LHUMAINE

N° 5 | 2025
PLURENSA (PLURilinguisme ENSeignement Apprentissage / Plurilingualism Teaching and Learning / Plurilingüismo Enseñanza Aprendizaje)

Introduction [EN]

Nathalie AUGER *Professeur des universités*
ITIC
LHUMAIN
Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier

Édition électronique :
URL : https://lhumaine.numerev.com/articles/revue-5/2341-introduction-en
DOI : numerev_2493
Date de publication : 01/06/2025

Cette publication est sous licence **CC BY-NC-ND** (Attribution - No commercial - No derivatives).

Pour **citer cette publication** : AUGER, N. (2025) Introduction [EN]. *LHUMAINE*, (5). https://doi.org/10.34745/numerev_2493

This introduction presents the various articles and authors that make up this journal issue dedicated to multilingualism, teaching and learning.

Mots-clés :
Plurilingualism, Teaching, Learning, Interconnecting, Complexity

---

This issue of the journal L H U M A I N E stems from the keynote speaker presentations at the international PLURENSA conference, which took place in June 2023 at University of Montpellier Paul-Valéry, France. One of the aims of this conference was to foster dialogue between two internationally renowned researchers (Li-Auger, Cenoz-Cavalli, Genesee-Gajo, Cummins-Beacco, MacSwann-Véronique, Gogolin-Coste, Chiss-Ehrhart, Hornberger-Bronckart) who work in different contexts and languages, allowing them to debate issues related to multilingualism, teaching, and learning. The goal was to bring together truly diverse intellectual perspectives by pairing eight international researchers.

The LHUMAIN research unit subscribes to a framework of "interconnecting"[1] seeking to better understand our complex studies by transcending binary oppositions. While binaries help to highlight the specificities of each theory and help researchers categorize their research, it often hinders discussion. Encounter and interconnecting, beyond contexts and languages, can foster decentering, innovation, and intellectual fertility, opening up new, hybrid, rhizomatic ways of thinking and acting. I have personally followed this path when, over twenty years ago, I sought to put multilingual contexts in France (""allophone" students) into perspective by comparing them with other contexts in Canada (immigrant students, students in French immersion classes, or students in Francophone minority settings). I experienced a reversal of perspectives and viewpoints, as each context was shaped by different histories, with distinct visions and practices in education, language, and policy. Rather than polarizing my research, this experience allowed me to reconsider our taken-for-granted assumptions within our own contexts in France. A few years later, when Gail Prasad, then a doctoral student with Normand Labrie, Jim Cummins, Diane Farmer and Enrica Piccardo in Toronto (OISE/UT), came to Montpellier for a PhD research fellowship with us, I once again experienced a mise en abyme: we struggled to understand each other regarding certain concepts such as multilingualism/ plurilingualism, translanguaging, didactics, pedagogy, critical approaches, and many more. We could have opposed each other to assert our positions,

to claim and defend our viewpoints. Instead, we chose to question, contextualize, historicize, understand, and build bridges and connections to innovate. This shared experience originally led Gail and I to invite researchers from around the world working on multilingualism in education to share their life stories and their relationships working with notions of *language* and *languages*. Among the universal elements observed in the different research topics, we identified that the indignation (Moscovici) all researchers have more or less experienced throughout their linguistic journeys—whether in school, family, or various institutions (social, professional, religious)—was often a key motivating factor in their decision to study these topics. Their interest in multilingualism and teaching-learning stemmed from a scientific commitment that is necessarily subjective and contextually grounded. From these different biographies emerged a publication with Cambridge University Press: *Multilingualism and Education. Researchers' Pathways and Perspectives* (Prasad, Auger, and Le Pichon 2022).

During the PLURENSA conference, I deeply wanted to establish a community that would go beyond a single meeting or a book publication, offering genuine, in-person encounters within a living space for dialogue at University of Montpellier Paul-Valéry (France). The challenge was significant: most speakers spoke different languages, with no single language standing out as an obvious choice. We decided that oral presentations would be delivered in a language in which the speaker felt comfortable, while visual presentations would be in a different language to maximize accessibility for the audience. Furthermore, all languages and semiotic presentation modalities that facilitated comprehension were welcomed. The audience experienced a 'moment' between languages and translanguaging during their exchanges. Colleagues, students, and doctoral researchers not only translated but also translanguaged to convey, read, and understand what I hope is also made accessible in this issue of our LHUMAINE journal. Thus, in the very form of this journal, the texts are often presented in different languages and are also available in another form—oral presentations and discussions accompanied by slides in another language, accessible online[2]. The slides, oral presentations, and LHUMAINE journal together create a semiotic universe and a reflective space that, we hope, encourages decentering through languages and diverse discursive modalities. This endeavor was driven by a commitment to coherence between our vision of multilingualism and research-both in substance and form.

It was also an effort toward the interconnecting we chose to foster during out conference and in the journal issue that follows from it.

We decided to first give the floor to Li Wei to present a concept that has been relatively under-theorized in the French-speaking world (see also Daniel Véronique's contribution in this issue), namely *translanguaging*. In his two-part paper, ***Translanguaging et alternance codique : quelle est la différence ?*** and ***Le Translanguaging en tant que méthode***, Li Wei clearly outlines the distinction between code-switching and translanguaging. Code-switching is a well-established field in French-speaking research, making it particularly interesting to explore what this new concept of *translanguaging* brings to the discussion. Conceptualized as a process of meaning-making and sense-

making, *translanguaging* focuses on how speakers mobilize their linguistic, cognitive, and semiotic resources to create meaning. A key feature of this approach is its systematic inclusion of gestures, body posture, facial expressions, spatial arrangement, and typographic styles in linguistic analysis, as well as its rejection of strict divisions between linguistic codes and other communication modalities. According to Li Wei, the added value of this approach is that while code-switching analysis reveals how different linguistic codes are used, *translanguaging* falls within the framework of social semiotics, aiming to transcend "the boundaries between named languages and between linguistic and non-linguistic signs." He also sees it as a way to decolonize methodology, moving beyond traditional approaches that identify and separate elements into different named languages. Instead, *translanguaging* shifts the focus to meaning-making through the assembly of diverse elements. The specific methods used by Li Wei include the analysis of moments through Looking, Listening, Talking, and Thinking (LLTT), a framework developed by Li & Zhu (2013, p. 520).

In my response, ***La reliance comme épistémologie, le recyclage comme méthodologie pour aborder la question du plurilinguisme dans l'enseignement-apprentissage***, I explain that the goal of the discussion is not to set up an opposition between translanguaging and code-switching/language mixing, nor to engage in polemics over divergent epistemological positions underlying these concepts-such as qualitative versus qualitative approaches or decolonial versus colonial perspectives. The objective is to move beyond binary divides and to acknowledge History, much like in intercultural approaches, in order to engage with these notions in context—socially and historically situated-so as to better understand them and, perhaps, to connect and rework them within a paradigm of singular universals, where researchers grapple with the realities of languages, language practices, discourse, and their teaching.

Proposing interconnecting as an epistemological anchor enables connections with circulating approaches, such as *plurilingual approaches* or *translanguaging*, fostering innovation through "self-re-organization" (Morin 2005). Interconnecting also allows for the articulation of data collection and analysis across different educational contexts, in order to examine *translanguaging* today as an active process of interconnecting—moving from trans- (crossing from one language to another, going beyond languages) toward pan- (considering language and linguistic practices as a whole). This shift helps to account more precisely for human linguistic experience within a panlinguistic perspective (Auger 2021, 2023), which supports the connection between teaching-learning contexts through languages. The reflection concludes by exploring the methodological and pedagogical pathways that these interconnecting-driven activities bring forth: the linguistic diamond and the recycling of language and cultural practices to sustain a learning ecosystem through languages, serving the needs of learners.

Jasone Cenoz, in her paper written in Spanish and later translated into French *Translangaging et langues minoritaires*, adopts the notion of translanguaging by contextualizing it within the Basque Country, where Euskara, Spanish, and English are part of the multilingual education system in this autonomous community of Spain. The

majority of students are enrolled in a language maintenance program designed for speakers whose family language is Basque, with Basque as the language of instruction and Spanish taught as a subject. This model now also includes a large number of students whose first language is Spanish, as well as many migrant children who speak other languages at home. The situation of Basque remains vulnerable, especially considering that Euskara is predominantly used in formal learning contexts rather than in everyday interactions. Given the differences in status and number of speakers between Basque and Spanish, translanguaging risks further reinforcing the majority language. Thus, Cenoz & Gorter (2017, 2021) distinguish between pedagogical translanguaging, which aligns with Williams' work and integrates multiple languages into classroom activities, and spontaneous translanguaging among multilingual individuals, where linguistic boundaries remain fluid. To ensure that translanguaging remains sustainable in the classroom, Cenoz, following Fishman, advocates for the pedagogical organization of classroom spaces in a way that allows the minority language to "breathe."

In ***Un apport clé de l'enseignement des langues minoritaires à l'éducation : les enjeux cognitifs de l'alternance des langues***, Marisa Cavalli raises the question of the possible "submersion" of students whose family language is not Basque. For the author, "the question of the quantum of time allocated to languages in school" remains fundamental and applies to all linguistic minorities. She explains that in the Aosta Valley, the implementation of a "didactic contract regarding languages" has been proposed to ensure their equitable use: dedicated spaces for a single language versus multilingual spaces where students choose and mix languages for their work. Marisa Cavalli makes two major observations. First, it is essential to avoid treating non-language subjects as battlegrounds for foreign or minority languages, when the real challenge lies in achieving better disciplinary understanding through the study of language itself. Second, research shows that learners who struggle in academic subjects, particularly in transitioning from concrete to abstract thinking, perform better when instructions are given in French—even though French is most often a second and minority language for these students. These findings suggest that students read more attentively, engage in more analytical thinking, and ultimately understand concepts better when they are prompted to reflect using less familiar languages. The value of using new languages in learning is reaffirmed, further invigorating discussions on "the conditions for alternating languages in conceptual construction, ensuring that their reciprocal interaction benefits both the acquisition of disciplinary concepts and linguistic development itself."

Fred Genesee, in his plenary lecture titled ***The Relevance of the CLIL Approach for Diverse Students***, which has been summarized as ***Introduction aux travaux scientifiques de Fred Genesee*** (Nathalie Auger), demonstrates that CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) programs should be made more widely accessible to all students, including children with developmental disorders and those who speak languages other than those taught in schools. The author has specifically focused on three developmental disorders: language impairments, Down syndrome, and autism spectrum disorder. His numerous rigorously conducted studies reveal that these

students do not perform worse in CLIL programs compared to monolingual programs. On the contrary, in reading and mathematics, CLIL settings can enable them to develop stronger skills. Building on these findings, the focus then shifts to the quality of educational programs, which remains the key determinant of their impact on learners. The studies conducted by Fred Genesee at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington emphasize the need to inform professionals, parents, and educational authorities in order to promote the inclusion of so-called "at-risk" students in bilingual programs. He also proposes various reflections on how to implement high-quality curricula that allow all children to succeed under the best possible conditions. These conditions are essential and paramount, especially for students identified as "at risk."

Laurent Gajo, in his article ***Between Multilingual Normality and Monolingual Norm: Toward a new perspective, toward new questions***, responds to Fred Genesee by raising a series of questions from the margins of bi-plurilingualism toward the monolingual center. Daring to question in this way allows us to ask what constitutes a "true monolingual", whether monolingualism may be detrimental to certain children, and whether monolingual education is truly suitable for all young learners. This bold shift in perspective opens the door to considering new approaches for data collection and analysis. While it is relatively simple to measure lexical skills, it is much more challenging to assess plurilingual competence in action—to capture how students reformulate in one or multiple languages and leverage their plurilingualism to enhance their understanding of disciplinary concepts. It now seems crucial to pursue new lines of research that may be less aligned with the expectations of teachers, who primarily aim to enrich students' vocabulary, correct their pronunciation, or develop their grammatical skills. However, these new research directions remain fundamental to addressing contemporary challenges: navigating multilingual spheres that require the development of a fluid plurilingual and pluricultural competence, breaking away from the deeply ingrained notion that languages should be used in strictly compartmentalized contexts.

In ***Pedagogical Translanguaging: Assessing the Credibility of Theoretical Claims***, Jim Cummins proposes distinguishing between two versions of the concept of *translanguaging*. According to the author, the pedagogical implications of both approaches are quite similar, but their theoretical foundations differ significantly. The Unitary Theory of *Translanguaging* (UTT), supported by Ofelia García and her colleagues, argues that a bilingual's linguistic system is unified and undifferentiated, and that languages have no cognitive or linguistic reality. This claim leads its proponents to reject other theoretical concepts, such as academic norms, code-switching, plurilingualism, additive bilingualism, and the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP), which posits cross-linguistic transfer. Jim Cummins, however, incorporates these notions into what he calls the Interlinguistic Theory of *Translanguaging* (CTT) while also recognizing fluid boundaries in the linguistic registers used by speakers. The author conducts a detailed analysis based on three criteria to assess the legitimacy of UTT's theoretical claims: empirical credibility, logical coherence, and consequential validity. Through numerous examples and bibliographic references, he highlights contradictions between the claims of UTT and CTT on these three levels and warns of potential risks for classroom teaching. He emphasizes that CTT-type pedagogical practices have

demonstrated positive impacts on marginalized students since the mid-1980s.

Jean-Claude Beacco explains, in his response **Quelques réactions à la communication de Jim Cummins (Université de Toronto)**, that the conception developed by Cummins is widely shared among researchers in Europe (a point later confirmed in Daniel Véronique's article). Beacco reminds us that racist, colonialist, and neoliberal critiques directed at scholars conducting research with marginalized populations also exist in Europe, but in a much less polarized way compared to the United States, where the concept of "race" plays a central role in societal discourse. For Jean-Claude Beacco, these discussions are valuable because they allow for a re-examination of familiar concepts, such as that of the "multilingual classroom". He argues that problematizing the notion of a "multilingual classroom" helps to bring greater attention to the diversity of sociolinguistic contexts and the specific objectives of different educational programs. Thus, a distinction can be made between regular classrooms that welcome allophone students—whether they have recently arrived in France or were born in France but speak languages other than French at home—and specialized classrooms designed specifically to support newly arrived allophone students. In these different types of classrooms, the linguistic composition can range from high homogeneity to significant heterogeneity, depending on the trajectories of the students' families. Moreover, the educational goals of these classes are fundamentally different, and the pedagogical activities implemented are highly specific to each setting. These issues are crucial for understanding the necessarily plural forms of multilingual education.

In their article ***Idéologies linguistiques sans fondement : une brève histoire de la théorie du translanguaging,*** Jeff MacSwan and Kellie Rolstad also denounce ideologies that they argue lack a theoretical foundation, particularly concerning the concept of *translanguaging*. The text first addresses the issue of ideologies, emphasizing that they are not exclusive to researchers. The authors cite the "bad English theory", which, according to them, is based on normative statements about linguistic correctness that are not—and cannot be—grounded in linguistic facts. Their research has demonstrated that bilingual *code-switching* follows structured rules. The encapsulation of language-specific components within a bilingual's grammar prevents the rules of one language from altering structures in another in ways unsupported by linguistic data. Their body of work has thus served as a foundation for challenging deficit-based conceptions of language mixing, including the notion of "bad English." However, the authors argue that this research, which initially helped shed light on linguistic ideologies, has since been challenged under the influence of postmodernism and deconstructionism. They explain that these perspectives have denied minorities the right to claim their languages, since languages, according to this view, no longer exist, a stance they believe has serious implications for civil rights advocacy. The original theory of *translanguaging*, which was initially rooted in *code-switching* research, has thus evolved and, according to the authors, led to accusations against those who do not adhere to deconstructionism—a shift they see as being at odds with empirical research.

In his response, **On plurilingual practices: A French perspective**, Daniel Véronique

highlights both points of convergence and divergence between Anglophone and Francophone research on plurilingualism and multilingualism. According to the author, multilingualism in Francophone research has led to two key outcomes: first, a critical reassessment of structuralist analyses of language contact, and second, the advocacy for alternative theoretical approaches to provide in-depth analyses of issues related to multilingual education. Over the past 50 years, European and French perspectives on plurilingualism and multilingualism have contributed to the development of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), language awareness initiatives, and various projects exploring real linguistic practices, representations of multilingualism, and linguistic diversity in Europe. The concepts of "bilingual language practices," "interlect," and "plurilingual and pluricultural competence" are also closely tied to the contexts in which they emerged, such as the relationship between bilingual representations and bilingual discourse, creole languages, and pedagogical situations. The author notes that France remains reluctant to adopt a policy that promotes its regional languages, yet it has been compelled to define a more liberal linguistic policy in overseas territories than in mainland France. Conceptualizing plurilingualism and multilingualism from Francophone perspectives leads to terminologies quite similar to those that gave rise to the concept of *translanguaging* in Anglophone researches. However, due to the autonomous development and earlier establishment of Francophone researches in this field, the notion of *translanguaging* has had little influence on Francophone studies on plurilingualism and multilingualism.

Ingrid Gogolin, Hanne Brandt, Nora Dünkel, Thorsten Klinger, Kseniia Pershina, Birger Schnoor, Anouk Ticheloven, and Irina Usanova, in **Multiple Literacy Development over Time – A Longitudinal Study from Germany**, present the findings of a large-scale study (*The MEZ-Study*) conducted in Germany. Germany has been a major destination for migration since 1945, and this study, which tracked literacy skills in various languages among over 2,000 students over a period of three years, provides highly valuable insights for the scientific community. The collected data include reading and writing skills in at least two and up to four languages per participant, along with detailed general information on factors affecting linguistic development and performance. The analytical tools used are thus innovative and are expected to be highly useful for future research. As for the findings, the study highlights relationships between linguistic, personal, and contextual factors that influence the acquisition of multilingual competencies. Notably, the inclusion of students whose only family language was German revealed that multilingual settings also benefit these students, demonstrating the broader relevance of multilingual education.

Daniel Coste, in his response ***Un projet de recherche exceptionnel à plus d'un titre (À propos de la présentation faite par Ingrid Gogolin***), highlights the great quality of the project, which examines linguistic, personal, and contextual conditions and their interactions in relation to the development of young people's plurilingualism. Particular attention is given to the connection between multilingualism and other indicators of educational success, such as transition processes into employment. When comparing migration flows in France and Germany, it is important to keep in mind that, unlike France, Germany does not have a colonial past, which has likely facilitated the

development of various Hamburg-based projects on multilingualism. These range from the *PhyDiv* project, which explores the potential benefits of multilingual resources for understanding and constructing scientific concepts, to the MARE program, which investigates how plurilingual abilities, including minority migrant languages, might serve as an asset in the labor market. The MEZ study's findings significantly challenge—or even disprove—certain interpretations of PISA assessments, which suggest that lower academic performance is directly linked to the presence of students from migrant backgrounds. However, for Daniel Coste, these robust results are framed within a generally positive view of bi-/plurilingualism, which, he notes, could be somewhat doxical.

On this topic, in ***Le plurilinguisme est certes une réalité empirique mais aussi une idéologie linguistique***, Jean-Louis Chiss expands on the idea that, just like monolingualism, plurilingualism can also be ideological. This doxa is difficult to recognize as such, as it is based on an attested fact (the coexistence of multiple languages in the same context) and carries a projective dimension. However, it is interesting to observe that multilingualism tends to favor a dominant language: English. Furthermore, the argument of context is challenged in favor of a broader contextualization, which is essential for language didactics and linguistic policies. Jean-Louis Chiss expresses caution regarding the preservation and promotion of linguistic diversity, which, in his view, could conceal an ideological dimension of plurilingualism—a concept that was highly present in the 19th century through organic and vitalist conceptual metaphors. For Jean-Louis Chiss, contextualization is more than just situating language and culture in didactic frameworks. It also encompasses epistemology, praxeology, and axiology. "This pursuit of specificities, essential in any intellectual endeavor, cannot rely on the argument of context as a means to reject universality or to establish conditions of acceptability for discourses that have abandoned argumentation in favor of implementing a 'militant linguistics'" (Chiss, 2022: 98 et sv).

Sabine Ehrhart, in ***Les langues étrangères et les langues de contact : entre distance et proximité, un défi pour la didactique des langues***, responds to Jean-Louis Chiss by discussing diverse and specific contexts such as Luxembourg, New Caledonia, and Honduras. The author insightfully demonstrates that some current theoretical definitions and scientific terms do not align with the lived experiences of plurilingual speakers. To address this, she has proposed the term "multiplurilingual" or "multiplurilingualism" to describe the complex entanglement of languages and contexts that shapes classrooms in Luxembourg, capturing the interwoven nature of students' linguistic repertoires and the environments in which they operate. Furthermore, depending on the speakers, French may function as a second language for many students, a native, grandparental, or family language for others, and a foreign language for yet others. This pedagogical differentiation calls for a language teaching awareness, described as "a heightened awareness of what happens when teaching students with such diverse trajectories", which is essential for teachers. The author also revisits terms such as "heritage language", suggesting a literal interpretation that is not limited to migrant populations. With great humility, Sabine Ehrhart demonstrates that our observational filters and commonly used terminologies in one context may be imprecise

and unsuitable in another. “In this highly complex world, language didacticians are our travel companions. They can share their experiences with the places and people they have encountered, opening doors to universes that would otherwise remain inaccessible without their guidance.”

In ***Investiguer et enseigner (avec) les continua de bilittératie***, Nancy H. Hornberger presents her rich research trajectory on the framework of the continua of biliteracy, which explicitly aims at social justice and equity in research, teaching, curriculum development, and policy-making within multilingual contexts. This work began nearly 50 years ago with comparative ethnography in Philadelphia, later expanding to local, national, and international levels in the context of language education for immigrants, Indigenous communities, diasporic populations, and decolonization efforts—notably in South Africa, Sweden, Peru, and beyond. Key findings highlight the effectiveness of these approaches, showing that even monolingual English-speaking teachers have found ways to foster a sense of classroom community, motivating children to develop biliteracy skills through the interconnection of continua. This decolonial model acknowledges learners’ linguistic resources by facilitating information processing between home and non-home languages, integrating both abstract and non-abstract formulations, and exposing students to learning in informal and standardized linguistic varieties. “The continua of biliteracy and associated concepts—such as the ecology of language and voice, ideological/implementational spaces, the ethnography of language and education policies, ethnographic assessment and CoBi mapping, as well as anti-racist and decolonial pedagogies—help promote a culturally and linguistically diverse education that is socially just and equitable. They thus fulfill the purpose for which they were originally ‘imagined.’”

Jean-Paul Bronckart, in ***La diversité des langues en regard de l’unicité du langage***, responds and concludes the issue, offering his perspective as a psychologist in the field of educational sciences. For Bronckart, Nancy Hornberger’s approach is both similar to and distinct from the Teaching of Heritage Language and Culture programs implemented in the canton of Geneva and other Swiss cantons. Both share the idea of encouraging students to mobilize their familial linguistic resources while simultaneously supporting their integration into the school system of the canton, helping them develop competence in the local language. Bronckart then invites reflection on Saussure’s work, which explores the aspects of both unity and diversity in language. He does so by developing his own conceptualizations of language activity within the framework of socio-discursive interactionism, an approach that focuses on the interactive processes underpinning the organization and functioning of language. This approach is also concerned with the interactions that shape human behavior and psychological capacities. Inspired by Culioli’s work, which sought to construct a model of language activity integrating its various dimensions, Bronckart then raises the question of which elements in this model pertain to the specific and which to the generalizable. He ultimately discusses processes of a “translanguage” nature, which, for plurilingual speakers, involve developing awareness of aspects of other languages and linking these elements together to conceive “connections or even identities of a ‘translanguage’ order.”

[1]
__ « interconnecting » is our own translation of Edgar Morin’s (...) conception of “reliance” refering in French to the notion of “link work' or 'making links”. For Morin, we need a “theory of generalized interconnexion (bewtween science and citizens, between citizens, between separate knowledge. The suffixe “ing” reinforces the actions of the subjects toward interconnection. This concept also refers to the faculty of the mind, which is to articulate what is separate and to connect what is disjoint to distinguish forms or patterns without cutting them up, and to identify the patterns without cutting them up, and to identify the “thirds” or “binders” between them. is this not also what we now mean by the faculty of interconnecting? (Le Moigne 2008 lemoigne.pdf)

[2]
__ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqfxC3svTpWCsyR2VZCjagZCf-5xCf8fp