

Correoso-Rodenas, José Manuel, editor. 2020. *Teaching Language and Literature On and Off-Canon*. IGI Global, 2020. 370 pages.

Dimitrios Tsokanos (Dimitrios.tsokanos@loucoll.ac.uk)
Loughborough College

Teaching Language and Literature On and Off-Canon aims to examine literature as one the “key manifestations through which language is expressed” (p. xviii). In the Preface, the editor advances the volume’s double purpose, namely “to continue expanding the canon of literacy acquisition through the usage of literature”, and to be a “medium for minority languages and literatures’ scholars to show their work” (p. xviii). Furthermore, he clarifies that the aim of the volume does not include exposing the entirety of approaches to teaching and learning languages through literature. The volume is divided in three sections, each of which brilliantly covers the teaching of widely taught languages, the teaching of minority languages, and the teaching of literature written in those languages. The design of the book is coherent and transparent.

The first section, “Teaching of Languages on Canon”, commences the analysis of various approaches and authentic resources that contribute to the process of language teaching. María Victoria Guadamillas Gómez’s chapter opens the section by building on the analysis of fictional elements and their connections with gender stereotypes in EFL learners’ productions. The analysis focuses on short biographies written by pre-service infant and primary school teachers about fictional women in history. Her project pays close attention to the validity of the stories and the main characters while “considering the importance of gender awareness in educational settings” (p. 3). After carefully reflecting upon the different issues regarding collaborative and fictional writing in EFL contexts, Guadamilla Gomez’s study does indeed provide “a new insight into gender training at the university level and in the area of foreign language” while also proposing original ways to introduce micro-narratives as means to promote reading and writing (p. 11). In the same vein, Azlin Zaiti Zainal’s contribution in Chapter Two purports to analyze how to integrate authentic resources in teaching language in literary texts, meaning texts, activities and other sources that were not originally created to be part of the teaching process. Zainal presents

two activities designed for a group of undergraduates with the aim of collecting data on their experiences. Her conclusions convince us that these activities do help learners, and that the incorporation of authentic resources in such manner is a valid way for instructors to address limitations within classroom teaching and learning. She also supports that “it is vital for both educator and student to get more in depth in sociocultural contexts” to obtain the maximum benefits from teaching and learning accordingly (p. 26). The third chapter of this section is Hannah Grace Morrison’s outstanding attempt to explain how culture “is an essential and challenging part of teaching a second language” (p. 29). Morrison considers how poetry is potentially the most adequate way to analyze both language and cultural artifact. By focusing on the use of Spanish poetry in a basic level Spanish classroom, she does indeed expose “an important tool that should be found in the language learning backyard shed” while preparing any Spanish-learning class (p. 42). The fourth chapter is Benoit Filhol’s interesting effort to demonstrate the project and action-oriented approach to submerge literature in reality in foreign language teaching. Filhol concentrates on the case of French in his attempt to explore the latest teaching developments in order to advance “on the theoretical reflection about the articulation of the action-oriented approach and literature teaching through project-based teaching method” (p. 44). By delving into the background theories of literature, the types of projects and their structure, Filhol argues that “the teacher must avoid at all costs falling into this utilitarian and instrumental drift that the teaching of literature through the action-based approach” could entail if all the dimensions of literature are not present in the teaching practice (p. 56). Enrique Javier Vercher García’s ensuing chapter examines the teaching of Russian as a foreign language through literature. Vercher García examines theoretical and practical issues in the use of literature in teaching Russian particularly to Spanish-speaking students. After compellingly addressing issues of general didactic theory and presenting the characteristics and the benefits of employing literary texts in the teaching of Russian, he analyzes factors that influence the selection of an appropriate literary text for that purpose. He concludes by offering a large quantity and variety of relevant literature while also admitting that his work is “open for future in-depth analysis of the different issues it addresses” (p. 79). The final chapter of the first

section is Lidia Fernández Fonfría's unique approach to literary resources in the teaching of Arabic in Spain. Her work carefully gives an overview of the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language in Spain in recent years. Having discussed methodologies and resources that are available, she carries out a comparative analysis of "My Life on Planet Mars" and "A Year in Tangier" and she establishes that "Spain is still falling behind" in the use of graded and adapted readings in class while also pointing towards the adequacy of these two works "meet the requirements and conditions necessary" for the teaching of Arabic in Spain (p. 114).

Section Two delves into the teaching of languages off canon. Alvaro Trigo Maldonado commences it with his approach to the use of literature in the Korean language class. His work briefly explores the reasons behind the emerging importance of Korean and he links this to the growing interest in learning this language. He continues to examine a series of crucially relevant sources dealing with Korean literature while also proposing new ideas on "how to improve the current situation regarding literature acquisition by the students" (p. 140). In Chapter Eight, Eric Hoekstra and Gerbrich de Jong draw the reader's attention towards Frisian literature in education. Their rather interesting study discusses the extent to which this minority language is taught in schools as they attempt to systematically approach the position of literature in all levels of education. Their attention particularly falls upon the "problems" that a minority language faces in legislature and society in an effort to assist the authorities "in this process of rethinking the goals" of education (p. 156). In Chapter Nine, Mónica Durán Mañas's presents a convincing "didactic proposal for the teaching of Ancient Greek language and literature under an innovative and interdisciplinary approach" (p. 162). Having given an overview of ancient Greek teaching throughout the past centuries and up until today, Durán Mañas corroborates a "mixed method" of teaching, one that uses "collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches" to teach a variety of learners. Chapter Ten is Rocío Martínez-Prieto and Marina Diaz-Marcos's exploration of using literature to teach Latin. Their study argues that "literary texts are an essential resource" to familiarize students with Latin while also pointing towards the need to "deeply renovate the teaching of Latin with new methods" (p. 190). In Chapter Eleven, Vega María García

González studies teaching by means of exploring corpora in higher education. García González focuses on late Easter Aramaic (Syrian) in an effort to give an overview of its teaching at the University of Salamanca while also urging educators to take advantage “of the opportunities afforded by technological progress” (p. 207). Chapter Twelve analyzes the Israeli university-level approach to Judezmo, a traditional language of Sephardic Jews. David Monson Bunis focuses on the challenges of teaching Judezmo and carefully offers suggestions to learners who wish to cover gaps in their lexical knowledge.

The final section of the volume centers upon the teaching of literature. José Manuel Correoso-Rodenas commences the section with his study on the teaching of Native American literature to Spanish students. He explains his own experience with students of the College of Humanities of Albacete through which they were acquainted with Native American Literature while also enhancing their knowledge on the American literary canon. His study assesses that the teaching had “a positive effect on the students” and provides very useful graphs that allow for further interpretations of the benefits of such teaching (p. 234). Chapter Fourteen is Santiago Sevilla Vallejo’s inquiry on how language is used to express strong feelings, reflections and attitudes by examining *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury. More to the point, Sevilla Vallejo revisits critiques on the lack of identity in our society while proposing the application of Bradbury’s text in a classroom to address students’ reflections about identity. In Chapter Fifteen, Margarita Rigal-Aragón offers an exquisite demonstration of a teaching-learning experience carried out over a period of more than 15 academic years. Rigal-Aragón explores the impact that major authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Aesop, Shakespeare and Sophocles had on learners who were carefully and chronologically introduced to the first pieces of ratiocination. She also provides useful tables which help us further understand the learners’ experience through the literary journey from ancient to modern times while urging professors to “open new possibilities” to modern learners (p. 282). Chapter Sixteen is Alejandro Jaquero-Esparcia’s convincing inquiry on the utility of the digital context in the use of artistic literature. Finally, Chapter Seventeen concludes the volume through Daniele Arciello’s informative exploration of the early works of Italo Calvino and their usefulness in teaching Italian literature and culture.

Teaching Language and Literature On and Off-Canon is a remarkable and overall invigorating volume that indeed fulfils its purpose. It faithfully expands the canon of literacy acquisition through literature and it is a useful medium for scholars who wish to explore the teaching of minority languages and literatures. Moreover, it is a thematically sound book whose scope is ample enough to cover a wide range of aspects that would interest scholars of various literary fields. The essays that compose this volume are indeed critically up-to-date and follow a consistently thorough and innovative approach to the teaching and learning of several languages and literatures, therefore creating a unique volume that should interest both learners and educators.