

**Review of: Lacorte, Manel (ed.). 2014. *The Routledge Handbook of Hispanic Applied Linguistics*. New York: Routledge.**

Publication of the *Routledge Handbook of Hispanic Applied Linguistics* (Lacorte 2014) suggests a coming of age for the field of Spanish applied linguistics. As Lacorte points out in his introduction to the volume, research in Spanish applied linguistics has burgeoned in recent decades, an observation that can be linked, among other reasons, to the growth in the Spanish-speaking population worldwide, the increasing demand for Spanish language professionals both inside and outside of academia, and the rising importance of Spanish in “language industries” such as linguistic tourism and the mass media (pp. 1-2). Lacorte also highlights the prominent position of the teaching and learning of Spanish as a second language (L2) in the present day, with estimates of 20 to 25 million people studying Spanish in 93 countries (p. 99). Given these circumstances, the field of Spanish applied linguistics was ripe for a critical synthesis of its growing body of literature and this volume does an excellent job of balancing both breadth and depth, foregrounding historical contexts, including research by scholars across the globe, and highlighting connections between related areas of inquiry.

As the title suggests, this volume spans the entirety of the field of Spanish applied linguistics, which includes such diverse areas as foreign language education, lexicography, computational linguistics, textbook publishing, forensic linguistics, commercial discourse, and language policy. The broad coverage of this manual distinguishes it from another recently published and complementary volume, the *Handbook on Spanish Second Language Acquisition* (Geeslin 2013), which has a more narrow focus on L2 learners of Spanish. The diversity of topics presented in the *Routledge Handbook* reminds the reader that the scope of the field of applied linguistics is, indeed, expansive: it “connects knowledge about language to decision-making in the real world” (Simpson 2011: 1 as cited in Lacorte 2014: 1).

The *Routledge Handbook* is divided into five parts. The first section provides a selection of theoretical approaches to the L2 learning of Spanish, followed by sections on Spanish teaching, Spanish in the professions, discourses of Spanish, and social and political issues related to Spanish. Each of the 36 chapters in the volume is structured similarly, providing an overview of the area in question, its historical context, future directions, and further resources. Synthesizing the history, theories, methods, empirical research, and future directions of an entire area of inquiry or subfield into one chapter must have been an enormous undertaking, but the scholars involved in this project were clearly up to the task since the chapters are consistently well written, well organized, and informative. Considering the breadth of each chapter, however, readers who want to deepen their understanding of a particular area will want to take advantage of the resources provided at the end of each chapter to pursue further study.

Part I of the handbook (“Perspectives on learning Spanish”) offers an overview of key theoretical approaches in second language acquisition (SLA) research. The section begins with a chapter entitled “Sociocultural perspectives,” a banner that is general enough to potentially include several theories (e.g., language socialization theory), but that, in this case, focuses exclusively on Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory. The second chapter discusses L2 learning through the lenses of pragmatics and discourse analysis, examining language use in social interaction and in its social and cultural context. While the editor may not have intended to foreground socially oriented approaches, the positioning of the first two chapters in this section brings to mind the oft-cited “social turn” in SLA (Block 2003). Cognitive approaches to L2 learning are considered in chapter 3, which includes a discussion of key concepts and issues in

the field (e.g., attention, rate of acquisition, final attainment) and addresses learning in both instructed and naturalistic contexts. Chapter 3 concludes with a call to increase the diversity of populations in cognitive research “beyond young adult classroom learners” (p. 55), an important reminder for all L2 researchers, regardless of theoretical orientation. “Generative perspectives” and “Sociolinguistic perspectives” constitute the final chapters of this section. The former provides a nuanced discussion of generative linguistics as applied to SLA and includes helpful examples from Spanish to illustrate concepts. The final chapter in this section does a good job of situating sociolinguistic research in its historical context and addressing topics such as linguistic variability, identity, and context of learning as applied to SLA.

Progressing from L2 learning to L2 teaching, the 11 chapters that make up Part II (“Issues and environments in Spanish teaching”) offer a wide array of issues related not only to the classroom teaching, but also to program administration, curriculum development, assessment, and technology development. A noteworthy aspect of the first two chapters on teaching methodologies and teacher education is that both provide good coverage of these issues not only in the United States context, but also in Spanish and Latin American contexts and beyond. For example, in chapter 7, Pastor Cesteros and Lacorte discuss several policy initiatives put forth by the Council of Europe concerning the competencies and standards for Spanish teachers, the details of which may be unfamiliar to some in the United States. Similarly, chapter 8 (“Spanish as a Heritage Language”) considers heritage languages in a wide range of countries including Canada, Germany, Australia, Spain, and Sweden, providing an international perspective on the topic. Chapters 9 through 12 discuss curricular issues including program articulation, service learning, content-based instruction, and the role of literature in the curriculum. These chapters contain an insightful examination of the issues and will be of interest for both scholars of teaching and learning as well as for foreign language teachers, program administrators, and policymakers. To provide just one example, Rabin’s discussion of service learning highlights the contested nature of the term *service*. In the United States, *service* is linked to the traditions of volunteerism and charity, whereas in Latin America, there is a predominant social justice ideology behind *servicio* (‘service’) that “strives to overcome the usual power differentials established in the donor/recipient relationship, distancing itself from patterns of beneficence or patronage” (p. 173). Technology in education contexts is the topic of the following two chapters. Elola and Oskoz provide an overview of history and theory in Computer Assisted Language Learning and a discussion of opportunities for development of L2 knowledge and skills in computer-mediated tasks and interactions. Sykes, in the following chapter, presents a panorama of learning in digital contexts, including online courses and gaming. The final two chapters of this section are equally as perceptive, giving the reader an overview of assessment issues and critical perspectives on teaching.

Parts I and II make up close to half of the entire volume, which is perhaps a reflection of the importance of teaching and learning in the discipline. Parts III, IV, and V address “Spanish in the professions,” “The discourses of Spanish,” and “Social and political contexts for Spanish,” respectively. The first of these sections, “Spanish in the professions,” covers the areas often associated with this label (e.g., translation and interpreting in medical and legal contexts), but it also incorporates under this rubric topics with relevance to the workplace or to commercial enterprise including lexicography, computational linguistics, textbook publishing, and special education. Curiously, “Spanish in the professions” also contains a chapter on corpus linguistics, which—while providing an insightful look at this area—seems out of place in this section. Perhaps the awkward placement of corpus linguistics is related to Rojo’s observation that

scholars disagree on whether corpus linguistics is a methodology, theory, or discipline (p. 375). Among the many highlights of this section, two are mentioned here. In his chapter on the field of interpreting, Cerezo begins with a fascinating history of interpreting that goes back to ancient times. As the “second oldest profession in the world” (p. 314), interpreting can be traced in the historical record to ancient Egypt, where depictions of foreign subjects interacting through an interpreter with the pharaoh have been uncovered. The roles that interpreters played during the conquest of the Americas are also documented, but, as the author points out, their contributions were not always viewed positively, as the infamous figure of Malinche in Mexico attests. The chapter on forensic linguistics also discusses interpreting and interpreters, but specifically in the legal context. Findings from Spanish forensic linguistics indicate that, for example, that the presence of the interpreter in the courtroom can change the dynamics of interactions between lawyer, judge, and defendant, and that interpreters’ use of politeness strategies may intentionally or unintentionally alter the pragmatic force of interpreted utterances.

The penultimate section of the volume (Part IV) focuses on discourse in five different domains, each constituting a chapter: academic and professional, institutional, media, commercial, intercultural, and political. The first of these discusses the nature of academic and professional discourse, highlighting the genres, participants, practices, and purposes that characterize these two overlapping domains. The second chapter addresses discourse analysis in institutions, describing orientations and findings in educational, health care, legal, and administrative contexts. Media discourse is the topic of the next chapter and among the issues examined, the authors highlight some of the linguistic features that are found in the Spanish-language media such as idiosyncratic intonation patterns in spoken Spanish and verb tense usage in written texts. Other topics include racist discourse in both the Spanish and Latin American media and how the choice of direct or indirect quotation is related to the social status of the source. The last three chapters of this section are concerned with commercial, intercultural, and political discourse. The first of these chapters provides a panorama of the field of commercial discourse, from prescriptive and descriptive norms for written and verbal interaction in Spanish in business contexts to intercultural communication and the teaching of Business Spanish courses. The next chapter also takes a broad perspective, in this case on intercultural communication, examining theoretical approaches, key issues such as identity and education, and comparisons between the notion of interculturality in Europe, Latin America, and the United States. After completing the final chapter of the section on political discourse, the reader will have an understanding of the types of contexts in which discourse analysis is applied, both generally as well as specifically in the Spanish-speaking world.

“Social and political contexts for Spanish” constitutes the final section of the volume and contains five chapters. The first takes a critical look at the internationalization of the Spanish language, from the spread of Spanish during colonial times to the promotion of Spanish worldwide by Spain’s *Real Academia Española* and the *Instituto Cervantes* in modern times. The authors point out that political and economic interests underlie these efforts. For example, Spain’s diplomatic work to increase the study of Spanish in Brazil had the goal not only of promoting Spanish language in that country, but also of facilitating penetration into the Brazilian market for private corporate underwriters such as *Telefónica* and *Banco Santander*. As the authors say, “the neoliberal model that governs contemporary international relations promotes a view of global languages as assets that generate both economic value and political influence” (p. 578). The two subsequent chapters explore language policy in the United States and Latin America, respectively, analyzing language ideologies, official policies, and the role of Spanish

vis-à-vis other languages within a historical framework. The final two chapters of the volume consider the issues of migration and bilingualism. Moreno-Fernández in “Spanish language and migrations” discusses the history of Spanish as a “language of migration” (p. 624) and the effects of migration not only language, but also on individuals and societies. Finally, in García and Otheguy’s chapter on Spanish bilingualism, they present their “speaker-centered” view of Spanish “as a way of speaking” (p. 639) rather than as a discrete language in the mind of the bilingual speaker. The authors begin by pointing out that bilingualism has historically been common in Spanish-speaking communities through history, hence, there is little basis to consider monolingualism the norm and apply the monolingual perspective to studies of bilingualism. As they describe, “bilinguals have one linguistic repertoire from which they select features strategically to communicate effectively. That is, translanguaging takes as its starting point the language practices of bilingual people as the norm” (p. 646).

As the previous discussion suggests, this volume has a lot to offer and would make an excellent addition to the personal or institutional library of the applied linguist interested in Spanish. Notable aspects include the balance between breadth and depth of coverage of the field, the emphasis on historical context, the clear connections between related subareas, and the recommended resources at the end of each chapter. Although I suspect that the average person will not read this 700-page book from cover to cover as I did, doing so puts the field in its broader context and highlights the relationships between different areas. It also has the potential to generate new ideas for one’s own research through “cross-pollination,” that is, being exposed to the latest theories, methods, and empirical research in related fields that a specialist in one area may not keep up with otherwise. Other benefits of having access to this manual include the ease of locating key references and information about the various subfields of applied linguistics and the opportunity to assign one or more chapters to students in a Spanish applied linguistics course, either as core readings or as a starting point for a research project. This volume could also potentially be used as the course text in a Spanish applied linguistics course, however, since the volume is written in English, it may not be appropriate for such a course if it were taught in Spanish. A final consideration for the would-be buyer of this volume is whether to purchase the traditional hardcover or the e-book version. If price is of importance, the e-book comes in at US\$164 compared to US\$194 for the hardcover on Amazon.com. In terms of locating keywords in the text, the hardcover version does contain an extensive index, but, as a reader accustomed to the convenience of electronic searches, I found myself wishing I had the e-book version.

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## References

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