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SERIES IN EDUCATION

Exploring the Dynamics of Speaking and Learning Spanish in Western Canada

Angela George

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About the author

Angela George is Professor of Spanish in the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures, and Cultures in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Calgary (Alberta, Canada). She earned her PhD from the University of Minnesota in 2013 and has held faculty positions at both Kennesaw State University in the United States and the University of Calgary. Her research in Applied Linguistics focuses on the teaching and learning of Spanish, with particular emphasis on Additional Language Acquisition and Sociolinguistics. She has presented her work nationally and internationally and has published on a wide range of topics related to Spanish language learning and pedagogy. Her work has appeared in 'Foreign Language Annals,' 'Heritage Language Journal,' 'Languages, and Gender' and 'Language' journals. She edited a special issue on "Heritage Learners Abroad" for the journal 'Study Abroad Research in Second Language Acquisition and International Education.' She is the co-author of the book 'Online language teaching in diverse contexts' (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023). In recognition of her significant scholarly and pedagogical contributions, she received the Robert Roy Award from the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers. She has also received several competitive grants to support her research and teaching.

With extensive teaching experience at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, she has taught all levels of undergraduate Spanish courses, many of which relate to her background in Hispanic Linguistics. She has also taught graduate-level courses in additional language pedagogy and applied linguistics research methods. Her pedagogy reflects a strong commitment to both research and teaching, as well as to advancing inclusive approaches to Spanish language education. In recognition of her teaching excellence, she has received a University of Calgary Teaching Award. She remains dedicated to advancing the field of Applied Linguistics through her research, teaching, and service.

Summary

This monograph provides a comprehensive exploration of the experiences of Spanish speakers and learners in Western Canada, where Spanish is a minority language. Drawing on eight years of mixed-methods research, including surveys, interviews, and virtual exchanges, it investigates student motivations, instructional strategies, and the diverse identities of Spanish speakers, including heritage speakers, first-language speakers, and second-language learners.

Structured across eight chapters, the book begins with a contextual overview of Canada's multilingual landscape and the growing relevance of Spanish (Chapter 1). It then explores student motivations for learning Spanish (Chapter 2), the pedagogical methods employed by instructors (Chapter 3), and how classroom diversity influences student awareness and learning dynamics (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 examines communication practices and students' comfort with speaking Spanish, particularly in relation to virtual exchanges. Chapter 6 focuses on student perceptions of Spanish-speaking cultures, while Chapter 7 presents the views of Spanish-speaking immigrants regarding language use, identity, and linguistic discrimination. The final chapter (Chapter 8) synthesizes the key findings of the book and outlines practical implications for educators, researchers, and policymakers, offering forward-looking recommendations to support inclusive Spanish language education and linguistic diversity in Western Canada. By emphasizing the cultural, educational, and social dimensions of Spanish in an English-dominant context, this work contributes to broader conversations on language education, multiculturalism, and linguistic policy. It is intended for language instructors; scholars of applied linguistics, multilingualism, and education; heritage language advocates; institutional stakeholders; and policymakers committed to supporting diverse learners, promoting inclusive curriculum design, and fostering linguistic diversity in Canada and beyond.

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