Sarah Mercer and Marion Williams, *Multiple Perspectives on the Self in the SLA.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2014, ISBN 978-1-78309-134-8, 188 pages

The book edited by Sarah Mercer and Marion Williams entitled *Multiple Perspectives on the Self in SLA* provides an ample and inclusive image of the 'self' in Second Language Acquisition. The authors assume that such an image can be effectively created by investigating and combining insights from diverse perspectives. This manuscript successfully provides the readers with a meticulous overview of ways in which the self can be conceptualized in diverse SLA frameworks. In the introduction to their book Williams and Mercer (p. 1) write that "In the recent years, the key role of the self in second language acquisition (SLA) has increasingly been gaining recognition from SLA writers, and there has been a dramatic increase of research on this topic." A similar opinion has been presented by Jane Arnold, who, in her recommendation of the book, wrote: "The self has become an increasingly important focus for many areas; it is being highlighted in psychology, philosophy, neurobiology and very prominently, in research on language acquisition." However, this increasing popularity of the concept of *self* has brought some confusion resulting from the variety of existing definitions and overlapping terms. In view of that, the authors of *Multiple Perspectives on the Self in SLA* decided to assemble a collection of perspectives and to blend them into a significant amalgamate of concepts and viewpoints on the self.

Almost two hundred pages of this volume encompass twelve well written, separate chapters, each of which authored by a distinguished scholar. In the first chapter, Sarah Mercer and Marion Williams succinctly present their reasons for compiling the book as well as write about the potential readers and the book organization. According to the authors, ten chapters focus on differ-

ent perspectives of the self whereas the intention of the introductory chapter is to set the scene for further discussion and the concluding chapter aims at putting all those perspectives together and creating a blueprint for future research. The significance of this volume is even greater due to the fact that the editors allowed the contributors to approach the concept of the self from any theoretical or empirical angle they wanted to. This diversity results in a unique compilation of more precisely defined constructs and more holistic approaches to the topic.

The book continues with Chapter Two *Self-Efficacy in Second Language Acquisition*, written by Nicole Mills, who focuses on Bandura's social cognitive theory, which implies that every person is a proactive, self-reflective, and self-regulating individual. In her work, the author successfully describes the process of self-efficacy formation by investigating a series of selected studies which clearly indicate that in order to acquire a foreign language learners need to feel competent and capable. Furthermore, she states that self-efficacy beliefs of foreign language learners may be fostered through appropriate instructional choices, proper curriculum design, strategy and attribution training, as well as, instructors effectively developing students' self-efficacy beliefs. Chapter Three—*The Dynamics of Second Language Confidence*: *Contact and Interaction*, written by Canadian authors Sampasivam and Clement, focuses specifically on the concept of second language confidence (L2C) and how it is influenced by different types of contexts and situations. The authors provide a review of the history of development of the second language confidence and ways in which L2C can facilitate language acquisition, L2 communication, and adaptation process. A particular emphasis has been put on the role of contact with native and non-native speakers, which, according to the authors, is constantly connected with L2C. In Chapter Four, titled *Self-Esteem and Self-Concept in Foreign Language Learning*, Fernando Rubio, with the use of neurogenerative model, shows how two constructs —self-concept and self-esteem—may be interrelated. The author not only provides a valuable insights into these two concepts but also introduces a new neurogenerative view of the processes of self-concept and self-esteem formation in which "individuals constantly generate new impressions of the self" (Rubio, p. 41). Additional significance of Rubio's work comes from the fact that it includes potential implications for traditional foreign language learning classroom practice.

In the fifth chapter, *Identity and Poststructuralist Theory in SLA*, Bonny Norton takes a closer look at the poststructuralist theory and examines its helpfulness in classroom related decision making process which is supposed to support learners in discovery of their identities while using a language. The author supports her statement concerning poststructuralist theory and identity in a foreign language practice with the use of three, selected accounts from already published research. The construct of identity is also discussed in Chapter

Six––*Dual Identities Perceived by Bilinguals* by Chantal Hemmi, who looks at what identity is and examines it from a number of diverse perspectives which are analyzed in relation to their significance in understanding the identities of bilinguals. The author also reports on a small-scale study on six case-studies of bilingual Japanese women where she examined how these women perceived their identities and their sense of belonging in Japanese society. In Chapter Seven—*Relational Views on the Self in SLA*, Florentina Taylor, an American researcher, investigates three main relational approaches to the study of the self that have been partially adopted in SLA research. More specifically, she provides the readers with selected examples of most significant approaches to exploring the relational aspects of the self "through social interaction within and across different relational contexts in which the individual functions" (Taylor, p. 92). According to the author, learners need to feel accepted for what they believe in and who they are. They also need to become more autonomous, free to self-express, and free from negative judgment.

In the subsequent Chapter Eight—*Imagined and Possible Selves: Stories We Tell Ourselves About Ourselves*—Stephen Ryan and Kay Irie explore the role of imagination in the process of becoming who we are and who we would like to be. They focus on self-image creation and projection beyond one's actual experience and environment. According to Ryan and Irie, imagination is an essential and integral part of a foreign language learning process, since foreign language learners frequently express the aspiration to expand their assortment of identities (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). A similar theme has been presented in Chapter Nine —*Motivational Perspectives on the Self in SLA: A Developmental View* by Ema Ushioda, who explores developmental aspects of how motivation becomes or does not become integrated with the self as well as how the processes of integration and internalization are related to the developmental "angle in mind" (Ushioda, p. 128). In Chapter Ten—*Brain and Self: A Neurophilosophical Account*—Georg Northoff brings a rather unfamiliar approach as he ventures into philosophical and neuroscientific contexts in order to explain the existence of the self and the role of consciousness in the process of the self creation. Later, he introduces four different types of the self, the mental self, the empirical self, the phenomenal self, and the minimal self.

Finally, in Chapter Eleven—*The Self from Complexity Perspective*—Sarah Mercer provides a more holistic perspective on the self and explains how complexity perspectives can facilitate our understanding of the self. As Mercer explains, a learner's sense of the self in relation to language learning should be viewed as highly complex and personal. Therefore, its development may be difficult to predict "given the dynamic interaction of multiple internal and external processes across time and space" (Mercer, p. 174). In the closing chapter, the authors take a closer look at the most important perspectives of

the self presented in the preceding chapters and provide a succinct overview of definitions, research on the self, and an assortment of essential pedagogical implications for those educators who wish to become more self-reflective and self-sensitive in their everyday teaching.

Mercer and Williams hope that this volume "has contributed another piece to the puzzle of the self in SLA" (p. 184). However, the diversity of presented opinions and the difficulty of making far-reaching comparisons across different fields of study may result not in contributing another piece of the puzzle but another puzzle altogether. Although the authors in the final chapter explicitly state that it was not their intention to provide clear-cut answers, a potential reader may find it slightly confusing to follow the successive chapters included in the book.

All things considered, I strongly recommend reading *Multiple Perspectives in the Self in SLA* as it enables readers to obtain a broad, multifaceted perspective on the educational psychology and the concept of the self from renowned scholars and researchers, including Richard Clement, Sarah Mercer, Stephen Ryan, or Ema Ushioda. The book is essentially addressed to anyone with inquisitive mind, anyone who enjoys obtaining an extended view on a particular topic. Furthermore, the content of the book is highly recommended for participants of postgraduate programmes, teacher trainees, teaching instructors, as well as foreign language teachers who want to develop their self-awareness.

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