

Yasemin Kirkgöz
Çukurova University, Türkiye

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**JOANNA KIC-DRGAS & VIOLETA JURKOVIČ:
PATHS OF PURPOSE:
A JOURNEY INTO LSP TEACHER DEVELOPMENT
Brill, 2024.**

Abstract

This volume, authored by Joanna Kic-Drgas and Violeta Jurkovič, offers a comprehensive exploration of the educational and professional development of teachers specializing in languages for specific purposes (LSP). It provides a comparative analysis of the educational systems in Poland and Slovenia, highlighting the roles, competencies, and career trajectories of LSP teachers. The book opens with a preface, which outlines the main objectives, followed by five chapters, each divided into subsections, and concludes with a synthesis section, where the authors summarize the key points of each chapter. It delves into various critical aspects of LSP teaching, including needs analysis, curriculum development, materials design, and assessment methods. The authors present their involvement in relevant projects, and share findings from their empirical research with language teacher educators; as such, the book offers valuable insights into both pre-service and in-service professional development for LSP teachers.

Keywords: Languages for specific purposes (LSP), teacher development

Review

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the volume, divided into two parts that examine the LSP teaching contexts in Poland and Slovenia. It provides a comprehensive overview of each country, including geographical features, population, official languages, and historical backgrounds. The chapter highlights the current landscape for LSP teachers, discussing their legal status, curriculum, and professional development programs amid recent educational reforms. The authors note that LSP teacher education and professional development are evolving dynamically in both nations through conferences, international collaborations, and relevant publications. A strong commitment to foreign language learning exists, with English taught as the first foreign language starting at age seven.

Despite these similarities, Poland and Slovenia exhibit significant differences in size, demographics, geography, geopolitics, and history, which influence their educational frameworks, linguistic contexts, and language policies. In Poland, LSP teaching is a mandatory part of foreign language teacher education, whereas, in Slovenia, LSP courses are elective, allowing teachers to enter the profession without specific LSP training, although degree programs provide some linguistic and methodological preparation. The Bologna Reform had varied impacts: Poland increased the number of compulsory LSP courses, while Slovenia converted some compulsory LSP courses to elective status and reduced teaching hours. The chapter concludes that, despite political parallels, the distinctions in educational systems, linguistic environments, and language policies in both countries could significantly affect the training, professional development, status, and working conditions of LSP teachers.

Chapter 2 introduces the field of LSP, focusing on critical aspects of its pedagogy through recent literature. LSP is defined in contrast to related concepts and underpinned by key components including needs analysis, curriculum and syllabus design, materials development, teaching methodologies, and assessment. Drawing on Anthony's (2018) framework, which emphasizes needs analysis, learning objectives, materials and methods, and evaluation, the chapter highlights the importance of tailoring language instruction to learners' specific academic, workplace, or professional contexts. A comprehensive needs analysis is presented as the cornerstone of effective LSP instruction, informing the development of curricula and syllabuses aligned with learners' professional and communicative demands. The chapter explores distinctions between syllabuses designed for LSP and General Language Proficiency (LGP), as well as curriculum approaches such as subject-centered, learner-centered, and problem-centered, shaped by factors such as educational policies, industry collaboration, and student needs. The discussion connects LSP teaching to English Medium Instruction (EMI) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), examining the transferability of LSP principles while addressing the unique requirements of EMI learners. Challenges in LSP material development, such as limited resources and slow adaptation to market demands, are also considered. In terms of methodology, the chapter evaluates Project-based Learning (PjBL), Task-based Learning (TBL), and Problem-based Learning (PBL), emphasizing their capacity for learner engagement and contextual flexibility while delineating their differences in focus and task specificity. Finally, it examines the distinctive features of LSP assessment, emphasizing contextual and situational relevance alongside considerations of reliability, validity,

authenticity, and practicality, with a focus on integrating disciplinary knowledge and professional contexts into language evaluation.

Chapter 3 examines LSP teachers, starting with a statement from Richards, who noted, “surprisingly little is known about the professional lives and beliefs of ESP teachers around the world” (1997, p. 51). The authors address the misconception that LSP teaching is routine and view LSP teachers merely as technicians. They emphasize the dynamic and multifaceted nature of LSP teaching, particularly as classroom contexts evolve due to technological advancements and increasing multiculturalism. The discussion then shifts to the various competencies required for effective LSP teaching, advocating for a well-researched competence framework specifically designed for this field. Examples include the Erasmus+ Catapult project’s LSP Teacher Common Competence Framework and BALEAP’s Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes, both of which serve as valuable resources. A flexible framework is needed to accommodate diverse disciplines, educational levels, language proficiencies, and transversal skills. The chapter briefly explores LSP teacher identity, focusing on how these educators perceive themselves in relation to their roles, competencies, and the broader educational community. The authors acknowledge both the overlaps and distinctions between LSP teachers and those who teach general language programs (LGP) or other specific language programs. Common challenges faced by LSP teachers include the integration of authentic disciplinary materials, adaptation to evolving technological landscapes, and addressing the diverse needs of students. The authors point out that many challenges today mirror those experienced by LSP teachers four decades ago, highlighting a persistent lack of attention to LSP teacher education and professional development. Finally, the chapter emphasizes the importance of LSP communities of practice as essential networks that support professional development. These communities enable LSP teachers to engage through participation in associations, conferences, and journals, providing particularly valuable support for those teaching less widely taught LSPs or disciplines.

Chapter 4 delves into teacher professional development projects in LSP, focusing on three pivotal initiatives: TRAILS, Catapult, and LSP-TEOC-Pro. These innovative efforts aim to bridge the gap between the qualifications of aspiring LSP teachers and the demands of the field, addressing the growing need for well-trained LSP educators across Europe. The TRAILS project identifies shortcomings in LSP teacher education by comparing teachers’ needs with existing programs. Despite a surge in interest in LSP teaching, opportunities for professional development remain limited. Interviews with in-service teachers highlighted various gaps, including course design, lesson planning, genre-specific knowledge, teaching methods, assessment strategies, and essential soft skills. Additionally, a lack of standardization across more than a thousand institutions was noted. The Catapult project focused on the competencies required for effective LSP teaching, particularly emphasizing the importance of ICT skills. It uncovered a disconnect between the skill development offered in higher education and the actual needs of LSP teachers, such as specialized knowledge and institutional support. In response, Catapult developed a MOOC designed to enhance the competencies identified through its research. The LSP-TEOC-Pro project further extends these efforts, concentrating on online education and professional development for both experienced and pre-service LSP teachers. It offers a multilingual course comprising eight modules that address essential aspects of LSP teaching. This course features innovative certification options and personalized pathways for teachers at various levels of expertise. The authors argue that the research and resources

generated by these projects significantly enhance LSP education and professional development at the EU level, marking a meaningful step toward equipping educators to meet the challenges of this specialized field.

Chapter 5 explores LSP teacher education and professional development through insights from foreign language teacher educators regarding both pre-service and in-service training for LSP teachers. The authors argue that the professional development needs of LSP teachers have been historically neglected as previous studies primarily relied on LSP teachers as respondents, thereby overlooking crucial stakeholders in the teacher education process, particularly pre-service teacher educators who are vital in preparing future foreign language teachers. To address this gap, the authors conduct qualitative research to gather perspectives from foreign language teacher educators on the professional development needs of LSP teachers. Both groups recognize the importance of a general language teaching methodology course for LSP and General Language Proficiency (LGP) teachers, but they also agree that LSP teachers require additional competencies. These include genre analysis, standardization, and disciplinary awareness along with essential soft skills such as flexibility, self-directed learning, intercultural competence, and collaboration. The authors highlight that existing pre-service LSP teacher education programs in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) lack standardization, and emphasize the role of policymakers in shaping LSP education. The study indicates a growing demand for qualified LSP teachers and underscores the importance of foreign language teacher educators in fostering collaboration throughout an LSP teacher's career, particularly in supporting novice teachers. The authors call for international networks and resources to support LSP teachers, especially those in less widely taught languages.

Concluding Remarks

This book offers a thorough analysis of LSP for both pre-service and in-service teachers across two EU countries. By linking LSP theory with practical applications in various aspects of LSP, including needs analysis, course and syllabus design, and the professional requirements of LSP teachers, it provides insights relevant to diverse LSP contexts. I highly recommend this volume to pre-service and in-service LSP teachers, language teacher educators, policymakers, LSP curriculum designers, and researchers interested in the field of LSP education. As the significance of LSP continues to grow globally, this book encourages exploration of new avenues for personal and professional development in teaching, research, and project initiatives within this dynamic field.

Reference

Richards, K. (1997). Teachers for specific purposes. In R. Howard & G. Brown (Eds.), *Teacher Education for Languages for Specific Purposes* (pp. 115–126). Multilingual Matters.

Izvleček

Joanna Kic-Drgas & Violeta Jurkovič: Paths of Purpose: A Journey into LSP Teacher Development. Brill, 2024.

Monografija avtoric Joanne Kic-Drgas in Violete Jurkovič, napisana v angleškem jeziku, ponuja celovit pregled izobraževalnega in strokovnega razvoja učiteljev tujih jezikov stroke. Monografija se začne s predgovorom, kjer avtorici predstavita glavne cilje publikacije, nato pa sledi pet temeljnih poglavij, ki se dalje členijo na podpoglavja. V njej je najprej predstavljena analiza izobraževalnih sistemov na Poljskem in v Sloveniji, s poudarkom na vlogah, kompetencah ter poklicnih poteh te skupine učiteljev. Monografija se zaključi z zadnjim poglavjem, v katerem avtorici povzameta ključne točke vseh prejšnjih poglavij. V delu so obravnavani različni ključni vidiki področja tujih jezikov stroke, vključno z analizo potreb, snovanjem učnih načrtov in gradiv ter načini vrednotenja znanja. Avtorici predstavita tudi zasnovo in rezultate treh evropskih projektov, ki so razvili izobraževalne vsebine za ciljno skupino učiteljev tujih jezikov stroke. Ključni znanstveni prispevek monografije so rezultati kvalitativne empirične raziskave, izvedene z izobraževalci bodočih učiteljev tujih jezikov. Monografija ponuja dragocen vpogled tako v strokovni razvoj učiteljev tujih jezikov stroke, ki šele začenjajo svojo poklicno pot, kot tudi vseživljenjski razvoj izkušenih učiteljev na tem področju.

Ključne besede: tuji jeziki stroke (TJS), izobraževanje in usposabljanje učiteljev TJS