



BOOK REVIEW

Will, L., Stadler, W., & Eloff, I. (Eds.). (2022). *Authenticity across languages and cultures: Themes of identity in foreign language teaching and learning*. Multilingual Matters.

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Over the past four decades, many definitions of authenticity in language education have been prevalent (e.g., Breen, 1985; Roach et al., 2018; Widdowson, 1990). However, given the theoretical literature on authenticity abounding in works with limited scope (i.e., language teaching and language materials), context (i.e., English-speaking societies), and theory (i.e., second language acquisition theories), further studies are needed to integrate the existing findings for a comprehensive discussion of authenticity in second/foreign language education. To that end, *Authenticity across Languages and Cultures: Themes of Identity in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, edited by Leo Will, Wolfgang Stadler, and Irma Eloff, aimed to reveal the emerging understating of this concept in the light of other theoretical frameworks, diverse contexts, and curricular dimensions.

The volume is organized into 16 chapters in three parts. After introducing authenticity from different contemporary perspectives, the first section (Chapters 2-7) dips into the associations between authenticity and language pedagogy. These authors have looked into the phenomenon through different lenses (politics and philosophy, English as a Lingua Franca, etc.), placing authenticity into a multidimensional frame and exploring authenticity in language teaching to bridge theory and practice for the best. Moreover, this part challenges the stereotypical nature of authentic discourses in some didactic settings, where idealized authenticity attributes a native language to its speakers and invalidates non-native learners' identities (see Chapter 2). This section also aims to inspire inclusive classroom climates to move away from inauthenticity. Furthermore,

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this part informs authentic practices and choices in three domains: teaching methodology (see Chapters 5 and 7), language testing (see Chapter 4), and language materials (see Chapter 6).

The second part (Chapters 8-12) probes the interplay between authenticity and learners' and educators' identities in different contexts of language pedagogy (e.g., Europe, Canada, and Africa). Two chapters suggest the development of multicultural curricula for today's classrooms to avoid the ideologically and politically driven value systems of Western societies (i.e., Germany, Austria, and Switzerland), which impose idealized norms and neo-nationalist behaviors on agentive individuals (see Chapters 8 and 11). Two other chapters zoom in on text authenticity from two different perspectives: situating language materials and texts within learners' sociocultural contexts in Africa (Widdowson, 1978) (see Chapter 10), and developing language materials for heritage language learners based on their multiculturalism, beliefs, and attitudes, casting light on the importance of intercultural awareness for learners' success in intercultural interactions and identity co-construction (see Chapter 12). The ninth chapter of this section explores the role of socioemotional factors, affecting authenticity in early childhood education in the South African environment as an ignored domain in authenticity studies.

The third part (Chapters 13-16) focuses on the authenticity roles of literature in education. To that end, the authors have focused on how aesthetic effects of literature (e.g., autobiographical fairy tales, self-expression in indie-folk music, and literary contents) can be used as authenticity strategies for situating and personalizing language materials, expressing oneself in a classroom, bridging cultural gaps, training teachers in pre-service courses, and developing critical language awareness. This part involves classroom case studies from diverse sociocultural settings, underscoring the universality of aesthetics in authentic language pedagogy in light of locally specific arts. Considering global shifts, the afterword is especially helpful since it gives readers a clear idea of where to focus future studies and implications. It also provides a reflective summary of the key insights in this volume and a critical perspective on authenticity, highlighting the dynamic, context-dependent, multidisciplinary, and multimethodological nature of the phenomenon in question.

Taken as a whole, this volume has many strengths. For example, it has tapped into the multidimensionality of authenticity, making progress from the previous unidimensional definitions and frameworks, which were mostly bound to texts and materials (e.g., Breen, 1985; Widdowson, 1978, 1990). Another contribution of this edited volume is that it acknowledges authenticity as a situated process of negotiation between the self and society in personal and social arenas, suggesting language teachers provide opportunities for dialog in the classroom, negotiate their ideas and experiences with their students, and construct the syllabus with other course members. Moreover, the next distinctive point in this volume is the endeavor to put authenticity into a multidisciplinary frame, representing the dynamic interplays between diverse views and insights (philosophy, politics, linguistics, etc.) into authenticity. It also tries to put into practice the

theoretical views on authenticity to showcase its out-of-the-box applications and uses in language pedagogy. It also taps into the contribution of the contemporary phenomena of multiculturalism, globalization, and digitalization to the surge of authenticity in the principles and procedures of language teaching and testing.

Despite the values of this resource, it has some limitations. Albeit drawing upon a wide range of disciplines and dimensions, these contributions may not be integrated as a model or framework of authenticity because it is far from theoretical economy, which minimizes the assumptions of a model to be easily interpretable (Simon, 2002). In addition, some contributions could be more practically oriented to help novice teachers translate authenticity into practice (e.g., Chapters 4 and 7). Moreover, although a revisited view of authenticity is claimed in the foreword and the first chapter to move away from the views of native-speakerism in authenticity, the values promoted in the book (e.g., existential individuality in identity formation) are rooted in the theories from the Western societies, presenting an unbalanced top-down pattern of the voices from the Global North and Global South.

To conclude, this volume is an intellectually rigorous guide for researchers and practitioners although its findings may not be applicable to the examination of authenticity in the contexts ignored in the book (e.g., Asian and South American countries). The implication of this book for researchers is to retheorize the extant thoughts on authenticity to develop a comprehensive model of this concept, shying away from the past's native-speakerism and today's neo-liberalism and neo-nationalism. Moreover, as a reference point for policymakers, materials developers, and teachers, this book may raise their awareness to reconsider authenticity in their thoughts and practices and to make headway toward inclusive authenticity.

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