

Exploring the Dynamics of Speaking and Learning Spanish in Western Canada

Angela George

University of Calgary

Series in Education



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This book brings together a series of empirical studies to examine the role of Spanish in Western Canada inside and outside the classroom and from the perspectives of students, teachers, and immigrants. It offers an in-depth look at the diverse experiences of these groups in terms of learning and using Spanish and is essential reading for those interested in Spanish as an additional, heritage, and first language in multilingual contexts.

Dr. Rachel L. Shively
Professor of Spanish and Applied Linguistics
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Canada is a Spanish-speaking nation. Although English and French are favored publicly, Spanish is an important language in the country. Of particular interest are heritage speakers, who have skills and needs that differ from those of second-language learners. The linguistic discrimination that heritage speakers face from a society that does not understand them and side-lines their language creates an environment in which Canada stands to lose Spanish.

This book is an essential reference for anyone who speaks and/or works with Spanish in Canada. It provides an engaging and cohesive summary of recent research, along with original investigations conducted among the Spanish-speaking population of western Canada. Included are first-hand accounts, as well as discussion questions and prompts that can be utilized in the classroom and in the community institutions. It does not shy away from criticism of the dangers that institutional privileging of Canada's two official languages does to Spanish speakers, their language, and their sense of belonging in the country.

For Canada to truly embrace its multilingual and multicultural nature, Spanish must be included in its educational systems, institutional discourse, and public life. Exploring the Dynamics of Speaking and Learning Spanish in Western Canada provides a call to action, as well as a pathway to reach that goal.

Dr. Meghann Peace
Chair of the Department of Languages
St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas

This data-rich book provides useful insights and recommendations for students, instructors and language program coordinators, researchers, policymakers, and language users themselves who are interested in how Spanish and—by extension—other non-official languages are spoken, taught, learned, and negotiated in the complex linguistic and cultural environment of Western Canada.

Dr. Mary Grantham O'Brien
Department of Linguistics
Simon Fraser University

This exceptional volume constitutes a timely, original, and substantive contribution to the domains of Spanish applied linguistics, heritage language studies, and multilingualism research in the Canadian context. Drawing on a robust and methodologically sophisticated mixed-methods research program, it provides a theoretically informed and empirically grounded analysis of Spanish language acquisition, heritage language maintenance, identity formation, and multilingual practices in Western Canada. Through the systematic integration of classroom-based investigations, virtual exchange initiatives, and the lived experiences of learners, educators, and immigrant communities, Angela George offers a compelling synthesis of sociolinguistic inquiry, language education research, and language policy perspectives. The volume's distinctive contribution lies in its ability to connect macro-level questions of linguistic diversity and language ecology with micro-level processes of language learning, identity negotiation, and community engagement. Characterized by conceptual depth, methodological rigor, and pedagogical relevance, this work advances our understanding of Spanish as a dynamic and evolving component of Canada's multilingual repertoire. It will serve as an indispensable reference for scholars, educators, and policymakers engaged in the study and promotion of multilingualism, heritage language education, and linguistic diversity.

Prof. Dr. Francisco Salgado-Robles
Department of Teaching and Learning
The City College of New York (CUNY)

Exploring the Dynamics of Speaking and Learning Spanish in Western Canada offers a comprehensive and timely account of Spanish as an additional language, a heritage language, and a vital social resource in Western Canada. Drawing on diverse perspectives and rich empirical data from learners, teachers, and Spanish-speaking immigrants, Angela George compellingly demonstrates Spanish's evolving place in Canada's multilingual landscape and makes a persuasive case for more equitable pedagogical practices and stronger institutional recognition.

Prof. Dr. Carol A. Klee
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University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

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Acronyms

CLA:	Critical Language Awareness
CLT:	Communicative Language Teaching
EL2:	Early Second Language Learner
FLA:	Foreign Language Anxiety
HLL:	Heritage Language Learner
HS:	Heritage Speaker
L1:	Speaker's first language
L2:	A second language spoken in addition to the speaker's first language
L2 MSS:	L2 Motivational Self System
L2L:	Second Language Learner
LL2:	Late Second Language Learner
LOTE:	Languages Other Than English
Non-HLL:	Non-Heritage Language Learner
NS:	Native Speaker
SLA:	Second Language Acquisition
TBLT:	Task-Based Language Teaching
TPR:	Total Physical Response
TPRS:	Total Physical Response Storytelling
VE:	Virtual Exchange
WTC:	Willingness to Communicate

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Foreword.

Spanish in Canada: An Illustrious Stranger

Francisco Moreno-Fernández
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Spanish in Canada remains, in many respects, a great unknown. Its presence is visible in classrooms, families, cultural associations, workplaces, and immigrant communities; it is heard in large urban centres and sustained in increasingly diverse educational settings. Yet it has not received attention commensurate with its demographic, social, and cultural significance. Canada's linguistic imagination has understandably been shaped by the historical and institutional centrality of English and French. But the country's contemporary multilingual reality is broader, and Spanish now occupies a place within it that deserves careful description and sustained scholarly reflection.

The numbers alone invite closer attention. According to Statistics Canada, Spanish was, in 2021, the non-official language with the largest number of speakers in the country, with approximately 1.2 million people able to converse in it. In that same census cycle, the Latin American population, narrowly defined as those reporting "Latin American" as their sole population group, reached 580,235, more than triple the figure recorded in 1996. These data do not exhaust the many ways in which Hispanic, Latin American, and Spanish-speaking identities are lived in Canada, but they do make one point unmistakable: Spanish is not marginal to the country's multilingual life. It is a language of migration, heritage, education, professional mobility, and cultural belonging.

For that reason, the present volume is especially timely. Exploring the Dynamics of Speaking and Learning Spanish in Western Canada brings together a substantial body of empirical research conducted between 2015 and 2024 and offers a nuanced account of how Spanish is learned, maintained, negotiated, and valued in Western Canada. Its significance lies not only in the originality of its data, but also in the breadth of its perspective. The book moves beyond the conventional treatment of Spanish either as a foreign language taught in formal settings or as a heritage language confined to the domestic sphere. Instead, it presents Spanish as a living social resource that circulates across universities, schools, immigrant trajectories, intercultural exchanges, and communities of practice.

The volume is particularly valuable because it brings into dialogue groups that are too often studied separately: second-language learners, heritage language learners, teachers, first-language speakers, and Spanish-speaking immigrants. It asks why students choose to study Spanish in Alberta; how educators respond to linguistically heterogeneous classrooms; what kinds of tensions and opportunities emerge when heritage speakers and second-language learners learn together; and how virtual exchanges may strengthen willingness to communicate, intercultural competence, and critical language awareness. It also devotes essential attention to the experiences of Spanish-speaking immigrants in Calgary, showing how language maintenance, English acquisition, discrimination, codeswitching, and belonging intersect in daily life.

One of the book's most important contributions is its insistence that Spanish in Canada cannot be understood solely through institutional language policy or demographic counting. It must also be approached through lived experience. The chapters reveal that Spanish is attached to memory, family, aspiration, insecurity, resilience, and recognition. For heritage speakers, it may be a fragile inheritance or a source of renewed affirmation. For immigrants, it can be a vital connection with transnational life while also becoming entangled with pressures to adapt linguistically to an English-dominant environment. For students who encounter Spanish in the classroom, it may open paths toward travel, work, friendship, and a more expansive understanding of the Americas.

This perspective is of particular interest to the Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española. The Academy has long been concerned with the presence, vitality, and future of Spanish in North America, and Canada forms an indispensable part of that linguistic geography. Yet the Canadian case has often remained less visible than that of the United States. Thanks to this book, scholars, educators, and institutions now have access to an updated and richly documented account of the state of Spanish in a region where it has grown in importance but remains insufficiently known. The volume provides a basis for future research, but also for informed educational practice and broader public recognition.

The achievement of this work is therefore twofold. It documents a field that urgently needed fuller description, and it places Spanish within the larger conversation about multilingualism in Canada. The sociolinguistics of Canada has quite naturally concentrated on English and French, on their histories, tensions, and institutional arrangements. That focus remains indispensable. But a country transformed by migration, educational diversification, and expanding transnational networks also requires a sociolinguistics capable of accounting for languages that have become structurally significant without being official. Spanish is one of them.

Finally, we are fortunate that the publication of this book practically coincides with new research on Spanish in Canada, in this case focused specifically on native speakers and their migratory backgrounds. The book in question is *El español en Canadá. Demolingüística de los hablantes de dominio nativo*, authored by Lauren Beck and Yolanda Iglesias and published by the Cervantes Institute's Global Observatory of Spanish

This book makes a persuasive case that the moment has come to study Spanish in Canada with greater continuity, precision, and ambition. It deserves a place in Canadian sociolinguistics not as a peripheral curiosity, but as a meaningful component of the country's evolving linguistic landscape.

Introduction

When I first started interacting with Spanish speakers in Canada, I was struck by the many roles the language played. Spanish forms a key part of identity for heritage speakers (HSs), an academic challenge for university students learning the language from scratch, and a vital link to home for recent immigrants. These experiences sparked my curiosity about where Spanish fits within Canada's broader linguistic landscape. This book explores that question.

This book, *Exploring the Dynamics of Speaking and Learning Spanish in Western Canada*, draws on years of empirical research and classroom experience to examine how Spanish is taught and learned in a region where it remains a minority language. It emerges from an ongoing collaboration with students, educators, community members, and newcomers who engage with Spanish in Western Canada, a context shaped by English dominance and French co-official status, yet marked by a growing interest in Spanish for both cultural, educational, and professional reasons. While studies on Spanish in Canada remain limited, particularly in Western regions, this book fills a critical gap by offering a detailed, mixed-methods account of language learning and use in diverse educational settings. All translations from Spanish are the author's unless otherwise indicated.

Drawing on research conducted between 2015 and 2024, this monograph synthesizes findings from a series of independent but thematically connected studies, including surveys, interviews, classroom-based research, and virtual exchange (VE) initiatives. Some portions of the data were collected using previously employed survey instruments, and related topics have been presented at academic conferences. However, the data, analyses, and interpretations presented here are original to this book, contributing new analytical and thematic perspectives. All material has been substantially revised and recontextualized for this book, which was supported in part by internal research funding from the University of Calgary.

The book draws on a mixed-methods approach and includes perspectives from a wide range of participants, including university students, HSs, adult immigrants, and educators. What distinguishes this book is its integration of classroom-based research with VE data and interviews with Spanish-speaking immigrants, offering a holistic view of language learning and community engagement. As public discourse increasingly engages with issues of inclusion, linguistic diversity, and culturally responsive education, this book offers both data-driven insight and practical guidance.

This book is intended for language teachers, applied linguists, scholars of bilingualism and education, heritage language advocates, and policymakers with an interest in promoting linguistic diversity in Canada. The findings are not only relevant for academic audiences but also for instructors seeking to adapt to increasingly diverse classrooms and for institutions interested in supporting heritage language learners (HLLs) and inclusive curriculum design.

Using data from surveys, interviews, and transcripts of virtual conversations between HSs and second-language learners (L2Ls), this book examines how Spanish is taught, experienced, negotiated, and maintained in educational and community settings. By combining theoretical reflection with applied insight, it contributes to current discussions in language education, sociolinguistics, and multicultural policy, fostering more inclusive and responsive approaches to Spanish language teaching and support for Spanish-speaking communities in Canada. Documenting how Spanish is lived and learned in Western Canada, this book informs conversations around language, inclusion, and culturally responsive education, highlighting learning and use not only as academic achievement but also as a lived experience shaped by identity, community, and access to opportunity.

Goals of this book

This book aims to show that Spanish occupies a meaningful and evolving place in Western Canada's linguistic and social landscape. Rather than treating Spanish solely as a foreign language taught in classrooms or as a home language maintained in private spheres, the book examines how it moves across educational, professional, and community contexts and how its meanings shift for different speakers and learners.

A central goal of the book is to analyze how language learning and language use are shaped by broader questions of identity, belonging, access, and legitimacy. In doing so, it explores how Spanish becomes tied to experiences of heritage, migration, intercultural contact, and institutional recognition, while also revealing the uneven conditions under which the language is maintained, valued, and taught.

The book also aims to contribute to wider conversations on language education and linguistic diversity in Canada by showing how Spanish can illuminate broader issues in multilingual societies. These include the relationship between language and social inclusion, the challenges of supporting learners with different linguistic backgrounds, and the need for more responsive educational and policy frameworks. Together, the chapters argue for a fuller recognition of Spanish as part of Canada's contemporary multilingual reality.

Research site and data sources

Chapter 1 draws on historical sources, census data, policy and institutional documents, and a synthesis of graduate theses and dissertations on Spanish in Canada to establish the broader sociolinguistic and research context for the chapters that follow. The data presented in Chapters 2 through 7 come from Alberta-based Spanish speakers, learners, and educators. These chapters draw from a wide range of participants, including postsecondary L2Ls, language teachers, HLLs, and recent immigrants. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining open-ended questionnaires for qualitative depth (Zipp, 2022), closed-ended survey items to support broad comparison and generalizability (Kircher, 2022), and semi-structured interviews (Karatsareas, 2022). Open-ended items allowed participants to articulate their views in their own words, providing rich, personal insights into language use and attitudes, particularly valuable in studying under-researched populations such as HSs (Zipp, 2022). Closed-ended items facilitated systematic comparisons and statistical analysis, balancing depth with analytical precision, as recommended by Dörnyei and Csizér (2012). Chapter 5 also draws on transcripts from VEs (Aranha & Wigham, 2020), which offer multimodal insights into language learning and intercultural interaction. Together, these sources provide a comprehensive view of Spanish language use across educational, professional, and community contexts in Western Canada.

Overview of the book's chapters

Chapter 1 introduces the book's central questions by tracing the historical development and current status of Spanish in Canada, with a focus on Calgary. It begins with a personal reflection on the multiple roles Spanish plays for HSs, immigrants, and L2Ls. The chapter explores Spanish's shift from a minor historical presence to one of the country's fastest-growing immigrant languages, examining its sociolinguistic position and use in educational, urban, and professional contexts. It also highlights the diversity of Spanish varieties spoken in Canada and the tensions that arise when these come into contact with standardized forms taught in classrooms.

The chapter then addresses systemic challenges facing Spanish speakers, including limited institutional recognition, language shift, and raciolinguistic ideologies. It examines how policy, public perception, and classroom practices often privilege English and French, leaving Spanish and other heritage languages under-supported. Through a vignette of an HS given the pseudonym Julián, the chapter illustrates how Spanish is tied to identity, belonging, and cultural continuity in daily life. It also points to growing, though uneven, institutional recognition through initiatives like the Canadian Language Museum.

Finally, the chapter outlines the study's mixed-methods approach and presents a synthesis of 49 graduate theses and dissertations focused on Spanish in Canada. These studies reveal important trends in language maintenance, identity, and educational practices, often offering insights from within the communities they study. Graduate research emerges as an important source of knowledge about Spanish in Canadian contexts, helping address gaps in national research and institutional understanding. Together, these threads establish the conceptual and methodological foundation for the chapters that follow.

Chapter 2 explores the motivations that drive postsecondary students in Alberta to enroll in language courses, with a specific focus on Spanish. It examines how students' motivations vary between those who take Spanish as an elective and those who study it as a requirement. Situating the discussion within the broader theoretical landscape of language motivation research, the chapter traces key developments from Gardner and Lambert's (1959) integrative and instrumental motivation model to contemporary frameworks such as Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2 MSS). Using survey data, the chapter analyzes the diverse reasons students choose to study Spanish, whether for career advancement, travel, personal connections, or cultural engagement, and how these motivations align with their identities and future aspirations.

Beyond individual motivations, this chapter places Spanish language learning within the larger linguistic landscape of Western Canada, where English dominates higher education and language programs have faced budget constraints. Despite these challenges, students continue to enroll in Spanish courses, highlighting its perceived value. The chapter also discusses how universities and policymakers can use these findings to enhance language education by fostering a balance between instrumental and integrative motivations. Additionally, it considers ways to strengthen curriculum design, such as incorporating more experiential learning opportunities, community engagement, and targeted professional applications of Spanish.

Ultimately, this chapter contributes to the book's broader exploration of how Spanish functions as a minority language in an English-dominant society. By analyzing student perspectives, it offers insights into the social and cultural significance of Spanish education and its role in shaping both personal identities and career trajectories. These findings provide a foundation for discussions in later chapters about teaching approaches, student diversity, and language policy.

Chapter 3 examines how Spanish educators in Alberta navigate the diverse needs of HLLs and L2Ls across university and K–12 bilingual and immersion programs. By exploring pedagogical approaches, ranging from traditional grammar-based instruction to communicative and task-based methods, it

sheds light on how teachers facilitate Spanish learning for students with different linguistic backgrounds. While many educators favor communicative and task-based strategies, explicit grammar instruction remains a key component, particularly for literacy development among HSs. Emerging methodologies, such as the Neurolinguistic Approach and Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS), are also gaining attention, though teachers report varying levels of comfort and training in their implementation.

A major theme of this chapter is how educators differentiate instruction for HLLs and L2Ls. HLLs often enter the classroom with strong oral proficiency but limited formal literacy, requiring targeted instructional strategies. Survey data reveal that while teachers recognize the need for differentiated instruction and culturally responsive materials, many feel unprepared to effectively address these differences. The challenges of mixed-group classrooms, where students' proficiency levels vary widely, underscore the importance of flexible teaching strategies that balance implicit and explicit language learning.

Beyond the classroom, this chapter highlights the broader social and educational role of Spanish as a minority language in Alberta. Educators play a crucial role in sustaining and promoting Spanish through inclusive pedagogy, advocating for heritage language education, and fostering linguistic diversity. By analyzing teacher survey responses and instructional practices, this chapter provides insight into both the successes and obstacles of Spanish language education, emphasizing the need for professional development programs that equip educators with the skills to support all learners. Ultimately, the discussion contributes to the book's broader exploration of Spanish in Western Canada, illustrating how language instruction adapts to evolving educational and sociolinguistic landscapes.

Chapter 4 considers learner diversity in university-level Spanish courses, analyzing how HLLs, L2Ls, and L1 Spanish speakers perceive their roles and contributions in mixed classrooms. By exploring student perspectives, this chapter sheds light on the dynamics of these multilingual learning environments, particularly in terms of equity, inclusion, and participation. It considers how linguistic backgrounds influence students' confidence, engagement, and perceptions of fairness in assessment and instruction.

A key focus of this chapter is the distinction between early second language learners (EL2) and late second language learners (LL2), as well as the different strengths that each group brings to the classroom. Survey data reveal that while HLLs and L1 Spanish speakers are often valued for their fluency and cultural knowledge, L2Ls, especially those who began learning later, tend to be recognized for their structured grammatical understanding. However, mixed classrooms also present challenges. HLLs may feel that their informal knowledge of Spanish is undervalued in academic settings, while LL2s sometimes struggle

with confidence when speaking. Additionally, students express concerns about fairness in grading, the pace of instruction, and how different linguistic backgrounds impact peer interactions.

Beyond individual learner experiences, this chapter situates Spanish education within the broader context of multicultural and multilingual education in Western Canada. It explores how universities can foster inclusive learning environments that recognize and support the diverse linguistic and cultural assets students bring. The discussion highlights the importance of differentiated instruction, equitable assessment strategies, and fostering an atmosphere where all learners, regardless of background, can contribute meaningfully to the study of Spanish. By addressing both the benefits and challenges of learner diversity, this chapter contributes to the book's broader exploration of Spanish as a language that unites individuals from varied linguistic and cultural experiences.

Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the impact of VEs on Spanish learners' Willingness to Communicate (WTC), foreign language anxiety (FLA), and intercultural competence. Focusing on intermediate and advanced students, including both HLLs and L2Ls, this chapter examines how structured online interactions provide opportunities for authentic communication with Spanish speakers. By integrating insights from experiential learning theories, it highlights how VEs serve as a bridge between students and Spanish-speaking communities, both locally and globally.

Survey data and student reflections reveal that VEs play a crucial role in increasing learners' confidence in using Spanish, particularly for L2Ls who initially experience higher anxiety in spoken interactions. While HLLs generally exhibit greater ease with oral communication, their participation in mixed-group exchanges strengthens their linguistic self-image and encourages deeper engagement with their heritage language. At the same time, L2Ls benefit from interacting with HLLs, gaining exposure to authentic language use and receiving real-time feedback that enhances their communicative competence. However, the chapter also considers challenges such as varying proficiency levels, initial discomfort, and the structure of VE tasks, which influence students' experiences and learning outcomes.

Beyond individual learner experiences, this chapter situates VEs within broader discussions on digital language learning and linguistic diversity in Western Canada. It explores how technology facilitates meaningful linguistic engagement, making Spanish learning more immersive, interactive, and socially connected. By analyzing how VEs help students develop intercultural competence and confidence in real-world language use, this chapter contributes to the book's larger themes of Spanish as a minority language and the role of technology in enhancing bilingual education.

Chapter 6 delves into how HLLs develop critical language awareness (CLA) and navigate dual identities through VEs with peers in Western Canada and the United States. By analyzing these interactions, the chapter highlights how Spanish learning intersects with broader sociopolitical issues, including linguistic discrimination, cultural identity, and language preservation. It considers how personal experiences, community support, and educational materials shape students' perceptions of Spanish and Spanish-speaking cultures, particularly in the North American context.

Survey data and qualitative discourse analysis reveal that HLLs engage with Spanish as both a cultural connection and a marker of identity. The chapter examines how linguistic insecurity, codeswitching, and perceptions of non-standard Spanish varieties influence learners' confidence in using the language. While many participants view Spanish as an integral part of their identity, some express concerns about language proficiency and societal attitudes toward HSs. VEs provide a space for HLLs to reflect on their bilingualism, share regional experiences, and discuss the realities of Spanish maintenance in predominantly English-speaking societies. These conversations highlight how students experience and, in some cases, resist linguistic discrimination, using Spanish as an act of cultural affirmation.

By situating these findings within the broader discussion of multilingual education and language ideologies, this chapter underscores the role of CLA in empowering HLLs to critically engage with their linguistic experiences. It also emphasizes the need for heritage language programs that extend beyond grammar instruction to address sociopolitical factors shaping language use. Ultimately, this chapter contributes to the book's overarching themes by demonstrating how Spanish serves as both a personal and collective resource for HSs, shaping their linguistic identities and fostering cultural resilience in multilingual societies.

Chapter 7 highlights the experiences of Spanish-speaking immigrants in Canada, focusing on how language, identity, and social integration intersect in their daily lives. Through interviews with immigrants from Latin America living in Calgary, this chapter examines how they navigate linguistic challenges, from acquiring English to maintaining Spanish in an English-dominant society. It shows how language shapes their sense of belonging, cultural identity, and participation in different social contexts.

A key theme of this chapter is how Spanish-speaking immigrants balance cultural preservation with societal pressures to conform to dominant linguistic norms. By analyzing topics such as codeswitching, linguistic discrimination, and language maintenance, the chapter reveals the complex ways in which immigrants negotiate their linguistic and cultural identities. Many participants report experiences of linguistic discrimination in workplaces, public spaces,

and institutional settings, reflecting on the stigma attached to accents and the use of Spanish in professional environments. At the same time, the study explores how bilingualism can serve as a tool for adaptation, as immigrants use translanguaging and codeswitching to navigate complex linguistic landscapes.

The chapter also highlights the role of CLA in helping Spanish-speaking immigrants understand language as a site of power and social negotiation. Beyond individual experiences, it examines how Spanish functions within immigrant communities, sustaining cultural connections while adapting to new social and linguistic environments. Storytelling and cultural narratives emerge as important strategies for maintaining transnational identities, reinforcing ties to heritage while adjusting to life in Canada.

By situating these experiences within the broader sociopolitical context of multilingualism in Canada, this chapter deepens the book's exploration of Spanish as a minority language and its role in immigrant communities. It underscores both the challenges and resilience of Spanish speakers as they integrate into Canadian society, offering insights into how linguistic diversity is negotiated in daily life. Ultimately, the discussion contributes to broader conversations on language policy, multicultural education, and the importance of recognizing and supporting the linguistic rights of immigrant communities.

Chapter 8 synthesizes the key themes explored throughout the book, emphasizing the broader contributions of Spanish education to multiculturalism, linguistic diversity, and language policy in Canada. By integrating insights from learners, educators, and Spanish-speaking immigrant communities, it highlights how Spanish functions as both a heritage and foreign language in Western Canada, fostering connections among individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

A central focus of this chapter is the broader implications of these findings for language education and policy. It revisits key discussions on student motivation, pedagogical approaches, learner diversity, VEs, and sociolinguistic experiences, demonstrating how Spanish serves as both a bridge between communities and a tool for cultural preservation. The chapter also examines the challenges and opportunities of maintaining Spanish in an English-dominant society, highlighting the need for institutional support, differentiated instruction for HLLs and L2Ls, and expanded access to language programs. Additionally, it explores how Spanish-speaking immigrants navigate linguistic discrimination, codeswitching, and identity negotiation, reinforcing the social and cultural significance of Spanish in multilingual communities.

Finally, the chapter offers recommendations for educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders to promote and preserve Spanish as a minority language in Canada. It underscores the value of linguistic diversity and advocates

for greater institutional recognition of Spanish within Canada's multicultural framework. By emphasizing the importance of inclusive education, heritage language maintenance, and intercultural competence, this chapter situates Spanish within broader conversations on linguistic rights, identity, and global citizenship. Ultimately, it ensures that the book's findings contribute to ongoing efforts to support Spanish in both educational and community settings, strengthening its presence in Canada's multilingual landscape.

Together, these chapters provide a holistic understanding of the multifaceted nature of language learning and use, addressing the challenges and opportunities that arise in multicultural settings. By examining the motivations of language learners, the pedagogical approaches used by educators, the diversity of students in Spanish classrooms, and the role of experiential learning, this book highlights how Spanish serves as a bridge between individuals with distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the discussions on VEs, CLA, and the experiences of Spanish-speaking immigrants shed light on the broader sociopolitical dimensions of language use, including linguistic discrimination, identity negotiation, and the maintenance of heritage languages in an English-dominant society.

By bringing together these diverse perspectives, this book aims to provide a meaningful contribution to discussions on language learning, linguistic diversity, and the evolving role of Spanish in Canada's multicultural society. Spanish is not just a foreign language or an immigrant language; it is a living, dynamic presence that reflects Canada's shifting linguistic and cultural landscape. Whether through education, political activism, or community engagement, Spanish continues to shape and be shaped by the people who speak it. Yet, as Duff and Becker-Zayas (2017) note, Canada's language policies have long privileged English and French, offering only limited institutional support for heritage languages like Spanish. Their work highlights how this gap, combined with societal pressures, language shift within mixed families, and inconsistent educational policies, undermines heritage language retention, despite the growing multilingual reality of Canadian cities. The chapters ahead explore these themes in depth, offering a comprehensive look at Spanish in Canada, its present realities, its challenges, and its future potential.

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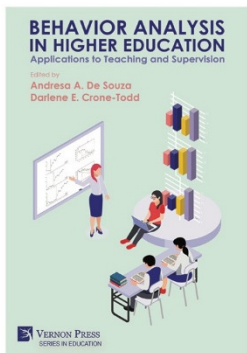
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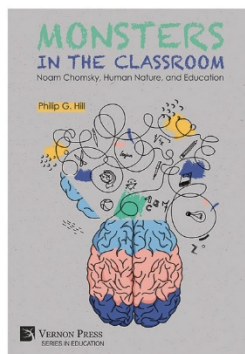
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