


2010

Introducción a la lingüística hispánica. By Hualde, José Ignacio

Michelle F. Ramos-Pellicia
California State University San Marcos

Follow this and additional works at: <https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/ijlasw>

 Part of the [Linguistics Commons](#), and the [Spanish and Portuguese Language and Literature Commons](#)

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

Recommended Citation

Ramos-Pellicia, Michelle F. (2010) "Introducción a la lingüística hispánica. By Hualde, José Ignacio," *International Journal of the Linguistic Association of the Southwest*: Vol. 29: No. 2, Article 7.
Available at: <https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/ijlasw/vol29/iss2/7>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by EngagedScholarship@CSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Journal of the Linguistic Association of the Southwest by an authorized editor of EngagedScholarship@CSU. For more information, please contact library.es@csuohio.edu.

Introducción a la lingüística hispánica. BY HUALDE, JOSÉ IGNACIO, ANTXON OLARREA, ANNA MARÍA ESCOBAR AND CATHERINE E. TRAVIS. NEW YORK: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2010, 2ND ED. 554. HARDBACK \$80.00.

Reviewed by MICHELLE F. RAMOS-PELLICIA, *California State University San Marcos*

Hualde, Olarrea, Escobar and Travis (2010) is the second edition of an excellent resource to be used as the main textbook in introductory classes at the undergraduate or graduate levels. It could be used as well as a reference in any library. This new edition presents a more extended analysis of the required areas to be considered as one initiates in the field of Spanish linguistics. *Introducción a la lingüística hispánica* has been written with clarity and presents explanations that are brief and precise to facilitate the comprehension of many areas that are cumbersome to understand to anyone without a previous background in linguistics. The textbook has as its main audience the English native speaker, but the material is relevant to anyone interested in the study of the Spanish language and linguistics. For a native Spanish-speaker, *Introducción a la lingüística hispánica* will expand his/her knowledge of the complexities of language production and the particular characteristics of his/her language that otherwise cannot be explained when using a prescriptivist approach. The following paragraphs present a general overview of the organization of the textbook, a summary of each one of the eight chapters and an evaluation of the contributions of the text.

Each chapter is organized following the same model. Prior to the introductory section, there is a table with the objectives clearly stated. After almost every section, there is a set of exercises to review the material or questions for the reader to consider and on which the following material will be based on. It is in this fashion that a dialogue is established with the reader. Through the chapters, there are tables and figures that ease the material's presentation for those readers who are more visually inclined. At the end, there is an extended section with exercises followed with a section summarizing the material covered in the chapter. The textbook also has a twenty-five page glossary that includes an explanation of the majority of the concepts. The references are organized by chapter, an effective tool for the researcher to find the source of interest relevant to the reading.

In the first chapter, *La lingüística: ciencia cognitiva*, the authors clearly define the aims of the field of linguistics which is to identify the constructions produced by speakers instead of prescribing how language has to be used. Furthermore, the introductory chapter makes the case for language study as it is a way to understand the mental mechanisms involved in the human thought processes. As a cognitive science, linguistics serves as a tool to observe language acquisition. The work in the field of language acquisition, the authors explain, has helped us to understand it as an innate human capacity. This behavior shares the same characteristics found in the biologically conditioned behaviors found in animals. Observations of child language acquisition show that humans learn a language in a short period of time based on a limited amount of information. Because of the possibilities that understanding the cognitive processes to produce language present to the linguist, the study of the language must be from a descriptive perspective. It is from this perspective that researchers can have a window to the complexities of the human brain. Terminology such as: signifier and signified; performance and competence, language, langue and parole, grammar, internal knowledge, descriptivism and prescriptivism is included. Also, a succinct explanation of the characteristics of human language are included in chapter one.

The second chapter, *Los sonidos de la lengua: fonética y fonología* is dedicated to phonetics and phonology. As in any reasonable introduction to the study of sound, the chapter explains the concept of phoneme and provides several examples to argue for a distinction between sound and grapheme that required the creation of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) or AFI in Spanish. The first sections are dedicated to explain relevant concepts such as: phoneme, minimal pair, allophones. While these concepts are introduced, different types of articulation processes are explained in terms accessible to the reader. The sections that follow detail how the consonants are classified based on their point of articulation first then by manner of articulation. The use of spectrograms to explain how sounds are produced is very effective as the reader can visualize the physical aspect of sound. Also, by juxtaposing the sound production of the English and Spanish consonants, the reader regardless of his/her native language, can understand the contrasts between these sounds and the reasons for a non-native speaker accent. In a brief section, the Spanish vowels are introduced. However, the explanation is brief because the beginning pages are dedicated to the classification of these five phonemes. It is in the sections on the allophones that more details are provided. Topics such as the syllable, the stressed syllable and intonation are also covered in the chapter. With respect to the stressed syllable, the reader will find the explanation on when to write the written accent mark in Spanish words practical. Material difficult to understand such as the distribution of the distinction between /k/ and /j/ is made accessible to the reader. However, and somewhat related with the

topic, other readers may find more accessible a parallel between /j/ and /j̞/ with the distribution of /b, d, g/ and its allophones (Morgan (2010)). The explanations are clear and based on the reader as a speaker with a basic knowledge of how sounds are produced. The combination of the traditional phonetics/phonology exercises with humor and practical applications of the material included in the chapter are effective tools to maintain the reader engaged.

In *La estructura de las palabras: morfología*, the reader interested in Spanish word formation will find a relevant resource. Not only it explains succinctly and clearly the derivational and flexional processes for word formation, but also an extensive list of examples for each process. Without having to include a previous chapter on the history of the language, the authors explain clearly the process of transformation that word formation had to experiment from Latin to Spanish. Other processes of word formation are also included such as: *palabras compuestas*, *abreviaciones*, *siglas*. Unfortunately, not much time is dedicated to explain the logic for the hierarchical structure for word formation. The reader would benefit from seeing more examples presented graphically, particularly those words that are more difficult to explain as the order of the processes can be misconstrued.

A chapter dedicated to syntax: *La estructura de la oración: sintaxis* follows. Making use of the knowledge the reader has about how sentences are formed in Spanish; the authors explain abstract concepts such as: word order, constituents, recursivity, nucleus, pro and PRO, movement and substitution. Often times, a reader will find similar explanations too dense, but *Introducción a la lingüística hispánica* makes the material accessible by using the structure of the nominal phrase as a model to explain other more complicated structures. Thus, the mechanism of recursivity is explained as well as the subordinate clauses, complements, arguments and adjuncts are introduced. Building on these concepts, an explanation is provided for the lexical component required in the subcategorization of a lexical entry, the concept of trace and the transformations. The authors depart from the basic concepts of the syntactic unit to introduce X' theory. During the presentation of these abstract concepts, the authors connect the new material with those presented in previous chapters reminding the reader that language has a hierarchical structure, organized in a logical order that speakers unconsciously know and in which smaller units of sound are combined to form words which in turn are combined to form constituents and these form sentences. As opposed to the other seven chapters, *La estructura de la oración: sintaxis* includes two appendixes, one listing the different types of sentences in Spanish. The second appendix provides a schematical presentation of the different uses of the subjunctive in the Spanish language. When compared to the previous edition of the textbook, this second edition has a considerable more expanded version of the syntax chapter with the enhanced explanation that the X' theory provides.

Although a more logical transition would have been to discuss semantics and pragmatics, instead, the fifth chapter is dedicated to historical linguistics, *Historia de la lengua española*. In this chapter, the argument is presented on the many reasons to consider the history of the language, particularly, because it explains the relation between the changes found or not in one and another related linguistic variety, the variation within the language, and the reasons behind language change. To put these changes in perspective, the history of the different groups that inhabited the Iberian Peninsula is given. While, on the one hand, the authors explain the different phonological changes from Latin to Medieval Spanish and then to Modern Spanish, at the same time, references are made to current changes and variation. More importantly and as a way to guide the reader to the many transformations that occurred, the chapter first presents an overview of the most dramatic changes, i.e. the /f/ in Latin to /h/ ~ ø in Modern Spanish and the evolution of the sibilants. Similarly, different morphosyntactic changes are discussed along with lexical and semantic change. The use of tables and figures help to illustrate these processes. The samples from *El cantar del Mio Cid*, as well as samples written in Judeo-Spanish, Aragonese and Galician are invaluable contributions that are maintained in the second edition. The chapter is attractive, not only because it provides the history of the language, the different languages spoken in the Iberian Peninsula and in contact with Latin, Mozarabic and Romance, but also because it makes the connection to the current situation. In other words, it also discusses the linguistic situation nowadays where Spanish is in contact with many languages in Spain (Catalan, Euskera, Galician, among others) and in Latin America (Náhuatl, Mayan, Quechua, among many others).

An addition to the second edition is the chapter on semantics and pragmatics. In *El estudio del significado: semántica y pragmática*, the meaning of words, phrases and sentences is considered along with how language is used in a way that is successful even when words are used in a meaning that differs from the one that is otherwise intended because of the speaker's intentions or because of the context or the situation. Thus, concepts such as antonymy, synonymy, homonymy, polysemy, metaphoric extension and semantic roles are discussed. Furthermore, the different acts of speech are explained along with Grice's Cooperation Principle. With the use of a variety of examples, humorous at times, the reader can see how any speaker can refrain from explicitly saying what s/he actually means.

La variación lingüística en español should have been a more sensible chapter after *Historia de la lengua española* as it is, in many ways, a continuation of the different themes already introduced in chapter five. The chapter discusses in depth the different types of linguistic variation, providing examples from each variety and establishing a difference between the written/oral educated variety or standard and the colloquial varieties. Once the distinction is established, then

the discussion proceeds to cover the Spanish varieties spoken in the Iberian Peninsula, Africa, and Latin America. Authentic text samples are included as the discussion progresses. The use of these materials maintains the interest of the reader as well as it provides him/her with an idea of how the variety may sound. As the aim of the chapter is not to provide an exhaustive analysis of each variety of the language, it gives an overview of the relevant most salient characteristics of each one. It emphasizes several times that the division between each variety is not clear, but gradual and that isoglosses are clearly a demonstration of the gradual variation. In addition to the different Spanish varieties discussed, several sections are dedicated to Judeo-Spanish, Afro-Spanish, and Spanish in contact with Catalan, Galician, Euskera, Mayan, Guaraní, Quechua as well as contact between different Spanish dialects in Spain and in Latin America.

A natural extension of the previous chapter on Spanish variation is this last chapter in the textbook on Spanish in the United States, *El español en los Estados Unidos*, a chapter that is also a new addition in this second edition of *Introducción a la lingüística hispánica*. An extensive review of the historical context and the demographics of each Spanish-speaking group in the U.S. is provided. In addition, the characteristics of each group are explained in terms of language use according to region, group, domain, gender, education and generation. Later on, the specific linguistic characteristics are discussed by group, and as a result of contact between different Spanish-speaking groups and contact between Spanish and English, e.g. code switching. Similar to the previous chapters, *El español en los Estados Unidos* includes examples from authentic texts and make use of tables and figures to summarize the material discussed. A relevant contribution of the chapter is the discussion on the sociolinguistic macro and micro factors that help maintain Spanish in the United States. In summary, the linguistic vitality of Spanish in the U.S. will depend on the speakers' agency both at home and in their community.

Just as the authors explain that the maintenance of the Spanish language in the United States will depend on the active role of its speakers, the textbook is a contribution in the prevalence of the language's vitality. In other words, many native, non-native, heritage language speakers and individuals interested in the study of the language will benefit greatly from the publication of *Introducción a la lingüística hispánica*. Not only the textbook offers a sensible discussion of a variety of topics, it expands and goes in-depth into issues relevant to the understanding of the language structure and the current issues related with language use. Historical issues and developments as well as the synchronic variation are clearly connected and it is evident that language changes and the current varieties are not just random accidents of the Spanish language.

REFERENCES

MORGAN, TERRELL. 2010. *Sonidos en contexto*. New Haven: Yale University Press.