

Research in EFL and Literature Context: Challenges and Directions

Edited by

Aleksandra Nikčević-Batrićević
Marija Mijušković

Athens Institute for Education & Research (ATINER)
2014

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Research in EFL and Literature Context: Challenges and Directions: An Introduction

Aleksandra Nikčević-Batričević and Marija Mijušković

This edition gathers together a variety of challenging papers on language, methodology, cultural studies, as well as selected papers on special topics in literature that were presented at the conference organized by the Athens Institute for Education and Research in 2012-2013, which took place in Athens. Scholars from all over the world, including as distant regions as the Iran, Turkey, Portugal, China, Georgia, Brasi, Egypt and several other countries, were brought together by their interest in reconsidering language, methodology, literary and cultural studies. Needless to say that one of the good things about this international cooperation is that owing to their different socio-cultural backgrounds, these scholars have contributed to producing an extremely varied picture of ways of approaching the challenge of a changing world of the humanities.

This collection opens with a paper titled “Advanced Research Projects in the Humanities: New Trends on Literature, Language & Linguistic Studies”, by Carlos Ceia from New University of Lisbon (Portugal), who focuses on new trends of advanced research projects to reinforce the importance of research in a time of crisis in the Humanities. He concludes that organization and funding of science and scholarship in Europe has been promoting anything but research into social sciences, including educational areas, and in his analysis he follows the recent call from the Board of Trustees of Academia Europaea to redirect policies towards the organization of “multidisciplinary research projects founded by the European Research Council, to ensure that through such European cooperation critical but endangered small subjects can continue to be nurtured and studied in Europe”.

Maia Shukhoshvili from the Institute of Classical, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies (Georgia) writes about Plato and liberal education following several aspects related with meaning, concept and the goals of liberal education. In her paper she reconsiders Plato’s educational plan and its relation with the modern curriculum, as well as his description of education as an art to make man perfect.

Ruhtan Yalçın from Hacettepe University (Turkey) writes about “Language, Hermeneutics and the Cosmos”, in order to interpret the central importance of language as a world-forming experience, “with an interdisciplinary focus positing a primary emphasis on Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology, the role of the symbolic – language or the ‘big Other’ – within Lacanian psychoanalysis and the debates on ‘identity’ and ‘alterity’ in contemporary political philosophy, this paper questions the future possibilities of expounding the hermeneutic horizons of linguistic experience as an alternative prospect for cosmopolitanism interpenetrating both particularity (immanence) and universality (transcendence)”, while Tahir Wood from the University of the Western Cape (South Africa), focuses on the hermeneutic pragmatics of fictional communication. According to Wood the fictional discourse exhibits certain complexities that are not observable in other forms of discourse.

In their paper titled “Epistemological Holism and Meaning Holism” Aihua Wang and Binzizi Dong from the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China discuss the validity of epistemological holism and meaning holism, as well as their

connection to each other. They begin with the problem about the inference from epistemological holism to meaning holism, review Esfeld's definition of holism, use this definition of holism to examine epistemological holism and meaning holism and find that both fit this definition, "but with a different family of properties, which means that both kinds of holism are valid but neither is derived from the other, though there is some connection between meaning holism and epistemological holism".

Parastoo Salavati (Iran) traces the relationship between language, culture and identity, and describes how one acquires new identities while using languages that are spoken in wider scopes, such as national and international languages, while Maria-Luiza Dumitru Oancea from University of Bucharest, Romania, in her paper "Mocking Epic and Tragic Patterns in Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*", proposes a new reading-lens for Apollonius' *Argonautica* as poetical banter through which the author mocks the epic and tragic models of the age. His "study analyses circumstances, characters, sentiments, thoughts and gestures that support our hermeneutical approach". The author concludes that Apollonius wished to minimize epic and tragic patterns in order to humanize the heroic model. Manuel Ferro from Coimbra University (Portugal) in "From Hesiod to Manuel de Galhegos: The *Theogony* vs. the *Gigantomachy*" analyses the way Manuel de Galhegos takes advantage of the structures and suggestions available in Hesiod's *Theogony* and Claudian's *Gigantomachy*, and how both works imply the codes of epics, and the way in which he updates aspects and problems that affect, influence, condition and trouble men from his own time.

Elena Domingues Romero from University Complutense Madrid (Spain) offers a cognitive approach to reception in a paper inspired by Peter Stockwell's work in which Stockwell states that it is common to see how a text relies heavily on another single identifiable text, through direct citation or through the transposition of plot into a different world: "Literary texts lift characters, plots, settings and themes out of their original environments and place them into new blended spaces where an emergent structure develops independently. Hence the structure of the blend allows new insights to appear as well as a new understanding of the elements of the input spaces." Her aim in this paper is to claim this to be an incomplete process, while examples taken from reception in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* are used to support her claim.

Seyedeh Saideh Sanjari, from Islamic Azad University (Iran), lists Persian mythical women in an attempt to provide a direct contact between universal and legendary heroes, and the ancient roots of great holy people, while Latifeh Salamat Babil, Islamic Azad University Central Tehran Branch, concentrates on the comparison between the seven stages of Mithraism and the seven stages of Iranian theosophy in Persian poems. She writes that in the *Mehr* religion, the number seven was considered to be sacred and noteworthy and that there were seven stages that the disciple had to pass to reach innocence and salvation. In her article *Attar's* poem and the seven stages in Iranian theosophy are compared to the seven stages of the *Mehr* religion.

Nabila Marzouk, Fayoum University (Egypt), writes about Havy Ibn Yaqzan and Robinson Crusoe, in a paper in which she re-reads two classic survival narratives, triggered by an essay by David Cook, entitled 'The Muslim Man's Burden: Muslim Intellectuals Confront their Imperialist Past', which appeared in *Israeli Affairs* in 2007, while Abdulaziz Al-Mutawa, from the University of Qatar, writes about the Paris massacre from English and French perspectives, as Christopher Marlowe's representation of the massacre is seen in his play, *The Massacre at Paris* (1592?), and it is compared with two other plays by French playwrights, François de Chantelouve's

Gaspard de Coligny (1575) and Pierre Mathieu's *Le Guisade* (1589). In this paper she conducts a detailed comparison between the English and the French dramatic representations of the event, the way the playwright treats the subject of the massacre in his dramatic representation, and she contextualizes each text, "while conducting a close reading of it to demonstrate how the massacre reflects the kind of propaganda of each playwright, through his attempts to represent it".

Alena Apaeva Yurievna from the Faculty of Philosophy of the National Research University's Higher School of Economics, Russian Federation, dedicates her article to Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin's poems 'Heimkunft' ('Homecoming') and 'Wie wenn am Feiertage' ('As on a Holiday'), while Liudmila Salieva from Lomonosov Moscow State University writes about the rhetoric of Lawrence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*, arguing that the key to its rhetoric is the rhythm of graphic units of three types: syntagms + phrases, discourse types and paragraphs.

In her paper "Humiliation and Social Negotiation: A Study of *Pride and Prejudice*" Truska Muhamad Alaadin of Salahaddin University (Iraq) deals with the strategy and tactic that Jane Austen's heroines use in order to escape humiliation, fear and shame. According to Alaadin in Austen's novel Elizabeth Bennet threatens male superiority through social negotiation and laughter. In her analysis the author focuses on Ullaliina Lehtinen, who in his book "Underdog' Shame" identifies two kinds of shame, the underdog's shame and the aristocrat's shame, and applies it to investigate Elizabeth's feeling and reaction. In addition to that, she examines the relationship between the individual and society.

Jiangsheng from Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, China, writes about T.S. Eliot's mission of salvation through myths, in his major literary works in which he elaborates on the social conditions of modern society, returns to religion and writes about the preservation of tradition. Baya Bensalah (Kasdi Merbah University, Algeria) focuses on Faulkner's language, in particular his diction, which has been the subject of wonder for researchers, who have labelled it "fulsome, inexorable, neurotic, fanciful, crowded, circumlocutory, exasperating, and verbose merely reflecting the writer's mannerism and deliberate complexity". The author selects compounding as a sample of Faulkner's vocabulary to be the object of a Lexical Adjustment analysis within the framework of Relevance Theory, and points out the processes by which linguistically specified word meanings are modified in use and illustrates the flexibility of lexical narrowing and broadening. Yildiray Cevik from the International Balkan University (FYROM) writes about the motifs of blindness and invisibility within the influence of post-war existentialism as reflected in *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, "as motifs of invisibility and blindness allow for an examination of the effects of racism on the victim and the perpetrator", while Lucía P. Romero Mariscal from the University of Almería (Spain) writes about "A Society", an Aristophanic comedy by Virginia Woolfe, as it deploys the mechanisms and plots of famous Aristophanic comedies, such as *Lysistrata* and *Women of the Assembly*, in order to enhance its utopian and critical message. She writes that "taking the genre of ancient comedy as a foil, the development of the story, from the comic idea to the various references to historical, as much as personal, events acquires an enriched dimension that illustrates the writer's learned and refined art of allusion. All in all, it is a witty and hilarious example of Virginia Woolf's original and creative art of reception of the Greek classical tradition".

Omnia Amin (Zayed University, Dubai, and UAE) lifts the veil off the intimate in Jordanian women's literature, revealing to the readers that the topic offers an intense

intellectual debate emerging in a fundamentally new way of thinking about women in the modern globalized world. She concludes that “by lifting the veil off their personal and intimate experiences they give rise to a more global-oriented image and join modern feminist writers in their endeavour to expose a world of a political, economic and social system built on power rather than on justice. They strive to produce an unveiled body and an unveiled discourse showing that the personal is the political and by taking it one step further to assert that the personal affords a global and universal experience”.

Elmas Sahin gives a comparative approach to *Malone Dies* and *To Lie Dying* as she points to significant intertextual similarities between these examples of postmodern fiction, while Marta Lupa writes about Margaret Drabble’s affair with the past in *The Witch of Exmoor*, *The Peppered Moth* and *The Seven Sisters*, as she employs former literary texts, genres, characters, scientific theories and cultural archetypes not only to subvert their conventional notion but to somehow “transcribe” them into postmodern reality: “In this paper I would like to present three different strategies of her ‘cooperation’ with the past, namely the reference to a genre, a scientific theory and a particular text. Firstly, I would like to focus on *The Witch of Exmoor* where she refers to the traditional understanding of fairy tales and demonstrates their irrelevance to contemporary reality. Secondly, I am going to move on to *The Peppered Moth* in which the characters’ growth is illustrated by an allusion to industrial melanism, being an example of the ‘survival of the fittest’. Thirdly, I am planning to concentrate on *The Seven Sisters* as the reflection of Aeneas’ quest.”

Jūratė Radavičiūtė from Vilnius University (Lithuania) analyses the mechanism of the creation of the public image in Salman Rushdie’s novel *Shame*, as well as the effect it produces on the intended audience and the person whose image is created. The research is carried out within the theoretical framework of postmodernism, looking at the works of Jacques Derrida and Jean Baudrillard. Graciela Boruszko in “My Words + Your Words = Our World@Literature.global” approaches the study of *Nord Perdu*, a work by Nancy Huston situated in the francophone literary world, with its tensions between two languages and two nationalities that find a fertile and welcoming terrain in the literary world of a globalized century. Yunling Yu from Harbin Institute of Technology (China), in “Impossible Balance: Textual Instability in *The Handmaid’s Tale*”, exemplifies the unstableness of textual meaning by conducting her study basically on two levels, “the logic level of a text which concerns the intension, extension, and taxonomy of texts, and second, the epistemological level of text, which concerns the understanding, the interpretation and discernibility of texts. (Gracia 2006, xxv)”. Svetlana Bozrikova (Balashov Institute of Saratov State University, Russian Federation) focuses on narrative journalism in America and Russia, a phenomenon that, according to Bozrikova, has become very popular all over the world lately. Although academics are divided about its definition, they concur on the main categories of journalistic narrative – the dramatic structure instead of ‘the inverted pyramid’, the literary prose style rather than the newspaper style, a deeply personal point of view.

The language section gathers seven different papers on language, ranging from evaluation of a Spanish grammar book to acquisition of gender in Russian as L3 by native speakers of Turkish, then “of mice and men and other irregular plural forms”, also non-movement analysis of adjectival ordering in Japanese, an assessment for pragmatic skills in Portuguese, a phonological awareness in two transparent languages (Turkish and Greek) and an international spelling reform of the Portuguese language.

The second part of the edition opens with a paper by Cristina Garcia Gonzalez from the University of Leon, “*Nueva gramática de la lengua Española (the RAE’s New Grammar of the Spanish Language)*”, which evaluates the effectiveness of the presence of the American variety of Spanish in the chapter on *New Grammar of the Spanish Language*.

The paper that follows this focuses on acquisition of gender in Russian as L3 by native speakers of Turkish by Elena Anatonova Unlu, from the Middle-East Technical University, Turkey and Anna Lozovska from Hacettepe University, Turkey. They share with us some of the findings of the study, suggesting that sufficient prior knowledge of English as L2 had a positive impact on Russian gender acquisition and the metalinguistic awareness of L3 learners.

In their innovative paper “Of mice and men and other irregular plural forms”, Eugen Zaretsky, Kartin Neumann, Harald Euler from Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany and Benjamin Lange from the University of Goettingen, Germany, discuss overgeneralizations of certain plural allomorphs and other tendencies in the acquisition of German plural markers.

The way that Japanese adjectives have two forms to distinguish direct and indirect modification interpretation is described in the next paper, “Indirect modification in situ: non-movement analysis of adjective ordering” by Yurie Okami from the University of Nagoya, Japan.

The identification and assessment of children at risk of language disorders, Cristiana Guimarães, Anabela Santos and Leandro Almeida from the University of Minho, Portugal, in their paper “Development of the Language Use Inventory: An Assessment for Pragmatic Skills in Portuguese” are regarded as crucial in carrying out effective early intervention.

Helen Kyraji (Ministry of Education and Culture, Cyprus) and Chryso Pelekani from the University of Cyprus, explore the possible impact of learning the phonology of Turkish as a first language on the phonology of Greek as a second language. They also explore the application of positive versus negative transfer/interference of L1(Turkish) on L2 (Greek).

The final paper in the language section, “Portuguese Language Orthographic Agreement of 1990: inconsistency and homographs” gives us a unique insight into the Portuguese language orthographic agreement. The author of this paper, Francisco Miguel Valada (European Union Institutions, Brussels, Belgium) points to the complexity of an international spelling reform, and adds that it increases the number of homographs by deleting consonants with diacritic functions and diacritic marks, such as acute accents. Also, it decreases not only the degree of certainty in terms of pronunciation, but also semantic clarity and orthographic transparency.

The section dealing with methodology issues contains nineteen challenging papers that emphasize the importance of methodology in the foreign language and literature classroom. Also, we have selected two papers belonging to the methodology of translation and one paper focusing on language techniques used to develop the skills in journalism students. The methodology section contains two main parts, that is, language teaching and the teaching of literature. Additionally, teaching translation and journalism belong to the last part of the methodology section, and they are considered the third part of methodology section.

Within the field of language teaching we selected twelve papers that emphasize important areas in the methodology of foreign language teaching. Namely, the first paper, “Perspectives of In-service and Pre-service Teachers of English as a Foreign Language towards the Teaching of Grammar: Focus on Form vs. Focus on Forms”

discusses the notion of the perspectives of in-service and pre-service teachers of English as a foreign language toward some aspects concerning grammar teaching and learning in the classroom context. The author of the paper, Ana Paula de Araujo Cunha from the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology, proposes a new approach to teaching grammar and believes that it would comprise a dual focus form/meaning in communicative interaction.

In “A Tale of expectations and perceptions: a case study of non-native English speaking students in the Masters level TESOL programme”, Beidi Li evaluates one masters-level TESOL programme in New Zealand. Findings demonstrate that the programme has several aspects of strength, such as improving English reading and writing proficiency.

Yesha Devi Mahadeo Doorgakant turns to the language educational policy in Mauritius as one of the key mechanisms in the structure of its power.

The importance of video use in language classes is a well-known fact in the methodology of language teaching. Burak Tomak and Gizem Verda Furuzan from the University of Istanbul bring an innovative paper “The Perspectives of EFL learners on Video Use in Language Classrooms” where they point out that the students benefit from the videos that they have created according to the project assigned to them. They also compared videos brought by the teacher and students’ videos where they also found benefits from both. On the other hand, Pedro Jesús Molina Muñoz from University of Cyprus introduces the digital portfolio as a tool for monitoring and evaluation in Spanish language courses that are currently taught at the University of Cyprus.

Two papers that follow focus on learning styles and learning strategies viewed from the perspective of neuroscience and neurolinguistics. Specifically, Eva Zanuy from Escoles Betlem in Spain, focuses on two theoretical perspectives – Neurolinguistic Programming and Honey and Mumford’s taxonomy of learning styles – in evaluating the bestseller publishing houses in teaching English as a second language while Sabatin Ibrahim from Al Quds Open University, Palestine, investigates the learning strategies used by Palestine female students, drawn from different proficiency levels in relation to their perceptual styles and brain hemisphericity.

In the following three studies, the papers pay special attention to the positive effects of learning strategies for the language skills development in foreign language classroom. In such manner, Bahman Gorjian from the Islamic Azad University, Iran and Abdolmajid Hayati from the Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Iran, investigate the effect of learners’ awareness of vocabulary learning strategies on reading comprehension while Cetinkaya (Nigde University, Turkey) and Gulsun Leyla Uzun (Faculty of Languages, History and Geography, Turkey) identify the readability levels of Turkish texts in the paper “Identifying and Classifying the Readability Levels of Turkish texts”. They emphasize the importance of a skill such as reading, defining it as the process of processing, interpreting, and making sense of signs and symbols perceived by the brain through vocal organs and the eyes. The skill of reading enables the student to encounter new information, events, cases, and experiences by accessing various sources. The third study deals with the analysis of communication strategies in the EFL context. Its author, Huei-Chung Teng, from the National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, seeks to facilitate the understanding of communication strategy use in the EFL context.

The succeeding two papers give us a unique reading of two important aspects in the foreign language classroom. In “ESP Course Evaluation”, Gul Eksi from

Marmara University evaluates the English for Specific Purposes courses offered in the School of Foreign Languages of a state school in Istanbul. The courses were mainly designed to equip students with skills which will assist them in following their departmental courses in the future. On the other hand, Siamak Mazloomi (Islamic Azad University, Teheran, Iran) explores Type a Syllabi and elaborates that learning happens through gradual development and strengthening of neural interconnections.

Opening the part of this edition devoted to teaching literature, Prapaipan Aimchoo from

Srinakharinwirot University in Thailand, presents the findings of the study on “Literature and the Effectiveness of EFL Students’ Writing and Thinking Skills”, where it is highlighted that the writing and thinking skills of Thai students could be improved. The paper that follows, “Students’ Attitudes towards Bilingual Children’s Literature in Hebrew and Arabic”, by Lae Baratz and Hannah Abuhatzira, both from Achva-College of Education, Israel, present the findings of a study of the attitudes of Arab and Jewish students towards bilingual children’s literature. They focus on whether bilingual children’s literature contributes to the establishment of identity and whether it is important to include such works in the school curriculum.

“A Literary/Creative Blog as an Active Tool to teach Literature” by Gomez, Fairless, Johnson and Sauer (Grand Valley State University), studies how a Literary/Creative Blog is a successful tool to studying literature where a blog is regarded as an example of active learning, where students successfully overcome their anxiety when studying literature in another language.

Finally, ways to teach translation as well as journalism is presented by three papers of this edition. Namely, in her challenging paper, “From the Myth of Translation to the task of the Translator: A Multimedia Application for Translation Teaching and learning”, Grace Fang, underlines the interactive textual and extra-textual relations which influence the translation process, in order to re-define translation as an interdisciplinary activity which bridges the gap between different fields of study through processes of communication, interpretation and re-creation. Also, the paper, “Patronage and Translation: A Case Study” by Bai Liping (the Chinese University of Hong Kong) deals with translation issues where the relationship between patronage and translation is discussed through a case study in twentieth-century China. The author demonstrates that a patron-translator relationship can be a harmonious collaboration, especially when the translator and his/her patron share common principles and purpose.

The volume closes with a paper about language teaching techniques for developing the skills of journalism students. The paper, “Capacitating Community Newspapers: Effective English Language Techniques in the Training of Journalism Students at Walter Sisulu University – South Africa” by Adele Moodly (Walter Sisulu University) outlines the specialist media consultant’s and editor’s perceptions of the effectiveness of their intervention.

As we are about to close this brief introduction onto the book, we hope that we have drawn at least a brief picture of the assumptions of the scholars who have contributed to this collection of papers. The variety and complexity of these essays offer fresh views to the problem posed in the title of the book. Therefore, we trust that they will stimulate intellectual confrontation and circulation of ideas within the field of language, methodology, as well as literary and cultural studies.

Editors

Aleksandra Nikčević-Batrićević, PhD, teaches courses on American literature, American women poetry and feminist literary theory and criticism at the University of Montenegro (Faculty of Philosophy, Department of English Language and Literature). Her M.A. and Ph.D are in American literature. Her publications include papers on Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, second wave feminism, Herman Melville and other American authors. She has organized nine international conferences on English language and literary studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Montenegro, and five on woman writing (with the following topics: woman writing; female characters in literary works; visions, re-visions: woman writing and their status in literary canon; from margin to the centre: feminism, literature, theory; poetry today). As a member of the Centre for young scholars in the Montenegrin Academy of Science and Arts, she organized two conferences on the topics of 1) literature text and the possibilities of its interpretation and 2) the creativity of women in Montenegro. She has also initiated numerous translational project (literary texts and literary theory). Most of these translations have been published in *Ars*, journal for literature and culture, and later collected in editions, published by Open Cultural Forum from Cetinje. As coordinator of a project financially supported by the Ministry of Science and Ministry of Education of Montenegro, she organized a conference on literary theory at the turn of the century, at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Montenegro. She has been president of “Montenegrin Association for Anglo-American Literary Studies dr Biljana Milatović,” from 2008 onward. She is also a member of the editorial board of journals for language, literary and cultural studies *Ars* (Open Cultural Forum, Cetinje), *Lingua Montenegrina* (Institute for Montenegrin Language and Literature), *Folia Linguistica et Literaria* (Institute for Language and Literature, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Montenegro), *Journal of Teaching English Language for Specific and Academic Purposes*, published by the Faculty of Electronic Ingeeneering, University of Niš, Serbia. She has edited or co-edited sixteen books, published in Montenegro or in Great Britain (Cambridge Scholars Publishing). She is currently writing a book about literary canon and feminist interventions in it.

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