Editorial

The central debate within this journal, and the Association to which it is allied (IALIC), can quite possibly be boiled down to two fundamental questions. First, what does it mean to speak a language? And secondly, how does learning another language relate to the idea of learning another 'culture'? In the discussions that have taken place around these questions over the past twenty years, one word which frequently crops up is the word 'competence'. Speaking another language is conventionally referred to as 'language competence'; communicating with someone from another 'culture' is conventionally referred to as 'intercultural (communicative) competence'.

The four papers in this open issue all address some aspects of these two questions, but in so doing, they also raise another couple of related questions. First, what is a 'language'? That is to say, is a language a self-contained system, which operates monologically at its different levels: phonology, morphology, syntax, pragmatics? Or should we conceive of a language as something that is constituted dialogically as a synthesis of the different linguistic systems which the different interlocutors ('real', or imagined as in literature) have at their disposal? Secondly, are the two 'capabilities', which I have set out above, part of a *single* interlinked system of competence (as perhaps posited in early sociolinguistic conceptualisations of communicative competence, such as Canale & Swain, 1980); or to what extent are they *separate* capabilities?

The notion of language competence has been always important in the pedagogical arm of intercultural communication, which spawned our journal. It is thirty years now since it began to dawn on us that there was something more to 'speaking a foreign language' than a narrow fluency in the standard variety of a culturally dominant language, and something more to 'teaching a foreign language' than either the relentless diet of translation tasks and grammatical exercises which constituted the daily gruel of my younger days, or the remorseless functionalism of communicative language tasks which comprised the bread-and-butter of later generations of language learners. This change in perspective is often traced back, at least in the UK, to Michael Byram's illuminating *Cultural studies in foreign language education*, published by Multilingual Matters in 1989. However, no sooner had the lid had been lifted on the idea of 'language' and 'language teaching' than the issue of what it meant to speak a language could no longer be contained. This spawned a range of more progressive ways of viewing language competence. The first great shibboleth to demolish was the idea of the 'native speaker', which oppressed language learners with its excessive notions of conformity to the

model of a standardised language. This 'privilege of the native speaker' was critiqued in a seminal paper by Claire Kramsch, again published in an influential collection of papers edited by Michael Byram and Michael Fleming (1998). As the first two papers in this issue testify, it can't be said that the native speaker ideal has been vanquished; but since these early forays, the notion of language competence has broadened considerably not just to acknowledge, but indeed to celebrate, the extraordinary range of different ways in which human beings incorporate a multitude of languages and language varieties within the talk and text of everyday life. These broader views of language competence now include 'multilingualism', 'plurilingualism', 'symbolic competence' - and perhaps, as evidenced by the 2016 IALIC conference in Barcelona, still the *ingénu* in this debate – 'trawsieithu' (Williams, 1994), or if you prefer, 'translanguaging'.

Our first paper in this issue written by Eugenia Demuro and Laura Gurney, and provocatively entitled *Mapping language, culture, ideology: rethinking language in foreign language instruction*, tackles head-on the issues around teaching a standard form of a hegemonic language. For Demuro and Gurney not only the form of a language but also how it is taught is infused with ideology, and relations of power. The language they address in their paper is Spanish, which the authors inform us not only is the official language of Spain and the lingua franca of Latin America, but also the most common language spoken in the United States apart from English – let alone the many millions of people who speak Spanish as another language. Here, the authors renew the call for the teaching of languages to be (re)combined with the teaching of 'culture', for them not just a version of culture which is a bland, decontextualized version of 'cultural artefacts', but a contingent and above all *critical* account of the conditions whereby the language being taught arrived at its present formation. And in this enterprise, it is necessary to challenge the ideology which underwrites and perpetuates the 'mythic' stasis and stability of a language. For Spanish, as with many other languages exported on the back of the colonial project - from which English is no exception, it is necessary to engage with the history of colonialism and the origins of the standardised, codified monoglossia to which it gave rise. These codes are realised through the modes of assessment that inform the summative qualifications and awards that are granted learners on completion of their language programme. However, above all it behoves us as language teachers to both acknowledge and inculcate in our learners a recognition of the plurality and hybridity of the language which is being taught.

Our next paper continues to problematize the issue of language standardisation, in this case that of another notoriously hegemonic language, English. Tajeddin, Alemi and

Pashmforoosh investigate the views of Persian-speaking English language teachers within the context of the global spread of 'English as an International Language' which, despite its capacity for variability, retains the notion of competence being attributed to one distinct language system. This study provides some of the clues to my perplexity as to the way in which 'native-speaker' norms still seem to endure, despite the appropriation of English within so many different parts of the world. The study deploys a mixed methods approach to elicit the views of a sizeable cohort of Persian-speaking EFL teachers concerning the extent to which they adhere to certain pedagogic norms relating to the English language. To get a purchase on this, they break their enquiry down in order to distinguish between linguistic norms and pragmatic norms. Overwhelmingly, the Iranian EFL teachers report that they still support adherence to the *linguistic* norms of English; but interestingly they reported more flexibility in relation to the *pragmatic* norms of the language.

The third study in this issue is positioned as riposte to the persistence of a predominantly monolingual approach to teaching languages to children, which flies in the face of the prevailing evidence of the linguistic diversity manifested in school populations worldwide. Ironically echoing the children's voices in its title, 'But do monolingual people really exist?', the paper also challenges conventional accounts of what it is to speak a language. Gail Prasad incorporates the drawings of children studying either French or English in an innovative multimodal research design derived from theories of social representation such as Moscovici (1961). Prasad asks young language learners in Canadian and French schools to produce representations of different manifestations of language competence: a monolingual individual, a bilingual individual, a plurilingual individual; and then to position themselves in relation to this implicit matrix. In so doing, it became apparent that the representations did not just reflect the children's 'capacity' to speak different languages, but that the children also made sense of themselves as plurilingual subjects who might have one, or even several discrete identities. The representations also demonstrated the children's affective orientation to the language(s) concerned, although this did not demonstrate that growing up in a plurilingual environment always made for a joyous outcome.

If Tajeddin et al. tend to regard the English and Persian spoken by their language teachers as still essentially different language systems, and Prasad - perhaps from a rather different perspective - still conceives of the plurilingual individuals imagined by the young learners as having the capacity of communicating with others through multiple language systems which function in parallel, Vinagre and Estaban view language, and *ergo* 'what it is to

speak a language', as being altogether more of an co-constructed business. Part of this difference in perspective might be down to the 'virtual' context in which the communication takes place; and part of this might be the sub-system of language with which they engage - pragmatics. As with many studies which analyse dialogic collaboration across cultures, Vinagre and Estaban focus upon the interactional rather than the transactional aspects of the exchanges which take place. This not only entails a move away from idealised native speaker norms to the more hybrid forms of language with which speakers feel they can identify, but it also entails speakers moving towards the socio-pragmatic norms of their interlocutors. In order to drill down to the specifically linguistic features of these interactions, Vinagre and Estaban draw on Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Model, and specifically on the domain of Attitude, in order to investigate the interactional language used by groups of American and Spanish students engaged in online collaborative tasks delivered on an optional undergraduate module. In a reverberation of Prasad's study, they find that of the three subcomponents under Attitude, tokens realising Affect were used considerably more frequently than either of the other two subcomponents, Judgment or Appreciation. While the researchers did posit the category of nationality as a variable in their research design, it will be interesting to those of us sceptical of positing nationality as an *a priori* category, that whether the students were American, or Spanish ultimately did not seem to influence significantly the extent to which they expressed emotion in their exchanges.

Regular readers will notice that, unusually, this third issue is the second 'open' issue in a row. Not only does this conveniently enable patient authors to get their papers out in hard copy, but it also means that we can still looked forward to a rich diet of consecutive special issues coming out in hard copy, back-to-back, at the end of summer. Prospectively, our special issue on *Language, Mobility and Work*, guest edited by Melissa Moyer has now been rescheduled to come out in August (Issue 4); and the special issue on *Education and the Intercultural Politics of Global Neoliberalism,* guest-edited by John Gray, John O'Regan and Catherine Wallace remains in the October slot (Issue 5). Volume 8 will conclude in December as usual with an open issue (Issue 6), which will start by picking up where we left off, with the theme of intercultural competence.

I round off this editorial by thanking our two book reviewers, An Du and Xin Li, for their labours in keeping us up to date on what is current in the field. There have also been some rotations in the engine room of the journal. As I have been compiling this issue, Adrian Mangaliman has moved on as Editorial Assistant for the journal. We thank him for tirelessly

propelling the papers round from authors to reviewers, and back to the editor. Nenycae Mei Murla has now taken over his seat at the Editorial Office, and we look forward to working with her. On the production front, I extend a huge debt of gratitude to Katie Williams, who has worked unflaggingly as the journal's Production Manager for more years than I care to remember. Katie has been re-assigned at Taylor and Francis, and we wish her every success in her new role; and we also extend a warm welcome to Alex Rutherford who is stepping into Katie's shoes. I look forward to working with Alex as we continue to get the remaining issues of Volume 18 to press.

Looking forward in the year, I hope to meet up with some of you at the Association's annual conference at the end of the summer in Finland. This will be held at the University of Helsinki, from the 29th to the 31st in August. The conference theme is *The 'good' interculturalist yesterday, today and tomorrow: Everyday life-theory-research-policy-practice.* You can find the full details on the new IALIC website: http://ialic.international/conference-2018/. Presenters will have the opportunity to publish their papers from this conference, full details of which will be announced in Helsinki and online, nearer the time.

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