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Beliefs, agency and identity in foreign language learning and teaching, Paula Kalaja, Ana Maria F. Barcelos, Mari Aro, Maria Ruohotie-Lyhty. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK (2015). xi+237 pp.

This is a unique book on key constructs in language learning and teaching, including beliefs, agency and identity. It is also a refreshing collection of studies on language learners and teachers conducted in two very different contexts (i.e., Finland and Brazil).

The book starts with an introductory section to give an overview of the book and the key constructs examined in it. The introductory section plays a critical role in addressing readers like us who question why the book is needed. Though Kalaja, Barcelos, Aro and Ruohotie-Lyhty have adopted a particular version of belief, agency and identity, they have convincingly presented the need to have a book that 'explores the phenomena of believing, acting and identifying' (p. 6). Given that edited volumes including Kalaja and Barcelors (2003) have already treated each of the key contexts in detail, it is timely for us to examine 'the interconnectedness' of beliefs, agency and identity 'in the learning and teaching of English or other foreign languages' (pp. 6–7). It is also noteworthy that the authors theorize these constructs as dynamic and complex phenomena emerging from ongoing negotiations between individuals and contextual conditions, a theoretical stance underpinning much of the second reviewer's works (e.g., Deters, Gao, Miller & Vitanova, 2014; Gao, 2010).

Following the introductory section are three substantial parts on young language learners' beliefs and agency, pre-service language teachers' beliefs, motivation and identity, as well as foreign language teachers' beliefs and identity development. Part I has two chapters (by Mari Aro) reporting on a longitudinal study on English language learners' shifting beliefs and understanding of agency in Finland. Chapter 3 reports that the learners were found to have been profoundly influenced by the ideological discourses and pedagogical practices in schools when they were young. They gained control of learning English in terms of beliefs as they grew up and had already begun to critically reflect on what constitute the best ways to learn English beyond the classroom. However, this does not mean that English language teachers do not need to engage their students in such discussions within the classroom as Aro rightly points out that '[the] walls of the classroom need not constitute a barrier, separating the language inside from the language outside' (p. 47). Chapter 4 presents an account of shifting roles that the two learners assumed in the language learning process. When they were young, their language learning was heavily influenced by the match or mismatch between their preferred activities and teachers' pedagogical activities. As they grew up, they could adapt themselves more easily to teachers' pedagogical activities and used what they were good at in the learning process. We totally agree with Aro that language learners can never be free agents in an absolute sense and learner agency emerges from the interaction with socio-cultural contexts (e.g., Gao, 2010). That is why we found Aro's reference to the collective emergence of agency particularly intriguing. We truly believe that further research should explore this notion of collective agency.

The three chapters in Part 2 focus on pre-service language teachers' experiences of learning foreign languages at universities in Finland and Brazil with focus on teaching beliefs, motivations and professional identities. With the person-in-context relational perspective proposed by Ushioda (2009), Chapter 5 (by Ana Maria F. Barcelos) reports on a 3-year longitudinal study that explored six student teachers' motivations to become teachers, their identities and beliefs about teaching as a profession and the interplay between the three factors. The participants were found to have displayed lack of motivation and commitment to teaching English even though they professed their love for learning English. In fact, the participants were initially motivated to become English language teachers because they expected to be respected by students. However, they became increasingly demotivated as they realized that teachers in public schools had to cope with students' poor discipline and work for low salaries in unsatisfactory working conditions. Such awareness of contextual conditions made them significantly less willing to assert their identities as teachers-to-be. Chapter 6 (by Paula Kalaja) recounts the development of pre-service English language teachers' beliefs of English and Finnish in Finland during studies at a Finnish university. Kalaja used four interpretive repertoires, affection (e.g. close vs. distant), aesthetics (e.g. beautiful vs. ugly), vitality (e.g. global vs. local) and challenge (e.g. easy vs. difficult), to analyze the pre-service teachers' discursive constructions of the two languages. Like Kalaja, we are deeply troubled by the findings that the participants targeted themselves to be 'double monolinguals', which is 'an impossible goal' (p. 118). This seems to be quite a common challenge for many language teacher educators to address in language teacher education programmes worldwide. The study reported in Chapter 7 (by Paula Kalaja) adopted highly innovative methods, including drawings and narratives, to investigate pre-service MA foreign language teachers'

visions and beliefs. Although more participants envisioned language teaching taking place in conventional classrooms (with desks, a board etc.), they also projected images of classrooms that were quite different from what they used to experience. A large number of them projected classrooms without textbooks even though they used to be quite dependent on them in learning. These findings correspond to what the participants wrote in narratives, in which they critically reflected on what they had experienced and asserted what learning experiences they would provide to students in the future (e.g. student-centred, authentic). We share Kalaja's caution that the participants might have simply echoed what they had been exposed to in the teacher education programmes in constructions of language teaching upon graduation. They need to be reminded that teaching is much more complex and it is often not straightforward to implement what they had learnt in practice.

The two chapters (by Maria Ruohotie-Lyhty) in Part III focus on the shifting beliefs of novice language teachers and identity changes of experienced ones in Finland. Chapter 8 draws on a discursive approach to examine the ecology of 11 novice teachers' belief changes over a period of 3 or 4 years. The results suggest that seven participants found the school environment constraining and felt compelled to teach in traditional ways. In contrast, 4 participants identified opportunities within schools to implement innovative pedagogical ideas. This emerging difference in the participants' accounts could be attributed to the different beliefs that the participants had 'about themselves in relation to other people and the environment' (p.170). Chapter 9 continues to explore five of the 11 novice teachers that participated in the study reported in Chapter 8 with focus on identity changes for another 9 years. Ruohotie-Lyhty noted identity change and identity continuity in the participants' narratives, which had been profoundly mediated by their encounters with pupils. In particular, the study revealed that three participants' readiness to consider pupils' needs helps them conceptualize and adopt roles 'in a new and more meaningful way' (p. 200). In contrast, two other participants reported traumatic experiences as they tried to distance from pupils and maintain what they used to be as teachers. These findings sound less exciting but they are highly convincing because Ruohotie-Lyhty followed up with the same participants for over 12 years!

After having covered the experiences of language learners, pre-service language teachers, novice and experienced language teachers, Chapter 10 concludes the book by pulling different themes examined in the previous chapters together to derive methodological, theoretical and practical implications for readers. Apart from many methodological innovations such as the use of multimodal narratives, the longitudinal research design allows Kalaja, Barcelos, Aro and Ruohotie-Lyhty to advance highly compelling arguments about the 'believing, acting and identifying' of language learners and teachers (p.205). We are not aware of any other studies with comparable longitudinal designs. We also share the view that the results have significant theoretical contributions as they shed light on the roles of the environment and emotions in the 'believing, acting and identifying' of language learners and teachers (Ushioda, 2009). These insights will help language teacher educators to engage both pre-service and in-service language teachers with critical reflections on their beliefs and practices for productive professional dialogues with peers. They also lead to further inquiries into relevant issues to gain new insights into the nature and development of beliefs held by language learners and teachers so that they can actively respond to emerging contextual conditions and manage their learning/professional trajectories.

Kalaja, Barcelos, Aro and Ruohotie-Lyhty should be commended for the efforts put into producing this highly engaging book. Since the second reviewer (Gao) has devoted much effort to understand the role of agency in language learning through a theoretical perspective similar to that of Kalaja, Barcelos, Aro and Ruohotie-Lyhty (e.g. Deters, Gao, Miller, & Vitanova, 2014; Gao, 2010), we started reading the book to find out whether it could add much to what we have already known about beliefs, agency and identity. In the end, we are truly amazed by the richness of data and insights that they have gained from their extended engagement with the participants. We also highly appreciate the tables used to summarize each study because that makes it much easier for readers to digest the essence of the work. In addition, opening pages in Parts I, II and III facilitate quick identification of the main issues and arguments in different chapters. Despite the complexity of constructs (e.g. beliefs, agency and identity), this is one of the most reader-friendly books we have ever read. It is literally a page-turner that dwells upon highly sophisticated, intellectually challenging ideas. We applaud its publication with great enthusiasm!

Acknowledgement

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Fundamentals of formulaic language: An introduction, David Wood. Bloomsbury Academic, London & New York (2015). vii + 198 pp.

This is another book on formulaic language authored by David Wood, who has been fascinated with and dedicated to research into the area since the mid-1990s. The momentum of the book is to create a comprehensive overview and synthesis of formulaic language research, and provide scaffolds for readers to explore their areas of interest. As a veteran researcher in the field, Wood forgoes some inessential details and foregrounds what he perceives as necessary for novice researchers, established scholars, and language teachers.

Compared with existing monographs or edited volumes dedicated to formulaic language (e.g., Schmitt, 2004; Wood, 2010; Wray, 2002, 2008), one welcome feature of this book is its user-friendliness, thoroughness, and instructiveness. The book consists of 10 chapters, which cover a wide range of topics related to formulaic language, taking readers through past and present of research into formulaic language as well as pointing out avenues for future research.

Another great bonus of the book is that each chapter is followed by a 'POINTS TO PONDER AND THINGS TO DO' column. The thought-provoking questions in that column not only lead readers to critical reflections on each chapter but also encourage them to pursue explorations into some tantalizing or controversial issues related to the topics of that chapter.

Chapter 1 draws a timeline and a mind map of the brief history and traditions of formulaic language research for readers. Although research into formulaic language was often neglected and was not in the mainstream of research before the 1970s, around eight research traditions into formulaic language that laid the foundations for future research still existed. From the 1970s on, when some structural linguists began to pursue research into formulaic language, a large bulk of research has been spawned in areas that constitute the main focuses of our research into formulaic language today.

After the brief introduction of the historical development of formulaic language research, the author specifically addresses the identification of formulaic language in Chapter 2. He mainly discusses the range of application and limitations of empirical measurement-based identification, covering frequency-based statistical measures, psycholinguistic measures, phonological characteristics, and criteria-based checklists that involve native speaker intuition. He illustrates the implementation of the identification criteria with his own research, and suggests that a combination of a battery of measures are usually needed to overcome the limitations of one single measure.

Chapter 3 taps into the categorizations of formulaic language. Research into formulaic language has long been daunted by the plethora of terms used in various studies. Wood points out that the main areas of focus in formulaic language research are *collocations, idioms, lexical phrases, lexical bundles, metaphors, proverbs, phrasal verbs, n-grams, concgrams,* and *compounds*. He also provides a detailed description of each category mentioned above. Then he raises the questions of whether the classifications are valuable to teaching and research, and to what extent all the categories of formulaic language are equally processed semantically or psycholinguistically by speakers.

Chapter 4 touches upon the issue of mental processing of formulaic language. The author firstly situates formulaic language processing within models of language comprehension and production, and discusses how procedural/declarative knowledge, long-term/short-term memory, and second language theories (especially the connectionist approach) can illuminate the mental processing of formulaic language. Then he gathers evidence to evaluate whether formulaic sequences are stored and retrieved holistically. It is revealed that the figurative or holistic meanings of idioms are generally processed faster than their literal meanings, and that higher frequency word sequences are processed more quickly and efficiently by both native speakers and high proficiency nonnative speakers. The brain lateralization evidence from brain-damaged individuals also lends support to the holistic processing of formulaic language. Taken together, formulaic sequences are probably mentally processed more or less holistically.

Chapter 5 delves into first and second language acquisition of formulaic sequences. Drawing upon evidence from previous research, Wood concludes that formulaic sequences are initially acquired and retained as wholes by L1 children. They play a pivotal role in children's pragmatic competence and communicative ability. Later, children began to segment and analyze formulaic sequences, and use them as guidance and scaffolding of rule-based language system. However, the picture is