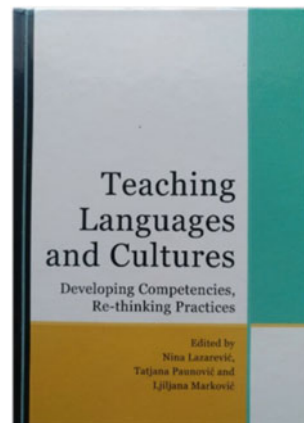


Nina Lazarević, Tatjana Paunović and Ljiljana Marković, *Teaching Language and Cultures. Developing Competencies, Re-thinking Practices*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018, 374 pages. ISBN: 978-1-5275-0893-4

The present book brings together a selection of 18 contributions delivered at one of the *Teaching Languages and Cultures* international conferences held at the University of Niš in Serbia that gives name to the present volume: *Teaching Languages and Cultures. Developing Competencies, Re-thinking Practices*. The principal objectives of this particular conference are investigating the best ways to prepare learners in the globalised world, determining which competences are more interesting for learners to develop and exploring ways to apply theory in real teaching practices. Hence, this work is dedicated not only to researchers, scholars, MA and PhD students but also to classroom practitioners and other professionals of language instruction and teacher education.



The editors of the volume, Nina Lazarević, Tatjana Paunović and Ljiljana Marković, divided it into five parts: Teacher Education, Language Skills, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), English for Special Purposes (ESP) and Different Language, Different Contexts. Moreover, an introductory section is included where the editors briefly review the papers selected for this publication and thank the participants for promoting collaboration between researchers and practitioners to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Additionally, the book includes a section with a brief biography of each of the authors and an index at the end of the book.

Part I, Teacher Education, is the longest section including 5 papers. First, in chapter one “Using Lesson Study as a Developmental Tool in Initial Teacher Education with English as a Foreign Language Student Teachers”, Deborah L. S. Larssen and Ion Drew analyse the benefits of using Lesson Study (LS) as a tool in EFL teacher education. They explain the relevance of LS highlighting its growing interest around the world, its adaptability and its collaborative and reflective nature. After explaining the steps involved in implementing this kind of methodology, the authors examine the benefits of this practice against normal teaching: it facilitates learning, helps pre-service teachers link theory and practice and promotes group work.

In chapter two, Nina Lazarević introduces an alternative assessment that gives name to her paper “Integrated Performance Assessment: Assessment for Learning”. First, she reviews current testing practices and highlights points that may be strengthened by implementing Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) in teacher education. Although she conducted the study on a small-scale, she comes to several interesting conclusions about the implementation of IPA in the Serbian education, such as promoting the use of authentic material, assessing skills together, providing feedback to learners and finding a balance among skills assessed.

Chapter three, “EFL Teachers’ Feedback on their Students’ Writing in the Greek Context”, aims to analyse 12 EFL teachers’ beliefs and practices in regards to feedback on writing. In a very straightforward and cogent paper, Lydia Mitits describes the characteristics of current assessment of writing in Greece. Also, she emphasises the need to develop more systematic and consistent forms of assessments to meet students’ expectations and promote learning from feedback.

Further exploring writing and oral production, Dr. Valetopoulos introduces the lexical field of emotions and feelings. This chapter, “How to Motivate Students to Talk about their Emotions: A Linguistic Approach”, addresses the principal issues of teaching within this lexical field: it conveys the use of verbal and non-verbal signs, it is closely linked to one’s culture, the difficulty of conceptualising emotions even in the L1 and verbalising emotions. The findings, even though only report on part of the corpus, shows that students use lexicon with emotional charge to compensate for the lack of vocabulary control in this field.

To finish the section, Tatjana Paunović addresses the issue of developing pre-service teachers’ communicative skills as part of their training in her paper titled: “Teaching Communication Skills to EFL Teachers”. She highlights the need to create opportunities for student teachers to raise awareness of their communicative skills and improve them. Therefore, she analyses the courses offered that aimed to enhance new teachers’ communicative skills in the current curriculum at a Serbian University. Sadly, this paper shows that there is just a small number of electives that address a limited number of specific communication skills resulting in new teachers’ poor awareness of communication strategies.

Part II comprises three papers dealing with Language Skills. First, Dr. Radić-Bojanić and Dr. Topalov examine how advanced English Language Learners (ELLs) use language learning strategies. By analysing learners’ strategic repertoire in oral comprehension and production, they realise that learners have limited strategic competence and they use the strategies infrequently and unsystematically. Consequently, raising awareness is very important to promote the development of their strategic competence.

Regarding reading, Brikena Xhaferi examines learners’ attitudes towards vocabulary learning and the lexical inferencing strategies they use in her paper “Lexical Guessing in Context during Reading Comprehension: A Case Study of EFL Learners”. Furthermore, she aims to find out the most effective inferencing strategies while reading. Her results conclude that learners in her sample consider vocabulary learning very important and they are successful guessers when coming across new vocabulary in a text. The participants proved to rely mainly on contextual cues, word features, general word knowledge and their L1 knowledge. The paper recommends teachers to promote strategy instruction in regards to vocabulary teaching and encourage students to become good vocabulary guessers.

Following the research on reading instruction, Rebecca Charboneau Stuvland compares teachers’ perceptions on teaching reading versus best practices proposed by new curriculum implementations in Norway. Despite teachers’ positive attitudes towards incorporating new reading practice in the classroom, the implementation of the new reform still leaves much to be desired. Teachers participating in this study report that they still face challenges when teaching reading such as time constrains, lack of funding or limited resources.

Part III presents papers focusing on Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC). The first paper, “Fostering Intercultural Competence through Process Drama in EFL Teacher Education”, written by Silje Normand and Milica Savić comes back to analyse EFL pre-service teacher education when developing

multiperspectivity and empathy. Through the analysis of EFL written reflections on a novel that portrays Native American culture and heritage, the authors discover that the participants of the study show affective engagement and were sensitive about the protagonist of the novel. This study highlights the importance of encouraging empathy and awareness of others' cultures and realities, necessary for FL learners' ICC development.

Investigating on the cultural resources and materials in a beginner-level textbook for learning Norwegian as a FL to promote learners ICC, Sofija Christensen carefully reviews how "På Vei" introduces cultural practices and promotes dialogue among students about Norwegian culture. While the traditional textbooks tend to monocultural education, "På Vei"'s approach to teaching culture promotes mediation and reflection towards a more inclusive view of the culture and builds on students' intercultural skills.

Part IV is dedicated to English for Especial Purposes (ESP). In the first paper, "Tuning-in: Re-Thinking an ESP Methodology Course in the Digital Age", Maria Y. Kopylovskaya focuses on introducing and updating digital tools in a new ESP course in a Master Program. First, she claims the position of English as a Lingua Franca and as an instrument of communication and highlights the need for methodologies to match the current position of English in the current digital world. Incorporating new technological instruments and procedures that build on learners' transferable skills would enhance their linguistic and communicative competence.

Furthermore, in chapter two, "Error Analysis: Its Usefulness to Students and Teachers", Jelica Tošić describes a study on error analysis by testing accuracy and grammaticality in ELF. This study is based on a qualitative analysis which aims to classify, describe and find a plausible explanation for a sample of previously identified errors on tenses. The paper shows the benefits of error analysis for teachers, students and researchers since it helps anticipate the type of errors learners usually make and identify the problems teachers may encounter when correcting errors in the classroom.

In chapter 3 of this section, "Developing Lexical Competence in ESP through Explicit and Implicit Vocabulary Instruction", Maja Stanojević Gocić collects data on learning instruction from two groups of students: the first group was exposed to explicit vocabulary instruction whereas the second group received it implicitly. On the results and discussion section, Dr. Stanojević Gocić reports that while the first group perform better in short-term assessment of the vocabulary taught, the second group exposed to implicit teaching achieved better results on long-term vocabulary retention. Consequently, this paper highlights the importance of incorporating implicit and explicit vocabulary instruction in ESP to enhance learners' lexical competence.

The data of chapter 4, "Reading in a Foreign Language: Students' Evaluation of EFL Classroom Reading Activities in a Higher Education Setting", are self-assessment scale questionnaires that assessed the attitudes of undergraduate students towards the frequency of reading activities in ESP classroom. Milevica Bojović discovers that students show a positive attitude towards reading activities which provide them with positive effects and improve their reading comprehension. The author also reports on contrasting attitudes between female and

male students about the frequency of reading activities in former primary and secondary education. The paper concludes with the benefits of carrying out this type of post-reading evaluation as well as future recommendations for similar studies.

Part V, titled Different Languages, different contexts, is devoted to the teaching and learning of languages other than English, such as Finish, Hungarian, Spanish and Slavic studies. This section opens with a chapter, titled “Slavic L1 vs. Finno-Ugric L2”, which describes the difficulty of teaching and learning a language belonging to a language family different from the learners’ native language. Particularly, Edit G. Bogár, as Hungarian and Finish as a foreign language teacher, discusses on the most problematic characteristic features of both languages for non-native speakers. He explains particular Finish and Hungarian linguistic features in regards of phonology and phonetics, morphology and syntax highlighting the difficulties non-native speakers may encounter when learning these aspects of the languages.

In her discussion on Argumentation Theory, Liliana Karina Alanís Flores reviews fundamental aspects of this theory and introduce examples to incorporate in the classroom of Spanish as a Foreign Language. On the paper titled “The Contributions of Argumentation Theory to the Teaching of Spanish as a Foreign Language”, the author discusses on the use of discourse markers and the benefits of online translation instruments, for example Linguee.com, as effective learning resources.

Moreover, Christian Voss presents a chapter titled “Reinvesting South Slavic Philology? Border Studies and the Balkans in Berlin” where he investigates on the evolution of Slavic studies in Germany. Dr. Voss passionately reports on his particular efforts to develop projects and keep alive the Slavic studies at the Humboldt University (HU) in Berlin. This paper concludes with a thoughtful summary of future research lines and networks that support the study of borders in the Balkans.

Finally, in his paper titled “Commentary: Language Learning in the Context of International Student Exchange-How Much Time Does a Student Need to Master the Language of the Host Country?”, Dunja Živanović challenges the idea that study abroad automatically results on language learning. This study reports on students’ experiences during study abroad and comes to interesting conclusion about the multiple variables that influence learners’ interactions in the target language, such as the host family, motivation, previous knowledge, etc. According to Dr. Živanović, previous knowledge, anticipated as an important factor in student exchange success, it actually less determining than motivation, effort or the setting characteristics. Nonetheless, this paper comments on the many variables that influence language learning during study abroad.

While providing a very wide view of the spectrum of teaching foreign languages and cultures, I believe the core idea in the book is the importance and need to link theory to practice. Throughout the papers, the importance to develop ways to link theoretical findings to the foreign language classroom is highlighted. Finding applications to theoretical frameworks and methodologies is necessary in the field of teaching languages and cultures. Reporting on their findings, limitations, successful experiences and pedagogical implications, the

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authors encourage other professionals in the field to observe, implement and undergo similar studies in their own contexts. From my point of view, this volume contributes to overcome the gap between theory and practice that is essential to the field of teaching languages and cultures.

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