1 Humanizing Research(ers) and Understanding How Concepts Evolve in Context

Gail Prasad, Nathalie Auger and Emmanuelle Le Pichon-Vorstman

Educational linguistics has many faces, embodied by thousands of researchers around the world. Whether scholars use similar or divergent terminology, it can be difficult to discern the contours of how concepts are taken up across and even sometimes within contexts. The interpretation of theoretical constructs requires a contextual articulation in relation to history: Where have theoretical constructs come from? How do they manifest? And, where might they lead us? This book aims to bring to life issues and perspectives regarding multilingualism and education that have emerged in specific contexts and through varied lived experiences. Taking a biographical approach, through the individual trajectories of contributing researchers, allows us to better understand how our epistemologies shape the way we mobilize concepts.

Although language biographies have been theorized as a key component of language learning and teaching, they have rarely been used as the basis of reflection for researchers about their own research. This book offers readers the opportunity to encounter scholars more personally. Research can too easily become disembodied and decontextualized through academic reporting. One of the limits with decontextualized scientific reports is that they obscure the fact that they are based on interpretations of concepts and practices from one context to another. Gradually, contextual processes of interpretation can produce alternative conceptualizations that can at times appear to be in conflict with their origins.

While it is expected that researchers may reference concepts in different ways and for different purposes, as we come to know researchers' biographies and trajectories, it becomes easier to understand how different nuances and meanings may have evolved. Based on this knowledge, the reinterpretation and reinvestment of concepts and practices create the opportunity to expand research opportunities on a more solid foundation. To this end, we invited scholars working at the intersections of language and education to share their language biographies and research trajectories. Accordingly, the objective was to paint a picture of how their work takes up concepts and practices related to multilingualism. Scholars across various career stages reflected on how

1

personal and lived experiences contributed to their sensibility towards language(s) and how theories have evolved out of practice and vice versa.

Readers will discover how diverse experiences have led researchers to adopt different terminologies to describe language teaching and learning, their positionalities and their connections across domains (Second Language Acquisition, sociolinguistics, anthropology, education, sociology, linguistics, etc.). While such differences are likely to produce division within the field of educational linguistics, they can also lead to productive intramural discussions to further our thinking and to contribute to the collaborative production of knowledge and complex ways of seeing, doing and being. Readers will also discover how scholars' reflections on their research have led to innovation in theory and in practice. Beyond these epistemic questions, the scholars will further explore the dynamic relationships among languages, powers and identities and how these relationships raise broader societal issues that permeate both global and local language practices.

Individual perspectives that are shared herein are woven across multiple life worlds: families, schools, academic positions and society. Transgressions across these different spheres have led academics to make choices in their personal and academic lives. Their experiences (whether they choose them or not) invariably mark them in different ways: speaking a language at home and another at school; witnessing or experiencing exclusion (symbolic or real violence); and falling in love with countries, languages and people.

Since the Multilingual Turn, we have seen a veritable explosion of terms that have tried to capture shifting perspectives on language(s) and their users. A way forward cannot be designed without or apart from language(s). In the Post-Multilingual Turn, we leave a paradigm of opposition or complementarity proposed by binary models such as 'bilingual', 'dual language education', 'compartmentalization' and 'two solitudes'. To go beyond inter-models ('interculturality', 'interlanguage') progressively opens up complex 'trans', 'hybrid', 'multi' and 'pluri' possibilities. In each contribution, concepts have been operationalized in different ways. Rather than seeing these differences in opposition, in this book, readers are invited to seek understanding of how plural meanings can advance their own understanding of language(s) in education and research. Emergent terminology reflects that languages, variations and modes co-exist. This reality must be taken into account as we embrace evolving critical perspectives.

Indeed, it seems vital at this point in history that we develop the academic practice of embodied dialogue. Involving scholars who work in the same field across different contexts and in different languages, this book stresses the value of cultivating a practice of sustained listening across different generations, genders, countries and continents.

We begin by recounting how our own research trajectories first brought us together and how our professional and personal experiences have further been enriched through collaboration. Our work together within and across contexts and languages allows us to reflect on how concepts and practices change, adapt and necessarily evolve as they are taken up in different ways with different audiences.

1.1   From Our Own Experiences of Variability Regarding Concepts

The vision for this book began to take shape when Gail Prasad and Nathalie Auger started working together first in France and then across the Atlantic between France and Canada and the United States. As they compared their own academic references, they did not necessarily share the same visions of similar concepts in English and French, and noticed that, in the end, they often used different notions to refer to similar experiences. They soon became aware that concepts that might appear at first to be in conflict were not necessarily so. Their relationship as colleagues and friends, however, encouraged them to persist in linguistic and cultural collaboration to work through perceived conflicts to build understanding of one another and their respective and shared work.

As three co-editors, our trajectories and work have raised many questions. It was first in 2013 that Gail Prasad's and Nathalie Auger's paths crossed virtually and then in real time and space. Gail Prasad had become invested in research in Canada's minority French-language schools through her graduate work at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) and the Centre de Recherche en Éducation Franco-Ontarienne (CRÉFO). At the time, as a self-professed monolingual Anglophone, she suffered from extreme linguistic insecurity and wanted to improve her French. She was also interested in multilingual/plurilingual approaches to teaching and learning in Europe that she had been introduced to in part through Nathalie Auger's work in France. When Gail was awarded a Weston doctoral fellowship to pursue international research at the University of Montpellier 3, she and Nathalie started to think about what it actually meant to collaborate as two researchers with common interests but different languages.

During that year-long collaboration, they came to see many commonalities in their interests. Translanguaging was a relatively new concept at the time, rising from New York in North America, whereas plurilingualism had become a key lens for European language research and institutions. In discussing scholarship in English and in French, their collaboration perhaps made it easier to build on commonalities rather than to focus on potential conflicts. They were both focused on linguistically minoritized populations even though the

contexts and the particularities of their study populations differed. This is not to say that generalization across contexts and populations is always suitable but rather that in investing in understanding one another, they were better able to go deeper in their reflections and to move beyond their comfort zones.

Emmanuelle Le Pichon and Nathalie Auger met in 2016 when they were both working with newcomer students in their respective contexts. They were interested in how the different countries in which they lived – the Netherlands, Canada and France – could ask the same questions about the integration of these students into education but treat the answers very differently. In the meantime, they met in London at a conference on Roma students (Romtels), where different concepts such as translingualism or plurilingualism were intensively discussed. No book at the time dealt with these transnational aspects. In 2019, Gail moved back to Canada from the United States and Emmanuelle Le Pichon joined the editorial team for this book. In coming together, their experiences allowed them as co-editors, colleagues and friends to realize the richness of collective work across contexts, languages and epistemologies.

The volume is organized into three sections:

1 The introduction outlines the methodology for the book with particular emphasis on the need for a synergistic vision for multilingual research and practice in education animated by the thinking of researchers from different generations, countries and continents.

2 Individual contributions from researchers make up the body of this collection. Authors share their language biography and, in particular, the elements that have influenced their interest in the issue of multilingualism in the education system and for each of the following three sets of concepts (multilingualism/plurilingualism/heteroglossia, intercultural/pluricultural/multicultural education, linguistic repertoire/communicative repertoire, awareness of language and language awareness, intercomprehension and education for cross linguistic transfer, translanguaging) to reflect on the evolution of the concepts in their own contexts, explaining their use of or reluctance towards these notions. Where they drew other concepts and practices related to multilingualism, they were asked to explain how and why they had come to propose, adopt and apply said alternatives. While each contribution was written by scholars themselves in first person in English and/or French, the editors also gave them the opportunity to write in the language of their choice or to use different languages to enrich the meaning they wanted to give to their thoughts. Contributions that were originally in French have been translated into English for publication. However, the editors have tried to respect authors' choices to move between languages in their texts. For example, at times, English translations are

provided alongside the original text for quotations. All together this collection includes contributions from thirty-six authors.

3 The conclusion then offers a meta-reflection on three recurrent themes and questions for further study.

As scholars we all know the shock of discovering the name of a renowned scientist on his or her badge at a conference and linking it to all the publications of the individual in question. As this book has taken shape, we have also come to reflect on the contribution of this collection for scholars and graduate students who read extensively but do not always have the advantage of knowing authors personally and the complex histories of various concepts and practices. While we appreciate the productive nature of constructive debate and scholarly discussion, we recognize the need today more than ever to overcome binary thinking and move towards complex, embodied ways of engaging in critique of theories, concepts and practices rather than individuals. In a highly mobile world, concepts, practices and authors routinely cross boundaries, giving rise to different meanings within different contexts. This book aims to elaborate on how such crossing can move our field forward.

This book then can also be read as a story of a discovery: the discovery of life courses that all converge towards a reconceptualization of language and education in the Post-Multilingual Turn. Individual contributions bring to light the contingencies of genetics, history, mobility, migration, power and vulnerability in relationships between and among people. Or put differently, these stories of mobility and migration told through the subjectivity of their respective narrators allow each author to put forward their own histories, perspectives and concepts as they have followed an advanced academic path.

We bring together scholars from a wide range of universities across four continents and various disciplines (linguistics, ethnology, anthropology, pedagogy). Browsing through the memories of these authors will allow readers to discover how the sometimes happy, often unhappy experiences have enriched their thinking about languages and contexts, including concepts of minoritization, racism, glottophobia and stigmatization. From the outset, we wish to underscore that experiences of minoritization are not always visible: in this book, the reader will discover that racial origin is not always indicated by name; that systemic racism is everywhere, but its many manifestations vary according to context; that academic norms and values are not homogeneous either but often depend on the geographical areas in which the universities are located; that a prestigious origin in one country is not necessarily prestigious in the other; racism, exclusion and discrimination, namely, on the basis of language persist everywhere. Taken together, the resulting work makes visible both the incredible range of concepts that authors are discussing across contexts (see index) and the theoretical depth of discussion related to these

concepts. For the presentation of the biographies, we have chosen to adopt an alphabetical order based on the surnames of the authors.

Mehmet-Ali Akinci begins by reminding us how schools in France at the beginning of the twentieth century punished students caught speaking a dialect by forcing them to clean the toilets because they 'had shit in their mouths!'. Coming from a family of traditional immigrants from Turkey, he shows how 'immigrant origin' often appears in the common imagination as a factor explaining their failure at school. His psycholinguistic background is marked by his fight against discrimination and *glottophobia* at school.

Nathalie Auger, who grew up between and within languages, pleads for a plural and inclusive 'hospitable' pedagogy, a pedagogy *of* and *for* diversity. Through the encounter and study of social representations of plurilingualism and linguistic diversity within urban multilingualism, she has examined social and linguistic fractures that generate verbal and symbolic violence, multilingual walls and stigmatization. These experiences naturally led her to address these fractures in her work through a linguistically sensitive pedagogy.

Theresa Austin is the daughter of Japanese immigrants by her mother and African-Americans by her father. Her history has led her to navigate between languages and identities that were attributed to her as she learned and developed the concept of a 'wholistic imagined identity'. She explains how the monolingual ideology in the United States has impacted her family life, preventing her from becoming a full member of the cultural groups of her choice.

Francis Bangou chose to fight social injustice by advocating for the empowerment of marginalized groups of learners. His social and academic background, made of geographical and institutional patchworks of language norms and habits, has led him to reject binary explanations, such as nature versus nurture and speaker versus language, in order 'to recognize that speaker, language, and matter are perpetually becoming other in creative relational and ever changing entanglements'.

The work of **Jean-Claude Beacco** brought him to the Council of Europe. There he became interested in the management of cultural Otherness, shedding new light on questions of legitimacy of certain languages in relation to others. For him, 'the stakes are being played at the pedagogical level, [. . .], but also at the structural level, through the indispensable coming together of at least language coursework and language(s) of schooling coursework'.

Mercè Bernaus grew up in Spain, in a language imposed by the oppressor, and reminds us that school is a political instrument manipulated by the official language. **Emilee Moore,** daughter of Italian migrants in Australia, explores the stigma surrounding the indigenous communities in Australia and their right to live and learn in their languages. Together, they explore how gesture, ways of dressing and dance movements can contribute to learning, in the context of

different sociocultural dynamics and through collaborative and activist approaches that include the whole semiotic repertoire of students.

Marisa Cavalli discovered at a very young age that her family's dialect put her in a marginal position, under the symbolic domination of the tourists who invaded her Italian village every year. This situation led her to fight for the rights of minorities from an inclusive pedagogical perspective. She promotes the maintenance of languages, shedding light on the social-political power relations and, in turn, on the pedagogical aspects.

The story of **Viktorija Ceginskas** is a story of interactions between different ethnicities, cultures and languages on the borders of the Baltic States. She shows how stateless refugees may compensate for their loss of identity by strong emotional bonds with families, native countries and languages. She shows how 'language use and practices help to determine a person's self- and externally ascribed identification by others, and provide orientation in everyday social interactions, including the recognition as a valid and represented group member with specific rights'.

Daniel Coste, the father of what has been coined 'plurilingual competence', demonstrates 'the intricacy of the historical, territorial, patrimonial, migratory, even ethnic and religious, and always economic, social, and political aspects that, depending on various configurations, affect the representations and positionings of social actors with regard to linguistic plurality'. He helps us to tease apart 'chosen plurilingualisms from forced plurilingualisms', and to remember that there are 'unfortunate, insecure, perhaps handicapping plurilingualisms'.

Diane Dagenais highlights her parents' resistance to linguistic assimilation and her own path between alternating and mixing languages. She quickly became aware of the boundaries between languages and of artificial and oppressive school policies. Her research has led her to explore children's linguistic practices, stereotypical representations and to fight against social inequalities by supporting multilingual pedagogies against unfair and oppressive practices.

Ester de Jong traces her development of a bilingual/multilingual stance through her personal and professional experiences. These began in the Netherlands and involved crossing back and forth from Europe to the United States and a variety of international contexts, investigating bilingual education systems, teacher development and practices. Her research has led her to affirm 'bilinguals are bilinguals' as a starting place for principled decision-making concerning equitable policy and practice with bi/multilinguals.

Pierre Escudé's text begins with a reminder of the history of dialects across France, and particularly Occitan. He draws our attention back to the nineteenth century and France's systemic repression of minority languages. Against this tide, he gradually became the ambassador of these so-called dialect languages and developed the field of intercomprehension, actively challenging the adage:

'One country, one language'. On the contrary, he describes how linguistic diversity may reinforce national identity, surprisingly, through its most recent immigrants: 'If my little one speaks Occitan, he will really be French'.

Carole Fleuret offers a vision of social injustice and racism in France during the 1980s by recounting her experience of the denial of the languages of migration at school, including the language of her grandfather. Through her research, she fights against the loss of the linguistic capital using children's literature, pluriliteracy repertoires and invented spelling to rethink school programmes.

Gilles Forlot also denounces French monolingualism and a homogenizing view of the Republic. He advocates fighting off these 'zombies', as he describes them, by dealing with 'the attention to exceptions in language systems, the illegitimacy of all forms of language contact, [and] a supposedly necessary balanced set of skills when one learns/speaks a language'.

Laurent Gajo offers a Swiss perspective from a mixed Italo-French family in a time when only men could transmit their nationality. Very soon convinced he was more than two passports, his research led him to education and specifically to the conceptualization of plurilingualism and the 'didactization of alternation that could respond to the complexity of classrooms'.

'I have learned these words when I first went to school in La Habana, Cuba'. This is how **Ofelia Garcia** introduces the reader to an in-depth discussion of the concepts of translanguaging, multilingualism, plurilingualism, heteroglossia, xenophobia and discrimination. She explains how well-intentioned educational programmes can carry the stigma of Otherness and discrimination. She strongly advocates the use of the full semiotic repertoires of students, moving away from monolingual ideologies and neo-liberal economics, curricula and pedagogy.

In France, **Cécile Goï** questions the notion of cultural otherness while mocking the times when she played with the Gypsies in her small village as a child. This experience was the seed of her first 'gesture of indignation' in response to ostracism related to cultural and linguistic diversity. Making sense of such experiences produced a profound reflection on social cohesion, equal opportunities and educational success, in particular for newly arrived students.

As for **Maureen Kendrick**, her Ukrainian family experiences in Canada inspired her to develop reciprocal teaching with migrant students. Through her work, she mobilizes not only languages but also multimodal semiotic resources to create access to new knowledge and opportunities for students.

Through the perspectives of raciolinguistics, language ideology, power and identity, **Kendall King** explores the tectonics of theoretical changes in applied linguistics over the last thirty years. She challenges the concepts of the native speaker, motivation and even the notion of language itself. From the study of language loss, maintenance and revitalization, she moved to superdiverse

contexts. She discovered the hybridity and fluidity of languages and cultures, and shifted towards a more holistic view of bilingualism and bilinguals.

Claire Kramsch grew up between four different languages, French, English, German and Yiddish. She shares how beyond the differences in languages, it is the misunderstandings between the speakers of these languages that have always fascinated her and that have guided her research. Literature and discourse analysis led her to develop the concept of symbolic competence.

Through her own trajectory, as well as her daughter's, **Emmanuelle Le Pichon** describes their experiences of 'languages belonging' and legitimacy from France to Canada via Italy, the Netherlands and the United States. Emmanuelle Le Pichon shows her concern with categorizing and reductive terms such as foreign language or L1, L2, L3 and proposes alternative ways for a proactive celebration of diversity in the classroom.

David Little learned French and German in the UK in a monolingual environment. His research quickly focused on the agency of the learners. Having worked with refugees and then with multilingual schools, involving many languages in the classroom, he rejects translanguaging. Rather, he suggests that collaborative learning tasks should be carried out with different languages in mind.

As a new immigrant to Canada, **Marie-Paule Lory** lived the popular 'Canadian experience', including learning and working with English-speaking researchers. Her vision of multilingualism in Ontario is to address the 'threat' to the sustainability of the French language while taking the risk of changing teacher practices in multilingual classrooms.

Jeff MacSwan describes himself as an 'incorrigible' child of the working class in the United States. His work continues to be devoted to disadvantaged children. From the 'opportunity room' to the university, MacSwan deals with commitment, understanding, respect in his pedagogical approach to fighting ideology about natural limitations and socio-economic reproduction.

Phan le Ha 's childhood in Hanoi, Vietnam, brought her into contact with words, expressions and songs in Russian, French, Chinese and English in turn: languages that were designated as the enemy's language, 'alongside her mother tongue Vietnamese'. In a duet with **Bao Dat**, they venture into a reflection on the hybridity and intertextuality of memories and languages rejecting colonial categorizations anchored in discourses of self and others.

From Italy to France and then Canada, **Enrica Piccardo** experienced a multifaceted journey with Italian, French, English, classical languages and dialects which nourished a holistic and complex approach of language learning that focuses on 'the ensemble of linguistic, cultural and semiotic means that allows students to find their place in the world'.

Gail Prasad, daughter of an inter-racial, -cultural, -linguistic and -religious couple, grew up with only one language, 'the language of opportunity'. At an

early age, she experienced systemic racism and exclusion, while navigating multilingual interactions as an act of resistance. Creativity and criticality are at the heart of her research investigating the coercive power relations among majoritarian and minoritized language users. She sees school as 'a protected space for imagining and building more equitable societies'.

Elatiana Razafimandimbimanana explains how, during her childhood, from Canada, Madagascar and Kenya to France, she experienced multilingualism, which in turn led her to co-construct pluri-artistic practices with students from New Caledonia. Deeply affected by being 'impure' in her own linguistic practices, she defines an ideology of purity spread around the world and how she turns to art to empower her plurilingual students.

Nikolay Slavkov experienced learning the languages of the Soviet bloc in Bulgaria. Beyond the Iron Curtain of the Cold War, he developed a passion for English and immigrated to China and then to Canada. Initially reticent about plurilingualism and translanguaging, he slowly opened up to multilingual classes and his own plurilingual children to propose a reflection on the destigmatization of bilingual and multilingual practices.

Heather Jane Smith experienced isolation in her early childhood in the United Kingdom because of her Canadian accent. She then decided to work in Zimbabwe, and back in Newcastle, she focused on the negative prejudices that prevailed regarding multiculturalism in education, taking into account British values and national security, and the growing racist nativist discourse in the English media.

Shelley K. Taylor recounts her impression, growing up in a multilingual city in Canada with multilingual parents, that everyone had their own 'secret' languages. While she has been a lifelong learner of languages, her journey reflects a blurring of boundaries between naturalistic and instructed Second Language Acquisition. Through her research on multilingual education navigating across different language families and global contexts, she challenges educators' monolingual mindsets to promote students' academic achievement and multilingual development.

Kelleen Toohey went to school on the Canadian prairies with Ukrainian-Canadian and Cree classmates. Strongly influenced by the civil rights movement, she continued to document diverse cultural practices to give students 'voice'. Using video cameras, tripods, storyboards and video editing software, she continues to enhance enaction in classrooms, including both human and non-human actors.

In Belgium, **Piet Van Avermaet** and **Sven Sierens** offer a joint biography where 'Dutch' and local dialects were their norm. Both of them grew up in a multilingual environment with migrant classmates. As researchers, they turned to a critical sociolinguistic perspective to propose functional multilingual learning to give multilingual students a chance to use their linguistic repertoires.