

Preface

We are constantly confronted with new demands in our personal and professional lives, especially as we face an ever more internationalized world. It is therefore the case that a knowledge of foreign languages can effectively arm us and support us in our efforts to cope with the challenges thus arising. Consequently, applied linguists feel particularly obliged to look for ways of facilitating the language learning process. This conviction underpins the position assumed by the contributors to the present volume and is reflected in their papers. Their intention is to present and discuss a number of issues related with “making the learning burden lighter” which are currently exercising theorists and practitioners in the field of teaching and learning foreign languages.

The volume consists of 18 papers divided into three parts. Part I, *Approaches to Language, Language Teaching, and Learning*, is of a theoretical and descriptive character and presents the authors’ individual views of and attitudes to the problems discussed in the five papers. **Stanislaw Puppel** considers every language as participating in “the natural language global arena”; he goes on to say that individual languages treated as organisms are distinct components of the alleged “Imperial Tetragon of Embodiment”. Also, since language diversity is the reflection of culture it actually “secure[s] the preservation of humanity’s maximum cognitive-cultural-linguistic resources”. **Anna Ewert** discusses the relationship between theoretical linguistics and applied linguistics from a Polish applied linguist’s point of view. She appeals for the accurate defining of the scope of applied linguistics and its relation to other disciplines. She also provides an outline history of applied linguistics and relates it to the Polish scene. **Maria Dakowska** discusses different aspects of foreign language didactics: as an autonomous, noninterdisciplinary science with its own objectives; as a field opposed to language teaching methodology and its meaning with regard to the cognitive potential of sciences. She provides a number of rational arguments for her views; these, however, must be deemed controversial, particularly by those who have adopted the ecological position with regard to language as a quantum phenomenon that requires an interdisciplinary scientific approach. **Romuald Gozdawa-Golebiowski**’s contribution makes a case for acknowledging the

dichotomy postulated by Byram (2010) with regard to educational and functional factors affecting target language and culture acquisition. It is shown in the article that FL (foreign language) didactics faces the problem of choosing between epistemic goals and practical ones, which then determines the teaching methods and approaches adopted. This issue leads the author to propose that it is formulaic language that should be taught in the first place due to its dual nature which comprises both epistemic and utilitarian features. **Jan Zalewski** concentrates on theoretical considerations pertaining to foreign language instruction in the domain of composition writing. Of particular interest to him is the opposition between process and post-process as applied in teaching writing and in linguistic research. He also discusses a number of key developments that have recently taken place in relevant research and had an effect on the current epistemic perception of the process/post-process distinction.

Part II of the collection comprises six papers that involve, in one way or another, the concept of *Awareness in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*. **Anna Nizęgorodcew** reports on an international Polish–Ukrainian project which investigated English majors in two universities in the respective countries with regard to the students’ perception of the English language. The findings from her research show that students perceive the target language to be dependent on the source culture. To Polish students English is a language of international communication, while Ukrainian ones link it with the target culture. This finding has pedagogical implications, in that the texts studied in the language classroom can be given different interpretations in different educational contexts. **Halina Chodkiewicz** points out that recent understandings of text processing and of reading comprehension call for a fresh conceptualization of reading purposes. She considers reading as a purpose-driven process and looks at reading comprehension skill from the point of view of an L2 learner with the aim of relating it to teaching the skill. She argues that it is this approach to the process that will adequately develop learners’ reading skills which they need to further their education. Next she discusses a number of important issues that pertain to the concept of reading as a goal-directed endeavor. **Anna Michońska-Stadnik** notes that according to recent research findings, it is the left hemisphere that is engaged in remembering FL words while the actual use of them in communication is processed via the right hemisphere. She refers to vocabulary retention only and discusses the role of explicit metacognitive instruction in derivational morphology. She argues that in learning words the awareness of their structure is part of declarative knowledge and assumes that it should aid learners in memorizing them. This, however, has not been confirmed experimentally. **Mirosław Pawlak** argues that the effectiveness of form-focused instruction depends on the beliefs of learners and teachers concerning the ways formal instruction should be conducted. Unfortunately, it turns out that this is not always the case. His study of representative samples of advanced students and teachers of English revealed that the beliefs about various aspects of form-focused instruction which are held by the research subjects very

often differ. The findings have significant pedagogical implications and provide grounds for practical recommendations. **Ewa Piechurska-Kuciel** addresses the problems of social support that adolescent foreign language learners need and actually receive from others, which results in their SL (second language) learning achievements. She analyzes their mutual relationship in terms of gender as a mediating factor, as it has been empirically documented that it plays an important role in diminishing stress and raising adolescents' general wellbeing—in this respect females obtain more support than males. The author's own study validates earlier research to the extent that it proves that both genders receive equally high support from their parents, while, when correlated with achievement, the differences in favor of females are less significant. Teacher support turns out to be the lowest factor for both genders, and peer support proves to be a weak predictor of FL attainment. **Danuta Gabryś-Barker** deals with the construct of space as a socio-cultural component of language users' communicative competence, the functioning of which can differ across languages and can be attributed to their cultural backgrounds. Her article attempts to answer the question whether the concept reflected in the L1 mental lexicon overlaps with L2 or L3 lexicons. Her data come from investigating L1 Polish and L1 Portuguese trilingual language users of L2 English and L3 German, who performed association tasks in their L1s.

Part III, *Aspects of Foreign Language Instruction*, includes seven papers that are related to language learning in formal settings and are pedagogically oriented. The opening paper by **Zbigniew Możejko**, on standards and advancedness in foreign language education, presents the standards that are required of language students in assessing their language level as adequate for the language skills they have developed. This serves as a starting point for a discussion on the notion of advancedness in foreign language education and for an analysis of the role of standards in the educational systems in the USA and Europe. Furthermore, the paper investigates the role of two important documents: the National Standards in American Education, and the Common European Framework of Reference, in assisting the development of advanced language capacities. The paper concludes with a suggestion for preparing learners to reach advancedness. **Magdalena Szpotowicz** reports on a longitudinal study on the four-year-long process of FL English acquisition by young learners that took place in instructed contexts. She explores factors influencing early language learning in Poland. The study was carried out as part of a multinational, longitudinal research project ELLiE, the main aim of which was to explore and describe potential linguistic attainment in instructed contexts with little class time available for instruction. It also examined language policy implementation, key factors contributing to language achievement, and the linguistic and nonlinguistic effects of an early start in language learning. **Joanna Nijakowska** devotes her paper to problems related with dyslexia. She provides arguments in favor of implementing the multisensory structured learning (MSL) approach in teaching foreign languages to dyslexic learners. She regrets that language teachers are often unwilling to introduce new, yet positively verified,

approaches and methods in their teaching practice. This she attributes to their insufficient training and personal reluctance to get involved. This paper is meant to bridge the gap between research findings and actual practice in FL teaching to dyslexics. The author discusses both the principles of MSL (multisensory structured learning) and presents findings that have proven the effectiveness of this approach in teaching languages to dyslexic learners. **Liliana Piasecka** discusses the role of the literature in foreign language learning and teaching; she also argues for the usefulness of literary texts in developing communicative competence, intercultural competence, and both individual and social growth. Currently, the many-sided didactic value of integrated language and the literature teaching is conspicuously recognized. However, this approach and its implementation in the FL classroom requires that teachers should be properly and adequately trained with regard to what texts to use and how to use them. The relevant situation is discussed within the Polish school context and the benefits of teaching English with the use of literary texts are presented. **Jerzy Zybert** argues that learners of English should be taught interrogative structures right from the start. He provides appropriate arguments claiming that students' awareness of a particular incompetence incapacitates their otherwise relatively developed interactive abilities in English, which affects them emotionally and lowers their self-esteem. He concludes that teaching interrogatives should be of primary concern to English teachers. **Ewa Waniek-Klimczak** presents and discusses the results of an online survey of English pronunciation teaching practised in Europe. The European context serves as the background for looking into pronunciation teaching in Poland from the teachers' viewpoint. This allows for comparison of Polish teachers' practices with those used in other countries. The survey is intended to show that the quality of pronunciation teaching can be improved if the attitudes and practices of language teachers are investigated. **Teresa Siek-Piskozub** and **Aleksandra Jankowska** emphasize the significant role that teaching practice plays in preparing students for the foreign language teaching profession. Their suggestions and recommendations with regard to the adequate development of trainees are based on their studies, which have enabled them to look into the practicum from both the trainees' and the school-based mentor's point of view. This is followed by a discussion of expected foreign language teacher competence and the place of the practicum in competence development.

This volume has been prepared as a tribute to Professor Hanna Komorowska. She is a scholar well-known throughout Poland and the world in the field of applied linguistics, and it is in recognition of her achievements and her service to education that this volume has been put together. Her scholarly range is remarkable and made manifest in the impressive scope of the topics and themes addressed in her published work in didactics, pedagogy, psychology, foreign language teaching methodology, and language acquisition. The variety of issues discussed by the contributors to this volume reflects in a small way the richness of Professor Hanna Komorowska's professional and academic interests. In soliciting these articles and compiling this book, we wish to respect Professor Hanna Komorowska

not only as a distinguished international scholar but also as our friend, colleague, and mentor to generations of students and researchers.

The Editors

Reference

Byram, M. 2010. Linguistic and cultural education for *Bildung* and citizenship. *The Modern Language Journal* 94: 317–320.

Investigations in Teaching and Learning Languages

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