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BOOK NOTICES

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LA CLASE MÁGICA: IMAGINING OPTIMAL POSSIBILITIES IN A BILINGUAL COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS. *Olga A. Vásquez*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2003. Pp. vii + 237. $27.50 paper.

In this volume, Vásquez accounts the detailed development of an after-school project specifically designed to assist and prepare Mexican-American students to acquire the "social and cultural capital (knowledge of *know how to*)" necessary to understand the workings of the dominant culture, which are directly related to the culture of higher education and education in general. To succeed or pursue higher education, the minority individual must have enough social and cultural capital. One purpose of the volume is to assist and provide the disadvantaged individual with this social and cultural capital. Another purpose is to promote intellectual and cognitive development as well as self-esteem among Mexican-Americans living in a predominantly Mexican community. For this reason, participants in this program are free to express themselves in Spanish or English or to mix both languages without any feelings of inferiority; that is, *la clase mágica* attempts to control for such notions that there is a dominant language and the idea that the teacher teaches and the student listens and learns. In this classroom, teaching and learning is a collaborative effort among equals. It also shows how information technology could be used to assist and educate not only younger individuals but also adults (e.g., undergraduates, graduate students, parents) willing to participate and collaborate in the process of discovery and symbiotic learning.

Indeed, Vásquez's description of la clase mágica is so detailed that it would be easy to follow her instructions and implement it; that is, Vásquez's writing is like a recipe that provides specific directions on how to start one's own version of la clase mágica. The reader immediately knows what to do, how to do it, and what not to do.

However, throughout the book, Vásquez introduces figures and graphics without providing suggestions on how to interpret them. Additionally, Vásquez fails to provide a representative survey of the literature on identity theory and bilingual identity. The literature reviewed is outdated and does not represent the latest theoretical developments in the field of bilingual identity. Regardless of these shortcomings, this book is excellent and I highly recommend it to students of learning and teaching.

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CORPUS PRESENTER: SOFTWARE FOR LANGUAGE ANALYSIS. *Raymond Hickey*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2003. Pp. viii + 285. CD-ROM. $95.00 cloth.

During the last 10 years, there has been an increased interest in access to corpora and the ability to perform corpus analyses from both language researchers and language teachers. The questions of which corpus to use and what tools are available for helping to search a corpus often plague language teachers. This volume helps to address this question by providing a book and an accompanying CD-ROM that contains a corpus and 27 tools.

The Corpus of Irish English, included with this book, is well designed and covers a range of different genres (e.g., novels, plays, religious texts) and periods (i.e., the Middle Ages through the beginning of the 20th century), thus offering the user a variety of different types of analysis that can be performed. The corpus would be a useful resource for courses on stylistics, diachronic change, or dialect studies.

The suite of 27 tools included with this book allows users to perform many functions, including basic concordance searches (e.g., identifying a word and seeing what words co-occur with the target word), identifying word clusters, and tagging texts with grammatical information. The tools also include a database manager along with various editors and file managers. In addition to the variety of tasks that can be performed with the tools provided, one of the real advantages of this book is that the tools can be used with other corpora, including those created by the user.

Although the book claims that the tools can be used by novices, I found that the user interface was not always transparent. However, if the user is comfortable with computers and takes a little time to explore the various tools, then the user will be able to take full advantage of the powerful array of tools that make up this volume.

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COGNITIVE GRAMMAR. *John R. Taylor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Pp. xii + 621. $29.95 paper.

This volume is not aimed at SLA researchers but is a book that SLA researchers interested in usage- and frequency-based models will find valuable. Taylor provides a lucid, comprehensive account of Langacker's theory of Cognitive Grammar (CG) and along the way also offers a thoughtful introduction to Cognitive Linguistics (CL). Of the many approaches within CL, CG has a notably wide scope and high degree of internal consistency and, thus, is particularly worthy of SLA researchers' attention. CG's central premise is that language is inherently symbolic and that linguistic expressions symbolize—or represent—conceptualization. In the original, Langacker's writing is technical and detailed, with many unfamiliar formal conventions; Taylor provides the uninitiated with a thorough, clear introduction to this significant, innovative work. SLA

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researchers will find it a valuable resource that provides many access points into CG and CL.

Cognitive Linguistics offers a provocative counterpoint to the generativist paradigm. The theory looks to general human cognitive abilities and human interaction with the sociophysical environment (including massive, contextualized language input) to explain the nature of language. CL emphasizes that humans have a unique constellation of cognitive capacities, including the ability to form categories and make fine-grained comparisons across categories (the essence of metaphor), the ability to form highly complex patterns of organized memory (schemata), and a capability for rapid pattern detection). CL holds that the unique neurological architecture reflected in these abilities, in conjunction with our embodied experience of the sociophysical world, accounts for the nature of language—both its universal traits and its more idiosyncratic quirks. CL offers cogent analyses of some of the most complex areas of language, such as English prepositions and the match between verbs and their argument structures—areas notoriously difficult for second language learners. As such, it represents a theoretical model of language that addresses issues of genuine interest to second language researchers and teachers.

The book is divided into seven parts. The first two sections, which make up nearly half the book, are likely to be of most interest to SLA researchers. Here, Taylor compares the general assumptions that distinguish CL from the generativist paradigm and discusses CG's basic approach to syntactic, semantic, and phonological issues. Most chapters include study questions.

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