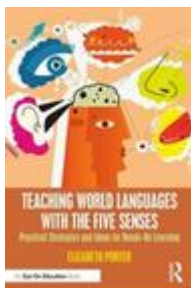


## BOOK REVIEW: TEACHING WORLD LANGUAGES WITH THE FIVE SENSES, PRACTICAL STRATEGIES AND IDEAS FOR HANDS-ON LEARNING



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**Aidillah Suja<sup>1\*</sup>, Muassomah Muassomah<sup>2</sup>, and Sutaman Sutaman<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>STAIN Sultan Abdurrahman Kepulauan Riau, Indonesia

<sup>2,3</sup>UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

aidillah\_suja@stainkepri.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, muassomah@bsa.uin-malang.ac.id<sup>2</sup>,  
and sutaman@uin-malang.ac.id<sup>3</sup>

\*correspondence: aidillah\_suja@stainkepri.ac.id

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### Abstract

This book review discusses Elizabeth's journey as a mother and teacher who combined her personal and professional experiences to design a language teaching method that engages the five senses. The book "Teaching World Languages with the Five Senses, Practical Strategies and Ideas for Hands-On Learning" that resulted from her research provides deep insights into language acquisition in the brain. Each book's 11 chapters address various topics, from language learning in the brain to five-sense teaching methods to cultural responsiveness in the 21st-century language classroom and decolonizing the world language curriculum. Emphasis is placed on teachers adapting to student diversity, dealing with learning anxiety, and providing approaches that support higher-order thinking skills. Suitable for all language teachers worldwide, this book presents an innovative approach involving the five senses in language learning, emphasizing a basic understanding of the brain as a foundation for more effective teaching practices.

**Keywords:** bilingual education, brain-based approach, teaching with the senses

Elizabeth's experience as a mother whose son was diagnosed with autism that did not allow him to produce language, her experience as a teacher with "neurotypical" special needs children, and her experience as a bilingual teacher. These experiences led Elizabeth to research language acquisition in the brain,



comparing neurotypical children with autistic children, resulting in the book “Teaching World Languages with the Five Senses, Practical Strategies and Ideas for Hands-On Learning.” Interestingly, this book presents many stories from the author's experience, so the reader is brought into the experience. Each chapter of this book is prefaced with quotes that serve as background for the discussion in each chapter.

The 11-string chapters are initiated with an introductory overview of the book and the author's story and experiences. Chapter 1, ‘Introduction,’ highlights the importance of this book for teachers and language learners to read. It also tells the story of how the author's experience led to creating the method of teaching language with the five senses. It also highlights the structure of the book's content to make it easier for readers to familiarize themselves.

Chapter 2, ‘Language Learning in the Brain,’ explains and explores language learning in the brain, specifically how the brain acquires language through the Senses, where the Five Senses serve as sensory receptors. It also highlights how Broca's and Wernicke's Areas as language centers in the brain related to language production and receptive competence. (Rosselli et al., 2014). The chapter emphasizes that teaching practices must evolve to align with what we continue to learn about how the brain connects to acquire new skills, knowledge, and language.

Chapter 3, ‘What Is Language with the Five Senses?’, provides an overview of the Five Senses Method, showing how learning through understanding can help overcome learning anxiety. It alleviates anxiety by helping students use their prior knowledge to create new knowledge. The chapter also explains that Language with the Senses is a method that models the way we learn our native language. This technique mimics how the brain makes connections to develop the native language. When a language learner uses the senses to derive meaning from language, the learner is more likely to retain language and skills in the brain. New language forms, such as vocabulary and grammatical structures, are more easily remembered from physical experience. Therefore, physical movements, gestures, and imagery greatly influence language learning (Wilks-Smith, 2022a, 2022b). It is interesting to discuss that in this chapter, the author is very straightforward in saying that the translation method in language learning could be more effective.

Chapter 4, ‘Culturally Responsive 21st-Century World Language Classrooms,’ explains and describes 21st Century Education and culturally responsive practices. Readers will understand the differences between 20th Century and 21st Century Education and how to foster a culturally responsive and 21st Century classroom environment in the context of world languages. This chapter reveals that teaching practices must adapt to a diverse student population (Awang-Hashim et al., 2019; Markey et al., 2023). It also highlights what the 21st-century teacher needs.

Chapter 5, ‘Decolonizing the World Language Curriculum,’ focuses on ensuring that the curriculum represents all students in the classroom. That all students can see themselves in the curriculum and that the curriculum represents all the people and places where the language is spoken. No one should be excluded from the curriculum, and it can all be summed up in one post under the

sub-heading “Decolonizing Education Is Critical Because Everyone Succeeds When Students from Underrepresented Populations Succeed.”

Chapter 6, ‘Pathways to Fluency,’ explains the difference between fluency and accuracy, why translation methods do not work, and how to encourage confidence in speaking the target language. The key to fluency is practicing authentic language to create linguistic connections where the brain can process receptive language and ultimately produce spontaneous and expressive language (O’Sullivan et al., 2019). By focusing on fluency, it can eliminate the anxiety that arises when trying to communicate in the target language. This chapter emphasizes for language teachers to create usable language tools that students can use in practical situations. The Five Senses Method is a fun and worry-free approach to learning.

Chapter 7, ‘Pathways to Biliteracy,’ explains the difference between bilingualism and biliteracy and the practices that promote literacy in the target language. It also explains how knowing another language helps us understand our own better and creates space to expand our world. Our brains acquire language through the same process, whether our mother tongue or a 20th-century language. Therefore, literacy is as essential in the second language classroom as it is in the mother tongue classroom. This chapter emphasizes that language teachers use literature appropriate to the student’s language proficiency level.

In Chapter 8, ‘Bringing the World into Your Classroom,’ examples of exposing students to diverse cultures within the classroom are presented. The chapter underscores the vital role of teachers in integrating global perspectives for the benefit of every student. Simultaneously, it criticizes policymakers for neglecting to recognize teachers as professionals. The chapter, encapsulated by the quote, “We cannot change the world unless we change our perception of the world, and we cannot change our perception of the world if we cannot see it,” passionately advocates for educators as critical agents in shaping students’ global awareness and essential skills.

Chapter 9, ‘Creativity in the World Language Classroom,’ explains the importance of creativity regarding fluency and higher-order thinking skills in the language classroom. Creativity is essential in language acquisition because learners can use language skills in new and innovative ways. The chapter also explains how the language and arts classroom is a haven for many students, where they can shine and feel comfortable to express themselves. The chapter also highlights how art and creative expression are a natural part of the language acquisition process. In this chapter, the author again criticizes education policies prioritizing quantitative assessments that only assess students with numbers or science lessons and ignoring language and arts.

This book is suitable for all language teachers worldwide, whether first language, second language, foreign language, bilingual, or multilingual teachers. Teachers will be exposed to a new approach to language teaching, a brain-based approach that shows how language learning is a sensory experience. This approach allows students to effectively learn language and improve memory through activities involving the five senses - sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. The book also provides real-world examples backed by research and classroom strategies and activities that language teachers can readily use. This

book will give readers the tools to become a Language with the Five Senses teacher.

It is ironic how few language teachers worldwide are taught about Broca's and Wernicke's areas because these two areas of the brain are so important in guiding effective practice. When teachers delve into these two areas, their teaching practice will become more informed. This book is a benefit for students, teachers, and stakeholders dealing with language education. After reading this book, readers will become more informed in their teaching practice.

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