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Celebrating 35-Year's Research Contribution to Psychology, Language Education and Communication: A Special Issue Honoring Peter MacIntyre

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¹Introduction

It is with immense pleasure and gratitude that we present this latest Special Issue of LTRQ, celebrating the remarkable 35-year career of Professor Peter MacIntyre and his extraordinary contributions to the broad fields of language education, educational psychology, and second language acquisition (SLA). Professor MacIntyre, currently a distinguished Professor of Psychology at Cape Breton University in Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada, stands as a towering figure in the interdisciplinary realms of educational psychology and language education. His groundbreaking work has not only advanced theoretical understanding and research methodology but has also had a profound impact on pedagogical practices worldwide.

¹ This paper is part of a special issue (2025, 48) entitled: In Honour of Peter D. MacIntyre's Contributions to Psychology of Language and Communication and Second Language Research Methodology (edited by Mirostaw Pawlak, Zhisheng (Edward) Wen, and Hassan Mohebbi).

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A proud alumnus of Cape Breton University (at the time the University College of Cape Breton), where he earned his undergraduate degree, Professor MacIntyre completed his Ph.D. at the University of Western Ontario in 1992. Since then, his research has consistently pushed the boundaries of knowledge in the psychology of language and communication, with a particular focus on second language acquisition. His scholarly output is both prolific and transformative, encompassing over 150 articles and book chapters (as indicated in Scopus), as well as co-authorship of several seminal books. Professor MacIntyre's scholarly impact is nothing short of extraordinary, with his works being cited over 61,107 times (according to Google Scholar) as of July 09, 2025. This remarkable achievement has earned him a place among the 'World's Top 2% Most Cited Scientists', a prestigious ranking published by Stanford University that underscores his global influence and the enduring relevance of his research.

Throughout his illustrious career, Professor MacIntyre has explored a diverse range of topics, including positive psychology, motivational dynamics, nonverbal communication, innovative teaching practices, and the role of individual differences in language learning—such as anxiety, motivation, and, most notably, willingness to communicate (WTC). Among his extensive body of work, his 1998 publication in the *The Modern Language Journal (MLJ)* on the topic of WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998) stands out as his most cited work, with an impressive 3,680 citations to date (March 2025). This seminal paper has become a cornerstone in the field, shaping contemporary understandings of the psychological and social factors that influence language learners' readiness to engage in communication. Equally influential is his 1994 paper on language anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994), which has also garnered over 3,000 citations so far, further cementing his status as a leading authority in the psychology of language learning.

Professor MacIntyre's exceptional contributions to the field have been recognized with numerous prestigious awards, including the Gardner and Harwood Prizes from the International Association for Language and Social Psychology, and the Mildener Prize from the Modern Language Association (MLA). His pioneering work on willingness to communicate (WTC) has fundamentally reshaped how educators and researchers conceptualize the interplay between psychological factors and language learning success. Equally transformative are his contributions to positive psychology, which have shed light on the profound ways in which emotional and motivational states influence learning outcomes, offering invaluable insights into theory, methodology, and teaching practices alike. Through his dedication to interdisciplinary research and his unwavering commitment to advancing the field, Professor MacIntyre has inspired and mentored generations of scholars and practitioners, leaving an indelible mark on the academic community.

This Special Issue stands as a tribute to his landmark achievements, bringing together contributions from colleagues, friends, and students who have been profoundly influenced by his work and mentorship. It is a celebration of his enduring influence and a testament to the far-reaching impact of his scholarship.

Overview and Structure of the Special Issue

The papers assembled in this Special Issue of *Language Teaching Research Quarterly (LTRQ)* stand as a testament to the enduring impact of Professor MacIntyre's work. They reflect the

remarkable breadth and depth of his influence, showcasing cutting-edge research that builds upon and extends his foundational ideas. Organized into four thematic sections, this Special Issue is structured to honor the multifaceted nature of his contributions: (1) Theoretical Perspectives and Frameworks, (2) Willingness to Communicate, (3) Empirical Studies and Case Analyses, and (4) Reflections, Reviews, and Ethical Considerations. Each section not only highlights the evolution of key concepts pioneered by Professor MacIntyre but also underscores their continued relevance and application in contemporary research and practice.

Part I: Theoretical Perspectives and Frameworks

The first section of this Special Issue opens with a thought-provoking position paper co-authored by Peter's close colleagues **Elouise Botes, Pia Resnik, Sharona Moskowitz, Jean-Marc Dewaele, Sarah Mercer, and Samuel Greiff**. Titled "A Tangled Web: Learner Autonomy as a Predictor of Learner Emotions, Willingness to Communicate, and Academic Achievement in Online Language Learning," this paper delves into the intricate interplay between learner autonomy, emotions, willingness to communicate (WTC), and academic achievement within online language learning environments. By unraveling these complex relationships, the authors provide valuable insights into how autonomy shapes emotional and communicative experiences in digital learning contexts.

Building on this foundation, the second paper, "Splitting the L2 Self-Guide: Ways Forward for Motivation Research," by **Alastair Henry and Meng Liu**, takes a critical look at the concept of the L2 self-guide—a cornerstone of motivation theory in language learning. The authors propose innovative directions for future research, challenging existing assumptions and offering fresh perspectives on how self-guides influence language learning motivation and outcomes.

The third paper, authored by **Meagan Driver** and titled "Differentiating Interest and Joy in Foreign and Heritage Language Learning: Expanding the Research in Positive Psychology," further enriches this section by exploring the nuanced distinctions between interest and joy in the context of foreign and heritage language learning. By expanding the scope of positive psychology research, the author highlights the unique emotional dynamics that shape language learning experiences, offering a deeper understanding of how these emotions influence learner engagement and success.

Together, these papers not only reflect the breadth of Professor MacIntyre's influence but also push the boundaries of current research, setting the stage for the cutting-edge contributions that follow in this Special Issue.

Part II: Willingness to Communicate

The second part of this Special Issue is dedicated to the focused theme of Willingness to Communicate (WTC), a cornerstone of second language acquisition (SLA) research profoundly shaped by Professor MacIntyre's pioneering contributions. The section opens with a paper by Rintaro Sato, titled "Japanese EFL Speakers' Fluctuation of Willingness to Communicate: Its Interplay and Association with Feedback." This study investigates the dynamic fluctuations in Japanese EFL learners' WTC and examines how these shifts are influenced by feedback, offering new insights into the situational and contextual factors that shape learners' communicative readiness.

Following this, **Ljiljana Knežević, Jagoda P. Topalov, and Sabina Halupka-Rešetar** present their paper, "No Picture, No Sound? Exploring Students' Willingness to Communicate in Different Modes of Communication in a Synchronous Online Foreign Language Classroom." This research explores how varying modes of communication—such as audio, video, and text—impact students' WTC in synchronous online language learning environments. By highlighting the role of technological affordances in shaping communicative behavior, the authors provide valuable implications for designing effective online language instruction.

The third paper in this section, "No Pain, No Gain: Willingness to Communicate vis-à-vis Communication Behavior and Their Effects on Language Performance," by **Jiayi Zhang, Nadin Beckmann, and Jens Beckmann**, delves into the intricate relationship between WTC, actual communication behavior, and language performance. Through a rigorous examination of these interconnections, the authors shed light on how learners' willingness to engage in communication translates into tangible linguistic gains, reinforcing the practical significance of WTC in language learning contexts.

The last paper of this section is from **Gertrud Tarp**, titled "English as a Lingua Franca and Its Impact on Willingness to Communicate in a Second Language." This paper explores how the global dominance of English as a lingua franca influences learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) in second language contexts, offering a fresh perspective on the interplay between global linguistic trends and individual communicative behaviors.

As a whole, these papers not only underscore the enduring relevance of WTC as a central construct in SLA research but also demonstrate its adaptability to diverse learning environments and technological advancements. This section stands as a testament to Professor MacIntyre's lasting influence on the field and the continued innovation of WTC research.

Part III: Empirical Studies and Case Analyses

The third part of this Special Issue brings together a diverse array of empirical studies and case analyses, each contributing unique insights into the psychological, emotional, and contextual dimensions of language learning and teaching. These studies reflect the interdisciplinary spirit of Professor MacIntyre's work and demonstrate the far-reaching impact of his research.

Opening this section is the paper by **Lingyu Fu and Fangwei Huang**, titled "Exploring Learners' Engagement with Feedback in L2 Academic Writing: Insights from a Multiple Case Study", which delves into the complex dynamics of feedback engagement. Through a detailed multiple-case study, the authors reveal how learners interact with feedback in academic writing, providing practical implications for enhancing feedback practices in L2 classrooms.

Shifting the focus to the increasingly prominent topic of teacher well-being (Mercer & Gregersen, 2020), **Yanyun Zhou and Yongcan Liu** present their paper, "Contextualizing High School English Teachers' Well-Being in China: Validating and Extending PERMA in the Chinese School Context." By adapting the PERMA model to the Chinese educational setting, the authors offer a culturally sensitive framework for understanding the factors that contribute to teacher well-being and professional satisfaction.

The emotional experiences of language teachers take center stage in **Julia Goetze's** paper, "A Longitudinal Examination of Changes in Language Teachers' Anxiety and Enjoyment Using Growth Curve Modeling." Through a longitudinal approach, Goetze examines how teachers' anxiety and enjoyment evolve over time, shedding light on the emotional trajectories that shape their professional lives.

An empirical study by **Kata Csizér and Ágnes Albert**, titled "Positive Paths to Feeling Successful and Accomplished in Teaching English: A Teacher-Focused Pilot Study in Hungary," investigates the factors that foster a sense of success and accomplishment among English teachers. Their findings offer valuable insights for supporting teacher motivation and professional development.

In their contribution "Chinese EFL Learners' Task Control-Value Appraisals, Emotions, and Behavioral Engagement During After-Class App-Assisted Vocabulary Learning," **Banban Li, Wehan Shen, Yue Ding, Mirosław Pawlak, and Mariusz Kruk** explore the emotional and behavioral dimensions of vocabulary learning. The study highlights how learners' appraisals of control and value influence their engagement and emotions during app-based learning, providing implications for the design of technology-enhanced language learning tools.

In the next paper, **Yuwen Shangguan, Yan Ni, Peifeng Zhou, and Peijian Paul Sun** employ the innovative idiodynamic approach in their paper, "Understanding Anxiety, Enjoyment, and Breakdown Fluency in L2 Monologic and Dialogic Speaking: An Idiodynamic Approach." By analyzing real-time fluctuations in anxiety and enjoyment during speaking tasks, the authors offer a nuanced understanding of how these emotions impact fluency in both monologic and dialogic contexts.

Finally, **Anna ZÓLYOMI and Zsófia SZÉLL** explore the dual identities of teachers and researchers in their paper "Understanding Dual Teacher and Researcher Identities: A Multiple-Case Study in the Hungarian Context." Through a multiple-case study, the authors illuminate the challenges and opportunities faced by educators who navigate these dual roles, contributing to a deeper understanding of professional identity in language education.

To sum up, these papers not only showcase the diversity of empirical research inspired by Professor MacIntyre's work but also highlight the continued relevance of his ideas in addressing contemporary challenges in language learning and teaching.

Part IV: Reflections, Reviews, and Ethical Considerations

The fourth and final part of this Special Issue brings together reflections, reviews, and contributions focusing on ethical considerations, offering a thoughtful conclusion to the collection. The section opens with a timely and insightful paper by **Amy Thompson**, titled "A Reflection of Ethical Responsibility in Applied Linguistics Research." Thompson's work critically examines the ethical responsibilities inherent in applied linguistics research, a topic that has gained increasing prominence in the field and underscores the importance of integrity and accountability in scholarly practice.

Following this, **Miao Yu and Lizanne Thornton** provide a forward-looking perspective in their paper, "Motivation of Heritage Language Learning: Is Heritage Attachment Enough?" By revisiting key themes in heritage language learning motivation, the authors not only reflect

on past research but also chart new directions for future inquiry, offering valuable insights for scholars and practitioners alike.

The Special Issue culminates with a dedicated invited commentary, "Peter MacIntyre's 35-Year Research Contribution to Psychology, Language Education, and Communication: A Systematic Review," co-authored by **Peter MacIntyre** himself, **Ali Panahi**, and **Hassan Mohebbi** (who is also the co-guest editor). This comprehensive review provides a detailed account of Professor MacIntyre's remarkable contributions over the past decades, tracing the evolution of his ideas and their transformative impact on the fields of psychology, language education, and communication. Uniquely, the final commentary blends a first-person reflection from Professor MacIntyre with third-person data and evidence, offering a dual perspective that combines his personal journey in his own words with the measurable impact of his work through hard facts and figures.

Final Remarks

As guest editors, we hope that this Special Issue stands as a testament to the profound and enduring influence of Professor Peter MacIntyre's work on the fields of second language acquisition (SLA) and educational psychology. Each contribution in this collection reflects the breadth and depth of his impact, showcasing cutting-edge research that builds upon his foundational ideas and pushes the boundaries of our understanding. From theoretical advancements to practical applications, the papers in this issue highlight the continued relevance of Professor MacIntyre's work in addressing contemporary challenges in language learning and teaching.

To end on a positive note, as we celebrate Professor MacIntyre's 35 years of scholarly excellence, we also look to the future with anticipation. His legacy has not only shaped the past and present of our field but will undoubtedly continue to inspire generations of researchers and educators to come. We are deeply grateful for his contributions and honored to dedicate this Special Issue to a scholar and friend whose work has so profoundly enriched our understanding of language, communication, and the human experience.

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