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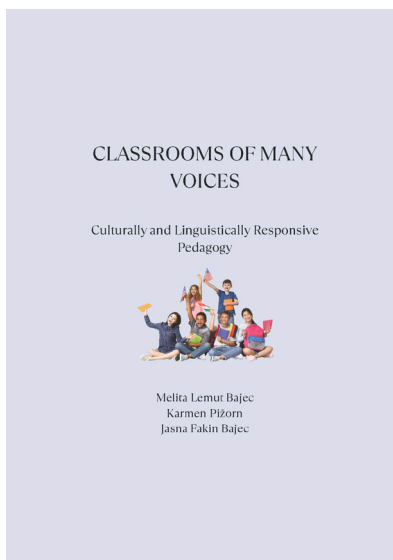
Melita Lemut Bajec, Karmen Pižorn, Jasna Fakin Bajec,  
*Classrooms of Many Voices: Culturally and Linguistically  
Responsive Pedagogy*, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of  
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Reviewed by MAJA MELINC MLEKUŽ<sup>1</sup>

When we talk about education today, it seems almost self-evident that classrooms are no longer homogeneous: linguistically, culturally or in terms of experience. However, this assumption often remains at the level of general principles, while in concrete pedagogical practice, it becomes clear that diversity is not always systematically considered. It is precisely in this gap between the declarative acceptance of diversity and its actual didactic implementation that the textbook *Classrooms of Many Voices: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy* by Melita Lemut Bajec, Karmen Pižorn

and Jasna Fakin Bajec finds its place. The main purpose of the textbook is not merely to present the key concepts of multilingual and intercultural education but to connect them with concrete pedagogical situations and with broader discussions of inclusive and socially responsive education. Several chapters return to the question of how teachers can respond to linguistic and cultural diversity in everyday classroom situations. Rather than offering fixed didactic solutions, the authors encourage readers to think through the complexities of multilingual and intercultural classrooms step by step. In doing so, the textbook invites reflection on what it means to teach in environments where multilingualism and interculturalism are part of everyday classroom reality rather than exceptions. The authors develop the concept of language-sensitive pedagogy through discussions of translanguaging, plurilingual education and inclusive teaching practices.



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<sup>1</sup> School of Humanities, University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia; [maja.melinc.mlekuz@ung.si](mailto:maja.melinc.mlekuz@ung.si).

Each chapter includes intended competences, learning outcomes, reflective activities and references to portfolio-based tasks that require students to engage actively with the material. In the first content section, the textbook focuses on understanding linguistic repertoires. Here, the authors clearly distinguish between concepts such as multilingualism, plurilingualism, language switching and translanguaging. It is important that these concepts are presented not merely as terminological categories but as different ways of understanding language practice. The tasks accompanying this section guide students to analyse their own language use. The second chapter, “Multilingual and Intercultural Education”, continues this discussion by emphasising that intercultural education cannot be reduced to simply acquiring information about other cultures. More important is the development of critical awareness of one’s own perceptions, stereotypes and cultural perspectives. Many of the reflective tasks focus on dialogue, empathy and students’ attitudes towards cultural and linguistic differences. Particularly useful are those activities that invite students to analyse their own experiences and assumptions about cultural diversity. In this section, the textbook moves beyond the purely theoretical level and actively involves students in processes of professional self-reflection. A similar balance between theory and practical applicability is evident in the chapter on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The CLIL methodology is presented in a balanced manner, without idealisation. In contemporary pedagogical debates, CLIL is sometimes depicted as a universal solution for multilingual education, but the authors avoid such oversimplifications; they clearly emphasise that the successful implementation of CLIL depends not only on teaching the subject in a foreign language but primarily on careful planning, cognitive support and the meaningful integration of language and content objectives. Particularly useful is the explanation of the 4C model – Content, Communication, Cognition, Culture – which is presented clearly enough for students to relate it to specific learning situations.

The textbook also devotes considerable attention to broader pedagogical issues that extend beyond a narrow understanding of multilingualism. The chapters “Taxonomy of Educational Objectives” and “Critical Thinking and Metacognition” significantly broaden the conceptual framework of the work. The taxonomy of educational objectives is presented not merely as a formal classification but as a way of thinking about learning processes. Many activities require interpretation, argumentation and evaluation rather than simple reproduction of information, and reflective and interpretative forms of learning are frequently promoted. The authors also understand critical thinking in a much broader sense: not as a set of isolated cognitive skills but as the ability to understand different perspectives and social relations, and to reflect critically

on issues of inclusion, power and cultural diversity. This approach is particularly relevant at a time when educational debates increasingly include issues of identity, social justice and democratic participation.

One of the textbook's most interesting aspects is how it links language with cultural memory and identity. The chapter "Wisdom in Words" treats proverbs not merely as linguistic curiosities but as carriers of cultural meaning, collective memory and social values. In the Slovenian context, where language instruction often remains heavily focused on normative aspects, such a broader cultural perspective is particularly valuable. The textbook convincingly shows that language teaching can also provide a space for reflection on identity, values and intercultural understanding. This perspective is further developed in the chapters "Language as a Cultural Symbol of Individual Identity" and "Language as Intangible Cultural Heritage." Here, language is presented not only as a means of communication but also as part of cultural continuity, belonging and collective memory. Importantly, the textbook does not romanticise cultural heritage. Alongside issues of language and identity preservation, the authors also address themes of inequality, inclusion and social power. Each chapter includes clearly defined learning objectives, reflective activities, portfolio assignments, and sections focused on working with academic articles. Most activities are meaningfully linked to the chapter's content and effectively promote active student engagement. Particularly effective are tasks requiring students to connect theoretical concepts with their own language experiences or specific pedagogical situations.

The multimodal elements also deserve special mention: the sections "Truths across Time", "Press Play for Perspective" and "Culture & Language Curiosities" significantly broaden the context for understanding individual topics and support diverse ways of engaging with learning. Especially noteworthy is the multilingual adaptation of the story *The Three Little Pigs*, which combines multiple languages within a single narrative and encourages students to reflect on similarities between languages, mutual understanding and multilingual communication. Such activities are didactically effective because they link abstract concepts to concrete and recognisable situations.

The textbook is also notable for the way it incorporates contemporary European frameworks and research. References to the CEFR, FREPA, plurilingual education and language-sensitive pedagogy are thoughtfully integrated throughout. At the same time, the authors maintain an accessible and pedagogically oriented style, which is particularly important for students encountering these concepts for the first time. Given the broad scope of the topics, some areas are presented in a simplified and introductory manner; however, this should not be considered a major shortcoming, as the primary purpose is to introduce the

subject matter. Readers seeking a more in-depth theoretical analysis of individual concepts will need to consult the selected references suggested at the end of each chapter. The textbook does not aim to be a specialised monograph in applied linguistics or intercultural pedagogy but rather to establish a broader conceptual framework for further professional reflection and study. The main objective is to help future teachers and other educational professionals understand the evolving realities of today's classrooms and society, explore effective ways of responding to them, and approach these changes with both critical insight and empathy.

The textbook's overall structure is logical and accessible, and its pedagogical aims are clearly articulated throughout. At the same time, certain aspects invite further reflection and discussion. A more pronounced connection between individual chapters could contribute to greater internal coherence. Moreover, a greater number of complex case studies from diverse school settings could further enrich the practical dimension of the work. Another limitation is the pronounced focus on European educational frameworks and perspectives. Although this is understandable given the context in which the textbook was created, including more non-European perspectives would further expand its intercultural dimension. On the other hand, the close connection to European frameworks significantly contributes to the work's terminological consistency and academic relevance.

*Classrooms of Many Voices* remains highly relevant to current educational discussions and represents a pedagogically valuable and carefully designed contribution to teacher education. Its greatest strength lies not only in presenting contemporary concepts of multilingualism and interculturalism but above all in repeatedly connecting these concepts with recognisable classroom situations. This is particularly important in the Slovenian context, where educational discussions have only recently begun to engage more systematically with the realities of increasing linguistic and cultural diversity brought about by contemporary migration and broader social change. Much of the existing literature in language didactics still approaches language primarily from the perspective of norms, grammar or methods for teaching individual languages. In contrast, *Classrooms of Many Voices* understands language in a much broader sense: as a space of identity, culture, social relations, inclusion and educational participation. The textbook is most convincing when it remains close to actual classroom dilemmas and encourages future teachers to think about how linguistic and cultural diversity shapes everyday teaching practice. At a time when issues of inclusion, identity, equity and access to knowledge are becoming an increasingly important part of European education systems, such reflection is not merely desirable but essential. This is precisely why *Classrooms of Many Voices*

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represents an important contribution to contemporary teacher education and pedagogical thought. It manages to remain theoretically informed while still staying close to concrete pedagogical situations and classroom dilemmas. Such a balance is difficult to achieve, which is why this publication is particularly valuable for both higher education and broader pedagogical practice.