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Author

Kirschen, Bryan

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Introduction

This volume of *Voices* aims to explore what it means to be a speaker of Spanish today and how one may account for variation—both across linguistic features as well as in ideological stance. As the theme of this issue—“50 Shades of Spanish”—suggests, our contributors offer insight and analysis on Spanish as an acquired first language and a learned second language. The articles in this issue address concerns that are at the forefront of linguistic inquiry and are, therefore, relevant to all who are in contact with speakers or learners of Spanish. Our issue commences by exploring common perspectives on Spanish in the United States as well as native Spanish speakers’ perceptions on learners’ Spanish language proficiency, continues with issues of transfer in development of syntactic structures among young adult learners of Spanish, and concludes with phonological variation among speakers.

The term *espanglish* is often used when speaking about the variety of Spanish spoken in the United States. Our issue opens with an article asking what this term means, how is it defined by the public, and what connotations are associated with it. In an attempt to revise the Royal Spanish Academy’s definition of this term, Belén Villarreal and JyEun Son administer questionnaires to members of the Latino community of Los Angeles, as well as to intermediate students of Spanish, to assess common beliefs associated with the term *espanglish*. The results of this study offer great insight as to how this term is widely perceived, how the current definition could be changed, and why it is most appropriate—and necessary—to do so.

Our issue continues to explore how ideology is intrinsically linked to language. We continue this discussion by exploring how native speakers of Spanish view, comment on, and perceive the production of Spanish by non-native speakers. Jhonni Carr develops her article by engaging in discussion by means of an online blog. She questions why native speakers are so willing to complement the language produced by a non-native speaker, while often devaluing their own—maternal—variety of language. What does it mean to speak a language well, and further, who has the authority to determine this? This study assesses how linguistic insecurities may be related to such ideologies.

Second language acquisition—or the learning of a second language—requires a great deal of time and dedication. Understanding this process allows society to understand the capabilities of the human mind. In our next article, Franny Brogan and JyEun Son explore patterns of acquisition by first year students of Spanish at the University of California, Los Angeles. This article explores types of transfer and the most common error types produced in speech by native English-speaking students. As Elementary Spanish is divided into three separate courses at this university, the authors assess the production of syntactic features by students within each level. Their findings allow us to identify common types of errors, frequency of these errors across levels, and the overall acquisition of such structures as the students' proficiency develops.

The final article of this issue extends our understanding of sociolinguistic phenomena and serves to explore phonological variation in both formal and informal speech. Mariška Bolyanatz assesses the production of /s/ as well as intervocalic /d/ among two speakers of Chilean Spanish who relocated to the United States only a few months before this research was carried out. Bolyanatz explores literature exploring phonological variation in these two phonemes and their respective allophones, confirms previous hypotheses, and indicates how her findings provide new understanding as to patterns of distribution.

The articles featured in this issue aim to assess how Spanish is both produced and perceived by speakers of the language and the greater communities in which the language is spoken. Thanks to our contributors, we are able to gain an understanding of the various *shades* of Spanish and appreciate each variety given its unique setting. We encourage readers to think critically about the research presented by our authors, and to engage in similar investigation in their respective communities. We welcome contributions for future editions of *Voices* that may extend the scope of these articles and offer new insight as to the plethora of varieties of Spanish in the United States and beyond.

Bryan Kirschen
Editor-in-Chief
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