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Department of English Studies, Faculty of Pedagogy and Fine Arts, Adam Mickiewicz University, Kalisz

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Editorial

This special issue opens with a series of articles that deal with the need to make language learners able to communicate effectively in an increasingly diverse world filled with English varieties. In the first text, Khawla Badwan reports the testimony of a study-abroad student in the UK, addressing the discrepancies between language classroom goals and real-life unpredictable needs. Badwan explains how those differences stem from the frequent need for teachers in non-occidental countries to develop specific skills aimed at obtaining high scores on specific language tests rather than making language learners aware of varieties of English and at ease with them. A case is made for language teachers to embrace a plurilithic view of English.

In the second text, Neva Čebtron suggests that using the materials developed through the Intercultural Education Resources for Erasmus Students and their Teachers (IEREST) project can diversify learning opportunities, leading to innovative approach to enhance learning beyond classroom experiences. Čebtron argues that in a multilingual and multicultural context, the linguaculture can be a norm that informs the leaning process by which the language transfer facilitates communicative encounters. For learners to be more adventurous, likely to engage in second language learning outside the classroom settings such as the Erasmus sojourn scheme, the level of preparedness should seek to minimise factors that are likely to impede the complete cultural and linguistic immersion. Čebtron suggests that there is a need for teachers to develop a deeper awareness of communicative processes and the way they relate to cross-cultural competencies. Čebtron concludes her article by asserting that learners' exposure and engagement can be achieved through rethinking learning beyond students' mobility by integrating new communication paradigms into the preparation for international experience that various "intercultural paths" offer while abroad.

In the third text Matteo Santipolo takes this suggestion further by suggesting a method for teaching English variation. Santipolo then suggests a method

for teaching English variation in Italian schools through BLT, a student-centered approach. The author begins with a well-documented overview of the foreign language offer in the Italian school system, underscoring the variability in teacher qualification and teaching contexts. Santipolo then makes us realize that little attention has been devoted to the kind of English being taught. The author proposes that the concepts of utility and usability should form the criteria for selecting the language elements to be taught, rather than the traditional teaching sequences based on increased complexity and difficulty.

In the fourth article, that plurithic view of English is then suggested for language assessment. Betty Lantaigne discusses the relevance of including jumbled sentences (such as “Want taxi Dubai you?”) and their validity as test items in English classrooms. Since the need to reorder words to understand spoken language does occur in reality, the author discredits the inauthentic label assigned to such sentences. After compiling and analyzing 54 jumbled sentences uttered in real-world communication by low-proficiency speakers, Lantaigne argues in favor of including such items on the basis that they reflect real-life communication in places where English is used as a *lingua franca*.

The following article also pleads for emphasizing sociological aspects of language in education, this time taking us from language learning to translator training. Larisa Ilynska and her two colleagues investigated the effects of including LSP texts in developing thematic, linguistic and cultural competence. A strong point of this article is the difficulty for translators – as for readers in general – to identify intertextual references that require some sociolinguistic knowledge. The authors argue that intercultural competence is difficult to develop, and that a solution lies in the reading, analysis and translation of popular LSP texts, complemented with pre-reading and post-reading tasks.

Our special issue closes with another set of thematically-related articles, which deal with wider social issues. Saadia Gamir shares her personal and critical reflections as a language tutor about new language provision in the UK and at her university in particular. Based on recent official survey figures, she discusses what she perceives as a crisis for foreign language learning at various levels of education in UK schools as a consequence of recent reforms, budget cuts and class time shortage. A striking point of her argument is a drop in the number of university students reaching a high level in languages, compared to other academic subjects.

In his article, through a solid documentation protocol, Daniel Tomozeiu provides an overview of the diversity in linguistic rights of the minority language communities in the 28 EU member states. In the public sphere, it appears that minority languages enjoy visibility in the education and the media, more so than in the judiciary and public services. The author reflects on the ways in which the

status of minority languages are determined by historical influences. Suggestions are made to enhance education in minority languages with calls for better coordination among organizations and better clarification in official documents.

Language minority may have rights but they also need access to language resources. The final article is about book-reading practices in various languages, in this era where globalization results in increased media availability. Marie Rivière presents the results of 24 interviews with plurilingual readers living in Western Europe, about their access to books in their different languages. Perhaps unsurprisingly, printed and digital books in less dominant languages do not circulate as easily and visibly as those in dominant languages, and are less numerous and more expensive in local and online supplies. Interestingly, Rivière demonstrates how language domination both causes and results from economic advantages. We hope the readers will enjoy the texts we selected for this special issue.

Théophile Munyangeyo
Leeds Beckett University, UK
t.munyangeyo@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

François Pichette
Université TÉLUQ, Québec, Canada
francois.pichette@teluq.ca