

**Lafford, B.A., & Salaberry, R. (Eds.).** (2003). *Spanish Second Language Acquisition: State of the Science*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. Pp. 344, \$39.95 US (paper).

*Spanish Second Language Acquisition* gathers together in one volume numerous studies on the acquisition of Spanish as a second language. While several books exist that survey the field of second language acquisition (SLA) in general (e.g., Gass & Selinker, 2001; Doughty & Long, 2003), none has focused on the Spanish language. As interest in learning Spanish grows, an increasing number of studies have examined learners of Spanish, and Spanish SLA has become a sub-field with its own fora for publication (e.g., the proceedings of the annual Conference on the Acquisition of Spanish and Portuguese and the applied linguistics section of *Hispania*). However, these publications are limited to specific issues; only Lafford (2000) has attempted to present an overview of the many varied areas of research within Spanish SLA. This book thus fills a noticeable gap in SLA at a time when interest in learning Spanish is increasing.

*Spanish Second Language Acquisition* is designed as a reference tool for SLA researchers, graduate students, and second/foreign language teachers. The editors also suggest that it might be used as a textbook for a graduate course on Spanish SLA, as some background knowledge of linguistics (and, this reviewer would like to add, some basic knowledge of SLA) is needed. While the editors acknowledge the futility of trying to present an exhaustive survey of Spanish SLA studies, the amount of information collected in this volume is still impressive. The major themes studied by Spanish SLA researchers are all represented in this book, as are some less-studied topics such as pragmatic and discourse competence. The authors of each chapter have research experience in the area they discuss and are thus able to provide a detailed account of what has been done, where the current research stands, and what issues remain to be examined in the future – the three questions that guide every chapter.

*Spanish Second Language Acquisition* is divided into three parts. The first part, 'Linguistic Topics: Products,' examines the acquisition of specific structures of Spanish, such as phonology (chap. 1 by A.R. Elliott); past tense and aspect (chap. 2 by S. Montrul and R. Salaberry); use of complex syntactic structures and the subjunctive (chap. 3 by J.G. Collentine); object pronouns (chap. 4 by J.F. Lee); lexicon (chap. 5 by Lafford, Collentine, and A.S. Karp); and pragmatic and discourse competence (chap. 6 by D. Koike, L. Pearson, and C. Witten). Some of these chapters are more specific to Spanish than others, depending on

how much research has been done on the topic. For instance, tense/aspect morphology, the subjunctive, and object pronouns have been popular areas of study in Spanish SLA, while phonology, lexicon, pragmatics, and discourse have received less attention. The authors of these latter chapters thus survey their topic in general and apply data from Spanish where available. The editors are to be commended for not limiting the overview to structures that have been well studied in Spanish SLA; by including less-examined topics, they have highlighted areas where research is lacking.

The second part of *Spanish Second Language Acquisition*, 'Theoretical Perspectives: Processes,' focuses on the different models of language development that have informed SLA research, namely generative grammars (chap. 7 by L. Sánchez and A.J. Toribio), cognitive approaches (chap. 8 by P. Dussias), and sociocultural perspectives (chap. 9 by M. Antón, F.J. DiCamilla, and J.P. Lantolf). The authors first provide a summary of how these approaches have accounted for SLA in general, then focus on studies involving Spanish that were carried out within these frameworks. These three chapters would perhaps be better placed at the beginning of the book, as some of the studies in the section on linguistic products make reference to these models. For instance, both chapter 2 and chapter 4 refer to generative perspectives on tense/aspect morphology and clitics, so it might be useful for the reader to have a general understanding of these perspectives before reading about the specific structures.

The title of the final part of the book, 'Methodological Perspectives,' refers not to research methodology but to the application of SLA research to Spanish language teaching. It consists of one chapter (chap. 10 by C. Grove) that surveys studies on input, intake, output, and interaction involving Spanish classrooms. Grove also includes sections on the Natural Approach and Input Processing, two pedagogical 'methods' that originated with teaching Spanish. What strikes the reader after this chapter is how little attention Spanish pedagogy has paid to SLA research, including the research mentioned in this book. Grove summarizes numerous studies that have examined specific classroom variables, such as the amount and type of input, yet – with the exception of the Natural Approach and Input Processing – he finds himself unable to provide much evidence of pedagogical applications of these findings in Spanish classrooms.

*Spanish Second Language Acquisition: State of the Science* serves its intended purpose as a reference tool well. Many researchers and graduate students will no doubt take advantage of the exhaustive bibliographies that follow the chapters as a launching pad for their own

reading. Spanish language teachers who wish to stay up to date with the field but do not need (or have time) to keep up with every published article will also be grateful for the 'snapshots' that this book provides. Like any state-of-the-art publication, this book will only remain up to date for a few years; nevertheless, this does not detract from its usefulness as a bibliographic resource, especially for key papers that all researchers of the topic should read. As a graduate textbook, this volume may be less suitable: students at the graduate level should be reading primary literature, not survey articles, and *Spanish Second Language Acquisition* does not address other key components of SLA courses such as research design and data analysis. Nonetheless, the authors and editors are to be commended for their efforts in gathering together in one volume the rapidly growing research on Spanish SLA.

### References

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- Lafford, B. (2000). Spanish applied linguistics in the twentieth century: A retrospective and bibliography (1900–1999). *Hispania*, 83, 711–732.

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