

## Book review

### Designing Authenticity into Language Learning Materials



**Author:** Freda Mishan

**Intellect Books, Bristol, UK**

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**Paperback 224 pages**

**230x174mm**

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This book aims to be 'a comprehensive approach to exploiting authentic texts in the language classroom' (p. ix). By 'text' Mishan does not simply mean a piece of written or spoken discourse; but a 'cultural product'. She explores how seven audio, visual, graphic and printed cultural products can be used in language classrooms as a basis for authentic input and for authentic tasks, providing not only a rationale for their use based on second language acquisition (SLA) research findings and on sound pedagogical theory, but practical, classroom tasks for a range of levels, which language teachers can use as a resource as written or adapt to their own teaching/learning situations.

The book is divided into two parts. The first three chapters of Part One establish the rationale behind what Mishan calls 'the authenticity-centred approach to language learning materials design' (p. 67). Chapter 4 then takes the theory and applies it to the construction of a 'task authenticity framework' whose purpose is to guide and rationalise the design of authentic materials for language learning, where 'materials' is understood as the combination of the text used plus the activities which are based on it. The practical applications of the task authenticity framework (and of the authenticity-centred approach established in Chapters 1-4) are developed in Part Two of the book. In a series of seven chapters Mishan explores how Literature, The broadcast media, Newspapers, Advertising, Music and song, Film and Information and communications technologies (ICT) can best be exploited for language learning materials and provides sets of classroom tasks most suited to each type of text.

#### **Part One. The theoretical grounding.**

The first chapter presents the historical background to the concept of authenticity in language learning and teaching. Mishan shows us that the use of authentic materials for communicative purposes has been around for centuries and she classifies the many precedents into three broad groups which she terms 'communicative' approaches, 'materials-focused' approaches and 'humanistic' approaches.

Given the ongoing efforts to establish common standards of second language learning in multilingual environments and the search for defining and assessing levels of language proficiency in terms of communicative competence (see, for example, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages developed by the Council of Europe (2001), or the Proficiency Guidelines developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 1986), Mishan's discussion of the notion of communicativeness and its relation to authenticity, is a useful summary of current thinking and trends. She notes how 'our perceptions of authenticity are beginning to shift to accommodate the nascent linguistic varieties' (p. 19) emerging from the use of Internet technologies, and suggests a set of criteria (on p. 18) by which to assess the authenticity of texts for language learning materials.

The second and third chapters develop the arguments in favour of using authentic texts for language learning. Chapter Two does this by examining some of the recent SLA

# Designing Authenticity Into Language Learning Materials

**Sebastian Brünink**



## **Designing Authenticity Into Language Learning Materials:**

## Embracing the Beat of Appearance: An Psychological Symphony within **Designing Authenticity Into Language Learning Materials**

In a world consumed by monitors and the ceaseless chatter of instant communication, the melodic splendor and emotional symphony developed by the prepared term usually fade into the background, eclipsed by the constant noise and disturbances that permeate our lives. Nevertheless, set within the pages of **Designing Authenticity Into Language Learning Materials** a stunning fictional prize filled with raw thoughts, lies an immersive symphony waiting to be embraced. Crafted by a wonderful composer of language, that captivating masterpiece conducts viewers on an emotional journey, skillfully unraveling the concealed tunes and profound impact resonating within each cautiously constructed phrase. Within the depths with this poignant analysis, we can explore the book is key harmonies, analyze its enthralling writing style, and surrender ourselves to the profound resonance that echoes in the depths of readers souls.

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