



Español académico como LE/L2. Destrezas, competencias y movilidad universitaria

Susana Pastor Cesteros

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This monograph represents a seminal work in the field of Academic Spanish for non-native speakers, an area that is traditionally under-represented in the field of Applied Linguistics (or more specifically, Spanish for Specific Purposes), yet comprehensively covered in the ten chapters of this book. The author of this work, Susana Pastor Cesteros, is not only an expert voice in this area given her over 17 first authored publications in this realm, but arguably with more importance, she is an authentic participant in the world of Academic Spanish for L2 speakers given her own experiences as an Erasmus student, her experiences as a faculty member teaching Spanish as an L2, her role as coordinator of study abroad programs, as well as her own diverse classroom, where she has received hundreds of foreign students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds over the years. Her authenticity in this realm is further cemented by her first dedication of the book, devoted to those who have passed through her classroom and who taught her first hand the nuances and difficulties of expressing oneself in an academic register in an L2.

In the introduction she makes an important distinction between the literature on Spanish as a Second Language and that on Academic Spanish for L2 speakers, given that the latter involves many complex skills not covered by the former. Hence, this monograph accurately showcases the complex and multi-faceted dimensions of Academic Spanish for L2 speakers, which encompass psycholinguistic, pragmalinguistic and sociocultural elements within almost every interaction. While other work in this area tends to focus more on written genres, Pastor Cesteros gives equal importance to the complex nature of spoken language, which arguably holds more weight during an experience abroad for students enrolling in university classes in an L2 environment. To that end, the book sets out to achieve two broad objectives: (1) to define the notion of academic Spanish for non-native speakers in the context of university experiences abroad, and (2) to

provide tools for faculty members to better orient and support non-natives in their classrooms. It is important to note that the chapters of this book are not exclusively based on experiences at Spanish universities, but rather inclusive and representative of university experiences in Spanish-speaking countries worldwide, so that the book's second goal is also accomplished.

Given the above-mentioned aims, this book is written for two primary audiences. Firstly, faculty members working in Spanish-speaking universities across a variety of disciplines (including those who work in Spanish as a second/foreign language) who host L2 Spanish study abroad students, as well as L2 Spanish students (with a level of B2 or higher) who seek to better navigate Academic Spanish in the environment of a host institution. The chapters are not only impressively inclusive of a multitude of disciplines in which L2 Spanish students may study, but they are also filled with a plethora of practical exercises and thought-provoking questions that faculty members can implement in their classrooms, which L2 Spanish students can use to reflect and hone their skills in this area.

This book is divided into two parts, the first focusing on skills and competencies in Academic Spanish for non-native speakers and the second on curricular design and planning as well as practical academic interventions. The first part of the book is comprised of five chapters, which move from the broad definition of Academic Spanish as an L2 and how academic discourse differs from that of traditional L2 discourse (Chapter 1), to specific grammar and lexis within academic discourse, touching upon textual coherence and cohesion, author perspective and style, specific uses of grammatical structures throughout academic texts, and hedging – all of which is underpinned by the dense lexis required for comprehension of academic texts within a particular discipline (Chapter 2). Chapters 3 and 4 delve into spoken and written genres of academic Spanish, respectively, offering a comprehensive view of the various genres (both oral and written) that foreign students will inevitably engage with. Such genres include, but are not limited to, the oral genres of lectures, conferences, webinars, oral presentations and debates, as well as the written genres of manuals, essays, monographs, research articles, slides, notes, and reviews, among others. Finally, part one concludes with an overview of the variability of academic cultures and practical means of avoiding “academic culture shock” while navigating an L2 in a host university.

The second part of this book moves from the definition stage to more actionable content for instructors who host L2 Spanish students. Chapter 6

discusses methods of conducting a needs analysis for incoming students, which serves as the basis of all successful planning, while chapters 7, 8 and 9 provide an in-depth look into what is deemed the most appropriate classroom approach for this context, that is, one based on academic genres (Chapter 7). The following chapters then continue with materials and resources for facilitating better learning of Academic Spanish as an L2 (Chapter 8), and the use of corpus linguistics as a tool in the academic space (Chapter 9). Finally, chapter 9 concludes with feedback and evaluation of non-native students, covering the various perspectives of evaluation, certification, corrective feedback and grades.

The true beauty of this monograph is not only its comprehensive nature but also its seamless organization. Each topic is not only well-developed, but the chapters flow from broad definitions and concepts to importance nuances in Academic Spanish for non-native speakers, and from theoretical understandings to practical advice. This is done in such a way that it serves as an educational resource and a practical manual for faculty members and students alike. Readers are not just left with new perspective, but with actionable steps and fresh ideas that can either be implemented in the classroom (as an instructor) or individually (as a student) with the aim of achieving more successful integration of L2 Spanish students in a host institution. It is for this reason that this book fulfills a highly noble cause that extends beyond its intended aims, that is, more inclusive access to higher education, from a global perspective, to non-native speaking students who otherwise would not be able to successfully access curriculum in their host country of choice. The implications of this monograph go well beyond its over 200 pages, as it brings to light the urgent need for all institutions of higher education, in our now-more-than-ever globalized world, to provide adequate support to faculty members who receive international students from diverse linguistic backgrounds in their classrooms. By doing so, we are investing not only in the success of L2 acquisition in an academic space, but we are taking tangible measures to ensure the success of important global education programs like Erasmus and study abroad.

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