

From the Editors

It is with great satisfaction that we present this special issue of 'Zeszyty Łużyckie' titled "Teaching and Studying Minority/Minoritized Languages of the Iberian Peninsula". We hope that the articles presented provide valuable insight and an overview of innovative pedagogical approaches for educators, theorists, researchers, university and secondary school students, and language activists interested in this interdisciplinary field which spans between applied linguistics and sociolinguistics. The articles gathered here represent diverse perspectives on the opportunities, challenges, and methodologies involved in teaching languages such as Catalan, Galician, Basque, and Aragonese while considering the nuances of regional varieties, as well as social and cultural contexts.

Teaching the minority languages of the Iberian Peninsula in the university and secondary education context in Europe is crucial for preserving linguistic diversity and fostering intercultural understanding. These languages are not only key elements of regional identities but also represent rich cultural and historical heritage. By incorporating them into university and secondary education curricula, institutions not only contribute to the revitalization and promotion of these languages per se, but also offer the students unique opportunities for multilingual proficiency and cross-cultural exchange. Moreover, teaching minority languages helps challenge linguistic hierarchies and hegemonies and supports the broader European commitment to fostering linguistic diversity and minority language rights.

We bring together researchers from diverse prominent European higher education institutions, such as Universität Leipzig, Universidade de Vigo, Universitat de les Illes Balears, The Open University, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, Uniwersytet Łódzki, and Uniwersytet Jagielloński. Thus the issue offers a broad perspective on the current methods and approaches to second or third language learning as well as teaching in the context of different national languages and teaching policies.

The articles collected in this volume present two main approaches to the main topic: the theoretical and descriptive approach combined with one based on practice and focused on applicable proposals of new teaching solutions.

Marta Pawłowska examines the status of the neuter article *lo* in Catalan, a phenomenon often dismissed as a Castilianism. The study investigates the tension between prescriptive norms and everyday spoken language, offering valuable insight into the way such linguistic features are addressed in selected textbooks and grammar companions which may have impact on teaching practices in the sociolinguistic situation of Catalan, a language increasingly influenced by Spanish.

Ildikó Szijj's description of the history of Catalan, Galician, and Basque language courses held at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest offers a comprehensive view of how these languages have been taught over time, emphasizing the importance of both linguistic and cultural education.

Maria Filipowicz-Rudek draws attention to the role of motivation in the teaching and learning of minoritized languages, arguing that the teaching of Galician, for example, involves profound engagement with cultural identity, best facilitated through creative tools. The author presents a series of observations based on experience as a Galician language teacher who has been actively using poetry and songs as auxiliary learning materials.

Carsten Sinner's contribution focuses on motivation in language learning, specifically regarding the acquisition of translation and interpreting skills. The article highlights how language mediation activities enhance both academic success and student engagement with minority languages like Catalan and Galician. The analysis is based on surveys and analyses of students' learning progress drawn from long-term observation.

Elga Cremades, Ivan Solivellas, and Anna Tudela-Isanta's collective work sheds light on the impact of language ideologies on the use of Catalan in the Balearic Islands, particularly among young speakers. By examining the language attitudes that affect identity and usage, the authors propose pedagogical strategies to tackle linguistic prejudices in the classroom, thus fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

Katarzyna Ciszewska's article introduces the concept of cooperative learning as a powerful tool for enhancing plurilingual competence. A proposed lesson unit plan incorporates minority languages like Catalan, Galician, and Aragonese into Spanish language classes, demonstrating how these languages can enrich the students' linguistic repertoire in a collaborative setting.

Similarly, Vanesa Freire Armada focuses on an innovative approach in Spanish secondary education, designing a short-term Galician course within the framework of a French language curriculum, providing

a compelling example of cross-linguistic integration and evidencing the benefits of interdisciplinary projects.

Together, these articles underscore the importance of contextualizing minority/minoritized language teaching and learning within broader socio-cultural and ideological frameworks. They highlight the need for innovative, motivated, and culturally responsive approaches to foster deeper understanding and appreciation of the linguistic diversity within the Iberian Peninsula.

The teaching of minority languages of the Iberian Peninsula remains in demand among both participants of philology courses outside the Peninsula and students and pupils in Spanish bilingual regions. This fact suggests that developing the offer in these languages by introducing them into curricula in different countries and at different levels of education is an idea worth considering.

It is our hope that the publication of this volume encourages those responsible for the curriculum policies within institutions that may influence the future of these languages in a European context, to regard the opportunities associated with the teaching of this aspect of the Iberian heritage.

