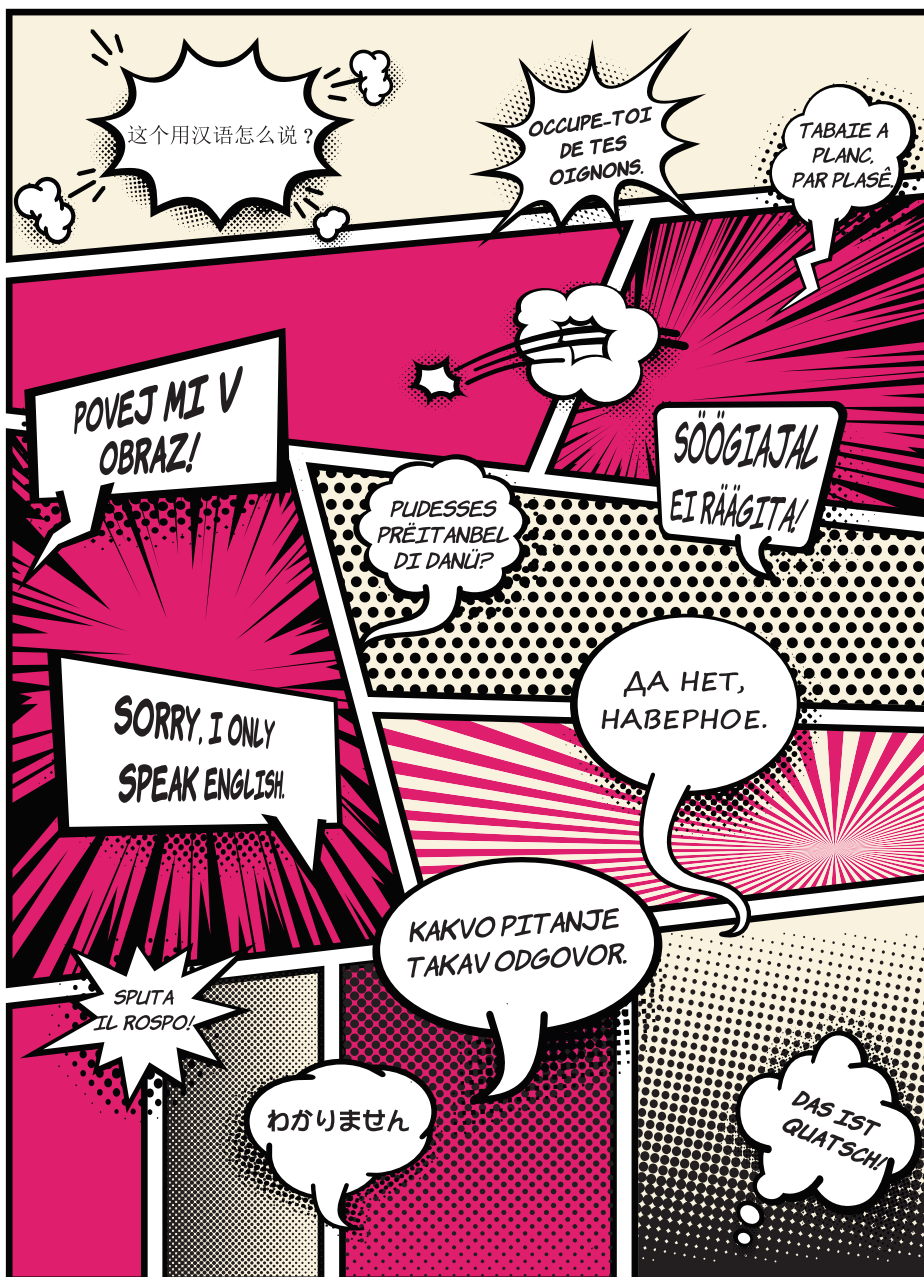


Pathways to Plurilingual Education

Edited by **Silva Bratož**, **Anja Pirih**, **Alenka Kocbek**



Translations of the expressions in the bubbles from the cover

Slovene: *Povej mi v obraz!* (Tell me in my face!)

Croatian: *Kakvo pitanje takav odgovor.* (Ask a silly question and you get a silly answer.)

Italian: *Sputa il rospo!* (Just say it!)

German: *Das ist Quatsch!* (What nonsense!)

English: Sorry, I only speak English.

Estonian: *Söögiajalei räägita!* (No talking while eating.)

Russian: *Да нет, наверное.* (Yes no, probably.)

Ladin: *Pudesses prëitanbel di danü?* (Can you please repeat?)

Friulian: *Tabaie a planc, par plasê.* (Please speak more slowly.)

French: *Occupe-toi de tes oignons.* (Mind your own business.)

Japanese: **わかりません** (Wakarimasen: "I don't understand.")

Chinese: 这个用汉语怎么说 (How do you say that in Chinese?)

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Contents

Preface

Silva Bratož, Anja Pirih, and Alenka Kocbek · 7

Introduction · 11

Common Beliefs about Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition

Silva Bratož · 13

Factors Influencing the Learning of Languages in Multilingual Environments · 29

Slovene-Medium and Bilingual Schools in Italy: Towards a New Paradigm?

Sara Brezigar · 31

Contiguous or Border Languages and Their Teaching in Europe

Irina Moira Cavaion · 47

Manifestation of Multilingualism in School Ideology, Environment and Practice:
An Ethnographic Survey of Case Examples from Schools in Europe

Ülle Säälük · 59

Perceived Importance of English and Its Connection to Learning Motivation
and Foreign Language Anxiety

Mojca Žefran · 77

Developing Cross-Linguistic Competences · 95

Using the Cultureme Paradigm in FLT

Alenka Kocbek · 97

Guidelines and Recommendations for the Development of Cross-Linguistic
Awareness for Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

Tina Čok · 111

The Illocutionary Force behind Learning

Hans Drumbl and Renata Zanin · 131

Developing Foreign Language Competence · 143

They Do Read, After All: Slovene Primary School Students' Reading Motivation in EFL

Anja Pirih · 145

Developing Foreign Language Literacy Skills in Primary School

Mateja Dagarin Fojkar, Mira Metljak, and Tina Rozmanič · 167

The Importance of Phonological Awareness Instruction in (Very) Young
Second/Foreign Language Learners

Anita Sila · 183

Developing Cross-Cultural Awareness · 207

Do They Appreciate Diversity? University Students' Approach to Linguistic
and Cultural Pluralism

Eva Seidl · 209

Fostering Intercultural Dialogue through Literature and Creative Writing:
Examples of Successful Classroom Practices

Matea Butković and Ester Vidović · 229

Approaches to Foreign Language Learning · 249

Developing Young Learners' Multiliteracies through Multimodal Storytelling

Lynn Mastellotto · 251

Suitability of Coursebook Materials for Teaching English Through CLIL

Melita Lemut Bajec · 267

Reviews · 287

Preface

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Over the last two decades, we have witnessed important changes in our perception of the role of languages in our social, economic, cultural and political environment. It has become clear that effective social integration and cohesion can only be reached by overcoming traditional language boundaries and promoting the knowledge of different languages and cultures. A response to the challenges posed by new forms of mobility and migration is the development of plurilingual and intercultural education which implies recognition of and support for the linguistic and cultural diversity of all the learners at all levels of schooling and whose ultimate objective is to build a more humane and inclusive society.

The monograph *Pathways to Plurilingual Education* addresses recent trends, challenges and developments related to plurilingual education and foreign/second language teaching and acquisition. It consists of fifteen chapters which discuss the topic from multiple perspectives, reflecting the complexity and potential of the field and suggesting that the road to an efficient plurilingual and pluricultural environment is all but smooth and straight. The issues addressed by the different authors are therefore varied, from current research in bilingualism, pedagogical implications of plurilingualism and innovative approaches in foreign language teaching to the importance of neighbouring languages and the question of identity in a world of cultural and linguistic diversity.

The volume is divided into six parts. The introductory part presents the chapter *Common Beliefs about Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition*, in which Silva Bratož looks at some of the most important assumptions

related to second language acquisition and the so called 'bilingual advantage.' She discusses the recent trends in the area of bilingualism and second language acquisition and points to the fact that the results of studies in this field are often still fragmentary and inconclusive.

The second part addresses different factors influencing the learning of languages in multilingual environments and sheds light on linguistic and cultural diversity from different perspectives. Sara Brezigar presents the results of a preliminary study on the challenges faced by Slovene-medium kindergartens and primary schools in the Italian region Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) in their endeavours to curb the trend of deteriorating linguistic skills among pupils by improving teaching methods, adjusting teaching contents, and developing teaching skills and suggests the implementation of a contextual approach to stop the decline of linguistic skills. In the next chapter, Irina Moira Cavaion discusses the complex nature and still disputable definition of contiguous or border languages and, after presenting several documents, recommendations and frameworks aimed at introducing or enhancing the teaching of neighbouring languages in EU border areas at all educational levels, points at the difficulty of providing an exhaustive overview in this field. She also presents some successful cross-border teaching projects involving these languages and underlines the urgency of launching a debate on the status of border languages within national and European linguistic policies. In the next chapter, Ulle Saalik argues that the increasing immigration flows and the resulting expansion of linguistic and cultural variety pose challenges to teachers, educators, and policy makers, as educational laws require that students be prepared for living and operating in linguistically and culturally diverse societies. She presents the results of an ethnographic research carried out in several schools in Europe promoting the use of two or more languages and pursuing the objectives of multilingualism and multiliteracy. The second part closes with Mojca Žefran's discussion on the status and significance of English and the correlation between the perceived importance of English to students' motivation for learning English and the levels of foreign language anxiety.

The third part focuses on developing cross-linguistic competences and deals with the multifaceted aspects of communication across language and cultural barriers. It opens with Alenka Kocbek's chapter in which she discusses the potentialities of using the 'cultureme' paradigm, a scaffolding tool originating in the domain of translation studies, for developing a fully-fledged communicative competence involving verbal, para-verbal, non-verbal and extra-verbal aspects, to be used in multilingual settings. In

the next chapter, Tina Čok proposes new guidelines and recommendations for foreign language learning and teaching, drawing on the results of an empirical research focused on the discrepancies between conceptual representations of reality and their verbalisations by native speakers of Chinese, Italian and Slovenian. Hans Drumbl and Renata Zanin conclude this part by analysing the process of learning a new language in the light of the speech act theory and by stressing the importance of illocution as the pragmatic foundation of effective cross-linguistic communication.

The fourth part presents different approaches to developing foreign language competences. In the first chapter, Anja Pirih focuses on reading motivation as one of the key factors influencing reading efficiency, and presents the results of a study involving young adolescents in Slovenia, which has shown that this age group has multidimensional EFL reading motivation, with the strongest component being EFL reading self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for EFL. In the next chapter, Mateja Dagarin Fojkar, Mira Metljak in Tina Rozmanič examine methods and activities applied by teachers for developing literacy in EFL and present the results of their research aimed at examining how English teachers in selected Slovene primary schools develop foreign language literacy skills in grades 3–5. The results of this research are meant to provide guidance in creating foreign language literacy materials and training programmes for teachers. In the closing chapter of this part, Anita Sila presents her model for developing phonological awareness in different second/foreign languages in the preschool period and its impact on the development of literacy skills in the languages concerned in later educational stages. Her model is based on the findings of several studies carried out with (very) young second/foreign language learners, which have proven the benefits of early phonological awareness instruction.

The fifth part discusses the development of cross-cultural awareness. It opens with Eva Seidl's chapter, in which she reports on a research conducted at the Department of Translation Studies at an Austrian University, aimed at investigating university students' perceptions of linguistic and cultural pluralism and their deliberate decisions regarding the use of linguistic resources in different areas of life. The findings of the study show that multilingual higher education in the field of transcultural communication and translation studies would profit from the establishing of inclusive learning environments acknowledging the linguistic and cultural resources of all learners and the implementing of teaching practices which adopt the concept of translanguaging. The second chapter in this part, authored by Matea Butković in Ester Vidović, examines the potential of literature and creative writing in fostering

intercultural dialogue. The authors present a range of classroom activities, which have been carried out at the Faculty of Teacher Education (University of Rijeka) and the Rochester Institute of Technology (Zagreb, Croatia) and have proven useful in encouraging the students to engage in intercultural dialogue inside multicultural classrooms and thus acquire the knowledge and tools enabling them to successfully navigate multicultural environments.

The last part looks at different approaches to foreign language learning. In the first chapter Lynne Masttelotto's argues that children's literature can be seen as a rich source of high-quality language input, and as a powerful pedagogical tool for developing young learners' functional literacy and emotional literacy. She shows how multimodal storytelling practices involving well-known picture books provide rich opportunities for communication and meaning-making activities with young learners through multisensory input that activates their learning on multiple levels. In the second chapter in this part, Melita Lemut Bajec analyses the use of selected course books for team teaching of Biology and English by adopting the CLIL approach in upper-secondary education. Her study focuses on the levels of cognitive demand, authenticity and comprehensiveness implied in and the motivation derived from the use of the selected course books, and shows that the students involved in the research found the teaching materials not challenging enough and expressed the desire for more problem-based teaching materials in order to be able not only to gain knowledge of the subjects involved, but also to develop critical thinking skills.