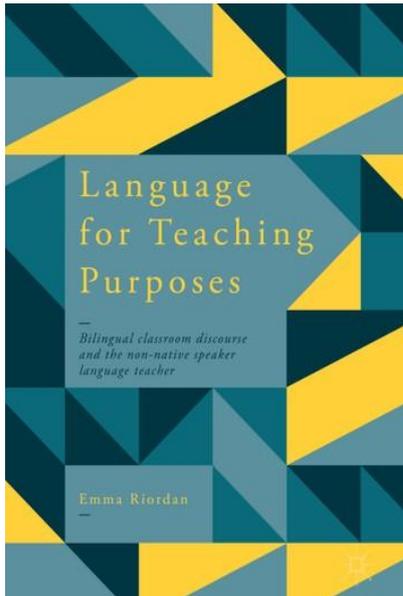


## BOOK REVIEW

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### LANGUAGE FOR TEACHING PURPOSES: A THIRD SPACE CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

**Emma Riordan.** LANGUAGE FOR TEACHING PURPOSES. BILINGUAL CLASSROOM DISCOURSE AND THE NON-NATIVE SPEAKER LANGUAGE TEACHER (2018), Cork: Palgrave Macmillan. 227 pp., ISBN-978-3-319-71004-4 (HBK). ISBN-978-3-030-10005-6 (PBK). ISBN-978-3-319-71005-1 (EBK).

294

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Emma Riordan starts her book with a clear introduction showing the rationale of the research generated from her experience as an instructor of students that were trained as post-primary English teachers at a German university. Her students were “anxious about the lacunae in their language proficiency” (p. 2) and desired extra language classes to improve their English. Therefore, what is notable in the introduction is the reflexive illustration from the author’s experience and the transfer of such experience to the author’s context. Thus, the notion of the language needs of non-native speaker language teachers (NNSLTs) is outlined in this book with a look at the importance of teachers’ language as a source of input for managing and supporting classroom discourse within foreign language (FL) learning contexts. The central argument in this book is that the language that is generally used by teachers in the classroom is different from the specific language used in classes of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP). For example, the reconceptualization of English as a specialized subset of language skills for teaching and preparing for lessons builds the concept of English for Teaching Purposes (ETP) as a flourished form of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for classroom discourse (Freeman, Katz, Garcia Gomez, & Burns, 2015).

The book includes eight chapters which are conspicuously precise and strongly connected with each other providing clear discussions that support ideas presented in the following chapter. In Chapter 2 a general background on LSP is provided. It traces the emergent definitions of specific purposes and how learners should be prepared based on these purposes, whether for a purely linguistic or purely communicative use of the target language. The crucial feature in this chapter is the in-depth connection between LSP and the analysis of NNSLTs' language needs. In a very important sense, Emma Riordan focuses on the language needs analysis not only in terms of using language for specific purposes, but also in terms of using language for specific teaching contexts. Due to the little attention that has been paid to language for teaching purposes in the LSP literature, the author's central investigation focuses on the analysis of non-native language teachers' needs and the language used in the classroom. What sounds constructive is that the author conducts her investigation based on a recommendation found in a study conducted by Serafini, Lake, and Long (2015), who stressed the importance of conducting needs analysis for specialized learner populations.

Chapter 3 explores the nature and structure of classroom discourse theoretically and practically. This chapter clarifies how the features of classroom discourse may affect the learning process in terms of some learning ideologies that exist in the field of education, including constructivist and sociocultural views in relation to sociological issues. The combination between the main principles of these ideologies and the role of teachers' talk helps to examine the nature of classroom discourse. The key point is to identify the teachers' position in terms of the classroom talk, whether as an exploratory talk that triggers learners to explore new ideas in accordance with the constructivist perspectives, or as a mediated talk for social interaction. As readers, we found that it is useful to elucidate more on how these ideologies contribute to analyzing the NNSLTs' needs. In terms of the sociological views, the classroom is considered to be a specific genre that includes communicative events. The lack of exposure to the genre of classroom talk may inhibit teachers' professional confidence and expertise. An explanation of this issue may be based on the mediation concept generated from Vygotskian theory in which teachers' language is a mediator in the classroom discourse. Therefore, the lack of the language, as a mediator that the teachers should have, may prevent them from accessing the genre of the classroom. What makes this chapter practical is that it provides tangible examples from the literature (Cazden, 2001; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Walsh, 2006) to show the role of the teacher in defining the use of the target language within the classroom and the structure of classroom discourse. Understanding the discursive features of classroom discourse (such as teachers' control, questioning, and the provision of feedback) helps to analyze the nature of the language that teachers need in their classrooms. Thus, the needs analysis of NNSLTs is built on the analysis of classroom discourse.

Chapter 4 investigates more specifically the FL classroom as a sort of hybrid of the native and target culture. Moreover, the FL classroom is understood as a kind of “third space” (Kramsch, 2009), where the target language is considered not only the object of learning, but also the medium of communication. Emma Riordan examines the challenges that NNSLTs may encounter while teaching the target language in a communicative and meaningful way, especially in non-immersion settings where teacher and learners speak the same first language. Another challenge is the choice between the first language and the target language to be used in the classroom. This is reflected on one of the teacher trainers’ views in the interviews conducted by the author to crystallize the notion of the third space: “the space that you create in an Irish classroom through German is not quite an Irish classroom and not quite a German classroom but you’re finding a mechanism and a form of interaction that works for the broader environment but takes into consideration different linguistic situations” (p. 84). Through interviews, self-report questionnaires, and classroom observations, the author explores the individual and contextual factors that affect teachers’ use of the target language in the classroom. These factors are: teachers’ language skills, teachers’ language background, socio-economic status of the school and age of the students. In this regard, we would like to refer to other factors that the author should have taken into consideration in her analysis, such as the students’ reaction and interaction with a teacher’s talk style, the contents and materials that reflect the use of the target language, the students’ proficiency levels, their needs and learning styles, and the culture of the classroom context. In our view, all these factors should have also been considered as dimensions for classroom discourse analysis (Cazden, 2001; Walsh, 2006).

Chapter 5 argues how NNSLTs’ experiences and practices within their professions are influenced by the level of their target language proficiency as compared to native speaker teachers. One of the strengths of this chapter is the inclusion of the teachers’ identities at both the macro level of the language teaching community and the micro level of individual perspectives. Hence, understanding how NNSLTs are characterized in the literature in terms of their self-perceptions and learners’ perceptions adds a flavor of complexity. This provides a deep understanding of the negative and positive self-image that the NNSLTs have about their language skills and professional confidence. Thus, it helps to gain deep knowledge of the NNSLTs’ language needs and shows the *raison d’être* of this book. In doing so, Emma Riordan analyzes the NNSLTs’ language needs in relation to five dimensions: the importance of teachers’ language proficiency, the degree of target language awareness, language teaching for language teachers as a part of education, language course content for NNSLTs, and language teaching methodologies for teaching NNSLTs.

Chapter 6 introduces NNSLTs as model bilingual speakers and not as idealized speakers of the target language. This notion is discussed as a problematic area in which the speakers may have strengths and deficiencies in the target

languages they use. In relation to language teachers, it is difficult to identify the degree of bilingualism and if bilingualism requires a language teacher to be a native speaker in both languages. The issues addressed are the extent to which NNSLTs are permitted to make errors and whether making errors is acceptable in classroom discourse or not. It also highlights the ability to code-switch appropriately from one language to another and the metalinguistic knowledge that teachers have as important skills for language teachers. A key point is the examination of NNSLTs' language awareness within the context of bilingualism or multilingualism. Thus, understanding the nature of the combination between two languages in classroom discourse and the mechanism of using this combination in a constructive way should be an essential dimension in NNSLTs' needs analysis and support.

Chapter 7 highlights the typology of the tasks (i.e. regulatory, transformative, or elicitation) and feedback that teachers should use to transform the use of the target language in a communicative and meaningful way. Selecting tasks plays a vital role in structuring the nature of classroom discourse. What is effective in this chapter are the examples as real practices from the research study to illustrate the use of classroom organization, dynamics, instructions, techniques, and patterns. Some errors made by NNSLTs are highlighted and how these errors may influence the nature of the combination between first and second languages. Due to these errors, some teachers may revert to their first language to avoid embarrassment, and thus it may contribute to teachers' negative self-image. It is the pedagogical language that the teachers use in their classroom tasks which is completely different from the general language use. The central conclusion reached in this chapter is that "even if teachers have a high proficiency level in the target language, they may not have the skills to perform these tasks, just as is the case in other areas of LSP" (p. 200).

Chapter 8 summarizes the three main arguments for understanding NNSLTs' use of language in the classroom. These arguments include the specific kinds of language used to function in the classroom context, the consideration of NNSLTs as a distinctive group of teachers with challenges and opportunities, and the selected pedagogical tasks carried out by teachers. The author also suggests future implications of training programs, and implementing or evaluating language courses for language teachers as parts of an LSP curriculum.

In summary, this book focuses on a very critical issue in FL teaching that serves to enrich the field of LSP. Also, the book is a valuable resource that can be transferred to other target languages in different FL educational contexts. Since the NNSLTs' needs analysis is carried out for German teachers in Irish schools, analyzing teachers' needs in other contexts may reveal other relevant variables, particularly the cultural and social ones that may differentiate the teachers' needs from one context to another. Regarding the structure of the book, the eclecticism of past and recent studies shows the connections between the past and present practices in an interesting and meaningful way. Although the literature review is thorough to demonstrate the book's significance, the exaggeration in elaboration and

redundancy may confuse readers. Nevertheless, the use of the mixed method design in the research study helps to provide triangulated and valid data sets that may offer insights in other future research areas, such as classroom discourse patterns in FL contexts. Considering English language is an international language used in many contexts, this book represents an excellent resource for teachers, educators and researchers of ESP and ETP.

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298

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