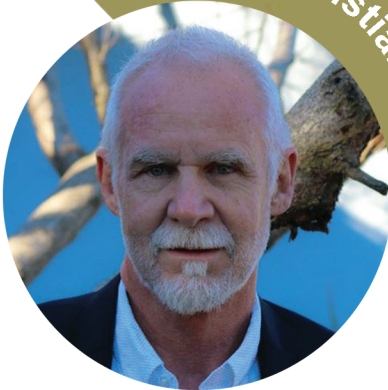




# YICER

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Prof. Dr. Christian J Faltis



Prof. Dr. Mustafa Baloğlu



Prof. Dr. Stephen Lafert





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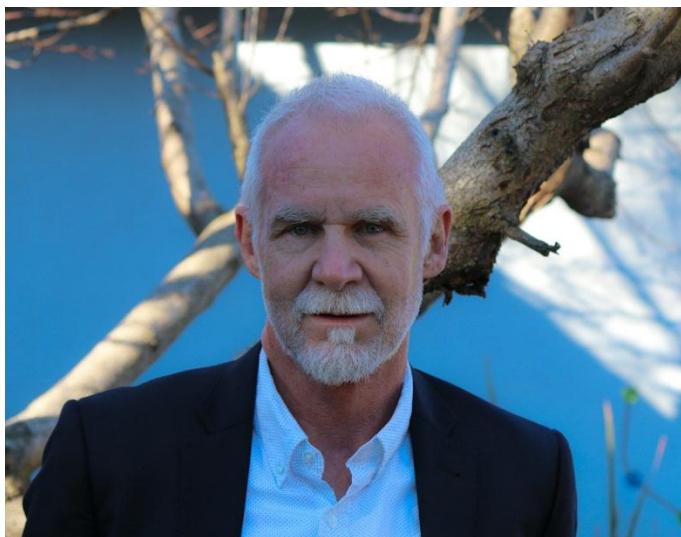
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## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

### Keynote Speaker I

**Christian J Faltis, PhD**



Christian Faltis (Ph.D. Stanford University) is the Dolly and David Fiddymont Endowed Chair in Teacher Education and Professor of Language, Literacy and Culture in the School of Education at the University of California, Davis, where he teaches courses in teacher education, and he has published 19 books and over 60 scholarly articles and book chapters. His recent books are *Academic Language and Second Language Learning* 2013, with M. B.

Arias), *The Arts and Emergent Bilingual Youth* 2013, with S. Chappell), *Implementing Language Policy in Arizona* (2012, with M.B. Arias) and *Education, Immigrant Students, Refugee Students, and English Learners* (2011, with G. Valdés). He also published "Art and Living Inquiry into Anti-immigration Discourse," *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 2012. He is Editor of *Review of Research in Education*, Volume 37, 2013, and Volume 39, 2015.. Faltis is an oil painter, whose works address immigration and social justice issues.

Presentation Title

**"Pedagogical Language Knowledge, Teacher Education, and Advocacy for Language Diversity"**

### Keynote Speaker II

**Prof. Dr. Mustafa BALOĞLU**



Prof. Baloglu received his Ph.D. degrees from Texas A&M University-Commerce in the fields of counselor education and educational psychology. His main research interests are mathematics and statistics anxiety, learning, and giftedness. He is currently general director of special education and guidance services in the Ministry of

Education. In addition, he is a professor of special education at Hacettepe University, Ankara.

Presentation Title:

**"Gifted education in Turkey: Past, Present, and Future"**

**"Turkiyede ustun yeteneklilerin egitimi: Gecmisi, gunumuzdeki durumu ve gelecegi"**

**Keynote Speaker III**  
**Prof. Dr. Stephen Lafer**



Stephen Lafer is a professor in the College of Education at the University of Nevada, Reno where he has worked for the last 26 years. His areas of expertise are secondary English arts education and socio-cultural contexts of education. He is the co-author of the book *The Interdisciplinary Teacher's Handbook* and several articles on the teaching of English within an integrated curriculum. He was instrumental in bringing the middle school movement to Nevada, helping to develop the Billingshurst Middle School curriculum and working with teachers to implement a project-based, problem-solving oriented team-taught

program. He is co-founder of the Rainshadow Community Charter High School in Reno, Nevada, a schools based on principles developed in the *Teacher's Handbook* and tested during the ten years of work with teachers in the Truckee River Projects, a program for in-service teachers who the Projects engaged in the kind of interdisciplinary explorations we were suggesting be used in their classrooms. Billingshurst continues to be one of the most successful schools in Nevada and Rainshadow is now in its eleventh year of helping students who do not succeed in school graduate with a love and respect for the process of learning.

**Presentation Title;**

**"Culture, Language, the Growth of Individuals and the Possibility for Democratic Societies"**

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# THE ELECTIVE STATUS OF THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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## **Abstract**

Knowledge of the language of the broader environment presents an extraordinary benefit, and the process itself can start from the earliest school age. The research issues that are covered in this work are the didactic aspects of the implementation, organizational ordering, and coverage of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education. Special emphasis is put on the manner and coverage of the realization of the elective subject Albanian Language in the nine-year primary education. This issue is studied from the aspect of examining the program foundations of the subject in question, the didactic qualities of the textbooks, and the opinions of the participants in the educational process. The research resulted in several conclusions that can positively influence the strengthening and development of the teaching of this specific subject. Generally, they come down to the existence of positive opinions from the participants of other ethnicities, the need for strengthening and reprogramming the textbooks, as well as the programs themselves. Such research provides possibilities for expansion and addition from the aspect of the organization and realization of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education in those classes with other languages of instruction.

**Key words:** multicultural education, teaching plans and programs, textbooks, elective subject, integrated teaching

## **1. Introduction**

The pedagogical-didactic problems connected to the issue of learning the Albanian language in primary education in the Republic of Macedonia represent a multidimensional pedagogical phenomenon. They seek special coverage on the level of pedagogical aspects, as well as on the level of social conditions and predispositions. These two aspects are closely related. Hence the effective pedagogical-didactic support is put in the spotlight of a much larger phenomenon: living in a multicultural society.

Multiculturalism, among other things, also means mutual communication between different ethnic entities. This is the reason for using language as a fundamental means for communication. Lack of knowledge of the language of the “Other” presents an impediment for higher development of both cultures, while at the same time it prevents the possibility for everyday effective contacts on both the personal and professional plane. Undoubtedly in R. Macedonia, there are environments where only one of the languages is exclusively spoken, it being either the Macedonian, Albanian, or Turkish language. Precisely this is an opening standpoint for an extensive debate as to how to overcome the language barriers without hurting the national and personal feelings of all the parties included, no matter what their ethnic belonging is. For this aim, there have been made attempts at conquering this situation through bilingual pre-school groups, but taking into consideration the sample of pupils included in the process, we are in fact discussing “a drop in the ocean”.

The realistic situation is that in this day, when the issue in question regards the two languages of greatest coverage in the country (Macedonian and Albanian), there exists so-

called “silent talk”. This brings about the need for introducing the Albanian language as an elective subject in the non-Albanian classes. R. Macedonia is a ground for many ethnicities, one of them being the Albanian people, with their distinctive cultural color, tradition, and language. We are living in a dynamic world, being enveloped in a multitude of changes and tendencies for a better future for the younger generations, so if the past regarded many things as being absurd, the present day thrives on competition which appears in every step and every aspect of life.

Thus, the question arises: *What would be the ideal solution in a general framework?* If the stereotypes, such as “I don’t care what other people think” or “I’ll never learn the language of the Other”, are neglected, then the solution to the problem lies in all the pupils (as potential social movers) developing their capacities for using the two languages of greatest coverage in the country. Simply stated, this process should start at the very beginning of one’s educational path, in a variety of ways; through different curricular and extracurricular models. It is possible that it be reciprocal, at the start of the educational process; or as a mandatory subject. There is also the possibility for the languages to be studied as elective courses in the regular curriculum, which is a relatively optimal option, since the belonging and national feelings are an integral part of one’s personal dignity and the dignity of their family. Each of these models has its own advantages and drawbacks, above all viewed through the lens of the pedagogical-didactic aspect.

In the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and the Law for Primary Education there is a basis for developing a curriculum with teaching curricula for the nine-year primary education. Setting out from the analysis of the primary education in R. Macedonia, as well as the mandatory education in other countries of the European Union, there has been constructed a proposal for redefining the developmental goals, and including a new teaching curriculum and teaching programs for the primary schools, which promise to improve the content, organization, and quality of the primary education. These suggested changes have taken into consideration the achievements in the fields of science and education, the recommendations of the Council of Europe and other international organizations, and especially the curricula and experience in the primary mandatory education in Austria, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Slovenia, Croatia, and other countries. Particular attention has been paid to the experiences acquired via the developmental research and innovations done in teaching in a large number of primary schools in R. Macedonia. Therefore, with all the acquired experience in the previous years it became necessary to seek a model for development of primary education, and for the transformation of the primary schools in accordance with the developmental goals, the new teaching plans, and the other set solutions for the already established educational system.

This decade has also seen a determination for expanding the model of the nine-year mandatory primary education, which has been moving forward in conformity with the developmental characteristics of the pupils in their separate developmental stages, such as is the case with R. Slovenia and other developed EU countries. It is well known that Macedonia is a multicultural country. The contemporary conclusions and tendencies point to the fact that the organization of the teaching should be increasingly oriented towards the individual possibilities of the pupils, i.e. the different forms of differentiation. It is also considered that with a differentiated approach towards the organization of the teaching and its adaptation to

the interests and abilities of the pupils, the contradictoriness between the size and depth of the teaching content and the limited possibilities of the pupils will be overcome.

## **2. Methodology of the Research**

The subject of this research is Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education, analyzed from the aspect of:

- The knowledge and tasks of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education;
- The program ordering of the teaching regarding the subject of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education;
- The didactic shaping (designing) of the textbooks of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education;
- Aspects of the didactic competences of the teachers of Albanian Language;
- Views and opinions of the pupils, teachers, administrative staff, and principals regarding Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education.

## **3. Research Goals and Character**

The main goal is to analyze the didactic aspects of the realization, organizational ordering, and coverage of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education, as well as the manner and coverage of the realization of the elective subject.

## **4. Research Tasks**

- To examine the program ordering of Albanian Language as an elective subject.
- To examine the didactic components of the textbooks of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education.
- To examine the opinions and views of the teachers who teach Albanian Language as an elective and mandatory subject in the teaching process.
- To examine the opinions and views of the pupils who have chosen Albanian Language as an elective subject.
- To examine the opinions and views of the administrative staff and principals regarding Albanian Language as an elective subject.

## **5. Research Hypotheses**

### *5.1. General Hypothesis*

It is thought that the subject Albanian Language as an elective subject in the multicultural teaching is realized in optimal didactic conditions, expressed through the

program ordering, the didactic values of the textbooks, and the existence of positive opinions from the teachers themselves.

### 5.2. Auxiliary Hypothesis

It is thought that:

- The textbooks of Albanian Language as an elective subject, directed for multicultural teaching, have been designed in accordance with the contemporary didactic standards.
- The pupils have positive views towards learning the Albanian language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education.
- The teachers have positive views towards the realization of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education.
- The administrative staff and principals have positive views regarding the realization of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education.

## 6. Research Variables

- *Independent variables:* The didactic values of the textbooks of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the multicultural teaching.
- *Dependent variables:* Opinions and views of the teachers and pupils, the teaching, as well as the manner of organization of the teaching.

## 7. Research Methods, Techniques, and Instruments

This research applies the method of theoretical analysis and the descriptive method. The method of theoretical analysis is used during the analysis of the value of the textbooks of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education, with the application of the descriptive method and the theoretical illustration of the different aspects that refer to the realization of the program and organization of the teaching of the elective subject: Albanian Language as an elective subject in the multicultural teaching.

While on the one hand, the descriptive method is used for the analysis of the content (documentation) of the textbooks, on the other hand, the surveys from the interviews were used to research the teachers and pupils.

The nature of the subject of research directs us towards several techniques: surveying, with the goal of examining the opinions of the teachers, an evaluation scale, and content analysis on the didactic values of the textbooks. As instruments, there was used an evaluation protocol, containing questions of an open and closed type.

The research itself has a qualitative and quantitative character. The qualitative approach is used for the analysis of the didactic components of the textbooks, while the quantitative approach examines the survey questions. In addition, regarding the instruments that are specially designed for the research, there can be mentioned *a check list for evaluation of the textbooks*, and *evaluation scales* designed for the pupils. The comprehensive collected

data and their interpretation provide for description of the state of the teaching programs, the process of their realization, as well as a qualitative and quantitative approach, the didactic components of the textbooks, research of the program ordering, and examining the views of the administrative staff and principals through interviews, teachers (partially), and a qualitative approach of examining the views of the pupils.

## **8. Research Sample**

This research covered primary schools from 4 cities: 6 schools from Kicevo, 3 schools from Gostivar, 13 schools from Tetovo, and 9 schools from Skopje.

In these schools the Albanian Language has been learned as an elective subject. The research surveyed 105 teachers, who were randomly chosen in order to hear the views and opinions regarding the teaching of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education. It included a total of 146 pupils between Grades VI and VIII, who had chosen Albanian Language as an elective subject; 105 teachers who had been teaching Albanian Language as an elective and mandatory subject in the curriculum; as well as the administrative staff (7 school pedagogues, and 7 psychologists), and 7 principals.

This sample is adapted in accordance with the conditions of the the field.

## **9. Discussion**

Multiculture and integrated education are significant segments of the present programs for advancing and perfecting the teaching. A specific element that needs to be mentioned is Albanian Language as an elective subject in the non-Albanian classes. For that reason this research analyzes the didactic aspects of the realization, organizational order, and coverage of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education. The subject of this research is to state the current situation regarding the status of Albanian Language as an elective subject. The following research elements have been chosen (because of their significance): the curricula, being state documents; the didactic quality of the teaching process; the teaching content and its potential concerning the development of the interest for learning Albanian Language in the nine-year primary education in R. Macedonia; and the didactic competences of the teachers of Albanian Language.

According to the principle of understanding the “Other” and multiculturalism, the content, methods, and activities that are being offered to the pupils in school should promote tolerance and mutual respect of the differences as values, and should provide the acquisition of knowledge and skills for better understanding and respect of the “Other”. According to this principle the multicultural nature of the Macedonian society requires primary education to promote the development of values for pupils’ cooperation, respect of differences between people and their culture, language and traditions, while at the same time the school is held responsible for expanding pupils’ consciousness about their cultural background and for instigating the interest to be introduced to the cultural heritage of the other communities.

Establishing electiveness in school facilitates the solution to several didactic issues, which further depend on how successfully the teaching will be organized and realized. Albanian Language is among the offered elective subjects for pupils in primary school. This research focuses its attention on this particular phenomenon, which is nearly wholly pedagogically untouched. Stating the current situation should allow for advancing, strengthening, and more efficiently acquiring the Albanian language, treated as an elective school subject. This can bring about conclusions that will serve as a basis for conceptualizing the optimal models.

A principally significant point, from a pedagogical point of view, is the issue of the didactic constellation of the whole process. It is here that textbooks, with their qualitative value, carry the primary didactic importance. The textbook itself still takes up a noteworthy place in the educational process, and it represents one of the means for acquiring knowledge and easily consuming terms and information. It should be noted that there are yet other, alternative “sources” that are being implemented, such as the contemporary approaches to educational technology. This has special meaning in the process of developing the language skills of one’s native language and the languages of the other communities.

The role of the textbook, viewed didactically, is to classify the teaching and systematic contents, in accordance with the pedagogical needs and the educational function of the school. In this sense it is inherently clear that the textbook represents one of the sources of knowledge and a teaching means that is being used for achieving the educational goals in both the teaching and learning process. The textbook allows the pupil to reach the standards of knowledge, and to instigate the development of one’s abilities: regarding the **cognitive area** (from understanding, application of knowledge, analysis, synthesis, to evaluation); the **affective area** (from the development of one’s abilities for accepting and including values, to the formation of opinions); and the **psychomotor area** (from instigating the pupil with prepared activities to acquire skills, to independent evaluation of practical work). In regards to the nature of the subject and the contents, a textbook can be offered, or a didactic set, containing several parts (a textbook, workbook, practicum, i.e. practical activities, or other teaching means). In contemporary practice, aside from the textbook, it is recommended that there also be published a methodological teacher’s book. The textbook should be of multimedia character, founded on the latest ICT changes in the world, which at the same time represent additional contributors for a more wholesome, more interesting and more contemporary shaping of the content, as well as for fulfilling the pupils’ affinities (digital transmitters of information, monographies, dictionaries, etc.). The textbook should be structured in accordance with the multidisciplinary concept of the teaching and the factual conditions in which the precise teaching is taking place. The concept of the textbook is defined by the general conditions for preparation of textbooks for primary and secondary education, which state that every textbook:

- Should be in close connection to the defined aims of the curriculum for a certain subject, and fulfill the general and precise aims of each and every thematic unit;
- Should follow the contemporary achievements of the specific scientific field and the accepted (suitable) terminology, as well as to be a synthesis of several pedagogical, psychological, methodical, and didactic elements, whose interrelatedness is correlative, complementary, and dynamic;

- Should be adapted to the pupils' age (following their developmental characteristics, and the language and writing style be clear and understandable);
- Should strengthen the educational component and the positive outlook towards knowledge, and should further develop their civil and national identity, multiculturalism, gender equality, etc.

Concerning the curriculum goals, the textbooks have developed teaching content from all the program areas: Language, Literature and Reading, Writing and Expression, and Media Culture in Primary Education

The concluding results from the research on a global scale can be structured into few segments, in accordance with the elements of the research, which end in tangible suggestions for a didactic consequence of the process:

- The Programs for learning Albanian Language in the nine-year primary education are well structured and organized. The curricula include educational goals that partially promote multiculturalism and respect towards ethnic differences, but not as comprehensively. In order to provide better implementation of the principles of multiculturalism in practice, there should be included content that will further promote interaction through representing the other ethnicities, as a part of the same or different situations. This means that there exists a need for redefining the content according to the needs of the pupils for easier acquisition and understanding of the Albanian language. The contents of all the program areas are covered: language, literature and reading, writing and expression, and media culture. In the integrated planning there can also be included suitable content from the other subjects, through which pupils learn about words and their functions, enrich their word bank, enhance proper speech and their written expression. When planning the curriculum, different weight is placed on the program contents, the set goals, the given deadline for realization, and the levels of achievement, being a basis for the planning of the teaching process. The successful application of the various methods, notwithstanding the personal efforts of the teacher, requires curricula that explicitly stress the contemporary approaches in teaching.
- Comparing the curriculum of Albanian Language, as an elective subject, with the other curricula, it can be stated that there are many elements that are lacking, yet are of great importance for contemporary and effective teaching. This will bring about better pupil achievements and fulfilling of the established goals. Therefore changes are forced to happen in the existing curriculum, in which aside from the general goals, there is a need for defining the concrete goals of every program area, the terms that the pupils must acquire from the content, activities and methods, which will provide an orientational frame for the teacher to shape the teaching process and to construct quality planning (global, thematic, monthly, daily), yet at the same time to accomplish the set goals. The curriculum does not describe the didactic recommendations, as a direction for successful fulfillment of the teaching process. In order for the teaching goals and contents to be realized in the realm of assessment (diagnostic, formative, macro-summative, and summative), the teaching means, the teaching conditions for the realization of the whole process, the teaching staff, and the expected results, are all interconnected and provide coherence.
- There is a need for redefining the curricula of Albanian Language as an elective subject. The research states that during the previous year a new curriculum for Grade



VI has been created, but that curriculum is not available in the schools as well as on the web site of the Bureau for the Development of Education. This also covers a textbook for Grade VI (in the framework of the program), which has undergone slight changes or modifications of the textbook of Grade V.

- The textbooks for Albanian Language (elective) in the nine-year primary education are not quite equivalent to the curricula. If the curricula describe learning through listening, practice, and writing, then it is sensible of them to contain activities for easier acquisition and learning, but unfortunately this is the case with a small part of the content. The texts do not correspond to the curricula contents and the terms that are covered. For example, when review tasks are given, there is no variety of tasks of different levels and types.

As they are textbooks for pupils who have come into contact with the Albanian language for the first time, there is lack of activities as well as other supplementary materials: among others, materials of visual or auditory type, and workbooks. In addition, illustrations are lacking. The textbooks are not very well designed, and they are neither attractive nor motivating for the pupils. Regarding the textbooks of Grade V and VI, they partially fulfill the didactic concepts of what a good textbook is, in terms of instigating the acquisition of new knowledge. The textbooks of Grade VII and VIII are not compatible to the pupils' age level since they are too long and do not attract any additional motivation on their part.

The pupils' views regarding their interest in Albanian Language as a subject have shown the experience to be extremely positive and acceptable. This works well for the requirements of revising and strengthening the didactic components of the textbooks of Albanian Language as an elective subject. In other words, the methodological-didactic standards that are specific to learning another language are required to be fulfilled.

- In addition to the previous statement, the teachers' views, most of which convey a positive attitude towards the elective status of the subject in the nine-year education, also work well for the whole experience. However, a significant number of teachers agree that the curriculum and the textbooks need to undergo changes, in order to coincide with the pupils' age and interests, and to satisfy the didactic standards. Moreover, teachers are of the same opinion that they need additional educational training.
- The concept of the teaching programs for the elective subject Albanian Language, in the nine-year primary education contains certain irregularities that refer to the existence of non-uniform criteria in their structure. The content should evolve around a methodological-didactic concept, which would contain contemporary approaches to working. In addition, there should also be contained a methodological handbook for each separate grade in which the teachers teach. At the end of this analysis, it should be worthwhile to also mention the insufficiency of multicultural topics, or lack thereof, as significant characteristics for the society in which we live, so as to provide a model that would promote multiculturalism.

This research offers possibilities for further expansion and broadening from the aspect of the organization and realization of Albanian Language as an elective subject in the nine-year primary education in the Republic of Macedonia.

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