

**REVIEW OF M. LACORTE (ED.), *THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF
HISPANIC APPLIED LINGUISTICS***

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The last few years have seen the emergence of a number of works dedicated to theoretical or empirical Hispanic linguistics, with whole grammars (RAE & ASALE 2009, 2010) and whole handbooks (Hualde, Olarrea & O'Rourke 2012). In contrast, the field of applied Hispanic linguistics had not received the appropriate attention in this form. Existing handbooks on the issue were typically devoted to only fragments of this field, and were published in Spanish, thus restricting its readership (eg., Sánchez Lobato & Santos Gargallo 2004). This is one of the reasons why this handbook is much welcome in the current state of affairs.

The structure of the handbook groups chapters according to the different main areas in contemporary applied linguistics, with appropriate extensions towards pragmatics and sociolinguistics, two disciplines that have traditionally interacted in central ways with applied linguistics: Spanish learning (5 chapters), Spanish teaching (11 chapters), Spanish applied to different professions (9 chapters), discourse analysis (6 chapters), social aspects (5 chapters).

As becomes obvious from the above paragraph, language teaching and learning take the lion's share in the handbook, as the two first parts are devoted to them. This is explained by the increasing importance that language teaching is having in the Hispanic context, but the decision to start with language learning has additional explanations: the first 5 chapters in the book play the additional role of setting a necessary introduction where the applied aspects to which the book is mainly devoted are related to different theoretical frameworks. Symmetrically, the book starts with a chapter on sociocultural perspectives of learning (Antón), and ends with a section of sociolinguistics and linguistic policy; the chapter on pragmatics and discourse (Félix-Brasdefer & Koike) has its replica in the second-to-last section, on discourse analysis. The rest of this first part is composed of chapters on cognitive linguistics (Sanz), generative approaches (Muñoz-Liceras) and pure sociolinguistic perspectives (Lynch). Even though the focus of the chapters is, obviously, language learning, and the details of these theories beyond learning are not covered in full, they present a relevant introduction that at the same time justifies the presence of the last two parts in the handbook.

Language teaching is the most voluminous part of the handbook, and starts with a presentation of the main methodological concerns (Lacorte), followed by some observations about teacher training (Pastor Cesteros & Lacorte). The rest of the section contains chapters of two different natures. Some of them develop further aspects that arguably fall inside the methodology of language teaching, such as the evaluation procedures (Bordón & Liskin-Gasparro), the format of the courses (Etola & Oskoz; Rabin), or the use of new technologies (Sykes). A second set of chapters concentrate rather on choices about the content of those courses, such as the integration of literature in the practice of second language teaching (Nance), the

progression of the program (Lord & Isabelli-García) or the integration of heritage languages in the curriculum (Fairclough). This block of chapters is perhaps the most valuable contribution of this volume, for three reasons: (i) it contains updated and concise introductions to the main problems that Spanish teaching is facing in the new higher education context; (ii) it is, arguable, the most complete part of the handbook, where virtually no practical problem is left undiscussed; (iii) it contains in itself connections towards different theoretical problems, properly contextualised (eg., the chapter on critical perspectives by Leeman).

The third part of the volume is devoted to different professions that, beyond language teaching, have become central in the present context: translation (Jiménez-Crespo) and interpreting (Cerezo), lexicography (Sánchez & Almela), computational linguistics (Martí & Taulé) and corpus linguistics (Rojo), publishing (Martín Peris & Cubillos), forensic disciplines (Berk-Seligson), special education (Lavine & Goode) and the use of Spanish in one specific context that has received much attention in recent years, to the point that it has been singled out as a research priority by some countries: language inside the health system (Martínez). As can be seen, this is the most eclectic part of the volume, and it is clear that almost each one of these chapters could have received as much attention as language teaching in the volume. While it is understandable that this would have produced a handbook so long that it would not have been manageable, it is perhaps a weakness of the handbook that interpreting and translation only are dealt with in one chapter each. In translation and interpreting there are similar methodological concerns, questions about the proper formation of professionals, and theoretical choices, to those found in language teaching. Note, for instance, that in recent handbooks in theoretical and empirical linguistics it has become almost customary to include a chapter on translation (see, for instance, Santos 2012 in Binnick 2012). A further focus on corpus and computational linguistics would also have been welcome, given that these are also expanding fields that are not ignored by theoretical linguists anymore and given that the amount of technical choices and the taxonomy of possible corpora give significant complexity to these issues. However, the chapters that are included in the volume are excellent and make a good job in summarising the huge amount of information in their respective fields; the critique lies in the fact that this reader would have wanted to see a bit more about those interesting issues.

The final two parts of the volume open the lense and discuss fields where applied and theoretical linguistics interact closely, to the point that the boundary is sometimes blurry. The fourth part, dedicated to discourse analysis, is simply excellent, and contains the most complete and updated compendium of chapters on this discipline with a focus on Spanish. Its inclusion is, in my opinion, justified by three facts: (i) in the previous parts it has become increasingly clear that discourse analysis is a central piece of applied linguistics at least in teaching and the health sciences; (ii) it is an emerging field that has attracted the attention of students, psychologists, journalists, researchers and even the general public; (iii) it contributes, through the discussion of text analysis, to fill some of the gaps with respect to translation that we noted in the previous paragraph. Inside this part, the division of chapters follows quite closely the main textual genres that are traditionally recognised in the field, but with important additions. There are chapters on academic discourse (Bolívar & Parodi), on media discourse (Fonte & Williamson), on administrative texts (Carranza) and commercial discourse (López Ferrero & González Arias), but to this more or less traditional taxonomy chapters are added for political discourse (De Arnoux & Bonnin) and intercultural communication (López-Rocha & Arévalo-Guerrero), two domains where

there is an increasing amount of literature and level of interest. These chapters, collectively, almost constitute a handbook of their own, given their completeness and clarity.

The final part of the book is devoted to applied aspects of sociolinguistics and linguistic policy. As in the previous part, the chapters exhaust all the main perspectives and provide the reader with background information which is relevant to assess aspects of the first three parts of the book. The focus, as expected in a handbook that concentrates on applied linguistics, is on how varieties are standardised, compete or simply coexist in a Hispanic context. There are specific chapters about how Spanish is promoted in the world (Villa & Del Valle), and its situation in USA (Macías) and in Latinamerica (Godenzzi & Sichra); more generally, two non-geographically delimited issues are discussed: planning in immigration (Moreno-Fernández) and bilingualism contexts (García & Otheguy).

Globally, this volume is an extremely valuable contribution that fills a gap that had only been fragmentally filled in the field, and that to the best of our knowledge is not matched by other current studies in extension, depth or how well they succeed to show the intricate relation between the job market, linguistics and society.

References

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