

***Communication Disorders in Spanish Speakers: Theoretical, Research, and Clinical Aspects***  
José G. Centeno, Raquel T. Anderson, and Lorain K. Obler, Eds. Buffalo: Multilingual Matters.  
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In *Communication Disorders in Spanish Speakers: Theoretical, Research, and Clinical Aspects*, the editors, José Centeno, Raquel Anderson, and Lorain Obler, have assembled a multidisciplinary perspective on an emergent avenue in the field of linguistics, sociolinguistics, and language pathology: the study of the growing and ubiquitous population of Spanish speakers in the United States. This field is multidisciplinary in breadth yet inconsistent in the depth with which each vein has been examined. Therefore, in an effort to address these issues, the editors have brought together views from contrastive analyses, cross-linguistic investigations, and empirical studies of monolingual and bilingual Spanish-speaking children and adults in educational, professional, and clinical settings. The intended audience of this volume includes students and practitioners in the fields of linguistics, sociolinguistics, and speech-language pathology. Students, researchers, and clinicians working with Spanish speakers, whether monolingual or bilingual, language-impaired or not, are provided with chapters on a variety of topics from which they can glean practical and often illuminating information.

The editors provide a comprehensive introduction that serves to situate the book's sections within the topic's multidisciplinary nature, and encourage awareness of the population under study. After English, Spanish is the second most frequently spoken language in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003) but Spanish speakers are by no means a monolithic group. Immigrants of Spanish, Central American, or South American provenance come to the United States with their own dialects and variations of the language. Upon arrival, immigrants might be monolingual in Spanish, or bilingual in a native dialect and Spanish. One purpose of the volume is to point out the paucity of available literature on Hispanic individuals and to broaden awareness of the diversity of this linguistic group.

In the spirit of awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity, this book provides conceptual and empirical information on Spanish speakers. It should be made available to clinicians in training as a fundamental handbook, and to licensed professionals as a resource in continuing education. In contrast to previous literature on speech-language pathology of Spanish speakers (e.g., Brice, 2002; Goldstein, 2004; Kayser, 1995; Langdon & Cheng, 1992), this publication orients itself in a clinical and research-based context, which examines both normal and aberrant communication skills of bilingual Spanish-speaking children and adults. As such, while it is still relevant, this book is not intended primarily for second or foreign language teachers of English.

The book is divided into three parts. Although the sections can be read independently of one another, it is most beneficial for the reader to study part 1 before consulting parts 2 or 3 as the first provides a comprehensive overview of introductory issues. Part 1, "Preliminary Considerations," contains eight chapters which include background information on the contrastive analysis of Spanish and English, the multifaceted field of bilingualism, and language disorders. Depending on his/her interests and needs, the reader may choose to go on to read part 2, which includes research on Spanish-speaking children, or part 3, which includes research on adults.

In chapter 1, “Contrastive Analysis between Spanish and English,” authors Anderson and Centeno provide an essential guide to phonology, morphology, and syntax for those coming into contact with Spanish speakers—for instance, English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers and administrators, clinicians, and linguists. The second chapter, “English Language Learners: Literacy and Biliteracy,” is just as valuable to this audience with its overview of biliteracy development, and cognitive, cultural, sociolinguistic, and clinical considerations for working with bilinguals. Kayser and Centeno take into account two major challenges faced by bilingual learners. First, bilinguals must learn to use two different print systems, one for the first language (L1) and another for the second language (L2). Second, the actual use of these two print systems is often not parallel: the L1 and L2 are usually used in different contexts and for different purposes.

Following this discussion on the biliterate learner, the next four chapters address conceptual and clinical aspects of bilingualism. In chapter 3, “Bilingual Development and Communication: Implications for Clinical Language Studies,” Centeno distinguishes the terms *simultaneous bilingual acquisition* and *sequential bilingual acquisition*, respectively, as the simultaneous acquisition of two languages at a young age and the learning of an L2 from late childhood onward. Centeno underscores the “individual multidimensional phenomenon” (p. 52) of bilingualism, arguing that researchers may be faced with the challenge of defining bilingualism for each case according to their practices and needs. Furthermore, the background of each individual is critical to understanding his or her profile, thus posing more challenges for the researcher.

In chapter 4, “Neurolinguistic Aspects of Bilingualism,” Gitteman and Datta present literature on bilingual aphasia and highlight areas where neuroimaging research has failed to fill in the gaps. They claim that while neurological studies can provide clues regarding language localization and differences in the phonological performance of adult and child language learners, there are still disagreements and unexplored topics in the field. Chapter 5, “Sociocultural, Societal, and Psychological Aspects of Bilingualism,” emphasizes the need to respect the cultural and linguistic rights of the individual. The authors of this chapter, Brozgold and Centeno, argue that awareness of these aspects can enhance communication between the researcher or clinician, and the bilingual participant. In chapter 6, “Cross-Linguistic Research: The Convergence of Monolingual and Bilingual Data,” Anderson concludes that monolingual research can be more helpful to bilingual research than previously believed.

To close part 1, chapters 7 and 8 offer a general look at the neuropsychology of language disorders among Spanish speakers, including dyslexia and clinical communication research with Hispanic populations. In chapter 7, “The Cognitive Neuropsychology of Language Disorders among Spanish Speakers,” Weekes suggests that speech-language pathologists should use a conceptual understanding of reading and writing as a predictive tool for language impairments. An interactive triangular framework depicting orthographic and phonological representations with semantic information is also presented. In keeping with the major theme of the book, chapter 8, “Ethical and Methodological Considerations in Clinical Communication Research with Hispanic Populations,” highlights issues clinicians may encounter based on demographic and cultural factors related to the Hispanic population.

Part 2 offers research on children and is comprised of five chapters in the areas of morphosyntactic impairments in specific language impairment (SLI), cognitive development in bilingual children, and speech differences and disorders in young bilingual children. Chapter 9, “Exploring the Grammar of Spanish-speaking Children with Specific Language Impairment,” presents a general view of the grammar of the SLI Spanish-speaking child while the remaining four chapters deal more specifically with research methodologies for working with language-disordered children. In chapter 9, Anderson notes that research on Spanish-speaking children with SLI is in its infancy and, thus, the grammar focus tends to be narrow. In chapter 10, “Language Elicitation and Analysis as a Research and Clinical Tool for Latino Children,” Restrepo and Castilla analyze story retelling, narration, interviews, and conversation for their benefits, and the use of *mean length utterance* (MLU) is discussed. MLU is a measure of the average number of words or morphemes per utterance in a given discourse. However, the authors claim that “standardization of these measures across Latino groups, ages and tasks are [sic] needed before they can be used as a reliable clinical tool” (p. 138).

Continuing the discussion on research methodology, Jackson-Maldonado and Conboy follow with chapter 11, “Utterance Length Measures for Spanish-speaking Toddlers,” in which they review the validity of MLU measures of words vs. morphemes. They conclude that both MLU word and MLU morpheme “are valid measures that correlate similarly with age and with other measures of grammatical development in the 20-30 month age range” (p. 152). Kohnert and Kan, the authors of chapter 12, “Lexical Skills in Young Children Learning a Second Language,” discuss lexical deficiencies and propose guidelines for identifying these deficiencies more effectively in the L2 learner. These guidelines include measuring lexical skills in both the L1 and L2, and measuring lexical performance at different points in time.

Part 3 provides the reader with an overview of issues related to Spanish-speaking adults. The authors in this section examine issues as diverse as evidence-based clinical procedures in neurogenic linguistic disorders, the development, use, and acquired disruption of literacy skills, and the clinical analysis of speech patterns. The first three chapters present studies of Spanish speakers with aphasia, followed by two chapters on dyslexia and one chapter on illiteracy.

To introduce part 3, chapters 14 and 15 both discuss preserved linguistic abilities in individuals with aphasia, adding to the discussion of whether aphasia is a deficit of linguistic competence or performance. In chapter 14, “Prepositional Processing in Spanish Speakers with Aphasia,” Reyes presents results indicating higher performance when the prepositions had high semantic content and when there was sufficient contextual information. To add support to the claim that aphasia does not mean linguistic loss, in chapter 15, “Cohesion in the Conversational Samples of Broca’s Aphasic Individuals,” Pietrosevoli shows that speakers with Broca’s aphasia can participate meaningfully in certain interactions. In chapter 16, “Language Switching in the Context of Spanish-English Bilingual Aphasia,” Ansaldo and Marcotte discuss a study on a middle-aged bilingual male with aphasia who was unable to control language switching. The researchers found that a theory-based individualized intervention paired with anomia therapy improved the man's overall naming and discourse abilities.

The following three chapters concern, respectively, the implications of dyslexia in Spanish monolinguals, the cross-linguistic aspects of dyslexia in Spanish-English bilinguals, and adult

illiteracy in Spanish monolinguals. Chapter 17, "Description and Detection of Acquired Dyslexia and Dysgraphia in Spanish," and chapter 18, "Cross-linguistic Aspects of Dyslexia in Spanish-English Bilinguals," both constitute literature reviews of dyslexia, covering surface, deep, and phonological dyslexias, and discuss the importance of orthographic studies for professionals working with sequential bilinguals. The authors of these two chapters stress that the orthographic-phonetic relationship in Spanish is not entirely one-to-one.

In chapter 19, "Neuropsychological Profile of Adult Illiterates and the Development and Application of a Neuropsychological Program for Learning to Read," Ostrosky-Solís, Lozano, Ramírez, and Ardila show the benefits of injecting neuropsychological perspectives into a literacy program in a Mexican school for illiterate monolingual Spanish speakers. They found that phonological scores on a neuropsychological examination predict communication skills such as verbal cognitive level, phonological awareness, memory strategies, and executive functioning. The test scores in effect enable the professional to target and reinforce weaker skills. The final chapter represents another essential chapter for ESL/EFL teachers of Spanish speakers. In chapter 20, "Phonetic Descriptions of Speech Production in Bilingual Speakers," Bell-Berti examines the use of phonetic description in the evaluation of ESL/EFL learners' speech production. This chapter is a guide for clinicians, demonstrating how to discriminate speech differences (e.g., accent) from genuine pathological disorders.

This edited volume brings together the limited amount of research available on Spanish-speaking monolinguals and bilinguals in clinical settings, providing a conceptual and theoretical background as well as empirical investigations of children and adults. Depending on the reader's interests and needs, the chapters can be read in any order, but throughout the book, students, professionals, and clinicians are urged to be aware of the cultural and linguistic diversity of Spanish speakers. The implications of this work are extensive. As stated earlier, the interdisciplinary nature of the field complicates the job of educators and clinicians. The researcher must consider factors such as age, culture, neuropsychology, time of English acquisition, and Spanish language ability along with other individual idiosyncrasies. Standardized research methods and variables might be developed to better guide future research. The purpose of this publication is to inform readers of the cultural and linguistic diversity of Spanish speakers in clinical settings, but the book also serves as a call to arms, prompting students, researchers, teachers, and clinicians to pursue further research.

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