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Review of *El español y la lingüística aplicada* by R.J.
Blake and E.C. Zyzik

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Blake, Robert J. and Eve C. Zyzik. *El español y la lingüística aplicada*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016. ISBN: 9781626162907.

Written in Spanish, *El español y la lingüística aplicada* is designed for advanced undergraduate students interested in developing their linguistic knowledge of Spanish as well as for pre-service and in-service teachers of Spanish. The authors outline the

core principles of second language acquisition (SLA) and its relationship to teaching and learning. Attention is given to matters such as the nature of language competence, input, and the impact of study abroad on second language (L2) development. Aspects of Spanish that are difficult to acquire are discussed. Careful attention is given to how language teachers might incorporate varieties of Spanish into their classroom instruction. The book consists of a preface, an introduction, and eight chapters. Each chapter includes reflection and discussion questions, and two or three task-based activities that allow students to explore the material further.

Chapter 1 is a comprehensive overview of what it means to know a language. The authors trace the historical development of the concept of “language competence,” from matters of behaviorist principles through Chomsky and Universal Grammar, to Krashen and comprehensible input. Canale and Swain’s work on communicative competence, Schmidt’s “Noticing Hypothesis,” and Long’s “Interaction Hypothesis” are also discussed. The two most influential language proficiency assessment scales, from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), are then considered. The chapter concludes with an interesting discussion of the similarities and differences of a native speaker versus a heritage language user. The notion of the native speaker as the target goal for L2 learners is questioned. More realistic goals for L2 learner performance are then outlined.

Chapter 2 addresses the issue of whether input is sufficient for language acquisition. The authors consider the nature of naturalistic L2 learning versus classroom instruction, explicit versus implicit instruction, attention to form, and task-based instruction. VanPatten’s input processing instruction, an approach that attempts to draw learners’ attention to form in input-oriented tasks and activities, is also discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of difficult-to-acquire language features in Spanish such as grammatical gender and word order. In Chapter 3, the authors attempt to determine the number of words an L2 learner of Spanish should know in order to be considered proficient. The authors conclude that a language learner must know about 8000 words in order to read. Cognates, degrees of knowledge, and idiomatic expressions are also discussed as important aspects for a proficient L2 learner. Chapter 4 examines how the structure of the Spanish language presents challenges for L2 learners whose L1 is English. The authors discuss how in Spanish one does not need to express an explicit subject. Direct and indirect pronouns and their possible misinterpretations are also reviewed. The authors contrast basic word order SVO with other possibilities in Spanish OVS, VS, and OVS. The chapter concludes with an interesting question about whether L2 learners of Spanish perceive the personal “a” in Spanish.

Chapter 5 describes two of the most difficult aspects of Spanish grammar for L2 learners: the acquisition of the preterit and imperfect and the subjunctive. The authors give essential background information on important linguistic concepts such as time, aspect, and mood. Their discussion of grammatical and lexical aspects are certain to provide the reader with a better understanding of how to approach the teaching of narration to intermediate and advanced L2 learners. The chapter’s discussion of the challenges that the subjunctive presents to L2 learners is also insightful. In Chapter 6, the authors take on the matter of linguistic variation across the Spanish-speaking world.

Background concepts such as geolect, sociolect, and register are defined. The authors then discuss phonetic, lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic variation. Address forms in Spain and Latin America are also discussed, as is the pluralization of “*haber*” in some varieties of Spanish. The chapter concludes with a series of recommendations for how to incorporate linguistic variation into the classroom.

Chapter 7 focuses on the question of whether technology can help L2 learners. The authors present a theoretical framework for the integration of computer-mediated language learning. Best practices for designing an online course are also discussed. Chapter 8 addresses the important question of how study abroad contributes to L2 development. In their discussion of previous studies, the authors note that there is significant variation in linguistic outcomes during study abroad. Special attention is given to study abroad as a conducive environment for the acquisition of pragmatics and intercultural competence. The discussion of pragmatics offers a number of important linguistic strategies that could be discussed with students during pre-departure. The chapter concludes with several suggestions for enhancing the study abroad experience.

This is an outstanding text for advanced undergraduates interested in developing their linguistic knowledge in Spanish as well as for pre-service and in-service teachers of Spanish. The authors have created a well-written, accessible, and informative introduction to applied linguistics in Spanish. The content of this up-to-date book is engaging and it promises to generate interesting class discussions.

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