

building, and cultural appreciation. The chapter examines a variety of works where utensils are presented as educational tools, playful elements, or anthropomorphised characters that inspire empathy and storytelling. Picturebooks like *Spoon* (2009) by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and *La Storia che Avanza* (2012) by Alessandro Lumare show how plates and utensils can encourage visual and linguistic literacy, turning mundane items into imaginative springboards for narrative creation.

Chapter 9 delves into the concept of “edible reading”, studying how incorporating taste and food into literacy experiences can enrich children’s multisensory learning. It argues that traditional reading, limited to visual and auditory engagement, can be expanded by involving the senses of taste and smell, fostering deeper connections to language and narratives. Historical practices like gingerbread hornbooks and contemporary innovations such as 3D-printed edible books reveal how food can serve as both a medium for learning and a playful tool for literacy development. By merging gastronomy, design, and technology, edible texts could transform early literacy, making learning more engaging, interactive, and memorable.

Chapter 10, “Reading on Fluid Surfaces: From Soups in Narratives to Interacting in a Fluid Narrative Space”, investigates the potential of soups and other fluid surfaces to support emergent literacy, blending play, nutrition, and learning. Building on the concept of edible reading, the chapter explores how liquids like soup can become interactive reading surfaces, encouraging creativity and literacy through the playful arrangement of floating letters and words. Drawing from children’s literature, such as Maurice Sendak’s *Chicken Soup with Rice: A Book of Months* (2014) and Kate Banks’s *Alphabet Soup* (1994), it highlights the symbolic and emotional connections of soup to warmth, comfort, and home, while examining its imaginative uses in storytelling and literacy activities.

Veryeri Alaca’s *Consumable Reading and Children’s Literature* expands the boundaries of early literacy by demonstrating the potential of material and sensory experiences to engage young readers in innovative ways. From the textures of picturebooks to the tastes of edible texts and the fluidity of soup surfaces, the book reveals the myriad ways that literacy can intersect with the everyday. By integrating historical insights, cutting-edge technology, and creative practices, Veryeri Alaca provides educators, caregivers, and scholars with new strategies to inspire children’s learning. This thought-provoking volume spotlights the transformative potential of connecting the tangible with the textual, offering a unique perspective on how literacy can be a playful, embodied, and deeply immersive experience.

New Perspectives on Teaching English to Young Learners

David Valente and Daniel Xerri (eds.). 2022. *Innovative Practices in Early English Language Education*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. 340 pp. ISBN 978-3-031-12921-6.

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Innovative Practices in Early English Language Education consists of 14 chapters devoted to teaching English to young children written by leading experts in the field. The

contents are organised in two main parts, “Innovative Practices in Early English Education” and “Innovative Practices in Early English Teacher Education”. The first part centres on innovations in the classroom with young learners while the second part explores innovations in teacher education contexts. Each chapter starts by addressing current issues and research regarding the topic of the chapter and then provides ideas for their practical application in the classroom, including frameworks and guidelines. At the beginning of each chapter, the authors state the children’s age groups they focus on (early years, lower primary or upper primary).

In the introduction to the book, the editors discuss innovative practices and their characteristics, at the same time providing insight into the structure of the book. The introduction is followed by nine chapters on innovative practices in the language classroom. The first chapter, written by Andrew Littlejohn, highlights the importance of integrating language learning for primary school children (ages 5–12) into general education. In the second chapter, Hendrik Dirk Lagerwaard discusses implementing agency-based approaches in upper primary English language education. He stresses how creating a trusting learning environment encourages learners to actively participate during lessons and express themselves through their agency. In the third chapter, Carol Read emphasises the development of intercultural competence as an essential goal of language teaching and provides a pedagogical framework for teaching children from four to twelve years of age. The fourth chapter, written by Lijuan Shi, introduces the topic of “translanguaging” and offers examples that show how it can be used in English language education with young learners. Both Joan Kang Shin and Georgios Neokleous concentrate in their chapters on other literacies beside text literacy. Shin underlines the importance of visual literacy as a skill needed for today’s multimodal world. She shares ideas for engaging primary school children in visual literacy activities in English while Neokleous deals with the development of children’s digital literacies and offers a framework for enhancing upper-primary learners’ digital awareness. Gail Ellis and Tatia Gruenbaum explore the integration of picturebooks in English language education through video recordings of picturebook read-alouds. The final two chapters in the first part of the book, written by Shelagh Rixon and Yuko Goto Butler, discuss self-assessment with children learning English as another language in the primary school age range (5–12).

Starting with Julie Waddington’s chapter, attention in the second part of the book shifts to teacher education. Waddington discusses embedding ELT into early childhood teacher education and emphasises the need for training programmes that combine foreign language teacher training with knowledge of how children develop and learn during their early years. Nayr Correia Ibrahim proposes integrating a multilingual perspective into educating early years and primary English teachers, highlighting the importance of acknowledging children’s full linguistic repertoire in the English learning process. David Valente explores ways of integrating intercultural experiences and issues of global significance into primary English teacher education through picturebooks. Donna Lim, Willy A. Renandya and Kiren Kaur discuss the importance of metacognitive practices in primary English teacher education programmes, drawing on examples from the Singaporean context. In the final chapter of the book, Anders Myrset and Troy McConachy focus on incorporating pragmatics into English language teaching education because teachers’ own understanding of pragmatics influences what and how they teach in the classroom.

Although the contents of the book are organised into 14 chapters, each with a different topic, four themes emerge as central for the discussion of innovative practices. Firstly, multilingualism and interculturalism – many of the children learning English as a foreign language already come to the classroom as multilingual, and an approach which enables them to draw on their full linguistic repertoires would be very useful in the English learning process. Secondly, learning in schools – there has been a shift from teaching English to privileged children in private classes to teaching English in (mostly state) schools, as a school subject, and of course there should also be a shift in the approach to teaching such different groups of learners. Thirdly, literacy – in today's world children need to learn to decode more than just written words. Teaching English as a foreign language should then also include the development of other literacies such as digital or visual ones. Finally, assessment – assessment tools are often determined outside the classroom and many teachers struggle with them. This volume proposes assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning, which leads to more effective learning.

Innovative practices represent a move away from approaches originally developed for adult learners learning in small groups and in well-resourced classrooms, a situation far removed from the majority of primary school classrooms around the world. Instead, such practices focus on children, their development and the way they learn and adapt to real classroom conditions. By combining theory with practice, *Innovative Practices in Early English Language Education* provides an impressive contribution to this important and necessary shift in English language education.