

BOOK REVIEW

Kumagai, Y., Lopez-Sanchez, A., and Wu, S. (Eds.). (2016). *Multiliteracies in world language education*. New York, NY: Routledge. 244pp. ISBN 978-1-138-83219-0 (Paperback)

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It has been a decade since 2007, when the Modern Language Association (MLA) Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages recommended that translingual and transcultural competence become the primary goal of foreign language (FL) academic programs in higher education. The report suggested directions for overcoming language-content divide and making language curriculum more relevant, but did not get to discuss details of pedagogical guidelines on how FL education can develop curricula to meet those goals (Allen & Paesani, 2010; Bernhardt, 2010), Kumagai, Lopez-Sanchez, and Wu's edited book fills a gap there with a proposal of the pedagogy of "multiliteracies" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; New London Group [NGL], 1996) as a theoretical foundation and practical guide for bridging language and content. At the same time, it highlights the multiplicity of languages, genres and modalities, and learner agency that should be at the center of curriculum (Byrnes & Maxim, 2004; Byrnes, Maxim, & Norris, 2010; Kern, 2000). Compared to Cope and Kalantzis (2000)'s pioneer work, *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*, it offers a more impactful, conceptually clear, and practical picture of the multiliteracies approach through well-defined and richly illustrated concepts of the framework and feasible applications for practice. The book will interest teachers of Korean and other FL educators who wish to meet their students' needs with creative and effective tasks and projects that promote linguistic and cultural applications in multiple modes of spoken and written communication.

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There are two major sections in the book: Part I “Designing Multiliteracies Curricula” (Chapters 2–5) articulates how innovative curricula could be conceived and designed through various interpretations of the multiliteracies framework, helping the reader to appreciate the principal concepts of the approach. Part II “Implementing Multiliteracies-Based Projects” (Chapters 6–9) showcases project-based classroom activities implemented in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, German, Italian, French, and Spanish courses for a range of proficiency levels, presenting to the reader concrete and practical applications of the framework.

Chapter 1 “Advancing Multiliteracies in World Language Education” by Yuri Kumagai and Ana Lopez-Sanchez opens the book with a rich description of the socio-economic and educational climate spurring the approach and the theoretical development of multiliteracies from NLG to systemic functional linguistics to digital and multimodal literacies. Chapter 2 “Developing Multiliteracies Through Genre in the Beginner German Classroom” by M. Warren and C. Winker presents a genre-based curriculum design and its application in writing and speaking tasks for beginner-level German language learners. Chapter 3 “Redesigning the Intermediate Level of the Spanish Curriculum Through a Multiliteracies Lens” by A. Lopez-Sanchez argues that multiliteracies and genre-based pedagogies that have only been implemented in L1 language education (i.e., language arts) need to be introduced to the FL curriculum at all levels for an enriched, transformative classroom experience.

Chapter 4 “Multiliteracies and Multimodal Discourses in the Foreign Language Classroom” by C. Sagnier focuses on multimodality, as it means multiple meaning-making modes that are not limited to verbal language. It includes examples of classroom activities and tasks that would help learners comprehend many forms of human communication and their transformation through social, historical, and cultural connections made in the FL setting. How the multiliteracies framework can adopt different genres and critical approaches in language teaching is further illustrated in Chapter 5 “Reading Words to Read Worlds—A Genre-Based Critical Multiliteracies Curriculum in Intermediate/Advanced Japanese Language Education” by Y. Kumagai and N. Iwasaki. This chapter introduces the principles of, and the instructional sequence for, a genre-based critical multiliteracies curriculum in intermediate to advanced Japanese courses that guides learners to become aware of the effects of semiotic choices, specifically of writing systems, lexis, styles, and grammatical structures. As an alternative to monotonous comprehension checks for reading texts in intermediate to advanced level classes, the authors suggest a strategy for designing reading instructions that

promote genre-based critical multiliteracies with specific goals connected to social situations and other disciplines, cultures, and societies.

Part II, which showcases actual applications of multiliteracies, leads off with Chapter 6 “Fostering Multimodal Literacies in the Japanese Language Classroom” by Y. Kumagai, K. Konoeda, M. Nishimata, and S. Sato, which presents digital video projects for promoting multimodal literacies. Detailed descriptions of a Vodcast project in first-semester Japanese course and a digital storytelling project in second-year Japanese course are given which aim to cultivate intentional and purposeful learning. The chapter highlights the value of practicing multimodal literacies not only in intermediate to advanced levels, but also in beginning-level language courses. Chapter 7, “Implementing Multiliteracies in the Korean Classroom Through Visual Media” by L. Brown, N. Iwasaki, and K. Lee discusses incorporating Korean visual media materials to develop multiliteracies in third-year course in U.S. college. For example, clips from a Korean television drama and a talk show were used to foster a critical understanding of how foreigners are perceived and categorized in Korean society by analyzing the media portrayals of their appearances, gestures, behaviors, putative cultural knowledge, and language use. These exercises counteract the omission or delay of critical aspects of language learning that is particularly common in classroom teaching at lower levels. Learners would have opportunities to critique the target language culture as well as their own through the activities suggested.

Chapter 8 “Empowering Students in the Italian Classroom to Learn Vocabulary Through Multiliteracies” by B. Spinelli introduces a multiliteracies-based project in intermediate level Italian conversation course. The project lets students produce an interactive dictionary by use of a Wiki site for their own vocabulary compilation. It sets an example of applying new literacies to take vocabulary instruction beyond the traditional resort to word lists, translations, and sentence-level practices and thereby demonstrates how new technological environments and platforms can be taken advantage of to create a context for learners’ critical engagement and to facilitate the development of their literacy skills at multiple levels.

The book ends with Chapter 9 “Creating an Effective Learning Environment in an Advanced Chinese Language Course Through Film, Poster Presentations, and Multiliteracies” by S. Wu. This chapter shows how a poster presentation can be used to guide students to explore a deeper layer of the target culture, society, values, and ideology past the linguistic elements, by foregrounding the significance of multimodality and intertextuality in communicating meanings at the academic level. A content-based project like this is particularly relevant for development of academic literacy

involving research, critical reading and writing, and is closely aligned with the 2007 MLA report's recommendation of "transcultural and translingual" language teaching.

In summary, the book engages language teaching practitioners in two main respects: project-based language learning and multiliteracies-based approach. Targeted for learners in higher education settings, the projects presented in it feature well-defined processes and products. Project-based learning contextualizes language learning with problem-solving tasks and tangible products (Buck Institute for Education [BIE], 2016; Stoller, 2006). In addition, students have ownership of the project and work in all modes of communication (Mikulec & Miller, 2011; Miller, 2006), and most importantly, such projects link language and content (Stoller, 2004). At the same time, throughout the process, students are encouraged to exercise critical-thinking skills, solve problems, and use multiple modes of meaning-making resources (Maxim, 2006; Morgan & Ramanathan, 2005; Norris, 2012; Swaffar & Arens, 2005). Ultimately, that is the heart of a multiliteracies-based approach—preparing language learners to be truly "literate" people in the 21st century. The book, however, does not address how to assess multiliteracies-based learning and project outcomes. The effect of the approach will have to be verified by appropriate and functional assessment.

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