1-1-2018

Review of *Fundamentos y modelos del estudio pragmático y sociopragmático del español* by S. de los Heros

Todd A. Hernandez
*Marquette University, todd.hernandez@marquette.edu*

Conversando con literatura is a carefully organized and well thought-out text. It would serve a conversation course with a focus on culture quite well since it provides students with a foundation in Hispanic literature while at the same time broaching timely and thematically relevant topics.

Eileen M. Angelini
Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures
Canisius College
Buffalo, NY

Publisher’s Response

We agree with the comments that Professor Angelini makes in her evaluation of Conversando con literatura. Still, we would like to add that each of the units of the book begins with an introduction to controversial topics about which most students are familiar. The topics addressed in these introductions reflect not only on cultural issues but also connect a variety of disciplines, including medicine, history, philosophy, and literature, as well as real life issues and current events. We believe that the well-designed selection of topics and their variety will captivate students and foster good discussion. Needless to say, the large number of topics and exercises included in this textbook will allow professors the opportunity to choose and select those that they deem to be appropriate and pertinent in their classroom.

The readings, exercises, pictures, and activities included in Conversando con literatura will serve students well insofar as they will enable them to practice all the language skills, such as speaking, reading, writing and listening. In addition to serving as a conversation textbook, Conversando con literatura can be used as a cultural reader and/or as a general introduction to a literature course.

Panda Publications
Wilkes Barre, PA
www.Pandapublications.info


The editors of this book have gathered an excellent collection of papers written in Spanish on first and second language Spanish pragmatics. The book is an exceptional resource for undergraduate and graduate students and researchers in Spanish linguistics. Pre-reading reflection questions and practice exercises are useful features for those teachers who want to use this textbook in an advanced undergraduate or graduate Spanish linguistics course.

The book contains 15 chapters divided into four sections. The first section is an introduction to the field of pragmatics. In the second section, the authors give an overview of linguistic methods and their application to specific aspects of pragmatics research. The third section presents a series of socio-pragmatic themes from distinct theoretical and methodological perspectives. In the fourth section, the authors explore the relationship between language and communication.
Part 1, “Nociones básicas del estudio pragmático,” contains two chapters. Blackwell distinguishes the field of semantics from pragmatics, arguing that, in order to understand how meaning is represented, one must take into account both semantic and pragmatic meaning. In the second chapter, Martínez Camino discusses the theoretical principles involved in inferential communication. His chapter focuses on the work of Grice, as well as that of Sperber and Wilson.

Part 2, “Métodos de análisis,” consists of five chapters. Félix-Brasdefer describes how speakers use language to express communicative acts or speech acts. The author presents sample speech acts and discusses them by using the frameworks established by Austin and Searle. Félix-Brasdefer concludes with recommendations for the learning of speech acts and other aspects of pragmatic performance. Bravo discusses linguistic politeness as an important aspect of the pragmatics research agenda. In delineating the relationship between indirect speech acts and politeness, the author refers to the theories of Lakoff (1972), Leech (1983, 1988), and Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). Bravo does an outstanding job of using authentic speech samples to elicit reflection and discussion. Koike and James discuss the use of conversation analysis to investigate social interaction. Cashman discusses the use of discourse analysis to examine oral and written language, while Zavala outlines the tenets of critical discourse analysis.

Part 3, “Lengua y poder,” contains six chapters. De los Heros explores the relationship between language and gender in the first chapter of this section. The author traces work on gender from the variationists and pre-feminists to more recent work grounded in sociopragmatics, postmodern theories, and feminist studies. She concludes with an interesting discussion of issues, including language and gender, language and sexual expression, and sexism in language. González-Cruz considers the relationship between linguistic variation and social class. In doing so, the author addresses work on social stratification, stereotypes, hyper- and ultra-correction, social networks, and other areas. In doing so, the author discusses the work of Labov on social stratification. Blas Arroyo reflects on language and politics. Using excerpts from authentic political speeches and interviews, the author investigates the linguistic strategies politicians use to persuade and manipulate the public. Escobar, del Puy Ciriza, and Holguín-Mendoza discuss the relationship between language and identity. The authors explore a number of interesting aspects of sociolinguistics: linguistic variation, the social construction of meaning, social networks and communities of practice, sociolinguistic expression of identity, construction of sociolinguistic identity, language contact, and code-switching. Bustamonte-López offers a fascinating discussion on language and immigration. Focusing on Spain and the United States, the author examines attitudes toward immigrants as expressed in public blogs and webpages. She concludes with a discussion of the linguistic features associated with immigration and language contact. García Tesoro discusses the relationship between language and education in the Spanish-speaking world. She compares traditional instruction with its focus on the structural aspects of language with more recent communicative approaches. The author then delineates the tension between a standard Spanish and varieties of Spanish, as well as indigenous languages.

Part 4, “Lengua y comunicación,” contains two chapters. Hernández Flores demonstrates how the media, in addition to transmitting information, are a central figure in the creation, confirmation, and redefinition of ideologies. It is in this sense that the media, together with...
political, economic, religious, social, and artistic groups, form an elite group of society. The author argues for the use of CDA as a theoretical framework to investigate the use of the media to propagate and reinforce prejudice and discrimination toward specific groups. In the second chapter, Niño-Murcia elucidates the at times indefinable construct of globalization. In doing so, she differentiates globalization as a process from current discourses on globalization. The author goes on to discuss recent phenomena associated with globalization: deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and call centers. Niño-Murcia concludes with an excellent discussion of the relationship between language and globalization, and Spanish as an international language.

This book is an outstanding resource for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as researchers in Spanish linguistics. It offers a clear and comprehensive introduction to the most important areas of research in Spanish pragmatics.

Todd A. Hernández
Associate Professor of Spanish Applied Linguistics
Marquette University
Milwaukee, Wisconsin


According to conventional wisdom, Spanish is the easiest language to learn for most American students. No doubt it is, at least when compared to languages such as Russian or Japanese. Already knowing French and Italian, I figured it would be a breeze to pick up some basic Spanish and my gut feeling proved to be right. Armed with my new SPANISH in 10 Minutes a Day textbook, I breezed through the equivalent of half a semester’s worth of beginning college Spanish in about a month and found the experience thoroughly enjoyable. The text employs a pedagogy well adapted to the busy schedule of people like myself who cannot study every day or for very long. So, course material has been slimmed down and focuses on the essentials, on what you need to know in order to survive, but just enough to make you want to learn more. To no one’s surprise, therefore, next semester, I plan to sit in on my Spanish colleague’s 101 class in order to gain a better mastery of basic grammar and also to have an opportunity to test my new language skills in a less threatening environment than Spain or Mexico (who wants to make a fool of himself?). Also, I need to work on pronunciation because the accompanying CD-ROM, though a good beginning, does not provide enough practice.

SPANISH in 10 Minutes a Day tends to favor standard “American Spanish” (defined broadly speaking as the Spanish spoken in the Americas), and therefore does not embrace the vosotros (colloquial “you” form) or zeta sound familiar to anyone who has visited Spain. However, in some places the vocabulary taught is either Castilian or American Spanish, which can be confusing to the beginning student. For example, in one place (76), the text teaches that “car” is carro (American Spanish) but then, a few pages later, uses the word coche (80) which is Castilian Spanish. And the woman in the picture on the front cover of the text clearly is a flamenco dancer from Andalucia. Also, as a small token of the text’s all-inclusive nature, there is a map of the Spanish-speaking world on p. 1. With the exception of a handful of Spanish-speaking territories in Africa (where Spanish is not the only language spoken), all Spanish-speaking nations are represented, but why not list all the countries in