

# **Contact, Community, and Connections**

Current Approaches to Spanish  
in Multilingual Populations

Edited by

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Bridging Languages and Scholarship

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# Acronymns

ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages)  
AP (Advanced Placement)  
BA (Buenos Aires Group)  
BLP (Bilingual Language Profile)  
CAs (Conferencias Académicas)  
CPH (Critical Period Hypothesis)  
CREA (Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual)  
CTS (Close-to-Standard)  
DELE (Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera)  
DS (Desviación Estándar)  
ELE (Español como Lengua Extranjera)  
FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale)  
HH (Hablantes de herencia)  
HL (Heritage Language)  
HS (Heritage Speakers)  
INDEMAYA (Instituto para el Desarrollo de la Cultura Maya de Estado del Yucatan)  
L2 (Second Language)  
LCP (Language Contact Profile)  
LIAS (Linguistic Identity and Attitudes in Spanish-speaking Latin America)  
NMCOS (New Mexico-Colorado Spanish Survey corpus)  
NYC (New York City)  
OBA (Outside Buenos Aires Group)  
RAE (Real Academia Española)  
SHL (Spanish Heritage Language)  
SL (Service Learning)  
TNMS (Traditional New Mexican Spanish)



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# Introduction

## Background

In 2015, we (Gregory L. Thompson and Scott M. Alvord) were both attendees at the 25th Conference on Spanish in the United States and 10th Spanish in Contact with Other Languages, which was held at The City College of New York (CUNY). After a wonderful conference experience, a meeting was held to determine where the next conference was going to be located. After some discussion, it was decided that Brigham Young University (BYU) in Provo, Utah would be an excellent location given its focus on language learning and teaching. It also moved the conference from the East Coast to the Mountain West thus providing the opportunity for additional individuals to attend. After the decision was made to hold the conference at BYU in 2017, we discussed what features we would like to see in the conference and determined that one of the outcomes that we wanted from the conference was an edited volume given the quality of the work that is presented every two years at this conference. We had an exceptional conference in 2017 and shortly after the conference, we put out a call for submissions. We decided not to limit the submissions for this edited volume to those who had participated in the conference but also invited submissions from the larger academic community via different professional listservs and contacts that each of us had with other professional organizations. From this original call, we received close to 30 excellent submissions from which 15 were chosen to be included in this edited volume based on the quality of the research and the focus of each of these chapters.

This edited volume is meant to be a valuable resource to all those involved in research and teaching both Spanish/English bilinguals as well as Spanish speakers who are in contact with other languages. This book will be especially valuable to all of those working with heritage language learners and in areas where Spanish is in contact with other languages. The goal of this edited volume is to appeal to both practitioners in the field as well as researchers who work with these populations. While the focus of the research in this edited volume tends towards those working in the post-secondary field or with adult learners, there are many chapters where the information therein would apply across all levels of language study as well as with those currently engaged in research in these areas. This edited volume is also written to be used in its entirety or for the use of select

chapters in a variety of courses ranging from sociolinguistics to dialectology to language education. This edited volume is unique in its broad yet coherent approach to the study of Spanish in contact with other languages as well as the ever-evolving nature of Spanish in the US by investigating current issues in the field through well-designed research and innovative analyses. The principal goal of this edited volume is to further the understanding of researchers, practitioners, and educators as to current trends and developing areas within the area of Spanish in contact with other languages. This volume contributes original research in these areas in a way so as to fill valuable gaps in the current knowledge in the field especially in the innovative ways of approaching areas such as teaching heritage learners, understanding diachronic and synchronic dialectal and linguistic changes as well as innovations in language use, and how language contributes to the formation of identity. In this introductory chapter, we will discuss some of the themes in this edited volume, outline each of the chapters, and mention some conclusions and future directions for research.

### **Introduction**

Spanish is continuing to grow as a first and second language in many contexts across the globe. It is one of the top five languages spoken either as a first or second language and as such finds itself in contact with many other languages (Lipski, 2008). In addition, Spanish is the most widely spoken foreign language in the United States and is found in so many contexts that it could even be considered more of a second language than a foreign language (Alonso, 2007; Brown & Thompson, 2018). Moreover, Spanish is the first language of many communities across the United States due to immigration patterns and community maintenance of the language. Given the widespread usage of Spanish across all areas of the world, there is a growing need for research to better understand how Spanish in contact with other languages impacts both individuals and diverse communities not only in the United States but in different regions around the world. In addition, this contact with other languages has led to dialectal and structural changes that are common as languages are shared by multiple speakers (Thompson & Lamboy, 2012). The goal of this edited volume is to provide state of the art research on developing areas of Spanish in contact with other languages as well as situations of Spanish in the United States.

### **Overview of the Chapters**

This edited volume is divided according to three major themes that focus on the overall issues of contact, community, and connections. Accordingly,

the chapters selected under the different themes help connect this edited volume in a coherent way that covers some of the major research areas in relation to language contact around the world, language education, and language change. The first section, titled “Language and Identity,” is composed of four chapters that focus on the connection between language and identity in unique settings. Valentín-Márquez studies how bilingual youth from different ethnic backgrounds in Pennsylvania value the Dominican and Puerto Rican Spanish varieties that surround them in Chapter 1. This chapter shows the importance of studying language identity by using both direct and indirect methodologies as well as showing how a social network analysis can also shed light on important nuances in attitudes towards different varieties of Spanish. This chapter also reveals the reality of linguistic insecurity that exists in bilinguals especially when they perceive that their variety of language is somehow less prestigious. In Chapter 2, Truman studies the attitudes of bilingual Mayan women living in Yucatán, MX toward the Mayan language and shows that, notwithstanding positive attitudes toward Yucatec Mayan, there is little intergenerational transmission of the minority language, pointing to probable language loss in this community. This chapter emphasizes the need for intergenerational maintenance in order to help maintain both a linguistic and cultural identity. Also important is how this chapter shows the ever-present potential for language loss even in communities with large numbers of speakers of a minority language.

The third chapter is a corpus analysis of the types of language used in more formal presentations given in Spanish in the United States and looks at how informal language is used in this typically very formal setting as a way to establish one’s bilingual or bidialectal identity. In this chapter, Viera looks at how formal academic presentations reflect the formality of academic writing while at the same time integrating common discursive elements to engage an audience in public speech. The final chapter of this section moves the conversation about learners of Spanish to the study abroad context and studies how learners of different dialectal varieties of Spanish respond to the pressures of being in Spain where many of the linguistic features and vocabulary vary greatly from that to which they had previously been exposed. Kentengian and Peace analyze two case studies of a Mexican and a Peruvian heritage student of Spanish who went to Spain to participate in a study abroad program. Given the differences in their varieties of Spanish and the ones in Spain, these learners develop a better understanding of their own identity while studying in Spain. Not only do their language skills improve but this immersion setting in a distinct dialect of Spanish impacts their language choices while abroad and how they seek to identify themselves to the Spaniards with whom they

interact. This study shows how language can be used as identity performance and can be used as a way for heritage students to differentiate themselves from other Spanish speakers.

The second section of this manuscript is titled “Language and Dialectal Contact” and is composed of six chapters that analyze the dialectal and linguistic changes in languages in contact in a variety of settings around the world. Chapter 5 begins this section with an innovative experimental examination of /s/ voicing in Andean Spanish studying the role of both linguistic and sociolinguistic factors on the production of this Spanish phoneme. In this study, Davidson examines the role that language contact has in facilitating voicing usage patterns across different Andean populations. In Chapter 6, the Trawick and Michnowicz study the well-known but understudied Guarani language in its contact with Spanish. Through an analysis of Spanish in contact with Guarani in Paraguay, the authors provide new information on the distribution of [ʔ] and detail on how the variety of Spanish in contact with Guarani is evolving from previous research. Chapter 7 provides an extensive overview of the evolution of one of the oldest dialects of Spanish in the United States—Traditional New Mexican Spanish. Arnold and Martínez-García explore the development of this variety in contact with other forms of Spanish and with English from the early Spanish settlers to present day struggles as this traditional variety is quickly disappearing. The authors further argue about the need for documentation of this and other dialects that are in danger of extinction.

Chapter 8 is an analysis of speakers of Spanish in New England and Utah compared to those from two different corpora to identify differences in subjunctive use across dialects in the US compared to monolingual varieties found in different corpora. Chaston finds that characteristics attributed to Spanish in contact with English are also found in monolingual varieties of Spanish. He goes on to provide some preliminary evidence for rethinking mood selection in both contact and monolingual varieties of Spanish. Chapter 9 explores variation in the aspectual system of verbal morphology, i.e., preterit and imperfect, in the Spanish spoken by a community of Spanish speakers of Mexican origin living in the south of Louisiana. Dorado and Rojas compare the usage of aspect in their participants to that of participants in other studies to determine what factors contribute to changes in use. They found in their research that age and time of arrival in the U.S. correlate with innovative forms and has led to the expansion of the imperfect into domains often reserved for the preterit. In the final chapter of this section, Chapter 10, Gimenez Meiling, Fails and Alvord investigate dialectal changes in Argentine Spanish of speakers living in New York. The

contact of these individuals with speakers of other varieties of Spanish was found not to influence the unique prosody of certain aspects of the Argentine accent. The results are somewhat surprising given the contact of this variety with many different varieties of Spanish in New York could be expected to change the prosody of these speakers. Additionally, the authors compare the results from natives from Buenos Aires to the participants in New York to other Argentines outside of Buenos Aires and find that a prosodic dialectal leveling is occurring across all their different varieties of Spanish.

The final section, titled “Language in Educational Settings,” consisting of five chapters with a focus on heritage speakers and second language students of Spanish in different classroom settings as well as abroad. Chapter 11 provides the expertise of two well-known researchers in the field of heritage languages (Moreno & MacGregor-Mendoza) who review their own program development and offer strategies for working with heritage learners and developing classes for these learners who have grown up with English and Spanish competing for linguistic space. They look at how service learning can not only help heritage students increase their language skills but also benefit them by helping them become more socially responsible, increase their involvement and contribution to the community, and increase their critical thinking skills. All of this is done while benefitting the community in which they live. Chapter 12 continues with the question of heritage learners but studies them within the context of mixed classrooms where they study with second language learners of Spanish. Burgo surveyed both types of learners and found that overall the heritage learners of Spanish felt that the mix was positive both in regard to the content of the course and their perceptions of their second language classmates. The heritage learners did express some concerns regarding the difference in the knowledge between them and their second language classmates. The author concludes offering suggestions on how to work with mixed classrooms to maximize the skills of both groups.

In Chapter 13, Peace considers how students’ service encounters with Spaniards in Madrid vary according to ethnic background and linguistic ability. The author studied students participating in study abroad and how Spaniards interacted with them using lexical items germane to the Mexican dialect of Spanish. The author surveyed the service providers and found that the providers attempted to correct the more proficient speaker and not the other speakers. It was also found that the most proficient student was also treated more like other local clients than the less proficient students. Chapter 14 in this section analyzes several young adults’ social networks and social circles regarding their minority language to determine how these

interactions impact their retention and development of Spanish. Pinilla-Herrera investigates how the languages used in the social networks contribute to the maintenance and/or attrition of these speaker's Spanish. The concluding chapter of this section and of the edited volume, Chapter 15, analyzes the use of annotations for heritage learners of Spanish in introductory textbooks for second language learners to determine whether they have been included. In spite of a growing heritage population and an increase of heritage language learners in introductory classes, Asención Delany finds that not only is there a lack of annotations but the ones that do exist do not facilitate the type of differentiated instruction that would be beneficial in the mixed classroom.

### **Conclusions and Future Directions**

This edited volume addresses many current and vital areas of research regarding Spanish in contact around the world as well as the different educational settings where Spanish is taught. There are many other areas and questions raised by these authors regarding future veins of research that need to be addressed. Differing linguistic attitudes are found in Valentín-Márquez (Chapter 1) amongst Dominican and Puerto Rican speakers. While attitudes were positive overall, much linguistic insecurity still existed. Valentín-Márquez suggests that future research consider gender as well as different age groups to determine if linguistic attitudes towards distinct varieties of Spanish are evolving across these groups. Issues related to language policy and language planning need to continue to receive attention as Truman (Chapter 2) details the increasing decline and maintenance of indigenous languages in the Yucatan. She finds that the current trends in the population that she studied are not passing their native language on to subsequent generations who are quickly becoming receptive bilinguals.

The research by Viera (Chapter 3) and Chaston (Chapter 8) provide new directions of research through the increasing use of corpora to analyze language patterns. Their research suggests that corpora can provide valuable samples that can reveal current patterns of language use and can be used to challenge traditional notions of language and formality. Davidson (Chapter 5), Trawick and Michnowicz (Chapter 6), Arnold and Martínez-García (Chapter 7), Dorado and Rojas (Chapter 9), and Gimenez Meiling, Fails, and Alvord (Chapter 10) all raise questions regarding dialectal changes occurring in Spanish in contact with other languages. These studies emphasize the need to a continual revisiting of languages in contact to reflect current language use and patterns given that languages in contact settings are fluid. These studies show how future research needs to revisit

possible established theories on certain contact varieties to determine the current state of language use.

In addition, the teaching of Spanish in the United States is an area that continues to be researched especially regarding heritage learners of Spanish with educators seeking innovative ways to reach and help these learners maintain and advance in their language skills. Peace (Chapter 13) and Kentengian and Peace (Chapter 4) found that taking heritage students abroad affords them opportunities often not available to second language learners. These heritage language students were afforded access to different social and cultural situations not available to other language learners. While Peace had a relatively small sample size, these results are encouraging for helping conduct larger studies to see how to integrate activities into study abroad that benefit all learners and help them to make the most of their time abroad. Future studies in this area can look at different types of heritage learners in a variety of educational settings abroad and in various countries. These studies can lead to not only improved programs but also help to encourage more heritage learners to go abroad and expand their linguistic and cultural proficiency. Future research can also address how linguistic attitudes change and are reflected as heritage learners come in contact with different dialectal varieties of Spanish.

Also, regarding heritage learners, Moreno and MacGregor-Mendoza (Chapter 11) find that heritage students can improve their language and cultural knowledge through service learning much more than in the classroom. Future research needs to continue to look at how to maximize the heritage learners' time during service learning and how to customize experiences for heritage learners at different levels of fluency. Also, their study was conducted in the southwestern part of the United States and future studies need to consider other areas of the United States as well as different populations of heritage learners. Burgo (Chapter 12) states that while the heritage learners in her class enjoyed the diversity of a mixed classroom, more research is needed on how to teach classes with heritage and second language students. Books such as Fairclough and Beaudrie (2016) and Pascual y Cabo (2016) focus on some of these issues, but more research continues to be needed given the large numbers of mixed classes and the unique settings in which heritage learners continue to be taught. Pinilla-Herrera's (Chapter 14) exploration of social networks is a developing area in heritage language maintenance. While her findings suggest that social networks, especially in the digital realm, are important in language maintenance, future studies need to consider how ever-evolving technologies continue to change and how these changes can

impact language choices and social networks. Also, given the small sample size of her study, future research needs to consider a broader range of participants and also look at different ages and their interactions through social networks. Finally, Asención Delaney (Chapter 15) suggests that not only is further research needed into the development of textbooks with heritage learners in mind but also provides valuable evidence for the need for a change in textbook development to consider the ever-growing population of heritage speakers in all levels of language courses. Studies using differentiated instruction could be carried out using textbooks that offer teachers support for the diverse classrooms in which they teach and the diverse study body that they teach.

It is hoped that this volume will inspire many future studies and inform current practices and theories related to Spanish in contact with other languages around the world as well as the teaching of Spanish in diverse educational settings. Given the global nature of the Spanish language, this edited volume offers insights that can benefit practitioners and researchers and lead to new pedagogical tools and insights into languages in contact.

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