THE APPLIED LINGUISTIC INDIVIDUAL: SOCIOCULTURAL APPROACHES TO IDENTITY, AGENCY AND AUTONOMY

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Equinox Publishing Ltd. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, The Applied Linguistic Individual: Sociocultural Approaches to Identity, Agency and Autonomy, Phil Benson, Lucy Cooker, A focus on learner individuality in Applied Linguistics has been considered a mark of theoretical weakness from several perspectives. One branch of second language acquisition research has systematically discounted individual characteristics in favour of a search for universal acquisition processes. Another has adopted 'individual differences' as its object of inquiry, but emphasises psychological and sociological group characteristics over those of individuals. At the other end of the spectrum, critical researchers have viewed these approaches as 'individualistic' and have emphasised instead the deeply social character of second language acquisition. More recently, however, the qualitative approaches favoured by socially-oriented researchers have begun to bring issues of individuality to the fore. Autonomy, agency and identity have emerged as important constructs through which researchers are seeking to understand relationships between individuals and the social contexts in which they learn and use languages, and case studies of individuals have become a preferred approach to Applied Linguistics research. These developments raise important questions about the relationship between the social and individual, which has now become a key philosophical and methodological issue in research. This volume addresses this issue through contributions from researchers who carry out their work in a variety of settings in Asia, Australasia, Europe, and North and South America. The authors explore how individuality is conceptualised in socially-oriented approaches to Applied Linguistics research, including Sociocultural Theory, Situated Learning, Imagined Communities, Complexity Theory, and Autonomy Theory. Is there a tension between the social and the individual in these approaches, and if so, how is it manifested and resolved in empirical research?.

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