Joanna Kic-Drgas / Violeta Jurkovič

Paths of Purpose

A Journey into LSP Teacher Development



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ISBN Print: 9783847116905 – ISBN E-Book: 9783847016908

SPECLANG
Beiträge zur Berufs- und Fachkommunikation

Band 5

Herausgegeben von
Beata Grzeszczakowska-Pawlikowska, Jacek Makowski
und Agnieszka Stawikowska-Marcinkowska

Die Bände dieser Reihe sind peer-reviewed.

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ISBN Print: 9783847116905 – ISBN E-Book: 9783847016908

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With 21 figures

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ISBN Print: 9783847116905 – ISBN E-Book: 9783847016908

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über https://dnb.de abrufbar.

Die Veröffentlichung wurde von der Abteilung für Sprache und Literatur der Adam-Mickiewicz-Universität Poznań, der Fakultät für moderne Fremdsprachen und dem Institut für Linguistik der Adam-Mickiewicz-Universität Poznań mitfinanziert.

Gutachterinnen: Prof. Dr. Yasemin Kirkgöz (University of Çukurova, Türkiye), Dr. Olinka Breka (University of Zagreb, Croatia)

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Umschlagabbildung: © Violeta Jurkovič

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com

ISSN 2750-6169
ISBN 978-3-8470-1690-8

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Preface

This publication is, and should be seen as an invitation, an invitation to travel and discover the still untrodden paths of the education and professional development of teachers of languages for specific purposes (LSP). For several reasons, we hope that this publication is unique. Firstly, the subject of the pre-service education and in-service professional development of LSP teachers is still a poorly researched topic, if only because of the great diversity and dynamic changes occurring in the professional sector. Secondly, it offers a non-perspective view of the topic, a theoretical review of the literature, practical solutions proposed within the framework of implementation projects (two of which the authors participated in as leaders of Polish and Slovene teams), and the authors' empirical research, presenting the opinions of language teacher educators in the context of pre-service education and in-service professional development of LSP teachers. Thirdly, the innovative dimension of this publication lies in the comparison of two similar but nevertheless different educational contexts – Polish and Slovene – in which the LSP teacher is confronted with constant challenges.

The aim of this publication is to point out the main aspects of LSP teaching (such as needs analysis, curriculum and syllabus design, materials design, or assessment), while highlighting the role of LSP teachers, their competences and career paths. These considerations will form the basis for the formulation of the possibilities for the pre-service education and in-service professional development of LSP teachers based on qualitative data collected in Poland and Slovenia among language teacher educators.

This publication consists of five main chapters, a preface, and conclusions. It opens with this Preface, which includes the main aims and objectives of the book, and the characteristics of the target audience of this publication. The first chapter is a description of the context of LSP teaching in Poland and Slovenia. It provides information on the educational system in both countries, the language policy in place, the legal regulations concerning the profession of LSP teachers and their legal status. The chapter goes on to point out the paths of LSP teacher education in both countries, the associations that promote new trends in LSP teaching and

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the networking of teachers through conferences. The second chapter thematises the basic areas of LSP teaching, starting with the definition of LSP, then through needs analysis, the development of syllabuses and curricula, the preparation of LSP teaching materials, the choice of appropriate teaching methodology and, last but not least, assessment. The focus of the next chapter, the third, is placed on LSP teachers. This chapter describes their roles and competences, pre-service and in-service education, and professional development programmes, LSP teacher identity, and the professional challenges they need to negotiate in their teaching contexts and along their careers. The fourth chapter is devoted to EU projects implemented so far in the field of LSP teacher education and professional development in response to the growing and diversifying needs of experienced and future LSP teachers. In this section, three projects – TRAILs, Catapult, and LSP-TEOC.Pro – are presented through their main aims, objectives, and results. The fifth chapter is the result of interviews with language teacher educators in Poland and Slovenia, and is a kind of change of perspective in describing the relevant elements of pre-service education and in-service professional development, which are previously presented on the basis of accumulated literature. The book closes with conclusions with a summary of and authors' takeaways from each main chapter.

The target group of this publication will primarily be LSP teachers at secondary school or university level, as well as in adult education, since it is hoped that in this publication they will not only find guidance on relevant issues in the field of LSP education and professional development, but will also be able to familiarise themselves with the latest literature and research trends in this field. Also important recipients of the book might be language teacher educators and policy-makers. The latter, in particular, significantly shape the contexts in which LSP teachers need to operate. It is worth mentioning that the book is dedicated not only to experienced LSP teachers, but also to young people who have decided to make this their career. The book can also serve as a signpost for researchers interested in the field of LSP teaching, as well as for those who are planning future research or teaching projects that could shed new light on hitherto undiscovered areas of LSP teacher education and professional development.

This book does not give a straightforward answer as to what the pre-service education and in-service professional development for LSP teachers should look like instead, its aim is to juxtapose what is certain, or indisputable (theoretical considerations) with what is still in the realm of expectations (the needs of LSP teachers, their concerns, and the challenges ahead). While a lot of research has already been invested in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), other languages are still under researched. In this book we draw a lot of information from available ESP research, but because we are advocates of multilingualism, we will use LSP (and not ESP) throughout. We also hope that this publication will contribute to

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the development of research into all languages taught for specific purposes and not only English.

We hope that this book will contribute to a better understanding of the situation of the many thousands of LSP teachers in all different corners of the world and, at the same time, intensify efforts to fill the existing but narrowing gap in practical implementations of research findings.

The authors would like to express special thanks to the reviewers: Prof. Yasemin Kirkgöz from the University of Çukurova, Turkey, and Dr. Olinka Breka from the University of Zagreb, Croatia, for their factual and highly constructive reviews. Additionally, we extend our gratitude for the financial support of this publication to Vice-Rector Prof. Dr. Katarzyna Dziubalska-Kołaczyk and the collegial body, The School of Languages and Literatures, Prof. Krzysztof Stroński, Dean of the Faculty of Modern Languages and Literatures, as well as Prof. Danuta Wiśniewska, Director of the Institute of Applied Linguistics at Adam Mickiewicz University.

We wish you an enjoyable and fruitful reading experience.

Poznań, Portorož, 2023

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1. Context

1.1. Introduction

Although the use of foreign languages in different professional contexts is becoming increasingly important in the labour market, the preparation of LSP teachers for the challenges of their future professional path, and therefore the provision of various forms of pre-service education and in-service professional development still seems to be a secondary issue. A report prepared by the European Commission (2017) highlights persistent shortcomings in the adequate preparation of LSP teachers for work with different groups of students, which contributes to reduced educational effectiveness in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and beyond. Therefore, due to the lack of adequate preparation to teach LSP, achieving the desired outcomes is not always possible (see Kırkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018).

This is particularly worrying, due to the fact that knowledge of specialised languages not only allows increased professional mobility but also significantly improves the employability of future graduates (see Kic-Drgas, 2022; Kırkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018), and is therefore an important element of a professional career. However, due to its specificity, resulting from the combination of linguistic knowledge and professional expertise, LSP teaching remains an enormous challenge for pre-service and in-service LSP teachers.

In this chapter, the current situation of LSP teachers will be discussed, with specific focus on their legal status resulting from national regulations, as well the construction of the LSP teacher education curriculum and professional development programmes. The perspectives and challenges of LSP teacher education and professional development will be based on an analysis of the educational landscape in Slovenia and Poland.

The choice of these countries results from the fact that firstly both countries have, in the last decades, undergone reforms of their educational systems that have also influenced the work and professional path of foreign language teachers. Secondly, in both countries LSP teacher education and professional development

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is developing dynamically, through the organisation of LSP conferences, participation in international projects addressing LSP teacher issues, as well as publications which are a response to the needs of LSP teachers representing different disciplines.

The chapter is divided into two main parts reflecting the LSP teaching context in Poland and Slovenia. First, both countries are presented, then the educational system in each country is described. Next, the definition of the teacher of foreign languages for general purposes (LGP) and LSP teacher in the light of legal regulations is provided. Following that, the status of LSP teachers is highlighted. The next part of this chapter is dedicated to the description of subjects supporting pre-service LSP teacher education at universities, and the presentation of an example LSP teacher education course. Finally, information about LSP conferences, associations, and journals is provided for both countries.

1.2. Poland

1.2.1. Presentation

Poland, with a total area of 312,679 km²[1], is located in the centre of the Northern European plain[2] and has borders with Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, and Russia. Geographically, Poland has access to the Baltic Sea to the north and the Tatra mountains to the south. The capital city of Poland is Warsaw.

The population of Poland is 38.5 million people[3]. It is rather homogeneous, 95% are citizens of Polish origin[4]. However, this situation has recently changed as a result of the war in Ukraine, which contributed to the migration of many Ukrainians to Poland in 2022.

Poland's official language is Polish[5]. This inflectional language is a member of the West Slavic group of Indo-European languages[6]. Polish is spoken as a mother language by some 44 million people worldwide[7].

1 http://www.studyinpoland.pl/en/about-poland/14-general-information-about-poland.
2 http://www.studyinpoland.pl/en/about-poland/15-why-poland.
3 http://www.studyinpoland.pl/en/about-poland/14-general-information-about-poland.
4 https://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechne/nsp-2021/nsp-2021-wyniki-ostateczne/informacja-o-wynikach-narodowego-spisu-powszechnego-ludnosci-i-mieszkan-2021-na-poziomie-wojewodztw-powiatow-i-gmin,1,1.html.
5 https://sip.lex.pl/akty-prawne/dzu-dziennik-ustaw/konstytucja-rzeczypospolitej-polskiej-16798613/art-27.
6 https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/polska-jezyk;4575053.html.
7 https://blog/jakie-sa-gwary-i-jezyki-w-polsce-poznaj-jezyki-urzedowe-dialekty-i-gwary-ziem-polskich/.

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