Leyre Ruiz de Zarobe and Yolanda Ruiz de Zarobe, eds. 2013. *Enseñar hoy una lengua extranjera*. Valencia: Portal Education. vii + 402 pp. ISBN: 978-84-941971-1-6.

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Leyre and Yolanda Ruiz de Zarobe, editors of previous monographs on various methodological aspects, such as CLIL (Y. Ruiz de Zarobe and Jiménez Catalán 2009; Lasagabaster and Y. Ruiz de Zarobe 2010), reading comprehension (Y. Ruiz de Zarobe and L. Ruiz de Zarobe 2011) and pragmatics (L. Ruiz de Zarobe and Y. Ruiz de Zarobe 2012), have published a volume which follows a global approach to analyse the state of foreign language teaching in the twenty-first century in Spain. As such, it joins initiatives similar to those undertaken by Amengual Pizarro, Garau and Salazar Noguera (2006) or Domínguez González (2008).

The nine studies comprising this volume, all written by university experts in the field, have been structured into two parts, the first being about linguistic competences and the second about communicative skills. Every chapter follows the same pattern, which is very useful for the reader: it starts with a bibliographic review in order to define the list of competences concerning each of the areas dealt with and ends with a didactic proposal which includes evaluation. This volume, prologued by Daniel Cassany, evaluates the effective implications of the communicative approach (Canale and Swain 1980), the natural approach (Krashen and Terrell 1983), the theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner 1983) and the task-based approach (Ellis 2003) within the foreign language classroom environment. In addition, it also points to the need for further development of some aspects included, but not explained, in the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001), such as how to deal with the intercultural dimension and a list of effective evaluation techniques for every skill and competence. Despite focusing on the study of teaching Spanish as a foreign language, the methodological strategies are transferable to the learning of any modern foreign language today.

The first part of the work includes an overview of the factors necessary for the development of communicative competence in a foreign language, which constitutes an expanding research area, yet practice of such competence, often out of context, is frequently reduced to sporadic interventions and resolving *ad hoc* questions instead of

responding to systematic planning. To overcome this, Santamaría Busto in "Enseñar la competencia fonética" presents an analysis of the predictable difficulties posed by each L1 along with an attempt to overcome them by making use of verb-tonal methodology, of observations of articulatory adjustments and suprasegmental aspects of communicative situations and with the help of attractive digital platforms such as *VoiceThread*. An interesting rubric for the evaluation of suprasegmentals and syllable division is given.

The chapter which refers to the teaching of grammatical competence ("Enseñar la competencia grammatical"), by Gómez del Estal Villarino, reports on the analysis of fourteen current Spanish as a Foreign Language coursebooks. His argument consists in strengthening grammatical awareness without sacrificing the communicative approach and this constitutes the key strength of the study, through a concise review of the state and appropriateness of grammar teaching in recent decades. He conducts a concise review of the state and appropriateness of grammar teaching in recent decades, rooted in the debate generated by Krashen's theories of natural learning in the 1980s which criticised the grammatical teaching approach and its generation of learning scenarios far from spontaneous language use and the distinction between natural acquisition and conditioned language learning. In his final analysis, Gómez del Estal Villarino argues for strengthening grammatical awareness without sacrificing the communicative approach, through the creation of tasks which are meant to reinforce the complicated structures arising from real communication.

Montaner Montava and Veyrat Rigat delve into lexical competence ("Enseñar la competencia léxica"), understood as the core of the teaching-learning process due to its self-referentiality. Montaner Montava considers the inherent difficulties of such a wide and changing research field, together with the ambiguities related to the concept of meaning. She proceeds to review influential linguistic theories, including *Frame Semantics* (Fillmore 1982) and conceptual metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), and scrutinises their application through the main methodologies in modern languages. Veyrat Rigat, for her part, analyses *Virtlantis*, an academic group in the virtual reality platform *Second Life*, the well-known online virtual world, which is used here as a space for open exchange where students enjoy great autonomy.

Leyre Ruiz de Zarobe presents a chapter devoted to pragmatic competence ("Enseñar la competencia pragmática") based on speech act theory. The coeditor of the monograph campaigns for the creation of a pragmatic conscience among students to contribute to the development of the intercultural personality reflected in the CEFR. She reveals the relevance of this type of conscience since deficient pragmatic instruction is often the source of many more misunderstandings by L2 users than linguistic errors. In addition, pragmatic mistakes may be more difficult to overcome in an autonomous way, as the acquisition of this competence implies complex processes such as the understanding of underlying meanings in the case of irony. She recommends selecting classroom materials carefully and preferably working with frequently used functional language formulae, thus helping students to select appropriate answers for different situations. Her didactic

proposal reflects on the uses of language and variables such as the people involved in communication and the context in which communicative interaction is produced.

Alonso Belmonte and Fernández Agüero analyse intercultural competence as an element of the plurilinguistic communicative competence described by the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, 101-108). They situate the origins of this concept in Kramsch's notion of the "third culture" (1993) and especially in Byram's concept of "intercultural competence" (1997), together with the need to find suitable evaluation items. Their thorough methodological proposal complies with the use of virtual platforms for the creation of intercultural communicative situations outside the classroom. Another proposal is the revision of the cultural content of both coursebooks and schemes of work to avoid their being reduced to the reproduction of ethnographic curiosities closer to stereotypes rather than to the kind of knowledge required for the acquisition of the multicultural-speaker condition.

The second part of the monograph is composed of four research papers related to the different communicative skills. Pinilla Gómez deals with listening comprehension ("Enseñar la comprensión oral"), which she considers to be an active skill, due to the many strategies needed to decode not only linguistic but also paralinguistic and supralinguistic components. She lists types of listening practice and their corresponding objectives, together with the roles of the listener, and then she expounds a valuable, detailed series of strategies matching these different needs. Pinilla Gómez also designs a systematic proposal of activities and possibilities for their evaluation.

González García examines oral production ("Enseñar la producción oral"), understood both as speaking and oral interaction, from a discourse analysis approach which is oriented towards the needs and difficulties of the foreign language student. To this end, she designed a questionnaire for Erasmus students to identify those communicative situations depicted by level B1 of the CEFR which they had already experienced in real life. This is followed by the elicitation of a list of oral corpora developed by different research groups through activities in which either the sense or the register are switched. Activities about messages in social networks are also included in this section about oral language as, despite being written language, they use a kind of informal register which is similar to that of colloquial conversation. Their immediacy and connection to everyday life turn them into a highly motivating resource.

Lorenzo Galés details some procedures for reading comprehension by taking advantage of the experience of Catalonia in bilingual education and positive results in the PISA Reading Assessment ("Enseñar la comprensión lectora"). She considers that poor reading comprehension results are derived from excessive emphasis on scanning to the detriment of other comprehension strategies. Her own didactic proposal consists of constructivist microtasks, which rely on the coordination of foreign language teachers with their colleagues of non-linguistic areas involved in CLIL methods. The aim is to provide the advancement of autonomy together with the discovery of reading as a source of knowledge and aesthetic pleasure.

Esteve Ruescas deals with written production ("Enseñar la producción escrita") by pondering its potential as a tool for lexis and grammar learning which can be transferred to the rest of the communicative skills. She considers how free writing triggers a series of mechanisms oriented towards decision making on a cognitive and metacognitive level, such as planning, monitoring and evaluation of the final result through the Vygotskian concept of "inner speech" (Vygotski 1978). Accordingly, she designs a methodological plan centred on the solution of those challenges through collaborative tasks, in which agency is put to work and where the process is more important than the product.

Every chapter derives from real needs observed in the students, followed by a comprehensive review of contemporary classics, which is then ultimately specified as teaching projects. It is possible to find common ground for all contributors since they analyse the skills from many shared references and constructivist perspectives in which the preferences of the students and their expected requirements are always taken into account. In spite of the convenience for the reader resulting from the adoption of the same structure, repetitions of content could be avoided by using a structure which moves from the general to the specific. For example, a first section consisting of a theoretical review is followed by the analysis of the implications of the CEFR and the need to find some cultural guidelines, to finish with space devoted to the analysis of each of the competences and skills.

The papers collected in this volume are complemented by extensive sections devoted to materials, digital tools, types of activities and specific guidance for evaluation. Due to its up-to-date references and practicality, the monograph reveals itself as especially apt as a reference book for undergraduate or postgraduate students of modern language teaching, as well as a positive acquisition to complement the lifelong learning of experienced professionals.

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