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## BOOK REVIEWS

Manel Lacorte (ed). *Lingüística aplicada del español*. Madrid: Arco Libros, 2007, 553 pp.

Reviewed by Pilar Garcés-Conejos Blitvich

The volume contains an introduction by its editor, Manel Lacorte, and fifteen chapters grouped around three main thematic threads: acquisition and teaching; socio-cultural and political contexts; and, Spanish as a professional language.

In the introduction, Lacorte presents and defines applied linguistics and offers a list of the main bibliographical contributions of the field to the analysis of Spanish, as well as a list of academic programs and institutions that support those research efforts. Looking forward, the main challenge to the application of linguistics to Spanish is to free itself from the all pervasive Anglo-centric influence on the field. The author argues that applied linguistics should balance the theoretical with the applied, combine normative with critical approaches, offer global and local views, and be both reflective and resolute.

In Chapter 1, Alba-Salas and Salaberry carry out an in-depth review of the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) field pointing out both the discrepancies and consensus that exist among scholars. Three approaches — generative, cognitive-functional and socio-cultural — are highlighted as these have guided research in SLA in general, and in Spanish as Second language (L2) in particular. An important section of the chapter is devoted to the discussion of the main trends and findings related to the acquisition of Spanish as L2, namely pronunciation, tense and aspect, subjunctive, null subjects, clitic pronouns, noun phrases, and argument structure. Despite what is assessed as a very significant increase in work on Spanish as L2, the authors point out the need for further research on the acquisition of pragmatic and discursive aspects of the language.

The teaching of Spanish as L2 is tackled from both a historical and a methodological perspective by Long and Lacorte in Chapter 2. An overview of the teaching of Spanish is presented which, linking socio-political events to the expansion of the language, spans from the introduction of Spanish in the Americas in the XVI century to the present when Spanish has reached the status of an international language. Different methodological approaches and their applications are discussed. The chapter ends with a discussion of the methodological future of teaching Spanish as L2, which points out the current increase in the professionalization of instructors and the need for more collaboration with researchers.

Chapter 3, by Leeman and García, also looks at the teaching of Spanish as L2. However, they focus on the influence of the socio-political context on teaching practices. The authors look at how Spanish as L2 is taught in Spain, where it is considered a majority language, and in the US, where it has the status of minority language. Both contexts have been deeply affected by globalization, which has increased the migratory movements of peoples and the perceived value of learning Spanish as a tool toward professional advancement. Whereas immigrants in Spain come from different linguistic backgrounds, many US based learners of Spanish are Spanish heritage speakers who struggle between sustaining a language as a symbol of their social identity and confronting a strong ideology of English monolingualism that has traditionally regarded bilingualism as non/anti American. The authors make a strong case for considering ideology related issues when developing teaching methodologies.

Gómez de Enterría, in Chapter 4, reviews the main tenets and practices of the field of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP). The field is subdivided into Languages for Professional Purposes (LPP) and Languages for Academic Purposes (LAP). Both subfields mostly focus on the teaching of specialized languages to either professionals in the field who need to carry out their practices in a L2 (Romanian nurses who may need to practice in Spain) or to students who need the language to access education in a given field or trade (Slovenian students who want to enroll in a Spanish university to study engineering). The author seeks to familiarize the reader with fundamental LSP practices such as needs analysis, the use and scaffolding of authentic materials, or the facilitating role of the instructor. The value of a corpus based on discursive approach to teaching/material selection and the internet as a tool is highly emphasized.

The role of the internet in teaching and learning of Spanish as L2 is further developed in Chapter 5. In it, Piñol reviews and provides very useful Spanish as L2 web based resources that may be of interest to scholars, teachers and students. Piñol points out the boundless possibilities that the internet provides for the learning of Spanish as L2 in authentic contexts and argues that much more research is needed linking Spanish as L2 to computer mediated communication and to applied linguistics.

Chapter 6 takes a turn and focuses on assessment. Bordón and Liskin-Gaparro provide a thorough review of extant models of linguistic competence and of specific initiatives to apply them both in the context of the United States (US) and Europe. Within the European context, the authors discuss the *DELE* (*Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera*), which were created as an assessment instrument to measure different levels of linguistic competence in Spanish. The *DELE* certificate has recently been updated to align with CEFR's (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) guidelines. The second section of the

chapter deals with current trends in assessment within the context of the classroom. The authors point out the disconnect between the goals of teaching/learning in authentic contexts, and common methods of assessment which are completely removed from those contexts. The chapter concludes with a look at the social approach which crucially relates assessment with social and ethical considerations.

Moreno Fernández, in Chapter 7, presents a very detailed geographical and historical profile of Spanish from its origins in the Iberian Peninsula during the VI–X centuries to its current status as an international language, second only to English in scope. Some scholars argue that Spanish emerged as a *lingua franca* used by Basque and Latin speakers. Basque's vocalic system also highly contributed to Spanish's loss of Latin long vowels and the reduction to five vocalic articulations. The extralinguistic, i.e. socio-political factors driving the significant increase in the prestige of Spanish and ultimately converting it into the national language of Spain, the North of Africa, Latin America, the Canary Islands and the Philippines are discussed as well as the standardization and codification processes that culminated in the founding of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language in the XVIII century. Moreno Fernández argues that Spanish is quite homogeneous, despite its wide geographical distribution, with Spain and Latin America sharing a "general Spanish". The main divisions in the areas that Spanish is spoken have to do, according to the author, with differences in how conservative/resistant to change and/or innovative/ open to change speakers are.

In Chapter 8, Siguan addresses the repercussions that contact with other languages within the Iberian Peninsula — i.e. Catalan, Galician and Basque — has had for Spanish. The 1978 Constitution granted Spanish official status as the language of seventeen autonomous communities of the Spanish state, shared with Catalan (in Catalonia, Valencia and Balearic Islands), Basque (Basque country and parts of Navarre) and Galician (Galicia). In those bilingual communities, autonomous governments and parliaments have passed similar laws to safeguard and promote their respective vernaculars. However, looking at hard data, it would seem that only Catalan enjoys a strong and healthy growth in terms of language of choice within a region. Despite efforts to use vernacular languages in institutional contexts such as government administration, education and the media, Spanish continues to be the language of choice by many and seems to have gained renewed strength as a consequence of globalization.

The contact between Spanish and other languages in the American continent is the focus of Chapter 9. In it, Lipski provides a thorough review of the influence that Amerindian languages such as Mayan, Quechua, Aymara or Guarani have on Spanish in those areas where bilingualism exists. Another section of the chapter focuses on the influence of other European languages on Latin American Spanish. Lipski describes the presence of Italian dialects in Mexico, German in Paraguay

and Argentina and English in Central America. Due to America's colonial past, many Creole languages — which emerged from an amalgamation of African languages and English, French or Portuguese — are present in the Caribbean area, Central America and the Antilles where they co-exist and influence Spanish. The last section of the chapter reviews the status quo of Spanish in the context of the US, where it is spoken by over 48 million people and briefly addresses the status of English as a co-official language in Puerto Rico.

Language rights, language policies and language planning in the Spanish speaking world are tackled by Mar-Molinero in Chapter 10. More specifically, the author offers an insightful review of how these matters were dealt with in Spain during Franco's time, as well as in the period of the transition to a democratic state that brought about the establishment of seventeen autonomous regions, eleven of which have a co-official language different from Spanish. Mar-Molinero concludes that current language policies still favor Spanish, and that despite a widespread recognition of Spain as a multilingual country, monolingualism is preferred *de facto*. The situation in Latin America is also explored by the author who points out that, in general terms, language planning has not been favored by national governments, especially in the area of education. Mar-Molinero argues that the status of Spanish as a global language is strengthened by the active role of US Latinos as well as the many initiatives and international presence of Instituto Cervantes.

In Chapter 11, García analyzes the interconnections between Spanish and the construction of social identity taking a post-structuralist stance and from the advantage point of her own experience as a bilingual Latina, living in the US. Her review spans from the xv to the xxi centuries. Currently, bilingualism and multilingualism are essential components of the identity of speakers of Spanish in Spain, Latin American and the US. In a globalized work, García argues, the fundamental connections are not between language and identity anymore, but between language and economy. Instituto Cervantes and the Latin American Academies of the Language are seen by García as pivotal in constructing the ideologies that underlay the new discourses on the Spanish language.

In Chapter 12, Ortiz and Mata review the status quo of translation studies. After a brief section on the history of translation studies related to Spanish, both within the context of Spain and other Spanish speaking countries, the authors devote the rest of the chapter to assessing the interconnections between translation, linguistics and culture, and to discussing different approaches to translation. Especial attention is given to the instruction of translators and to the changes that the new technologies have brought to the field of translation studies. Although Ortiz and Mata point out several strands of research that have provided translation studies with a very solid theoretical foundation, they lament that translators

are still not given the consideration that their crucial role in the advancement of science and society in general deserves.

Cassany, Gelpí and López Ferrero, in Chapter 13, look at the extant research on the use of Spanish in professional settings. In general terms, this is an under-researched field since only recently has Spanish been seen as a useful tool for professional advancement. Their review looks at Business Spanish, Spanish in the media, Spanish in science, technology, and scientific popularizations; Spanish in health settings; and Spanish and the law. The authors highlight the connections between these fields and the teaching of Spanish for Specific Purposes and conclude by suggesting lines for further research that take into consideration the pervasive use of the Internet in professional settings, compare and contrast similar genres and discourses in Spanish and other languages, and incorporate the tenets of the Plain Language Movement.

Chapter 14 focuses on the role of Spanish in human language technologies (HLT). HLT enable natural language-based, computer-human interaction. Llisterri provides an overview of speech and natural language processing technologies — the former focus on spoken language, the latter on written texts — and their many applications. He includes up to date information on university and corporate research teams that relate HLT to Spanish in Spain, Latin America, Europe and the US. Llisterri indicates that although the results of this research are very significant, their impact is lower than those carried out for English and other languages due to Spanish having less of an economic impact. He urges applied linguists to achieve a more pivotal role in the development of HLT.

Carreira, in Chapter 15, explores the economic potential of Spanish in a global economy, where it competes with other languages such as English or French. Despite English's unquestionable preponderance as the world's lingua franca, as well as the language of business, academia, and science, some scholars point out that other languages — Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic and Hindi — may shortly compete with English at a regional level. Using Graddol's (2000) reformulation of Kachru's (1986) model, Carreira looks at the economic, social and cultural capital associated with Spanish as mother tongue (L1), second language (L2) and foreign language (FL) in Europe, Latin America, US, Brazil and Asia-Pacific. Carreira concludes that current demographic, economic and social factors are extremely favorable to the spread of Spanish; however, the Spanish speaking world needs to realize its own potential and make renewed efforts to promote the language.

The volume offers a solid introduction to many sub-fields of applied linguistics. Without exception, all chapters are of high quality and relevance. In some, however, the focus seems to be more on the sub-field itself rather than on its connections to Spanish per se, which makes them less suitable for a specialized audience. Having divided the volume into sections, preceded by brief contextualization chapters

would have helped. As it is presented, the three sections the editor mentions in the introductory chapter do not clearly stand out. Collectively the chapters present an invaluable resource to both scholars and graduate students. The latter will find the final discussion points and questions included in all the chapters very useful.

*Dirección de la reseñadora*

Pilar G. Blitvich  
UNC Charlotte  
Department of English  
9201 University City Blvd.  
Charlotte, NC 28223  
Phone: 704-687 2126  
Fax: 704-687-3961  
pgblitvi@uncc.edu