BOOK REVIEW

Molsing, K. V.; Lopes Perna, C. B. & Tramunt Ibaños, A. M. (eds) (2020). *Linguistic Approaches to Portuguese as an Additional Language*. Amsterdam. John Benjamins Publishing Company

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This edited volume responds to recent calls to go beyond research focusing on English and adds to increasing academic literature focusing instead on Portuguese as target language in Applied Language Studies. Such developments go hand in hand with growing attention paid to the development of students' plurilingual repertoires and the acknowledgment that those repertoires are multi-layered, dynamic, and ever-evolving.

1. Introduction

This edited volume responds to recent calls to go beyond research focusing on English and adds to increasing academic literature focusing instead on Portuguese as target language in Applied Language Studies. Such developments go hand in hand with growing attention paid to the development of students' plurilingual repertoires and the acknowledgment that those repertoires are multi-layered, dynamic, and ever evolving. In this book, Portuguese has been designated under the umbrella term "additional language" to refer to different realities such as Portuguese as a host language, as a heritage language, as a second and as a third language. In the chapters covered by the book, those designations are mostly limited to Portuguese as a second and as a third foreign language, usually after English and/or Spanish, these languages considered the L1 or L2 of the tested respondents (although, in Martins & Nunes, the L1 is Chinese). Usually, students are described as having a high proficiency in the second language. The use of the term "tested" is warranted, since most of the studies give an account of quantitatively designed empirical tests, controlling different variables of Portuguese language learning: either the elements characterizing students' linguistic biographies (e.g. order of language acquisition, duration of learning experience, study abroad) or individual cognitive variables (e.g. inhibition control). Most of the studies are carried out by researchers in academic contexts with university students, providing the volume with a sense of consistency in terms of the universe covered.

The chapters are preceded by a Foreword by A. M. Carvalho, highlighting the relevance and the timely nature of the publication, emphasizing the growing economic and political influence of Portuguese as a world language. In the introduction, the three co-editors present the novel aspects of the book, underscoring the growing number of Portuguese learners at American universities, current geopolitical developments, and intensifying

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research studies being published around Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL). The book unfolds in three parts, clearly identified by their titles: "Linguistic components of language transfer in PAL research", "Linguistic insights into the PAL acquisition process", and "Linguistic results informing PAL instruction".

2. Part I

The first section, "Linguistic components of language transfer in PAL research", comprises four chapters in which different hypotheses related to transfer are tested, in different settings.

J. Cabrelli, M. Iverson, D. Giancaspro & B. Halloran González analyse whether Spanish L2 transfer is overcome faster than Spanish L1 transfer in Portuguese L3 morphosyntactic development, advancing some explanations as to why Spanish L1 speakers have more difficulties in inhibiting their "native language": amount of input, context of acquisition of L1 and L2, and enhanced metalinguistic awareness related to formal instruction of L2.

In "Syntactic contrasts in early and late Brazilian Portuguese-European Portuguese bidialectal bilinguals: Data from production", T. Castro, J. Rothman & M. Westergaard investigate the role of age of onset of exposure to European Portuguese (child and adult) in the cross-linguistic effects between the two varieties of Portuguese, showing that the cross-linguistic influences are bidirectional. The authors interpret the findings referring to the typological proximity of the two varieties analysed.

The third chapter of this section, "Learning to perceive, produce and recognize words in a non-native language: Australian English vs. European Spanish learners of Brazilian Portuguese", by J. Elvin, D. Williams & P. Escudero, investigates how learners acquire three abilities (perception, word recognition, and production) and how they are interrelated. The authors posit that students' "ability to produce native-like sounds in the L2 is also affected by their ability to perceive those sounds" (61). They focus on the analysis of perception, recognition and production of Brazilian Portuguese vowels, by English and Spanish learners of Portuguese, with a clear advantage for the Spanish speakers, which they account for through typological proximity: they defend that "in addition to the type and number of phonemes in the native and target languages, it is worth taking into consideration the acoustic similarity between native and non-native vowels when predicting L2 difficulty" (67).

The last chapter of part I, by L. Pereyron & U. Alves, highlights, as declared in the title of the contribution, "Multi-directionality in language transfer", focusing on the "Development of the vowel system of Brazilian Portuguese as a second (L2) or third language (L3)". The authors review theories of language development (and not language learning or acquisition, which, as they claim, refer to less dynamic processes: 84), understood through the lens of theories referring to dynamic, complex, and adaptive systems, characterized by openness and non-linearity, among other features. The authors conclude that "all the language systems of an individual are in constant development and interaction" (104), and that learning a third language impacts both the second and the first languages.

3. Part II

The second part of the book, "Linguistic insights into the PAL acquisition process", comprises two chapters, with empirical studies located in China and in Brazil.

In "The lexical aspect hypothesis: off-line evidence from Chinese learners of European Portuguese as an L2", C. Martins & M. P. Nunes offer a perspective on Portuguese learning that is not mediated by issues of linguistic proximity. They investigate the acquisition of tense and aspect, following a variationist perspective that aims to test the lexical aspect hypothesis. The authors compare the rules, selection processes and production of tense and aspect in Portuguese and Chinese, before explaining the methodological aspects of

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the study, consisting of oral interviews and a retell story task. They advance and confirm the hypothesis that mainly the length of exposure and format of the oral tasks would have an influence upon the results, as the interview may inhibit the marking of the Imperfect and the retelling by favouring it.

The second chapter, by L. C. Ferreira & D. Oliveira, interprets "how learners of Portuguese as an additional language talk about their experience from a cognitive perspective". The authors focus on the analysis and categorization of "metaphors, metonymies, discursive topics, and image schemas" (155) used, co-constructed and negotiated by learners to describe their individual learning experience in an immersive context. Ferreira & Oliveira adopt an emic, "experientialist" perspective (151), to reconstruct the meaning of students' learning experiences, as expressed during focus group interviews. They conclude that "the metaphor LANGUAGE AS A COMMODITY was recurrent when participants talked about the reasons they studied the language" (sic; 162).

4. Part III

The third part, called "Linguistic results informing PAL instruction", consists of five chapters, which highlight pedagogical consequences of PAL research: whereas in the other sections the pedagogical aspects were latent, they are highly present in this section.

The chapter by J. Fleck, M. R. Salaberry & H. S. Santos, "Implementing the concept of pedagogical mediation with the use of language corpora for the teaching of Portuguese as an L2 or L3" explores the use of corpora, both deductively and inductively, as a means to expose Portuguese learners to authentic language productions, mainly when these display systematic differences between closed related languages, such as Portuguese and Spanish. The authors present their experience based on the construction of instructional materials using natural and semi-natural oral corpora to explain the differences between "gostar de" (Portuguese) and "gustar" (Spanish) and to develop pragmatic competences in Brazilian Portuguese (in the fields of requesting and politely refusing). Results point towards the added-value of observing natural oral productions supported by a guided analysis in order to teach and learn pragmatic issues of the target language. The authors further admit that "it is important that the design of a corpus-based syllabus be focused on specific learning goals that can be achieved more efficiently, and perhaps more effectively" (186).

The second and third chapters of this part explore learning Portuguese after Spanish, in so-called "cross-training" programmes in the USA, an approach to language learning and teaching that leverages "existing knowledge of any non-native language for purposes of learning a new foreign language" (chapter by Bonilla et al., 191). The chapter "Leveraging Spanish knowledge and cognitive aptitude in Portuguese learning", by C. Bonilla, E. Golonka, N. B. Pandža, J. Linck, E. B. Michael, M. Clark, A. Lancaster & D. Richardson, explores how glosses can be used as an instructional technique to adapt authentic texts to the language classroom, facilitating written understanding and vocabulary acquisition (cognates, false cognates and non-cognates). Using an experimental design, the authors compared the rates of correct answers in a Portuguese reading comprehension task, as well as vocabulary retention, through immediate and delayed tests, in two bilingual English/Spanish groups: students who had glosses in English and Spanish, and students who had contact with the Portuguese test without glosses. Several cognitive variables and language background were considered to explain eventual discrepancies in the results. Results showed that immediate comprehension was facilitated by the presence of the glosses, but vocabulary retention decreased dramatically from the immediate to the delayed tests in the group contacting with bilingual glosses. The results point towards the value of noticing new items in retaining new vocabulary and the influence of linguistic proximity in vocabulary learning.

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The chapter "Autonomous Portuguese L3 learning through an adaptive platform", by J. Linck, M. Clark, C. Bonilla, E. Golonka, C. J. Doughty, T. Mecham & W. Burns, reports on the experience of developing and using a platform tailored to respond to students' needs. The authors present the prototype (namely the learning activities and the lexical environment of the platform), focusing on the overall usage statistics of two pilot phases, and the effects of individual corrective feedback on vocabulary learning. Some discrepancies in the results are discussed: for example, the fact that being subjected to multiple corrective feedbacks and correcting the productions accordingly does not immediately mean that the lexical item was effectively acquired. The authors suggest the need for "a more nuanced conception of what it means to know a word" (254).

The fourth chapter, "Exploring second language acquisition" by R. Ferraro, explores "the role of implicit and explicit knowledge in native and target languages", in the process of learning and teaching a first foreign language. The author recalls the body of literature focusing on the facilitating role of explicit knowledge in foreign language learning and, inversely, formulates the following research aim: to study "whether a person's lack of explicit knowledge in his/her native language hampers his/her ability to acquire a second language" (264). Using an action-research approach, the author analyses the difficulties of a group of monolingual Australian adults learning Portuguese and the consequences for the teaching process. Ferraro concludes that learners who lack explicit linguistic knowledge and metalanguage benefit more from implicit grammar instruction, while those with some explicit knowledge benefit more from explicit instruction.

The book closes with the chapter "The linguistic and anthropological dimensions within enunciation in additional languages: A look at a Portuguese language instructional setting", by B. Sommer-Farias. The author analyses the emergence and discursive construction and negotiation of (inter)subjectivity during classroom interactions in Portuguese as an additional language in Brazil. Sommer-Farias concludes on the intersection of previous utterance history (or the "individual use experience", 295), lived both by students and teachers, teachers' language analyst role and learners' inquiries, as important to reorganize meaning and address learners' (grammatical) questions. She suggests that teachers should observe and analyse their own enunciations in order to find a balance between their lived linguistic experiences and the "rules from linguistic reference materials" (296) when answering students' questions.

5. Additional thoughts on additional language research

The book has been read from my own lens and my own academic background in the field of language and teacher education, which will no doubt influence the additional thoughts presented in this section. From this perspective, some questions that go undisputed in several contributions and could be the object of reflection relate to the following issues:

i.   the (abstract) monolingual native speakers of English, Portuguese and Spanish are the models for the analysis of L2 and L3 productions. This assumption could be critically addressed for three reasons: i) the number of monolingual subjects is said to be inferior to the number of bi/and multilinguals, thus challenging the relevance of the comparison and inducing a "comparative fallacy" (Ortega 2014: 34); ii) nativespeakerism in research has been under fire, as a bias that does not provide a complete and fair account of multilinguals' skills and knowledge (Ortega 2014); and, iii) each of the three languages is pluricentric and accommodates a lot of variability, the native speaker being referred to in quite abstract terms through-out the different chapters (even when they refer to Spanish speakers from Mexico, Argentina or Spain, to name just a few; not to mention regional variations);

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ii. somewhat related to the previous point, it is almost a unanimously held belief that Portuguese learners wish to attain some kind of native-like proficiency (meaning "without an accent") and erase any mark of foreignness of their productions. Also an account of why and with which goals learners are engaged in Portuguese learning should systematically be added to the research about PAL and be considered as a variable;

iii. I previously stated that most of the tested audience was proficient in Spanish; while it is undisputed that being proficient in a near related language enhances Portuguese development, as typological linguistic proximity is akin to explaining cross-linguistic influence and transfer, the role of psycholinguistic distance/proximity is rarely addressed (except in Bonilla et al., referring to seminal work by Kellerman; Castro, Rothman & Westergaard also quote Kellerman, but on issues of morphosyntactic transfer related to typological proximity);

iv. the relationship between Brazilian Portuguese and European Portuguese is rarely considered and only partially mentioned; in one chapter (by Castro, Rothman & Westergaard), theoretical and methodological assumptions from studies involving different languages are transferred to the study of the double acquisition of both the European and Brazilian varieties, without considering the plausibility of such a transfer and without providing a clear positionality regarding these critical issues. In this chapter, Brazilian and European Portuguese are referred to as dialects, languages and varieties.

Some other aspects are not thoroughly considered or problematized and could enrich the studies presented. They relate to: i) the multidirectionality and dynamics of transfer in multilinguals (except in the chapter by Pereyron & Alves); ii) the role of formal instruction in enhanced language awareness and noticing skills (except in the chapter by Ferraro); iii) the role of psycholinguistic proximity in the classification of cognates or even the different understandings thereof (in chapters by Bonilla et al. and Linck et al., "criança" appears both as cognate and false cognate, respectively, showing how speakers' perceptions and lived experiences might diverge); iv) the past four decades of studies on Intercomprehension between Romance Languages (see Dabène & Degache 1996; Doyé 2005; Escudé & Calvo del Olmo 2019 and Hülsmann, Ollivier & Strasser 2000, for more recent accounts), could provide a pedagogical and didactical framework for most of the studies reported in the volume (intercomprehension is referred twice, by Bonilla et al. and Linck et al.).

To sum up, *Linguistic Approaches to Portuguese as an Additional Language* showcases a much-needed dialogue between Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, in general, and Foreign Language Education, more particularly. Moreover, it suggests further research perspectives that could enhance this interdisciplinary conversation (already advocated by May 2014) and eventually foster foreign language teaching and learning in innovative ways.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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