediators) on plurilingualism and its ability to contextualize learning.

The following article, “Translanguaging in content and language integrated learning (CLIL): Practices in the classroom of a Chinese university” by Yiran Ding, investigates how a teacher uses translanguaging in CLIL science classes at the tertiary level in China. This small-scale study analyses audio-recorded classroom interactions between the teacher and five graduate students. Data suggests the identification of five functions of the teacher’s translanguaging in the context: providing background knowledge, deepening students’ understandings, improving teaching efficiency, engaging students, and ensuring classroom interactions.

Finally, Beltamiro Selso Patricio’s article “Enseigner le français au Mozambique: une intervention didactique innovante qui favorise la comparaison des langues en contact” addresses the issue of multilingualism in the educational system in Mozambique. In a country where languages with very different histories and statuses (i.e., French, Bantu languages, and Portuguese) are part of the daily linguistic landscape of learners, the question of choosing a language of instruction and an appropriate second language pedagogy is crucial. After conducting a comparative study of three pedagogical approaches to teaching French, the author concludes that plurilingual approaches could indeed have positive effects on the learning of French in Mozambique educational settings.

As exemplified by the themes of the articles in this volume, the present-day multilingual reality involves diverse issues from theories on bi/plurilinguals’ cognitive system and distinctive populations and communities of plurilingual speakers, to pedagogies and technology to enhance plurilingual teaching and learning. It is challenging to capture the dynamism between plurilingual individuals’ transient practice, linguistic ideology, and social norms in a multilingual society. The studies in the current volume could provide a foundation for further research in the fields of multilingualism and second language education.

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