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Multilingualism and Beyond: Implications for Education

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The JLE editors explore multilingual perspectives in language learning, education, and society, as compared with mono- and bilingual perspectives. The notion of a separate language system turned out to be far from today's multilingual communications. The approaches to multiple language learning have dramatically changed towards multilingualism. The editorial review aims to consider the potential of the field for the JLE.

Basic Terminology and Definitions: the JLE editors dwell upon the key terms applicable to the field of multilingualism, including multilingualism on its own, plurilingualism, bilingualism, multilinguality, polylingualism, metrolingualism, heteroglossia, and linguistic repertoire.

Research on Multilingualism and Beyond: in this section, the JLE readers can find a short review of the research publications on multilingualism, bilingualism, plurilingualism, and linguistic repertoire indexed in the Scopus database.

Conclusion: multilingualism as a research field has a perspective for the Journal of Language and Education. Multilingualism is a many-faceted field, developing rather fast. Research on multilingualism may enrich the scope of the JLE and attract new readers.

KEYWORDS

multilingualism, bilingualism, plurilingualism, linguistic repertoire, language learning.

INTRODUCTION

Increasing international communications and mass migration lead to a need for individual multilingualism (Cenoz & Genesee, 1998). Professionals and students need to be competent in languages. Acquiring second and additional languages has become an integral part of any high-quality education.

Multilingualism emerged as a turn in the field of third language acquisition (TLA). The first event that became the turning point dates back to 1999 when the First International Conference on Third Language Acquisition and Multilingualism was held in Austria.

Previously, there was no difference in approaches to the acquisition of a second language and "multiple acquisition" (Cenoz & Genesee, 1998). It gave rise to what is now called "multilingualism". Though, some authors believed that it is mono-

lingualism that was a norm. In the 1990s, the new multilingual norm was put forward as an alternative. Monolingualism from this perspective "means missing out on the benefits which L2 knowledge and use can confer through growing up bilingual or through formal learning of an L2" (Ellis, 2008, p. 316). The notion of a language system as a separate set of features proved to be insufficient in the environment where people acquire and use two or more languages. Moreover, not all bilingual methods are adaptable for multiple language learners (Aronin & Singleton, 2012).

Multilingualism can be defined as the acquisition and use of more than two languages. Bilingualism is often included in the concept of multilingualism as a specific case. This stand is shared by some prominent researchers of the field. Larissa Aronin and Britta Hufeisen maintain that multilingualism subsumes bilingualism (Aronin & Hufeisen, 2009).

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The field is rather dynamic. Multilingualism is considered to be a complex phenomenon (Vetter & Jessner, 2019) based on various theoretical backgrounds. They as well as ideologies behind multilingualism lead to heated discussions (Aronin, 2018). Summing up the theoretical backgrounds that multilingualism is based on, we may boil them down to sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmalinguistics, teaching and learning languages.

In addition, a string of terms is closely linked to multilingualism, including bilingualism, plurilingualism, polylingualism, metrolingualism, heteroglossia, language or linguistic repertoire, monolingualism, and others. Multilingualism is treated as “an umbrella term for linguistic diversity” (Vetter & Jessner, 2019, p.2).

Basic Terminology and Definitions

Bilingualism as a subset of multilingualism describes a proficiency in two languages. Bilinguals are able to productively use both languages.

Plurilingualism. Some time ago, Francophone research publications introduced one more term defining an individual attribute describing proficiency in several languages. It is synonymous to multilinguality.

Linguistic Repertoire. The linguistic repertoire is a sociolinguistic term defining, first, all linguistic varieties in a speech community, and second, linguistic identities and linguistic resources or means of speaking used by an individual in diverse communicative situations. The Council of Europe differentiates between language repertoire or otherwise defined as plurilingualism (an individual competence of those who can use more than one language) and multilingualism describing several languages applied within one territory¹.

The Council of Europe pays much attention to issues of reorganizing repertoires of migrants within their linguistic integration². In addition, the language teaching at large aims to enhance individual language repertoires, including the languages individuals already have in their repertoires.

Multilinguality is a biotic model possesses inextricability and interdependability (Aronin & Singleton, 2012).

Polylingualism is a variation of multilingualism. In most contexts, polylinguals speak five or more languages. We may define polylingualism is a special case of multilingualism.

Metrolingualism as a field is not established, with only 38 search results in the Scopus database. Metrolingualism came into being from multilingualism, defining the ways people of mixed identities express them through languages. The focus is “not so much on language systems as on languages as emergent from contexts of interaction” (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010, p.240).

Heteroglossia defines the coexistence of distinct varieties within a single language. The term was coined by the Russian literary theorist M. Bakhtin in 1934.

Monolingualism (also *monoglottism* or *unilingualism*) describes the condition of being able to speak one language. In some contexts, monolingualism refers to an educational policy of enforcing one national or official language.

Research on Multilingualism and beyond

To estimate the scope of the field in question, we searched the Scopus database, using the terminology given above. The results substantially overlapped, as many documents denote a few of the above terms as their keywords.

The keyword “multilingualism” was found in the titles, abstracts, or keywords of 12,806 documents as of June 19, 2023 (see Fig.1). The earliest publication indexed in the Scopus database came out in 1946. The spread of the documents ranges from 1 to 13 in the period between 1946-1995, then the number of publications rose from 31 to 94 from 1996 to 2002. In 2003, the number exceeded 100 publications (n=111), in 2005 it hit 207. From 2012 there were over 500 documents annually indexed in the Scopus database.

8,339 and 6,889 documents are attributed to Social Sciences and Arts & Humanities respectively. 2,772 publications came from psychology. 1,966, 1,459 and 1,334 documents were published in journals on medicine, neuroscience, and health professions respectively. The subject areas also cover nursing (n=548), computer science (n=514), and others.

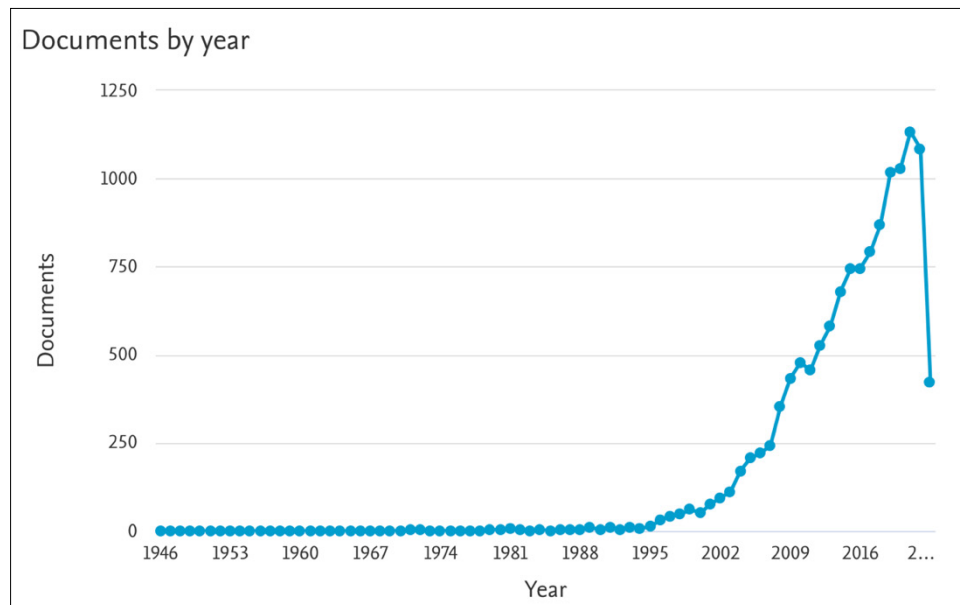
The most prolific authors writing on multilingualism are Ellen Balistok (77 publications), Albert Costa (61 publications), Tamar H. Gollan (52 publications), Jubin Abutalebi (46 publications), Jasone Ceboz (40 publications), and Jean Marc Dewaele (40 documents). Most publications came from the USA (n=3607), United Kingdom (n=1462), Canada (n=981), Germany (n=877), and Spain (n=857). The search results include articles (74.4 %), book chapters (9.4 %), review (6.1 %), conference papers (3.7 %), books (2.5 %), and editorials (1.4 %).

¹ Council of Europe Portal. Integration Linguistique des Migrants Adultes (ILMA). Language repertoire. Accessed June 20, 2023. <https://www.coe.int/de/web/lang-migrants/repertoire-language>

² Little, D. (2012). The linguistic integration of adult migrants and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Language Policy Unit. DGII – Education Department. Council of Europe. Accessed 19, 2023. <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016802fc1ca>

Figure 1

Research on Multilingualism: Breakdown by Year



Note. Source: Scopus Database as of June 19, 2023

The top cited articles on multilingualism are “Bilingualism, aging, and cognitive control: Evidence from the Simon task” (Bialystok et al., 2004) with 1,083 citations, “The language experience and proficiency questionnaire (LEAP-Q): Assessing language profiles in bilinguals and multilinguals” (Marian et al., 2007) with 1,063 citations, and “Moment analysis and translanguaging space: Discursive construction of identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain” (Wei, 2011) cited 926 times.

As for the recently published research on multilingualism, they range from language anxiety (AL-Qadri et al., 2023), multilingualism and multiculturalism in teacher education (Baumgart, 2023), multilingualism for pluralizing knowledge (Droz, 2023), managing multilingualism in a tourist areas (Ferenčík & Bariová, 2023) to assessing language profiles in bilinguals and multilinguals (Marian et al., 2007), language awareness pedagogy (Pfeffer, 2023), multilingualism in health emergency learning (Utunen et al., 2023), the language ideologies of multilingual nannies (Vessey & Nicolai, 2023), multilingual learning and cognitive restructuring (Wang & Wei, 2023), transformative pedagogy through translanguaging and co-learning (Wei, 2023).

Bilingualism

The search on “bilingualism” in the Scopus database resulted in 11,168 documents as of June 19, 2023. The oldest indexed publications date back to 1923. The field began to constantly rise, starting from the early 2000s from about 50 publications a year to over 900 in 2022 and 2023 (See Fig.2). The most abundant authors include Ellen Bialystok (153 publications) and Albert Costa (81 publications). Most

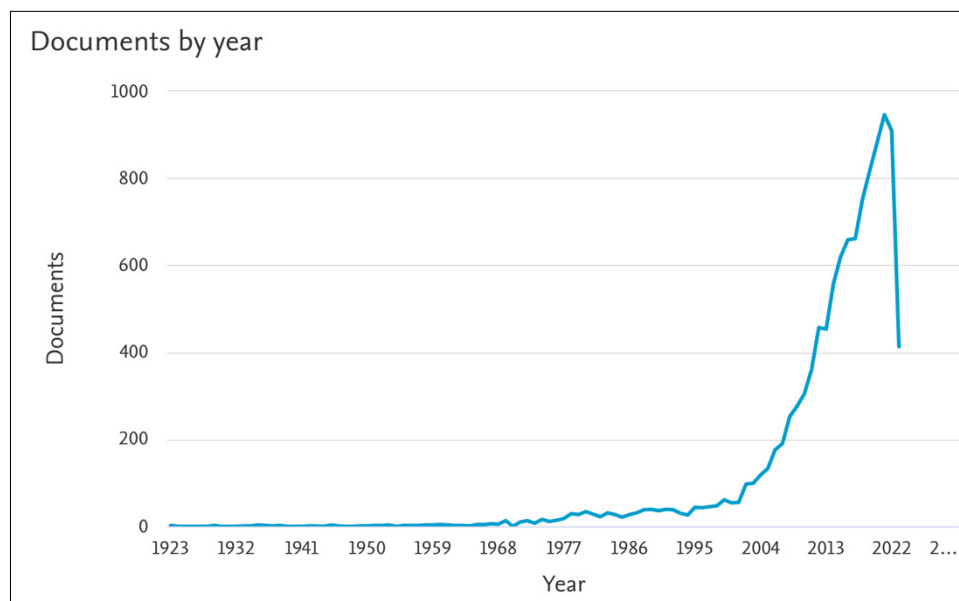
documents are authored by researchers affiliated in the USA (n=3,674), the UK (n=1,281), and Canada (n=1,110). The top sources are the *Bilingualism* (n=408), the *International Journal of Bilingualism* (n=353), and the *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (n=338).

The most highly cited publications on bilingualism cover “Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education” (García & Wei, 2013) with 1,626 citations, “Linguistic interdependence and the educational development of bilingual children” (Cummins, 1979) cited 1,615 times, and “Language style as audience design” (Bell, 1984) with 1,364 citations.

The recent publications on bilingualism research bilingualism in infancy and toddlerhood (Rocha-Hidalgo & Barr, 2023; Schott et al., 2023), bilingualism in the education of deaf learners (Simpson & Mayer, 2023), particular languages within the field of bilingualism (Polinsky, 2023), bilingual brain processes (Ding et al., 2023), and other aspects.

Plurilingualism

The Scopus search brought 640 documents (as of June 19, 2023) containing the term “plurilingualism” in their titles, summaries, or keywords published from 1981 to 2023. The yearly publication distribution is uneven, with only few in the 20th century and early 2000s per year. A constant rise started in 2012, whereas 2022 brought as many as 82 publications. Most of the documents are found in the subject areas of Social Sciences and Arts & Humanities. The most prolific authors have affiliations in Canada (104), Spain (102), and France (102). Other countries are represented less impressive. The most cited document in the search results

Figure 2*Research on Bilingualism: Breakdown by Year*

Note. Source: Scopus Database as of June 19, 2023

was published in 2006 and reached 500 citations (Coleman, 2006). The second and third most cited publications have 217 and 204 citations respectively (Lorenzo & et al., 2010; Flores, 2013). Only ten research papers in the search results exceed 100 citations and only twenty papers have more than 50 citations.

The studies on plurilingualism range from English-medium teaching in higher education (Coleman, 2006), relationships between multilingualism and neoliberalism (Flores, 2013), between plurilingualism and translanguaging (Garcia & Otheguy, 2020), plurilingualism and the panoply of linguistics (Marshall & More, 2018) to language motivation (Ushioda, 2006), plurilingualism and curriculum design (Piccardo, 2013). We also outline research relating to the monolingual mindset as an impediment to the development of plurilingual potential (Clyne, 2008).

The recent titles include pluralistic approaches in a comparative curriculum (Drachmann et al., 2023), plurilingual language policies in higher education (Duarte, 2022), separate language learning models for immigrant students (Resch et al., 2023), plurilingual and pluricultural competence scale (Galante, 2022), a plurilingual approach to ESP (Llanes & Cots, 2022), the multilingual agenda in EMI higher educational institutions (Preece, 2022) and others. The leading sources on linguistic repertoire encompass “

Linguistic Repertoire

The search for “linguistic repertoire” had 445 results as of June 19, 2023. The yearly distribution shows that there was a constant rise, starting after 2012 (See Fig.3). 321 (72.1 %) of

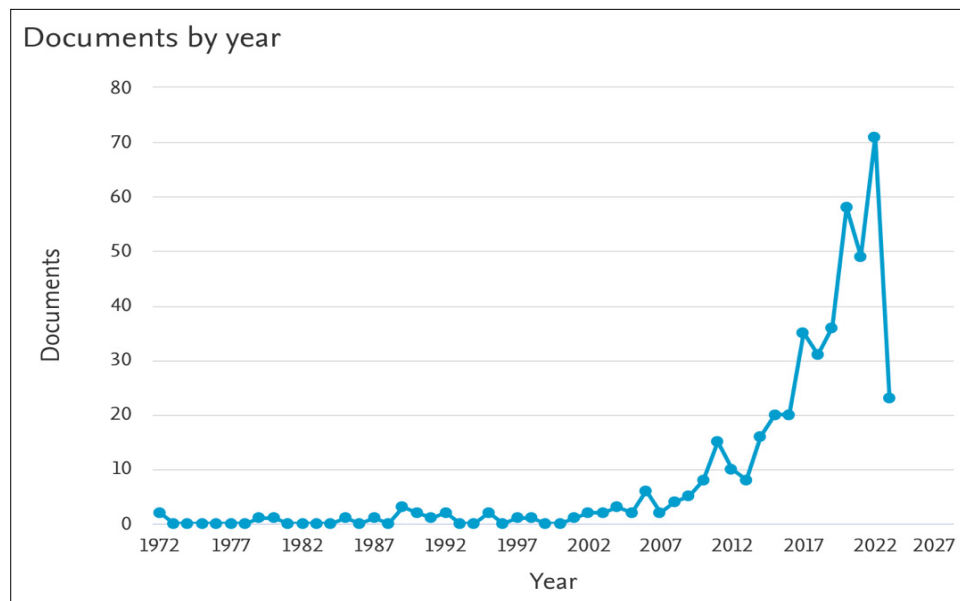
the results accounts for articles, with 84 (18.9 %) book chapters and 26 (5.8 %) reviews. The sources include the International Journal of Multilingualism, International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, Educational Linguistics, and International Journal of the Sociology of Language.

As for the field breakdown, 425 publications (51.4 %) belong to Social Sciences. 329 publications (38.9 %) came from Arts & Humanities. Jasone Cenoz and Durk Gorter were the most prolific researchers on the theme, with 12 and 11 articles each.

The top cited articles on linguistic repertoire include “Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages: A perspective from linguistics” (Otheguy, 2015) cited 798 times, “Linguistic landscape as symbolic construction of the public space: The case of Israel” (Ben-Rafael, 2006) with 428 citations, and “The linguistic repertoire revisited” (Busch, 2012) cited 285 times.

The recent publications on language repertoire embrace such research topics as linguistic repertoire of primary school learners (Mahadeo-Doorgakant, 2023), raced repertoires (Oostendorp, 2022), and a linguistic repertoire approach to postcolonial fiction (Smith, 2022).

We find that Figures 1-3 show the similar rising patterns, as the interrelations within the field segments are tight. It is almost impossible to delineate research papers on multilingualism from those on bilingualism, plurilingualism, monolingualism, and linguistic repertoire.

Figure 3*Research on Language Repertoire: Breakdown by Year*

Note. Source: Scopus Database as of June 19, 2023

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The Journal of Language and Education intends to focus more on research related to multilingualism. The dynamic and rapidly developing field is aligned with several overlapping segments of research, including monolingualism, bilingualism, plurilingualism, and linguistic repertoire. The JLE welcomes studies focused on educational implications of multilingual approaches in language learning as well as research on the ideologies and theories related to the field.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Lilia Raitskaya: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Software, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, other contribution.

Elena Tikhonova: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Software, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, other contribution.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

None declared.

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