



International Languages Educators' Association

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ILEA Winter 2022 Institutional (Research Focus) Forum

Tuesday, March 22nd, 2022 (12 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.)

ZOOM link provided to members of ILEA.

Agenda and Guidelines

1. **Welcome and Introductions** - *please introduce yourself when logging in via the chat; you may free chat with microphone but once the meeting starts, please mute your microphone; use the chat box to signal that you have a question or comment on the agenda topic and Maria (Chair) will call on you*
2. **Research Purpose Forum** – Constantine will remind members of the shared drive of resources for institutional members which includes resources for promoting the benefits of language learning; explanation on how we chose the research focus of this year's Winter Forum
3. Research Forum Presentations – please see presentation descriptions that follow on this agenda
4. Question Period
5. Open Meeting – members may share information or ask each other questions pertaining to program offerings
6. Plans for Spring Forum 2022



Presenter #1: Jeff Bale, University of Toronto

Topic: Language, Race, and Regulating Difference: The Heritage Languages Program in Ontario, 1977–1987

Abstract

This research project explores the contradictions of multilingual schools in officially bilingual Canada. Heritage-language education policies provide a unique vantage point: they sit squarely at the heart of tensions between official bilingualism as an *imagined ideal* for Canadian national identity, and the *lived realities* of multilingual, racialized students in Canadian schools.

As many of you will know—and some of you may have experienced—no sooner did the Heritage Languages Program appear in Ontario in 1977 than it became a political battleground over the next decade for contesting the relationship between language, race, and public education. The policy triggered complicated questions about which languages – *whose* languages – should be used and taught at school? To what ends? Above all, who gets to decide? This study focuses on the first 10 years of the HLP and the major conflicts over these questions.

In this presentation, I will share background on how the study has progressed, as well as some initial findings. But I am especially interested in learning about your experiences working with IL programs: to what extent to which these issues from the late 1970s and early 1980s resonate with your work today, or continue to shape how International Languages the people who speak them are integrated into school life?

Bio

Jeff Bale is Associate Professor of Language and Literacies Education at OISE, University of Toronto. His research applies political-economic, anti-racist, and critical perspectives to educational language policy and teacher education. He currently holds a Humboldt Fellowship for Experienced Researchers to study *Critical Perspectives on Teacher Education and Linguistic Diversity in Migration Societies*, hosted by Prof. Dr. Yasemin Karakaşoğlu at the Universität Bremen, and was recently awarded an Insight Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to support his ongoing work on *Language, Race, and Regulating Difference: The Heritage Languages Program in Ontario, 1977-1987*.

He is lead author of *More Than Just Good Teaching: Centering Multilingualism and Countering Racism in Canadian Teacher Education* (forthcoming with Multilingual Matters), and co-editor with Sarah Knopp of *Education and Capitalism: Struggles for Learning and Liberation* (Haymarket, 2012). His academic work is rooted in the decade he spent teaching English as a Second Language in urban secondary schools in the United States.

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Presenter #2: Lesya Granger, University of Ottawa

Topic: Plurilingualism in IL: Activity or approach? (*Perspectives of Ontario School Board Administrators on Fostering Plurilingualism in Secondary Level International Languages Classrooms*)

Abstract

The findings of this award-winning Master's thesis are relevant and important to the work of Ontario Continuing Education IL administrators and their teachers because the research identifies areas of both knowledge and needs related to plurilingualism which is a notion that is foundational to IL in general and to the revised 2016 IL secondary curriculum specifically.

IL educators encounter the term plurilingualism at conferences, in Ontario Ministry of Education and professional publications, and in Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) resources. Yet fundamental questions for practitioners – both teachers and administrators – remain and need to be addressed. This research both uncovers administrators' questions and attempts to provide some direction to answering them. Some of these focus on the "what": What is the difference between plurilingualism and multilingualism? What does a plurilingual education and plurilingual pedagogy look like? - while many focus on the "how": How can plurilingualism be enacted, applied, or connected to the IL classroom? How can an inquiry and growth mindset help our teachers to incorporate language awareness and intercultural understanding into their teaching? How are students' identities brought into the learning process through plurilingualism, technology, and the IL connection to a broader community?

This study bridges theory and practice by proposing first steps towards the clarification and application of concepts and practices that align with areas of need identified by IL language teachers in recent research by Ambrosio (2014), Aravossitas & Oikonomakou (2018), and Ascenzi-Moreno et al., (2016). It also gives administrators a voice in a field where their perspectives have not been adequately represented. The voices of 17 IL administrators from across Ontario have now been added to the broader academic discourse on plurilingualism. We will look at their expressed need to learn about plurilingualism-inspired classroom practices in order to guide and train IL teachers, to foster innovation in the immersion context of IL classrooms, and to advocate for IL and plurilingualism in the broader school system.

Bio

Lesya Granger recently retired from her position as the International Languages program manager at the French Catholic school board in Ottawa, where for eight years she oversaw the work and professional development of her team of over 350 language educators and administrators who provided 5000 elementary students and 400 secondary students each year with the opportunity to become literate in one of 27 languages. Lesya also contributed to IL as Chair of IL at CESBA and as a consulting colleague to the OME's French language branch on the development of the revised 2016 IL secondary Curriculum.

In 2020, Lesya completed her second M.A. at the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa with a concentration in Societies, Cultures and Languages. Her thesis on IL has been awarded the Canada-wide Master's research award by the Language and Literacy Researchers of Canada. Lesya's research focuses on plurilingual approaches to second language education, and her work of the past few years focuses on language teacher education, innovative pedagogies and the inclusion of heritage and international language education in the school system, as well as implementing task-based language teaching and the action-oriented approach. She is a collaborating member of EducLang at the University of Ottawa and is active in numerous national and international academic and professional education associations.

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We will also have a brief visit and chat from the following presenters should they be able to be present while attending a conference – extended description follows:

Presenters: Shelley Taylor and Ana García-Allén, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario

Description:

Underlying the Council of Europe's (2001) notion of "plurilingual competence" is the premise that plurilinguals' prior linguistic and cultural knowledge form an interrelated repertoire, which plurilinguals combine "with their general competences and various strategies to accomplish tasks" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 28). Seen thus, learners of Spanish and other foreign languages (FLs) and second languages draw on all the languages and language varieties they know, and prior cultural knowledge (i.e., their pluriculturalism) when learning new languages; that is, they draw on their multicompetence (Cook, 2016). Instructors can valorize learner multicompetence by adopting "plural" pedagogical approaches that involve several varieties of languages or cultures. Candelier, Camilleri Grima, Castelloti, de Pietro, Lörinez, Meissner, Schroder-Sura & Noguero (2007) refer to this approach as "pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures" (p. 7). This culturally/linguistically sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2017) approach to L2/FL teaching fosters language awareness (Taylor, Despaigne & Faez, 2018) and intercomprehension (Hufeisen, 2021), and challenges monolingual ideologies that hold that languages must remain separate, do not allow translation as an activity, and may stigmatize language variation (Cummins, 2008); however, plural approaches do not mesh well with all instructors' beliefs about 'good teaching.' To some, they fly in the face of traditional orthodoxy about 'keeping languages separate' and are tantamount to 'time off task'. Greater understanding of superdiversity, intersectionality, and the role of plurilinguals' multicompetences (Cook, 2016; Jessner, 2017) is needed, especially since questions of 'why?' and 'how?' remain. As such, the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) of the Council of Europe organized two blended workshops on developing teacher competences for pluralistic approaches to L2/FL teaching that my co-PI Arina Danielyan from Vanadzor State University in Armenia, and I attended in 2021 and 2022. The present proposal relates to notions introduced in the workshop that we, along with our co-PI Ana García-Allén (Western University) will actualize and document.

Our primary goal is to introduce Spanish and Italian university instructors in Canada, and EFL university instructors in Armenia, to competences that will enable them to orchestrate plural approaches to teaching. One competence that we will address involves distinguishing between different discourses about language; discourses that may fall along the knowledge/stereotype continuum of beliefs about (stigmatized) language varieties. A necessary first step for instructors to gain that competence, but they must also gain competence in orchestrating and managing teaching/learning conditions that draw on plural approaches. To illustrate, while focused on teaching a specific target language (TL), FL instructors at the university level can also inform learners of the value of drawing on their current metalinguistic, metacultural and metacommunicative competences to learn the TL (rather than instructors ignoring the other languages that students know or, in some circumstances, forbidding their use in the FL classroom). Instructors can motivate learners by valorizing what learners already know (e.g., heritage languages; other FLs), and showing them how to draw on that knowledge to support their TL learning. The second competence involves learning how to design, implement, reflect on, and improve plural approaches to FL teaching that are context- and participant-specific.

The short-term objectives of this study are to develop instructor competence in understanding of the value of plural approaches to FL teaching, and in orchestrating plural approaches to FL instruction. The long-term objective is for the instructors participating in this study to become convinced of the purpose and value of the change process that plural approaches entail. The study also compares institutional support for FL teaching/learning in EFL as compared to in other FLs. The methodology adopted is mixed methods research and a three-phase participatory action research design.



What is ILEA??

- an association of educators promoting the importance of first/heritage and additional/international language learning
- institutional members include school boards across Ontario that deliver programs in international and indigenous languages at the elementary, secondary and adult levels
- participant in the Curriculum Forum of the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Teachers' Federation
- memberships include exchange organizations, consulates, embassies, faculties at universities and other institutions involved in language and culture teaching and learning
- supporter to teaching staff and administrative staff of language programs across Ontario
- bridge to other associations across Canada and worldwide
- alliance member within the "Language Alliance" that advocates for language education together with other associations in English, French, International, Indigenous Languages

