



## Editorial 2(2): BILDing Optimism in Uncertain Times

ALISON CRUMP (Senior Managing Editor), Marianopolis College

LAUREN HALCOMB-SMITH (Managing Editor), Royal Roads University

MELA SARKAR (Senior Advisory), McGill University

### INTRODUCTION

This issue, our third since we launched the journal, marks an important milestone: *J-BILD* has now had a first birthday. Even the longest-running and most highly-respected journals had once to make it past their first year. In Canada, applied linguists can reflect with pride on the continuing success of the *Canadian Modern Language Review / Revue Canadienne des langues vivantes*, which will celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> year in 2019. The *CMLR/RCLV* began as a modest publication of the Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association in 1944, a year in which the fields of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics had yet to be mapped out; a year in which the fields most in the minds of our forebears were the battlefields of Europe and East Asia. In a similar vein, many readers will know that the *Modern Language Journal*, another top-ranked periodical for those of us interested in language learning/use, passed its centenary in 2016. We need not remind readers of the conflagration that was raging in 1916.

Launching a new scholarly journal several years into a terrible international conflict, the end or outcome of which could not with any certainty be foreseen, must have seemed dangerously optimistic to the point of foolhardiness in 1916 or 1944. Yet a few courageous scholars dared to do it. Now, as *J-BILD* moves into its second year, climate change is probably the gravest looming threat to the continued happiness and safety of not only our own species, but of all our co-inhabitants of the planet whether animal or vegetable. Right-wing governments dedicated, among other things, to the denial of this huge potential for global disaster are coming into power in one place after another.

Americans are emerging from midterm elections in the Trump presidency, an era in North American and global politics that, if we and the planet get past it, will be remembered as significant. A majority of Brazil's 200-million-plus people recently made an extreme rightist their president. And in Quebec, where *J-BILD* got its start a year ago, a right-of-centre and relative newcomer to politics swept a new political party to power a few weeks ago. One of the planks in the new party's platform was a promise to reduce immigration. A deep fear of the "Other" seems to be one of the main drivers of mainstream politics across national



boundaries, and at the same time, more and more people are being forced to flee their homelands and cross those boundaries in search of a safe haven.

So, while the team of determined volunteers who launched J-BILD a year ago are blessedly spared the tribulations experienced by citizens of warring nations, we still, with our readers, confront serious challenges to our collective well-being. Not the least of them is the current backlash against diversity (the “D” of BILD), as insidious and in its own way as dangerous as the climate changes that are sweeping the world. A new journal that builds on the bedrock of diversity as an inherent value is, we think, worth supporting and persevering with as never before. Even supposedly innocuous Canadian pro-multiculturalist preaching, though on the surface opposed to the right-wing ideal of a safe homogeneity, conceals an inner denial of the everyday reality of diversity. At the federal level, people who identify as members of communities other than White Anglophone or White Francophone are lumped into cultural groups whose languages are not recognized, yet who are celebrated for the “diversity” they bring to the Canadian cultural mosaic—an intolerance-masking language of which scholars like Sara Ahmed (2007) are heavily critical. This kind of discourse locates diversity in the bodies of Others and insulates the invisible majority against any real engagement with difference. In her critique of institutional policies on diversity and equity, Ahmed argued, “you end up doing the document rather than doing the doing” needed for meaningful change.

Language, the “L” of BILD, is no less important; like critical sociolinguist Monica Heller (2007), we see language/s as socially distributed through historical, political, and economic processes that inform what resources are assigned what value, by whom, and with what consequences. The value thus assigned goes far beyond the purely linguistic. In our era, language is one of the most ubiquitous scapegoats for ancient enmities that have more to do with scarce resources among feuding families than with speech. Language is rooted in, while also helping to define, identity, the “I” of BILD. As Norton (2000) has pointed out, identity references the desire for recognition, affiliation, and security—all of them necessary for physical and psychological well-being. Affiliation, *appartenance*, belonging—the “B” of BILD—bring us back around to where we began, with the defense of diversity and an insistence upon inclusion. The “Other” is by definition the person who does not belong.

But we are all the Other. We can only belong by virtue of renouncing simplistic notions of belonging. The identity we may thus win through transcends, while encompassing, the individual. We take our stand with Hugo of St-Victor, the 12<sup>th</sup>-century monk Edward Said was fond of quoting: “The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the



entire world is as a foreign land" (Said, 2000, p. 185). Finding a contemporary idiom for truths that go back to medieval times and forward into an uncertain, but certainly diverse, future—there in a nutshell is one of the main leitmotifs of J-BILD.

## IN THIS ISSUE

We are thrilled to be able to share six research articles, four in English and two in French, which in different, but interrelated ways, examine intersections of the four pillars of J-BILD, and thus contribute important voices to BILDing optimism in these uncertain times.

Marie-Pier Bastien, author of "Pratiques de littératie familiales d'élèves hispanophone," presents the results of a qualitative study exploring the family language practices of ten students enrolled in French schools in the Outaouais region for whom Spanish is the family language. Beginning with an exploration of the unique sociolinguistic context of the Outaouais region, Bastien presents and discusses the data generated through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Her analysis paints a rich picture of the family language practices of her participants and highlights the unique ways in which family language practices manifest among young people in multilingual environments. Bastien concludes with recommendations for supporting such students in their development as multilingual individuals.

Alison Crump's article, "Thinning the classroom walls: Graduate student perspectives on blogging as pedagogy," brings to light the views and experiences of graduate students a sociolinguistics and language education course in their use of blogging as a pedagogical tool. Crump presents and discusses data generated through focus groups and surveys to show how the use of blogging supported students in their learning through the cultivation of peer support, collaboration, self-reflection, and authenticity in the experience of writing for a "real" audience. Crump argues that open pedagogies, such a blogging, thin the classroom walls and create opportunities for publicly-engaged and networked scholarship.

Eun-ji Amy Kim, S. J. Adrienna Joyce, Annie Desjardins, and Yuwen Zhang's article, "Speaking to our minds, hearts, and hands: A cogenerative inquiry on learning through an interdisciplinary land-based course," reflect on their settler/visitor learning/teaching experiences in a land-based, interdisciplinary Indigenous field course in Kahnawá:ke. Their article takes the form of a metalogue, a method for engaging in dialogues both with theories and self-reflexivity and draws out the diversity of the co-authors' different learning paths. Common throughout the article, is an emphasis on building relationships based on collaboration; indeed, the authors argue, this is the *real* work of achieving the calls to action



in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Accord on Indigenous Education. Kim and company bring their metalogue to a close with a series of recommendations for universities, instructors, and students for future land-based interdisciplinary courses.

In "Reframing FSL teacher learning: Small stories of (re)professionalization and identity formation," Mimi Masson presents the results of a case study of two French as a second language (FSL) teachers and the factors that informed their professional identity. Through the analysis and discussion of narrative data, Masson argues that participants' successful identity-formation was closely linked to their feelings of being validated and supported by their respective communities. Masson concludes with recommendations for addressing FSL teacher attrition and retention.

Sylvie Roy and Julie Byrd-Clark's article, "Les identités multiples des jeunes Canadiens," reflects on the importance of examining former and current discourses on linguistic and cultural competencies in considering the future of young people's multiple identities. The authors draw upon ethnographic and sociolinguistic data that they gathered in Francophone and French immersion schools in the Canadian provinces of Alberta and Ontario. The youth in their studies do not see their identities as fixed but as continuously changing, yet they are deeply concerned with how others see them. The authors emphasize the importance of recognizing the linguistic and cultural repertoires of young people who are living in diverse contexts in order to foster greater inclusion in and belonging to Canadian communities.

In their article, "Supporting reconnecting immigrant families with English Language Learners in rural schools: An exploratory study," co-authors Gregory Tweedie, Anja Dressler, and Cora-Leah Schmitt focus on how Filipino secondary school immigrant students in Alberta acculturate and develop a sense of belonging when language and content acquisition, social-emotional, and acculturation supports are in place. The authors present and discuss data drawn from interviews with recently reconnected Filipino families as well as written responses from the teachers of the young people in these families. Through their work, the authors conclude that it is particularly important for the young people in families that are reconnecting to have language and content acquisition, social-emotional, and acculturation support for the development of their sense of belonging and identity.

In closing, we at J-BILD hope that these articles will inspire you to reflect upon your own experiences and positions as researchers, learners, educators, fellow beings, and encourage you to continue to thoughtfully and meaningfully engage with yourselves and others.



## REFERENCES

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