

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN EUROPE 13

Michał B. Paradowski (ed.)

Productive Foreign Language Skills for an Intercultural World

A Guide (not only) for Teachers



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Productive Foreign Language Skills for an Intercultural World

The past two decades have created quantitatively higher and qualitatively different demands for foreign language skills. Learners' needs, expectations and contexts of language use have undergone radical and far-reaching transformations. This collection of essays by experienced educators, teacher trainers and researchers from diverse linguistic, cultural and professional settings offers a fresh perspective on the aspects and ways of teaching skills which are crucial to contemporary language instruction, especially at the more advanced stages, but which have oftentimes been unjustly neglected in the classroom. The book discusses issues ranging from approaches to teaching, contexts of instruction, testing and assessment to curriculum

development and technology in the classroom.

The Editor

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Introduction

The past two decades have created both quantitatively higher and qualitatively different demands for foreign language skills. A mere handful of the plentiful developments which have led to this demand include the increasing technological development bridging people and requiring new literacies, the wide accessibility of information sources, social media, shifts in the international political scene, corporate mergers, the outsourcing surge, massive global migration, and the unprecedented rush for education.

The aims for which languages are being learnt and used today have accordingly changed as well, in parallel with learners' needs and expectations. On the one hand, given the dominant position of English as the world's *lingua franca*, some of the earlier native speaker-oriented models and norms have become interrogated and invalidated. In their place, communicative, pragmatic and intercultural competences have entered the limelight and gained in importance in language curricula, becoming equiponderant—if not more important than the customary purely linguistic core—components of *intercultural communicative competence*. The role is also increasing of languages for specific, business or academic purposes, and here too recognition is being given to the fact that narrowing down the context of use does not mean a reduction of the syllabus, but rather the need for an awareness and inclusion of the above-mentioned competences. The teaching of languages other than English has likewise been affected by the heightened focus on what learners *can do with language* (rather than what they *know about it*), and explains the consequent emphasis on such productive skills as speaking, writing, interaction and mediation.

This collective volume with fourteen contributions by experienced educators, teacher trainers and researchers from diverse linguistic, cultural and professional settings offers a fresh perspective on the aspects and ways of teaching skills which are crucial to 21st-century language instruction, especially at the more advanced stages. These methods are regrettably oftentimes neglected in the classroom, whether due to shortage of time, or the lack of awareness about the importance of the competences concerned. This book discusses issues ranging from approaches to teaching, contexts of instruction, testing and assessment to curriculum development and using technology in the classroom.

When we try to think what it means to *know* a foreign language, the first ability that comes to mind is that of **speaking** – indeed, it is considered the defining skill of linguistic competence, evident in the very question “Do you *speak* [insert