Editorial

Piotr Romanowski

The nature of multilingualism is complex and multifaceted, and it is no wonder that it is approached by scholars active in the fields of applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and education to name but a few from a wide array of disciplines. As much as multilingualism is a common phenomenon globally, there is a lot of variance in providing a comprehensive definition of the notion. However, an interest in individuals and communities that use a number of languages seems to be the unifying pivot in research. Consequently, a ‘multilingual’ is a person who has the ability to use more than two languages, either separately or in various degrees of code-mixing. So, who are the present-day multilinguals? Multilingual speakers might be immigrants who speak their first language(s) as well as the language(s) of their host countries (e.g., Poles in the United Kingdom or Cubans in the United States). In other cases, multilinguals can be users of a minority indigenous language (e.g., Basque in Spain or Aboriginal languages in Australia) who need to learn the dominant language. Other than that, languages are also learnt as they spread internationally, and it is believed that they open doors to economic and social opportunities, as is the case of English—the most widespread language, which is also very common as a school subject and as a language of instruction in schools and universities worldwide.

Research conducted in the field of multilingualism has mushroomed recently, and it is one of the most intensely investigated areas of linguistics nowadays. The omnipresence of multilingualism in private and public interactions is unravelled worldwide. Some of the most researched areas include: multilingual education, multimodality and new technologies, multilingual
language processing, the cognitive outcomes of multilingualism, the relationship between language and thought in multilingual speakers, multilingualism as a social construct, multilingual identities, multilingual practices.

Given its growing importance in modern society, multilingualism has increasingly attracted attention in applied linguistics, as can be seen from the numerous titles of research papers, books, and academic conferences using the term ‘multilingualism.’ This phenomenon is also mirrored in the establishing of the Journal of Multilingual Theories and Practices, which is an attempt to capture some of these developments, and thus serving as a response to a growing need for new publication outlets that would allow for the dissemination of research in the field.

As the editor, I have the immense pleasure of launching the Journal of Multilingual Theories and Practices and sharing the inaugural volume with a wider scholarly community and society at large. This volume is the first part of the first issue for 2020, and a second volume will follow shortly. JMTP is a venue that solicits scientific contributions on the study of multilingualism in all its likely manifestations. The journal welcomes manuscripts from diverse research and language communities so as to provide rich insight into the phenomenon of multilingualism. The disciplinary spectrum may include linguistics, applied linguistics, psychology, neuroscience, sociology, and education. Topics of interest include but are not limited to: early bi-/tri-/multilingualism, bi-/multilingual language development, education, competencies, literacy, identity, communities, work environments, later-learned additional languages, language maintenance and attrition.

The overriding goal of this peer-reviewed international journal is to showcase diverse perspectives and methodologies in the research of multilingualism. Studies published in the journal are motivated theoretically, focused on significant issues, and rigorous in both methods and argumentation. Manuscripts based on both theoretical and empirical investigations will be considered. A diligent peer review process ensures that each issue meets expectations for state-of-the-art, original research that furthers understanding of its subject.

In aiming at establishing this venture, I am most grateful to my colleagues from MultiLingNet and all the MultiLingNet Community, whose constant support I have received since 2017 when we first met in Portugal during the International Conference on Multilingualism and Multilingual Education. This journal grew out of our enduring passion and shared interest for the subject of multilingualism. I am also especially indebted to all members of the Editorial Board who, with their immense expertise, encouraged me to continue my efforts during the early stages of the initiative. Their affiliations represent 58 universities located in 39 countries on six continents. Above all, it has been the unfailing support, encouragement, and understanding from
Elizabeth Lanza (Oslo), Li Wei (London), Mila Schwartz (Haifa), Ulrike Jessner (Innsbruck), David Singleton (Dublin), Enlli M. Thomas (Bangor), Małgosia Machowska-Kościak (Dublin), Neva Ćebron (Koper), Ioannis Karras (Corfu), Martin Guardado (Edmonton) and Michał Wilczewski (Warsaw). Last but not least, thanks are also due to Janet Joyce, the Managing Director of Equinox Publishing, who believed in me and made this project real.

With this inaugural volume of JMTP, it is my sincere intention to thank the first contributors for agreeing to participate in the launch of the journal, and sharing their thoughts and findings with us. I am specifically grateful to Ellen Bialystok (Toronto), John Edwards (Halifax), Ofelia García (New York), Ulrike Jessner (Innsbruck), Åsa Palviainen (Jyväskylä), David Singleton (Dublin), Christa Van der Walt (Stellenbosch), and their respective co-authors. I would also like to express my gratitude to Britta Hufeisen (Darmstadt) who has offered to write the Introduction. Finally, my sincere thanks go to all the reviewers, who, by sharing their thoughts and providing meticulous feedback, have contributed to the improvement of the overall quality of the first published articles.

It is my expectation that with the first volume of JMTP, we have managed to successfully respond to the needs of wider research communities. It is also worth reiterating that we hope subsequent issues of JMTP will serve as a forum of knowledge exchange and will impact the better understanding of multilingualism.