# Editors' Foreword[1]

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This special issue of *Alizés* was produced in collaboration with the Association for Research in English Language Teaching and Acquisition (Association pour la Recherche en Didactique et Acquisition de l'Anglais, ARDAA). It seeks to illuminate the dynamic intersections of language teaching, learning, and multilingualism, emphasising both the sociopolitical landscapes and the educational contexts that shape and are shaped by the phenomena of learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), a second language (SL or L2), or as an additional language (EAL). This volume aims to explore these dimensions through two distinct but interconnected perspectives: the impact of multilingualism within sociolinguistic and geopolitical realms on EFL education, and the aspects of learning and teaching English in multilingual settings.

Historically, research into multilingualism has drawn significantly from studies on bilingualism. The seminal study on the general intellectual advantages of bilinguals conveyed in 1962 by Peal and Lambert paved the way for research supporting "additive multilingualism", overturning the initial fears of "subtractive multilingualism" and "semilingualism". Bilingualism is today a well-trodden path. Researchers were therefore invited not only to discuss the bilingual advantage hypothesis (Antoniou), but also to explore the potential connections between a multilingual advantage hypothesis and proficiency in English.

Looking at phonology, syntax and grammar, vocabulary, typographical symbols and punctuation marks, research has shown that interactions between languages occurred at different levels. Early research explored negative transfers, divergence and interference, initially emphasizing the negative impacts of an L1 on an L2. Over time, however, the concept of "bidirectional transfer" (Pavlenko and Jarvis) gained recognition. More recently, the field has adopted the broader and more neutral terms "cross-linguistic interactions" or "cross-linguistic influence" (Siemund), moving beyond the narrower notion of transfer. Contemporary cross-linguistic influence models in L3 acquisition include the L1 transfer model, the L2 status factor model, the typological primacy model, the linguistic proximity model, the scalpel model, and the cumulative enhancement model.

From a local perspective, research in learning and teaching English in our Reunionese context is highly indebted to Yvon Rolland's seminal studies on English phonology and multilingualism (2012, 2015). As we prepared this introduction, we took great pleasure in revisiting "Des discours au discours didactique" *(*Rolland, 2010), an article published fifteen years ago in this very journal, *Alizés 33*.

*Alizés 45* extended its invitation to local and international researchers to contribute to a field we regard as still insufficiently explored. Far from suggesting a lack of interest, the limited number of published studies on the topic may reflect the uncertainties faced by researchers and practitioners alike. Learning and teaching English in a multilingual environment is a daily reality presenting ongoing challenges in the field, hence the substantial number of master's professional theses on the topic produced at the School of Education (Institut National Supérieur du Professorat et de l'Éducation). From a local standpoint, each initiative in this field

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prompts a process of heuristic and critical self-inquiry which demands a rigorous methodology to maintain the objective distance essential for scholarly research.

Long prohibited in schools until the mid-twentieth century, Reunionese creole is now offered as an optional subject in primary and secondary education. Yet although code switching, translanguaging and *mélanges* are plentiful, a monolingual tradition of language teaching prevails. As a result, language contact awareness, which can empower (Kalyaniwala) language learners, remains insufficiently addressed.

Numerous studies, notably in African post-colonial countries, have delved into the "language question" and shed light on the negative impact of selecting an additional language as the medium of instruction, and on the benefits of teaching in many languages. Seychelles currently uses Kreol Seselwa as the medium of instruction in early primary education and subsequently imposes English as the language of education, although 98% of the student population uses Seselwa on a daily basis (Zelime). In Mauritius, Sauzier Uchida (2009) has shown that best results were obtained when English, French and Creole were concurrently used as media of instruction. If teaching English does not necessarily jeopardise language preservation, practitioners often grapple with the pedagogical implications of policies, ideologies and practices. Researchers and practitioners were thus invited to investigate these pedagogical implications and explore to what extent one may nurture cross-linguistic contacts to enhance language teaching.

Our topic is not consigned to a region, it extends far beyond our borders. We are proud to present papers in this issue which reflect a rich and diverse linguistic landscape. Contributions spanning the Indian Ocean (Reunion and Mauritius), North America (USA), Asia, Europe (Switzerland) and the French West Indies (Martinique) complete a worldwide tour.

First this issue investigates the pervasive influence of English within diverse linguistic landscapes and the implications of such dominance on cultural identity, language learning policy, and educational choices.

This subject is highly linked to cultural identities and questions the hegemony of English being used as a lingua franca and often taught and learnt as a foreign or second language. The world experienced a precedent with the political success of Latin during the conquest of the Roman Empire. But this gave rise to five major European languages (French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish) that spread throughout the world. English, on the other hand, is a composite language, drawing on Celtic, Latin, French, Germanic and other languages. This issue appears even more politically sensitive when studied from the point of view of speakers whose language used to be dominant. This is the case of the French language which, in a post-colonial world, seems to be weakened, as evidenced, for example, from the now predominant choice of English over French as a foreign language in North African countries. Building on the examination of diglossia and sociolinguistic hierarchy, this volume further delves into how multilingual landscapes adopt strategies to foster communication and learning. Such practices not only reflect but also shape the sociolinguistic environments of regions where multiple languages and sociolects coexist and interact dynamically.

In the first subtheme, contributions shed light on the sociopolitical and ideological dimensions that shape multilingual ecologies and the role of English within them.

Eric Alvarez's study, focusing on a third-generation Mexican-American child in Los Angeles, further illustrates how broader sociolinguistic hierarchies influence linguistic trajectories at the micro level. By examining the emergence of Chicano English in a bilingual household marked by diminishing heritage Spanish input, Alvarez highlights the interplay between identity, language shift and the adaptive resources of plurilingual speakers within English-dominant environments.

Mark R. Freiermuth's research note offers a comparative overview of English language policies in several East Asian countries, revealing how the geopolitical promotion of English often

collides with local implementation challenges. His analysis underscores the tensions between governmental ambitions, educational realities and societal fears, ultimately showing how the perceived necessity of English for economic competitiveness coexists with deep structural constraints.

The commented translation by Laëtitia Saint-Loubert and Karen Fleetwood, and their English translation of Roger Parsemain's short story *D'lo d'Amérik. Elixir from America*, concludes this first thematic subtheme by reflecting on translation as a site of multilingual negotiation. Their note foregrounds the presence of Martinican Creole in the source text and argues for translation practices attentive to transoceanic, South–South and postcolonial linguistic flows.

Together, these three contributions illustrate the multiple ways in which multilingual contexts—and especially those marked by linguistic inequality—inform and complicate the uses, perceptions and circulation of English.

The second subtheme turns to the learning and teaching of English within multilingual settings, and to the pedagogical, cognitive and institutional processes that arise from such contexts. Drawing on classroom data from preschool education in Mauritius, Shameem Oozeerally examines how teachers and young learners navigate a highly polyglossic landscape in which English occupies a paradoxical position: it is simultaneously an official, formal language and a medium with limited affective anchoring among children. His analysis shows how ritualised practices, teacher-centred routines and limited translanguaging opportunities shape the early experience of English. It also calls for a plurilingual pedagogy that acknowledges children's full linguistic repertoires.

Philippe Gervais's contribution focuses on secondary education and presents a classroom experiment in which pupils translate a nineteenth-century English text into Réunionese Creole. By comparing the students' translations, Gervais demonstrates how the interplay of English, French and Creole creates opportunities for communicative engagement while reshaping pupils' perceptions of Creole itself. The activity highlights the pedagogical value of multilingual tasks that foster linguistic awareness, metalinguistic reflection and creative negotiation across languages.

Finally, Slavka Pogranova examines primary-school English textbooks used in French-speaking Switzerland to determine the extent to which they reflect integrated language didactics. Her analysis shows that although plurilingual activities and cross-linguistic awareness appear throughout the materials, they remain unevenly implemented. By identifying the spaces where heritage languages, German and French intersect with English within these textbooks, she provides valuable insights for strengthening plurilingual approaches to EFL teaching.

Taken together, the contributions in this second section foreground the pedagogical implications of multilingualism and demonstrate how English is learned, negotiated and taught across diverse educational ecosystems.

Through this dual focus—on sociopolitical dynamics and on classroom realities—this special issue brings into dialogue two complementary perspectives that together enrich our understanding of English language teaching and learning in today's multilingual world.

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