

## II. BOOK REVIEWS

**Joanna Kic-Drgas / Violeta Jurkovič.** *Paths of purpose. A journey into LSP teacher development.* Göttingen: V&R unipress. 2024. Pp. 150

The learning and teaching of languages for specific purposes (LSP) is an approach that evolved after 1945 and has displayed constant growth since then, both from a theoretical and methodological perspective (Starfield 2012). However, there are still existing gaps in the research on LSP teaching considering, among others, “the lack of a clear definition as well as didactic-methodological criteria defining the difference between LGP (languages for general purposes) and LSP” (p. 47) as the authors note. This book intensifies efforts to fill the existing but narrowing gap in LSP teaching research, giving a wider perspective resulting from choosing not only ESP (English for specific purposes) but also other languages which still remain under-researched.

*Paths of purpose. A Journey into LSP teacher development* presents LSP teaching in Poland and Slovenia in detail, highlighting its main aspects, such as needs analysis, the development of syllabuses and curricula, materials design, the choice of appropriate teaching methodology and assessment (chapter 2). These aspects underpin the formulation of possibilities for the pre-service education and in-service professional development of LSP teachers, also based on qualitative data collected from among language teacher educators in Poland and Slovenia (chapter 5). The book provides theoretical and practical guidance primarily for LSP teachers, with ample examples from the accumulated literature, authors’ empirical research and, importantly, from the authors’ own projects.

The book, written by Joanna Kic-Drgas and Violeta Jurkovič, includes five chapters, in addition to the authors’ preface and conclusion. Each chapter finishes with a synthesis, enabling the salient points from each section to be captured.

In order to contextualise the discussion of LSP teaching in Poland and Slovenia, the book starts by presenting both countries in general, their educational systems and language policies. This is followed by a comparative description of the profession and status of LSP teachers in the light of legal regulations. The authors note that, “the policies in both countries rely on the assumption that the completion of a teacher education programme for foreign language teaching automatically indicates that a person has been prepared for LSP teaching, too” (pp. 44–45). Pre-service LSP teacher education courses at universities are not popular. After an investigation of the Erasmus+ Trails project conducted by Kic-Drgas and Woźniak (2022: 119–120), across 68 institutions in 14 different EHEA (European Higher Education Area) countries, only 88 full courses/modules were identified, of which only five were found in

Poland. In Slovenia, there are no accredited study programmes nor modules in higher education dedicated to the pre-service education of LSP teachers. The focus of the next, and final section of this chapter, is placed on the promotion of LSP, including conferences, associations and journals, that in recent years has been gaining momentum in both countries.

In the second chapter, the authors present the essential aspects of LSP teaching, starting from reflections on the historical development of LSP and the operational definition of LSP for the needs of the publication. Then, they draw the readers' attention to the creation of LSP syllabuses and curricula, comparing them to LGP syllabuses and curricula. Three main categories of curriculum design are highlighted: subject-centred, learner-centred and problem-centred. The division of this chapter was inspired by Anthony's identification of the four pillars of LSP teaching: needs analysis, learning objectives, materials and methods, and evaluation (Anthony 2018). In accordance with LSP teaching methods, they present: task-based learning (TBL), problem-based-learning (PBL), and project-based learning (PjBL). PBL concentrates on the product, PjBL focuses on the process of project development and the tasks are designed to be project-based, whereas TBL refers to smaller communicative tasks resembling professional situations, in that way using language in authentic-like contexts, they do not need preparatory phases or complex research (p. 69). The final section is dedicated to LSP assessment.

The third chapter sheds light on LSP teachers, discussing 1) their roles and competences, 2) teachers' understanding of the target language and the specific disciplinary content, 3) LSP teacher identity and 4) the professional challenges they need to negotiate in their teaching contexts and along their careers, as well as 5) LSP communities of practice. LSP teaching relates to language knowledge, as well as discipline-specific knowledge that correlates with a particular domain. General language proficiency is not enough by itself, and must be supported by disciplinary knowledge (p. 74) and specific analytical linguistic competences (p. 75). LSP teachers that understand the disciplinary context will be able, for instance, to engage in better professional communication with their students. Moreover, Kic-Drgas and Jurkovič give examples of two dedicated, research-based and validated resources for a competence framework for LSP teachers: 1) LSP Teacher Common Competence Framework (to be accessed via the Erasmus+ Catapult project<sup>1</sup>) and 2) BALEAP<sup>2</sup> Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes. This section also presents and discusses in detail the different challenges that LSP teachers encounter, such as integrating authentic disciplinary materials, managing various student needs and adapting to changing technological landscapes. It finishes with a description of LSP communities of practice, where LSP teachers can share their experiences and best practices.

The fourth chapter goes on to examine the EU projects to date in the field of LSP teacher education and professional development, with regards to the growing and diversifying needs of LSP teachers. It looks at three projects, with their main aims, objectives, intellectual outputs and results – TRAILS, Catapult and LSP.TEOC.Pro – two of which the authors participated in as leaders of the Polish and Slovene teams. The TRAILS<sup>3</sup> (Erasmus+ LSP Teacher Training Summer School) project was set up to identify the needs of LSP teachers and to compare them

<sup>1</sup> [https://catapult-project.eu/sdm\\_downloads/lsp-teacher-common-competence-framework/](https://catapult-project.eu/sdm_downloads/lsp-teacher-common-competence-framework/).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.baleap.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/teap-competency-framework.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Project website: <https://trails.hypotheses.org/>.

with authentic LSP teacher education programmes in Europe, in order to bridge existing gaps (p. 103). The substantial conclusion is that, “although a visible increase in interest in LSP teaching can be observed, in practical terms LSP teacher education and professional development is still treated marginally” (p. 104, see also Kic-Drgas & Woźniak 2022). The outcome of the course was the delivery of remote LSP teacher education (due to the Covid-19 pandemic) and professional development based on diagnosed needs. The Computer Assisted Training and Platforms to Upskill LSP Teachers (Catapult) project<sup>4</sup> was a three-year Erasmus+ project, that was intended to design and prepare professional development and tools for LSP teachers in adult and higher education. The third – the LSP.TEOC-Pro project<sup>5</sup> – as a continuation of the TRAILS project, aimed at analysing online education and professional development opportunities for LSP teachers. As an outcome of the project, an online course was created which, due to its multifaceted structure, provides in-service professional development for experienced language teachers and pre-service education for future teachers (p. 104).

The fifth, and final chapter, is devoted to LSP teacher education and professional development, and is the result of a qualitative study conducted by means of semi-structured interviews with foreign language teacher educators in Poland and Slovenia. It explores the views of teachers on pre-service education and professional development. Thus, this section is a kind of change of perspective in describing the significant elements of pre-service education and in-service professional development, which were presented in the previous chapters, on the basis of the literature reviewed and project outcomes (p. 10). The findings of the qualitative analysis mostly concur with the findings outlined by previous studies. LSP teachers and foreign language teacher educators share the same views on a number of aspects related to both areas (p. 129). Among these, there is, “an awareness of the importance of genres and genre analysis competences, which allow LSP teachers to have an insight into the target needs of their learners but also access to relevant discipline-specific terminology and thus language use in the target discipline” (p. 134).

This book should be seen as an invitation to a *journey* (as the title states, and the authors themselves admit in the Preface) – to travel and explore the paths of the education and professional development of LSP teachers, which is still an insufficiently researched topic. Considering all these things, I find the book a unique contribution, as well as engaging, well-sourced, and I deeply believe that it will be of great interest to LSP teachers at secondary school, university level or in adult education, as well as language teacher educators, policy-makers and researchers interested in the field of LSP teaching. It should also be emphasised, that the authors have achieved a good balance between presenting the theoretical knowledge of LSP teachers and main aspects of LSP teaching, including the conceptualisation of LSP teaching in Poland and Slovenia, and practice through the presentation of their own projects and their empirical research.

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<sup>4</sup> Project website: <http://catapult-project.eu/>.

<sup>5</sup> Project website: <https://lsp-teoc-pro.de/>.

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