

Researching Educational Practices, Teacher Education and Professional Development for Early Language Learning

Examples from Europe

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Introduction

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Introduction

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Researching Educational Practices, Teacher Education and Professional Development for Early Language Learning: Examples from Europe is made up of chapters written from papers presented at the international conference *Teachers and teacher educators: Education and professional development for early language learning*, chaired by Sandie Mourão and Carolyn Leslie from the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at Nova University of Lisbon (NOVA FCSH) in November 2020. The event was a happy collaboration between the then Early Language Learning Research Network (ELLReN)¹ facilitated through AILA – **International Association of Applied Linguistics**, the Primary English Education in Portugal (PEEP) Network² and NOVA FCSH. Originally planned as a face-to-face event, it became virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic and brought together colleagues from Europe and beyond.

Early language learning, especially that of teaching English, has been characterised until recently as “the Cinderella of applied linguistics research in general and of second language acquisition in particular” (Garton & Copland, 2019, p. 1). The premise for the event was that research into teacher education and professional development was, and at the time of completing this introduction still is, an emerging field when taking into consideration early childhood and the earlier years of formal education (i.e., 2–12 years old). The purpose of the conference was to focus on the education and professional development of teachers and teacher educators to foster multilingual spaces in the early years of formal education, and to provide a platform to further cement the relevance of learning from and with different contexts. Multilingualism is recognised here as the use of two or more languages in formal education, even if the second language is a foreign language (cf. Cummins, 2007).

Teacher education and teacher preparation – a combination of training and professional development (cf. Freeman, 2009) – has been identified as crucial for the success of early language learning (Alstad, 2022; Emery, 2012; Enever, 2014; Rich, 2019; Rixon, 2017). Yet, whole volumes that focus solely on empirical research into teachers, their education and development are few (cf. parts of Valente & Xerri, 2023b; Wilden & Porsch, 2017; Zein & Garton,

2019), and those that include a focus on teacher educators and higher education curricula even scarcer. The objective therefore of this edited volume is to disseminate empirical research in this ever-expanding field and highlight the implications for teacher education in early language learning.

The volume covers teacher education in contexts of multilingualism and English as a foreign language (EFL) with children from 3 to 12 years old in Europe, with sections that focus on teacher practices, teacher education and teacher education curricula. The chapters discuss research undertaken in Finland, Iceland, Germany, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. However, the issues discussed in the research are of relevance to teacher education for multilingualism and early language learning across Europe and beyond.

Multilingualism and early language learning in a linguistically diverse Europe

Europe is a linguistically diverse continent and groups of children in European schools are progressively more linguistically heterogeneous, speaking the official, regional or minority languages as well as home languages (i.e., of speakers from migrant backgrounds), and non-territorial languages like Romany. Supporting language diversity and language learning has been a clear European policy since the Barcelona European Council of 2002 which included a call to action “to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age” (European Council, 2002, p. 19). This was recently reiterated in a Council recommendation of May 2019 advocating, amongst many things, to:

- Apply comprehensive approaches to improve teaching and learning of languages.
- (Value) linguistic diversity of learners and (use) it as a learning resource including involving parents, other carers and the wider local community in language education.
- Encourage research in and use of innovative, inclusive and multilingual pedagogies ..., and innovate initial teacher education.

(Council of the European Union 2019, pp. 18–19)

Note the references to multiple languages being a resource and the importance of multilingual pedagogies. However, even though the presence of various languages in schools is regarded as an asset according to the European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2023), “teachers are seldom equipped with the competences they need to embrace the linguistic and cultural diversity they (increasingly) encounter in their classrooms” (p. 103). Results from a recent cross-national study in five European countries prompted the following recommendations:

As societal and individual multilingualism are the norm in Europe, it is imperative that research finds the most adequate ways of dealing with such phenomena by empowering teachers to acknowledge multilingualism in (language) education, instead of focusing solely on languages of instruction.

(Duarte et al., 2023, p. 62)

Results from Duarte et al.'s study suggest that future research agendas should “prioritize mainstream settings and features of multilingual didactics” (p. 62). This falls in line with the “multilingual turn” (García & Wei, 2014), situating language use as a social phenomenon that is (slowly) seeping into discourse associated with foreign language (FL) learning. We bracket “slowly,” as there is little evidence of this in early language learning despite FL learning being described as an “increasingly prevalent way for children [to] become multilingual” (Murphy, 2014, p. 131). For further discussion around this issue see Ibrahim (2022).

A desire for multilingualism in the European education system (i.e., the introduction of two or more languages) is the main argument for bringing a FL into the curriculum. The latest Eurydice report indicates that 86.1 percent of children were learning at least one FL in primary schools in Europe in 2020 and 98.3 percent of the time the FL is English. In most European education systems, children start this FL between the ages of 6 and 8 years old (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2023, pp. 21–23). It seems contradictory to policy that the FL brought into the classroom is most often English, and because of the ever-younger start of FL learning and its lamentable uncharted introduction into pre-primary education (cf. Mourão, 2021), children are learning this compulsory FL for an increasing number of years. It is for this reason that research into EFL teachers and their education is of such relevance, as is the need to chart how multilingual pedagogies are developing in school classrooms and higher education institutions.

Teacher education for early language learning in Europe

Teacher education for early language learning is both complex and diverse in its provision across Europe, “responding to the national needs, history and traditions, and often playing a significant political role in the life of the country” (Kelly, 2012, p. 409). Additionally, the younger the child, the poorer the knowledge of the effectiveness of teacher education programmes for multilingualism and early language learning (Alstad, 2022). Alstad reiterates from her early childhood education (ECE) perspective “that all teachers are language teachers and that teaching second language(s) should be integrated in all [areas]” (2022, p. 607). This has consequences for teacher practices and teacher education in both ECE and primary education.

In the following sections we look at the main threads and themes found in the chapters in this edited volume, with a view to highlighting the variety of

approaches and practices underway to respond to the multilingual directives in Europe as well as the introduction of EFL into ECE and primary education. Four chapters discuss early childhood education (children aged 2 to 5/6 years old) and ten focus on primary education (5/6 to 12 years old), with eight chapters sharing research on pre-service (also known as initial teacher education) and two on in-service teacher education. The categories of teachers referred to in this volume are either that of “generalist teacher” (also known as class teacher), who is responsible for all areas or subjects in the curriculum and thus the inclusion of multilingual pedagogies and or the FL, or that of a “specialist teacher,” who can teach up to three different subjects of which one is the FL.

Multilingual pedagogies, teachers and teacher educators

The chapters in this volume contribute to understanding some of the ways teachers and teacher educators incorporate multilingual pedagogies in a range of contexts (see Table I.1), which include generalist ECE and primary (student) teachers. Ragnarsdóttir (Chapter 2) describes generalist ECE teachers’ multilingual practices in Iceland and Pedley, Roxburgh, Anderson and McPake (Chapter 1) report on three different studies where generalist teachers are supporting (a) third language(s) in Scottish primary schools. There are also chapters on ECE teacher education for multilingualism: Tkachenko, Garmann and Romøren (Chapter 7) share their innovative approach to active learning for Norwegian ECE pre-service generalist teachers to engage in multilingualism, and Alstad (Chapter 13) describes a case study of Nordic universities which considers whether syllabi and textbook selection support multilingualism.

Foreign languages

The recent European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2023) report on *Key Data on Teaching Languages in School in Europe* shows that specialist EFL teachers have the responsibility of teaching English in 14 of the education systems, generalists in 11 and a combination of specialist and generalist in 10. This is a change from the earlier 2017 data, when the most common profile was that of the generalist teacher. This move from generalist to specialist might indicate an increased concern with specialist teachers’ language proficiency and their associated declarative and procedural knowledge, which has always been considered highly relevant and indicative of quality provision, despite their possible inadequacy regarding general pedagogical knowledge about children and learning (cf. Enever, 2018). Vraciu and Pladevall-Ballester (Chapter 5) examine the practices of a specialist EFL teacher in ECE and come to some interesting conclusions in this respect.

Table I.1 Research contexts and teacher categories

<i>Chapter n°</i>	<i>Authors</i>	<i>Category and Context</i>	<i>Country</i>
1	Malika Pedley, David Roxburgh, Lorna Anderson and Joanna McPake	In-service, generalist primary teachers	United Kingdom
2	Hanna Ragnarsdóttir	In-service, generalist ECE teachers and preschool directors	Iceland
3	Mateja Dagarin Fojkar, Katarzyna Brzosko-Barratt and Raquel Fernández-Fernández	In-service, generalist, primary EFL teachers and specialist primary EFL teachers	Poland, Slovenia and Spain
4	Tomáš Kos	In-service, generalist, primary EFL teachers	Germany
5	Alexandra Vraciu and Elisabet Pladevall-Ballester	Specialist, ECE EFL teacher	Spain
6	Nayr Ibrahim	Pre-service, generalist, primary EFL teacher education	Norway
7	Elena Tkachenko, Nina Gram Garmann and Anna Sara H. Romøren	Pre-service, generalist, ECE teacher education	
8	Mónica Lourenço	Pre-service, specialist, primary EFL teacher education	Portugal
9	Jana Roos and Howard Nicolas	Pre-service, generalist, primary EFL teacher education	Germany
10	Annett Kaminsky		
11	Ingebjørg Mellegård	In-service, generalist, primary EFL teacher education	Norway
12	Flávia Vieira, Sandie Mourão, Ana Isabel Andrade and Ana Raquel Simões	Pre-service, specialist, primary EFL teacher education	Portugal
13	Gunhild T. Alstad	Pre-service, generalist, ECE teacher education	Finland, Norway and Sweden
14	Ana Halbach	Pre-service and in-service, specialist, primary EFL teacher education	Spain

EFL teacher qualification categories

A total of ten chapters in the volume cover examples from a variety of EFL teacher qualification categories and include discussions around in-service and pre-service generalist and specialist teachers and teacher education (see Table I.1). Dagarin Fojkar, Brzosko-Barratt and Fernández-Fernández (Chapter 3) compare literacy practices in Poland, Slovenia and Spain with a

mix of generalist and specialist teachers; Kos (Chapter 4) considers the challenges for generalist teachers of mixed-age classes in Germany and Mellegård (Chapter 11) examines in-service generalist teachers' professional development in Norway.

With regard to pre-service teacher education, Ibrahim (Chapter 6) describes her endeavours in pre-service, generalist teacher education for translingual practices in Norway; Roos and Nicholas (Chapter 9) and Kaminsky (Chapter 10) bring discussion to pre-service, generalist teacher education in Germany, where Roos and Nicholas explore linguistic landscapes as a pedagogic tool and Kaminsky analyses how her student teachers grapple with taking stories into their EFL lessons. Lourenço (Chapter 8) presents her case study of pre-service, specialist EFL teachers' practicum reports looking at Global Citizenship Education, and Vieira et al. (Chapter 12) examine pre-service, specialist EFL teacher curricula with both chapters representing Portugal. Finally, Halbach (Chapter 14) takes a critical stance towards the different forms of teacher education she has been involved in, which include both pre-service and in-service provision for specialist EFL teachers.

The novel topics covered in this volume

Under-researched and thus singular key issues in multilingualism and early language learning are represented in some of the chapters. Under the umbrella of multilingualism, Pedley et al. (Chapter 1) share their innovative approaches to bringing a third language into the primary classroom in Scotland; Ragnarsdóttir (Chapter 2) deliberates over linguistically appropriate practices in Iceland where ECE centres are staffed by underqualified practitioners – a situation that is not atypical, but one that is rarely illuminated in such a way. Finally, Alstad (Chapter 13) alerts readers to teacher educators' ideologies when selecting textbooks for their university courses in her unique study into syllabi and textbooks in Nordic HEIs.

Regarding EFL teacher practices and under-researched dimensions, Dagarin et al. (Chapter 3) present their transnational survey of EFL teachers' literacy practices which highlights the need for teacher education and policy support regarding new notions of literacy (cf. Halbach 2022). Kos (Chapter 4) raises the issue of mixed-age learner classes, alerting readers to the limited research into this phenomenon and lack of teacher support (Smit & Engeli, 2015). Concerning innovation in approaches to EFL teacher education, Ibrahim (Chapter 8) contributes to our understanding of translingual practices through her groundbreaking work with Dominant Language Constellation artefacts (cf. Aronin, 2021). Lourenço urges us to see the EFL classroom as an “optimal” space for Global Citizenship Education, and contributes to the emerging trend that recognises the transformative nature of early language learning (Valente & Xerri, 2023a). Finally, linguistic landscapes have become a dynamic, fast-growing field in applied linguistics (Gorter & Cenoz, 2023), and Roos and Nicholas (Chapter 9) bring its unique affordances into early language learning.

Methodological approaches

The different research methods reported in this volume cover a variety of relevant and, at times, groundbreaking approaches to investigating the field of teacher education for early language learning.

The prevalence of case studies

The case study is common in educational research, and several chapters in this volume identify a case study as the selected approach, deriving from what each researcher considers to be “a specific, unique, bounded system” (Stake, 2005, p. 445). Multiple, ethnographic case studies of Scottish primary schools are discussed in Pedley et al. (Chapter 1), and a large-scale, national, multi-case study of ten higher education institutions (HEIs) in Portugal is reported by Vieira et al. (Chapter 12). Such studies are rare as it covers the nationwide provision of pre-service EFL teacher education in Portugal. Smaller multi-case studies include the analysis of curricula documents in three Nordic HEIs by Alstad (Chapter 13) and a qualitative exploration of language policies and practices of diverse immigrant families with a focus on two preschools in Iceland by Ragnarsdóttir (Chapter 2). A case study of specific sets of pre-service practicum reports is discussed in Lourenço (Chapter 8) and Kaminsky (Chapter 10), and in-service teacher reflections in Mellegård (Chapter 11). Each of these chapters delineates the cases in focus and recognises the oft-cited contentions around generalisability of results. However, each case is “strong in its reality” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 379) and as such becomes part of a growing pool of data and thus the expansion and generalisation of theory (cf. Yin, 2018) associated with early language learning and teacher education.

Written texts as a data source

One clear trend across the volume is the analysis of practicum reports or dissertations and written reflections as a tool for content analysis. Farrell (2018) identifies the potential in writing with its “built in reflective mechanism [as] teachers must stop think and organize their thoughts before writing” (p. 45). As a tool for potential data analysis, it is used in Ibrahim (Chapter 6), who asked student teachers to write about their decision-making while creating Dominant Language Constellation artefacts. Roos and Nicolas (Chapter 9) requested that their student teachers produce written reflections about examples of English they had photographed from their environment in a linguistic landscape project, intending to guide them to consider its relevance for their future teaching practices. With a focus on understanding the connections between theory and practice, Lourenço (Chapter 8) and Kaminsky (Chapter 10) both rely upon a specific sample of student teachers’ written practicum reports or dissertations for their data, selecting the relevant sections that required a reflective response to classroom experiences. Finally, Mellegård

(Chapter 11) develops her whole chapter around reflective practices, and for data relies upon texts produced by her in-service teachers who were asked to reflect upon “their existing teaching practices and observable changes and development” based on the professional development course they had attended. In these latter chapters, transformation is captured vividly through the words of the (student) teachers and suggests that this approach to investigating the impact of teacher education is a valid and relevant one.

Visual media as a data source

Visual methods are recognised as proffering data that “word-based data” does not, and such approaches are on the increase in educational research (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 628). In the chapters in this volume, respondent-created data is the focus of three chapters. Ibrahim (Chapter 6) uses a Dominant Language Constellation (DLC) artefact activity to motivate student teachers towards “linguistically sensitive teaching.” She provides a fascinating analysis of the DLC artefacts using semiotic analysis and clearly shows how two student teachers demonstrate *multi* and *trans* perspectives towards early language learning. Tkachenko et al. (Chapter 7) use language portraits with their student teachers to motivate them to explore the concept of “language as a socially constructed phenomenon.” This supported the student teachers in discovering “multilingualism in themselves” and was one of three approaches to active learning in Tkachenko et al.’s teacher education courses. Finally, Roos and Nicholas (Chapter 9) report on how they developed a seminar activity that involved their student teachers photographing linguistic landscapes (i.e., elements of languages visible in the environment) to discover the potential of this resource as a pedagogical tool.

Other methodological approaches

Approaches that have gone unmentioned so far in the volume include structured observation and transnational research. Structured observation has been referred to as a “reality check” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 542) for, if undertaken systematically, it will ensure that nothing is taken for granted or goes unnoticed. Vraciu and Pladevall-Ballester (Chapter 5) present their critical interpretation of a specialist EFL teacher as she undertook a sequence of five lessons in an ECE setting in Spain. Using an adaptation of an observation scheme, they focus on teacher-generated input and support for comprehension. Their results highlight the benefits of bringing a specialist EFL teacher into the ECE setting but also point to the downside of planning for discrete English lessons in a context that requires an integrated approach to early language learning.

As an approach to researching early language learning contexts, readers will be familiar with the seminal ELLiE project (Enever, 2011), which was a longitudinal, transnational study across seven European countries. Transnational research is comparative in nature and draws implications for practice from the

combined results of populations in two or more countries. Studies on a much smaller scale are also highly relevant and this is the case for Dagarin Fojkar et al.'s transnational survey on FL literacy practices in Poland, Slovenia and Spain. Surveys alone are not empirical in nature, but Dagarin Fojkar et al. point to the need for research of this nature to have a prominent role in feeding upcoming theoretical frameworks and classroom practices conducive to successful FL literacy learning.

Active, participatory learning for a theory–practice nexus

One of the threads running through the volume is that of ensuring active, hands-on learning in teacher education, and maybe even one that replicates what children might be doing or experiencing in their own learning experiences (cf. Woodward, 1991). The relationship between educational theory and the practice of teaching and learning has long been under debate, and readers will not be surprised to see these two words “theory” and “practice” as a subheading in our introduction. La Velle (2019) argues that the relationship between these concepts should not be viewed as a divide but rather as a nexus, which “combines the notions of ‘bringing together’ and ‘forming a focal point.’” She also emphasises that “the nexus comprises practice informed by theory and theory informed by practice” (p. 369) which might imply there is a desired equilibrium across teacher education provision, and one that might envisage a world where student teachers move smoothly between HEIs and schools. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case, as is evidenced in some of the discussion within the volume’s chapters, an example being Kaminsky’s (Chapter 10) description of the difficulties she observed her student teachers encountering when asked to engage in reflective practices while writing up their school-based practicum. She concludes:

... there is the issue of how to integrate more teaching practice into university-based teacher education so that student teachers can gain experience in teaching whole units rather than individual EFL lessons, and of how to use these instances of teaching practice to develop reflective practice and relevant research writing skills before student teachers start working on their teaching-based master dissertations.

(Kaminsky, this volume, p. 172)

Vieira et al. (Chapter 12) also identified the differences in programmes across HEIs in Portugal regarding integrating inquiry-based teaching, which they guarantee, when present, ensures the development of “student teachers’ critical abilities to analyse and transform practice” (Vieira et al., this volume, p. 206) The role of teacher education is to ensure that “role-relevant innovation” (Wedell, 2022, p. 247) enables and empowers teachers, student teachers *and* teacher educators to take what is known to be principled in approach and to engage in a variety of appropriate practices. This will “*enable implementation*

integrity—a range of different practices broadly consistent with curriculum aims becoming visible in most classrooms” (Wedell, 2022, p. 274, italics in original), in ECE, primary school *and* HEI contexts. We suggest this implies what Freeman et al. (2018) refer to as “the *how* and the *why*” (p. 16, italics in original) of teacher [*and* teacher educator] decision-making, which they have identified as pertaining to a particular knowledge-generation, i.e., “[a pattern] in how ideas about thinking and about knowledge in language teaching [are] understood” (Freeman, 2016, p. 115). The knowledge-generation “knowledge-for-teaching” (Freeman et al. 2018, pp. 16–17) moves beyond the teaching context and instead focuses on the knowledge needed to teach a particular group of students and on the “larger assumptions of social practice theories” (p. 18). This implies not only recognising who the teacher is, and thus how they teach, but for what purpose. The Council of the European Union (2019, pp. 18–19) advocate for “comprehensive approaches to improve teaching and learning of languages” together with “innovative, inclusive and multilingual pedagogies.” The chapters in this volume provide sound examples.

The structure of the book

Researching Educational Practices, Teacher Education and Professional Development for Early Language Learning: Examples from Europe is divided into three parts. “Part 1: Researching teacher practices” contains chapters that focus on teachers and their everyday practices. “Part 2: Researching teacher education” moves into investigating university and higher education contexts, and is centred around research into the education of pre-service and in-service teachers. Finally, “Part 3: Researching teacher education curricula” brings the volume to a close and addresses curricula issues and decision-making for improved teacher education. Each chapter opens with a short “Context” section, with a view to recognising that local specificities, even if in the same country context, will impact on the individual pedagogic approaches that are investigated and presented in the chapters.

“Part 1: Researching teacher practices” contains five chapters, the two opening chapters focus on multilingual approaches. In Chapter 1, Pedley, Roxburgh, Anderson and McPake discuss the 1+2 Approach, a policy designed to ensure that from autumn 2021, all learners in Scottish primary schools study a second language from the age of 5, and a third language from the age of 9. Their chapter focuses on the development of the L3, which the authors consider a “radical space” for exploration. The chapter synthesises three studies conducted between 2015 and 2020 which investigate innovative approaches to L3 experiences, each with its own particular emphasis, and considers ways in which lessons learned from these projects inform teacher education.

Early childhood education in Iceland is the focus of Chapter 2, where Ragnarsdóttir critically explores linguistic and culturally responsive practices in preschool and provides an insight into how the families and teachers of

immigrant children interact and cooperate. It reports on a multiple case study conducted in two linguistically diverse preschools in Iceland and shows that although preschool teachers develop various linguistically appropriate educational practices, they lack more thorough training and support to further develop and implement linguistically appropriate practices.

The following three chapters all have the EFL classroom contexts in common. In Chapter 3, Dagarin Fojkar, Brzosko-Barratt and Fernández-Fernández provide the results of a survey completed by 333 teachers in grades 3–5 of primary schools in Poland, Spain and Slovenia, which aimed to compare teachers' needs and practices in developing foreign language literacy. Besides disclosing teachers' daily practices, the study highlights the need for teacher support in developing literacy both systematically and across the curriculum, and thus the need for teacher education in literacy development in a cross-curricular manner and the link between L1 and L2 literacy.

The topic of mixed-age (M-A) primary foreign language classrooms, consisting of learners of different ages and grades, is considered by Kos in Chapter 4. Focusing on primary classrooms and drawing on a systematic literature review of M-A teaching and personal experience, the chapter outlines implications for teacher education and aims to provide practical advice for future teachers in M-A classrooms, as well as teacher educators, as it concludes that M-A pedagogical practices should be part of pre-service and in-service teacher education.

In Chapter 5, Vraciu and Pladevall-Ballester examine the pedagogical practices of a pre-primary EFL teacher in Spain through observation of different tasks and activities, the comprehensibility of the input, the support of learner output and the provision of corrective feedback. Although results show that teaching sessions provided numerous opportunities for the pre-primary children to produce and understand the target language, pedagogical practices remained teacher-led and failed to address a holistic approach to language education. The authors make two recommendations: (i) that educational stakeholders provide specific teacher education programmes to cater for early language learning in pre-primary education and (ii) that these programmes are strategically embedded into pre-service generalist teacher education curricula.

“Part 2: Researching teacher education” opens with Chapter 6 which explores the multi- and translingual practices in a pre-service teacher education master's programme in Norway, through the medium of dominant language constellations (DLCs). In her chapter, Ibrahim describes how she employs creative visual/multimodal methods, the DLC artefact, to examine student teachers' multilingual representations and evolving language ideologies. Results point to the crucial role of teacher education in operationalising references to multilingualism in national curricula, with teachers' reflections on an increased awareness of their own multilingualism, and a positive attitude towards multilingualism in general.

Chapter 7 reports on another study in a Norwegian university, but this time in early childhood teacher education. Tkachenko, Garmann and Romøren describe experiences from a module on multilingualism using student teachers' (STs) language portraits, narratives, and the results of questionnaires on multilingualism. Sociocultural theories of learning, student active learning and research on teacher beliefs and practices regarding multilingualism lead their discussion around the data they collected, which identified the multiple opportunities STs were given to develop a more nuanced understanding of multilingualism. They conclude that a positive synergy was created between teacher education, professional practice and research by combining theoretical and practical knowledge for STs to development a multilingual pedagogy.

From Norway, the focus switches to Southern Europe, where in Chapter 8, Lourenço presents the results of a case study that aimed to understand whether, how and to what extent pre-service primary English teachers in Portugal are educating for global citizenship. She undertook a content analysis of all STs' practicum reports between 2016 and 2022 and reports that although global citizenship education is present in about 10 percent of reports, albeit aligned with humanistic orientation, the STs struggle to discuss these issues with children and to assess learning. She concludes by highlighting the importance of offering time and space to help STs unpack preconceptions, experiment with global citizenship education and develop a more critical understanding of this concept.

In Chapter 9, Roos and Nicholas discuss the use of linguistic landscapes as a pedagogical tool to engage and educate prospective EFL teachers in Germany and argue for the need to raise language teachers' awareness of linguistic landscapes as a language learning resource. Working with some 45 pre-service primary EFL teachers, they contend that raising awareness amongst these teachers of the presence and role of the English in the environment revealed its potential not only for language teaching and learning, but also as a resource for language teacher education.

The following chapter also presents research into pre-service student teachers in Germany, but with quite a different focus. In Chapter 10, Kaminsky focuses on the challenges her STs experience while undertaking action research projects into using stories and picturebooks during their primary education practicum. Using the STs' written reflections in their practicum reports and follow-up interviews, she outlines the STs' discoveries and problems with lesson planning, anticipating learner ability and conducting research. She argues that teaching-based master's degree theses can initiate a process of critical thinking which enables STs to adopt reflective practices as a source of continuing professional development.

In Chapter 11, the last chapter in this part, Mellegård also considers the role of written reflections as tools to develop teaching practices. Through inductive analysis of reflective texts from in-service teachers studying on a course in teaching English in primary education in Norway, she concludes that

critical reflection and theorising can influence teachers' critical questioning of their teaching practices and stimulate their processes of integrating new language learning theories into their classroom practice.

"Part 3: Researching teacher education curricula" begins with Chapter 12 which reports on a nationwide study carried out in Portugal investigating initial teacher education master's programmes created in 2015, when English became compulsory in grade 3. Vieira, Mourão, Andrade and Simões describe how analysis of curricula and practicum reports, the findings of an online survey distributed to former students, and reflective records collected from former students, faculty supervisors and cooperating teachers were used to investigate ten such programmes. Their findings portray a holistic understanding of the profile of future teachers as reflective teachers and highlight the role of curriculum design in projecting meaningful learning scenarios, while highlighting the shortcomings of programmes and making recommendations for the future.

In Chapter 13, Alstad turns the focus to the study of syllabi and textbooks. She argues that although textbooks are often considered authoritative and crucial resources for student learning outcomes, they are by no means neutral transmitters of information. She discusses how course syllabi in three Nordic countries – Finland, Norway and Sweden – seem to be based on monoglossic language ideologies, focusing on supporting individual emergent multilingual's second language development rather than how linguistic diversity can be an asset to all children. She concludes that a critical multilingual awareness is as relevant for teacher educators as it is for STs, so that ideologies are challenged and negotiated rather than merely reproduced.

In Chapter 14, Halbach's reflections on her own experiences of leading professional development (PD) programmes for FL teachers in content language integrated learning contexts in Spain complete Part 3. In her chapter she compares classical short courses, supervised action research projects and participation in an Erasmus+ projects. She argues that to change one's teaching approach fundamentally, teachers need to develop a new identity as educators. This transformation involves deep reflection, moving from cognitive considerations to personal aspects, while also incorporating more behavioural elements. Additionally, the opportunity for sustained interaction with peers and teacher educators is essential for effective PD. She concludes that when stakeholders recognise this, PD provision will have a significant, positive impact on teachers' everyday practice, and invested resources will be put to valuable use.

We hope that you enjoy reading the contributions brought together in this volume. We would like to thank the authors for their patience during the long writing process – together we have grappled with finding common understandings and clarifying our ideas about each other's research and contexts. As editors, we have learned an enormous amount about the diverse contexts of early language learning in Europe, the crucial role of teacher education and the wide-ranging approaches taken to research in this area.

Notes

- 1 Since July 2023, ELLReN has become a federated not-for-profit research association, ELLRA – Early Language Learning Research Association [<https://ellra.org/>]
- 2 The PEEP Network [<https://www.cetaps.com/peep/>] is an inter-institutional network which was set up to promote the engagement in and dissemination of investigation in the field of primary English education in Portugal.

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