

Editorial

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It is a widely acknowledged truth that research institutes do not flourish by accident. Behind every vibrant academic hub lies not only a team of committed employees, but also a leader with vision, tenacity, and the ability to bring out the best in others. The Institute of Applied Linguistics at Adam Mickiewicz University has thrived in recent years precisely because it has been fortunate to be led by such persons, most recently by Professor Danuta Wiśniewska, in whose honour we publish this volume. She does not subscribe to the conventional hallmarks of top-down management. Instead, she believes in people rather than the chain of command. Her style is one of empowerment, trust, and space: she gives her staff the freedom to grow, while quietly removing the obstacles in their way. This gentle, deeply respectful approach has contributed significantly to the culture of the Institute, where academic development is accompanied by a genuine spirit of collegiality. We are not only encouraged to grow professionally, but also supported in becoming who we truly want to be – in an environment marked by mutual kindness, everyday politeness, and sincere respect. The results speak for themselves. Under her guidance, the Institute has not only grown in size and scope, but also continues to be a recognised research hub – home to numerous externally funded projects, two major research laboratories, and a range of multilingual and multicultural initiatives that extend far beyond traditional academic boundaries. In this vein, her own record of achievement as a scholar and her ability to engage great linguists from all over the world to cooperate with our Institute are also essential. No wonder the Institute continues to attract some of the most talented students, as reflected in recruitment figures and our top placement in university-wide rankings based on secondary school exam results.

Professor Wiśniewska's commitment to person-centredness is visible not only in her research and teaching, but in the very infrastructure of our work. This relates to classrooms and shared spaces – equipped, welcoming, and conducive to collaboration. In a world of productivity metrics, she has remained focused on people – their well-being, their development, and their potential. Her style is, above all, relational. She listens, nudges, trusts – and walks (sometimes literally) alongside her team. An anecdote recounts her refusal to stand passively on the pedestrian conveyor belt while travelling to a conference – choosing instead to race her colleagues on foot. Indeed, she moves

forward not just physically, but professionally and symbolically, and expects her team to move with her – not behind her. One of her articles asks whether silence is always golden – but if there is one thing that defines her leadership, it is the kind of silence that *is* golden: the trust-filled, shoulder-to-shoulder silence that comes at the end of a long day of collaborative effort. A story shared by Andrzej Danielak – formerly her student and now one of our colleagues – brings this to life vividly. In April 2019, a “special operations team” worked through a long weekend to prepare documentation for a new degree programme. Amid failing internet, dead printers, and collapsing energy levels, Professor Wiśniewska remained calm, resilient, and focused. Her offer of pizza at 9 p.m., her quiet endurance, her late-night negotiation with porters to extend access to the building – all of it spoke to her deep belief in people and purpose. That night ended with laughter, exhaustion, and pizza in silence – a moment of professional bonding as humans, welding a community.

Insights from this community are shared in this volume, which brings together contemporary research in applied linguistic, organised into five thematic sections that reflect pressing questions and evolving practices in language learning and teaching, as well as sociolinguistic engagement. Drawing from empirical studies, theoretical reflections, and applied perspectives, the contributions address the multifaceted realities of language use in educational, professional, intercultural, and social contexts.

The first part (“Language Teaching – Methods and Classroom Challenges”) explores diverse methodological and pedagogical questions in language education. It begins with a contribution by Małgorzata Bielicka, investigating the role of the target language as a medium of instruction at early educational levels, highlighting its potential for immersive learning. Next, Justyna Duch-Adamczyk, Monika Kowalonek-Janczarek, and Agnieszka Poźlewicka examine the function of German modal particles in A1-level listening comprehension, offering an analysis of textbook materials. Gabriela Gorąca-Sawczyk emphasises the formative role of social campaigns in shaping pre-service teachers’ reflections on the teaching profession, whereas Paweł Kubiak and Magdalena Jurewicz introduce a model for fostering critical linguistic awareness in teaching German as a foreign language, through the lens of political correctness and linguistic sensitivity. In the following contribution, Agnieszka Nowicka and Dorota Owczarek explore how students develop interactional competence in online English discussions, focusing on conversational turns. This section ends with a chapter by Magdalena Aleksandrak, who sheds light on the planning phase in action research, as carried out by novice teachers, pointing to the pedagogical importance of reflective inquiry.

Part two of the volume (“Specialised Language, Terminology, and Professional Communication”) contains contributions which investigate professional and domain-specific language use. It opens with a chapter by Lucyna Krenz-Brzozowska, who compares early note-taking systems by Herbert and Rozan, outlining their foundational role in teaching interpreting. This is followed by a contribution from Agnieszka Błażek, in which a biographical approach to professional multilingualism is pre-

sented using the example of the tennis community, in order to challenge traditional typologies. In the next chapter, Anna Godzich and Szymon Machowski analyse Italian culinary terminology and its English translations, revealing cultural and pragmatic translation issues in a bilingual cookbook. Specialised terminology is also the topic of the next text, by Izabela Prokop, Aleksandra Matulewska, and Joanna Kic-Drgas. These authors introduce a research project on the language of beekeeping, emphasising methodological implications for specialised language analysis. Finally, Joanna Kubaszczyk discusses how the topic of business locations in German classes can motivate learners and foster authentic language use through real-world tasks.

The following part is entitled “The Role of Emotions, Personality, and Psychological Aspects in Language Learning and Teaching”. Here, the contributions explore the psychological dimensions that shape language learning and teaching. This section begins with a text by Anna Kurzaj, discussing the challenges and benefits of emotional approach in foreign language teaching, and advocating for teacher emotional preparedness and support. Emotions are the topic also of the next contribution by Mehmet Tunaz and Artur Urbaniak, as the authors explore how teaching anxiety influences self-efficacy among pre-service teachers in Poland and Turkey, calling for targeted professional training. In the last chapter, Anna Szczepaniak-Kozak reflects on the emotional and intercultural challenges posed by migration in Polish schools, offering evidence-based strategies for inclusivity and empathy.

Part Four (“Intercultural Communication, Conceptual Aspects of Language, and Cultural Representation”) focuses on intercultural dynamics and conceptual representations of language. In the first chapter, Dominika Ciesielska, Katarzyna Klessa and Maciej Karpiński present an annotated conversation from the Polish Texan community in Chappell Hill, contributing to heritage language documentation. In the next article, Aldona Sopata investigates bilingual influence on German-Polish children, with particular attention to the use of null arguments in German. What comes next is Stephan Wolting’s reflections on the anti-bias approach in intercultural communication, linking theoretical insights to practical implications in learning and teaching German as a foreign language.

The volume finishes with a section entitled: “Linguistic Landscapes and the Visibility of Language in Society”. It oscillates around the intersection of language, space, and visibility in public and digital spheres. This part opens with a contribution by Camilla Badstübner-Kizik, who explores how elements of the linguistic landscape can be preserved for pedagogical and research purposes, despite their transient nature. It is followed by Barbara Alicja Jańczak’s examination of the linguistic asymmetries in the twin city of Guben-Gubin, revealing how the linguistic landscape reflects deeper socio-political divisions in the border integration model, with a special focus on the *linguistic borderscape* – a category developed by Jańczak as part of that model. In a somewhat similar manner, Grzegorz Lisek investigates the post-Covid presence of Russian in Karlovy Vary’s linguistic landscape, emphasising the commercial logic behind its

visibility. The last contribution returns to the topic with which the volume begins, that is, language education. Paweł Rybszleger proposes the use of virtual linguistic landscapes in social media-based language education, illustrating their potential for digital language engagement.

Together, these contributions offer a multiperspective view of the contemporary challenges, methodologies, and discourses shaping language education, marking this volume as a resource for scholars, educators, and policy-makers alike. It is also significant that these are thematic threads that recur throughout the scholarly work of Professor Danuta Wiśniewska.

It is with gratitude, admiration, and real affection that we dedicate this volume to her. Through her leadership, scholarship, and humanity, she has not only built an institution – we believe she has built something rarer still: a genuine academic community.