

BOOK REVIEW: RALUCA POP, *NORSK FAGDIDAKTIKK I EN FREMMEDSPRÅKLIG KONTEKST. INTERKULTURELLE OG STUDENTFOKUSERTE UNDERVISNINGSPERSPEKTIVER*, CLUJ-NAPOCA: PRESA UNIVERSITARĂ CLUJEANĂ, 2024

Crina Leon
Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași

Nowadays, in Romania, the Norwegian language is taught as a major and as a minor at the Bachelor's level at Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, as a supplementary course at Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, and as an optional course at the University of Bucharest. In this context, a book focused on Norwegian didactics is extremely useful, especially if it is student-centered, as is the case with Raluca Pop's *Norsk fagdidaktikk i en fremmedspråklig kontekst. Interkulturelle og studentfokuserte undervisningsperspektiver* (*Norwegian Didactics in a Foreign Language Context: Intercultural and Student-Centered Teaching Perspectives*, our translation), Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2024, 129 pages, ISBN: 978-606-37-2254-7.

The book is written in Norwegian and is organized in seven chapters, which follow the foreword and the introduction. The keywords at the end make the search throughout the book much easier. As stated at the very beginning, "This book takes foreign language teaching as its point of departure, but is strongly influenced by an intercultural perspective and a student-centered and adapted approach to teaching"¹ (Pop 8, our translation).

Every chapter starts with some theoretical considerations, and makes use of keywords for a better visualization of the concepts. The theoretical part is followed by a practical section including reflection questions. At the end of each chapter, one may find a summarizing section. The author also adds suggestions for further reading.

The first chapter, *Foreign Language Teaching*² (our translation), deals with the functions of foreign languages in a globalized world: a means of communication, but also a means to understand one's own culture and the other cultures. This leads to a permanent intercultural dialogue in the classroom. The focus in the book is on the Norwegian didactics course taught to Bachelor's students at the Faculty of Letters at Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca. Norwegian as a minor was included in the study offer in 1991 and as a major in 2008, while Norwegian didactics is an elective course offered by the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences to students of

¹ "Denne boka tar utgangspunkt i fremmedspråkundervisning, men er sterkt preget av et interkulturelt perspektiv samt en studentfokusert og tilpasset tilnærming til undervisning."

² *Fremmedspråkundervisning*.

Norwegian who want to become teachers, as part of a teacher training program. The course is in Norwegian and includes both lectures and seminars within four teaching hours a week for 14 weeks.

In the 21st century, the teacher's role has significantly changed, and school is supposed to act as a cultural mediator. In the digital era, teachers are expected to know how to use technology in the teaching process. Entitled *The Teacher and Students in the Classroom*³ (our translation), the second chapter moreover introduces notions such as “teaching competences”, “teacher competences”, “teacher identity” (*læreridentitet*), “expert speaker” (*eksperttaler*), “classroom management” (*klasseleddelse*) and “foreign language anxiety” (*fremmedspråkangst*).

Chapter 3, focused on *Grammar in Foreign Language Teaching*⁴ (our translation), discusses the importance of grammar teaching and different ways to teach grammar, either deductive or inductive. The pupils' age and maturity level play an important role when choosing the teaching method. In the deductive model, rules come first before examples and practice. In the inductive model, they come last. The author also suggests strategies to correct the pupils' mistakes, considering that “Making mistakes is a natural part of the process when learning a new language”⁵ (Pop 73, our translation).

Chapter 4, *Word Learning*⁶ (our translation), stresses the importance of learning vocabulary in a foreign language. Learning a word means mastering its form, pronunciation, spelling, connotation and denotation, style, abbreviation and acronym, collocations, synonyms and antonyms. Several strategies to teach vocabulary are to be found in this chapter. The author does not recommend memorizing words without a context. Memes prove to be a modern teaching resource, according to the author.

The *Listening and Reading Competences*⁷ (our translation) are addressed in Chapter 5. These are receptive skills and are contrasted with the productive skills - *Speaking/Conversation and Writing Competences*⁸ (our translation) - in the next chapter. Since Norwegian has a wide variety of linguistic variants, it is important to expose the students to different dialects and accents. Regarding the decoding of a text, the author discusses the “bottom-up” model (used by beginners) and the “top-down” one, which adds contextual understanding to the former model. Chapter 6 suggests some activities which could further develop the speaking/conversation and the writing competences. The tasks can be adapted to different language levels.

³ *Læreren og studentene i klasserommet*.

⁴ *Grammatikk i fremmedspråkundervisning*.

⁵ “Å gjøre feil er en naturlig del av prosessen når man lærer et nytt språk.”

⁶ *Ordinnlæring*.

⁷ *Lytte- og leseferdigheter*.

⁸ *Tale/samtale- og skriveferdigheter*.

The last chapter deals with *Digital Tools in Foreign Language Teaching*⁹ (our translation), a topic of high interest in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the post-pandemic era. As the author shows, “The goal is to promote and strengthen foreign language learning through innovative and student-centered strategies”¹⁰ (Pop 122, our translation). She further mentions some of the tools actively used in the Norwegian didactics course at Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca: Padlet, IdeaBoardz, Menti.com, AnswerGarden, Kahoot!, Coggle, Flipgrid, Nearpod, Canva, Wordwall, and Learningapps.

In conclusion, the book proves to be a useful tool for anyone interested in teaching foreign languages, especially Norwegian, and it stresses the importance of intercultural and student-centered teaching. The chapters are divided into different parts, which make them easy to access and give both theoretical and practical aid to the readers. Moreover, the e-book is available for free on the website of Cluj University Press.

⁹ *Digitale verktøy i fremmedspråkundervisning.*

¹⁰ “Målet er å fremme og styrke fremmespråklæring gjennom innovative og studentfokuserte strategier.”