Fäcke, Christian (Ed). (2014). *Manual of language acquisition.* Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter

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ABSTRACT

EN This review introduces readers to the *Manual of Language Acquisition*, edited by Christian Fäcke, and part of the "Manuals of Romance Linguistics" series. The Manual surveys current and central issues in the acquisition of Romance languages and cultures, as well as raises important questions about the relationship between Romance languages and with other languages—Immigrant languages, local dialects, English—across the Romance–speaking world.

Key words: LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, ROMANCE LANGUAGES, ROMANCE LINGUISTICS, HANDBOOK.

ES La reseña presenta a los lectores la obra *Manual of Language Acquisition*, editada por Christian Fäcke y enmarcada dentro de la serie "Manuals of Romance Linguistics". El manual ofrece un análisis de temas actuales y centrales en torno a la adquisición de lenguas y culturas románicas, y destaca importantes cuestiones referentes a las lenguas romances y a su relación con otras lenguas (a saber, las lenguas habladas por poblaciones inmigrantes, los dialectos locales y el inglés) dentro de las comunidades de habla romance.

Palabras clave: ADQUISICIÓN DE LENGUAS, ADQUISICIÓN DE SEGUNDAS LENGUAS, LENGUAS ROMANCES, LINGÜÍSTICA ROMANCE, HANDBOOK.

IT Questa recensione presenta ai lettori il *Manual of Language Acquisition*, a cura di Christian Fäcke e parte della serie "Manuals of Romance Linguistics". Il Manuale analizza questioni importanti e di grande attualità riguardanti l'acquisizione delle lingue e delle culture romanze e la relazione tra queste e altre lingue, come quelle dei migranti, i dialetti locali e l'inglese.

Parole chiave: ACQUISIZIONE DELLE LINGUE, ACQUISIZIONE LINGUE SECONDE, LINGUE ROMANZE, LINGUISTICA ROMANZA, MANUALE.

1. The manual

The *Manual of Language Acquisition*, edited by Christian Fäcke (639 pages, English) is the second volume in the "Manuals of Romance Linguistics" (MRL) series. The series, edited by Günter Holtis and Fernando Sánchez Miret, adopts a modular approach to updating two authoritative reference guides to Romance linguistics, *Lexicon der Romanistischen Linguistik* (1988-2005, volumes 1-8) and *Romanische Sprachgesichte* (2003-2008, volumes 1-3). In publishing the MRL in series form—and thus publishing each volume as soon as it is complete—the series editors aim for each manual to cover current and cutting edge research on central issues in romance linguistics.

Accordingly, the aim for the *Manual of Language Acquisition* is to survey current and central issues in the acquisition of Romance languages and cultures. It does this in 28 chapters, divided into five sections: Language Acquisition (chapters 1-6), First Language Acquisition (chapters 7-9), Second Language Acquisition (chapters 10-18), Acquisition of Romance Languages: Contexts and Characteristics (chapters 19-25), and Language Acquisition in the Romance Speaking World (chapters 26-32).

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The volume begins with Fäcke's introduction, which provides both an overview of the book and the answer to a pressing question about the volume: Why is a volume of the manual of Romance linguistics written in English? Fäcke gives a two-fold explanation: In addition to the simple fact that, for better or worse, English allows access to a wider audience, the decision to use English serves a more intentional purpose here. Fäcke points out that in some circles, "SLA" (Second Language Acquisition) has become synonymous with "TESOL" (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). He writes, "Näive observers whose reading is limited to English might believe that teaching and learning languages is only a matter for the English writing and reading world" (p. 3). This volume is meant to counter the encroachment of English as the only "L" that counts in "SLA," to create a stronger presence for Romance languages in the field, and to introduce the major issues in Romance linguistics to English-speaking researchers.

2. Chapters on language acquisition theory

The first three sections of the manual—Language Acquisition (chapters 1-6), First Language Acquisition (chapters 7-9), and Second Language Acquisition (chapters 10-18)—are composed of chapters that seek to provide overviews of current theoretical topics relevant to language acquisition. The best of the chapters also align with the aims of the larger series to provide these overviews within a framework of Romance linguistics. In this regard, particular standouts in this half of the book were chapters on language policy, language socialization, plurilingual education, learning to write and spell, and the history of Romance language teaching in Europe.

The first of these, F. Xavier Vila's chapter on Language Policy, Management, and Planning (3), usefully defines *policy*, explains key processes like *dialectalization*, *standardization*, and *restoration*, and discusses language policy management at all levels, from states to corporations to café owners in Catalonia. Following Fäcke's introduction, with its critical and explicit stance on English dominance in SLA, the framing of Vila's chapter is helpful and fitting: He outlines the historically dominant, Anglo-centric view of Language Policy and Management (LPM), which places the origins of the field in the 20th century, pointing out that LPM discussions were instead already taking place in Rome nearly two millennia ago, in the writing of Dante and others in the 13th century, and in the creation of the *Académie Française* and the *Real Academia Española* in the 17th and 18th centuries. Vila shows how current approaches to LPM have shifted from neo-classical, consensualist, "modernizing" approaches to critical, neo-Marxist, poststructuralist approaches, which emerged in Romance language LPM in the 1960s and 70s. Vila ends with a call for a critical, multilingual awareness within the field.

Another excellent chapter was Kathleen C. Riley's chapter (4) on Language Socialization (LS), which briefly traces the non-Romance-language origins of LS theory, a social theory of joint language/culture learning, before quickly moving into the burgeoning field of Romance Language Socialization (RLS). She paints a vivid picture of the state of the field through current studies in RLS. It is worth noting that her survey takes us beyond Europe to Montréal, New York, California, Haiti, St. Lucia, and Cameroon, places outside of the imagined community of Romance languages, but where Romance speakers reside and where Romance language learning is being documented through RLS work.

Chapter 9, Michael Fayol's account of "Learning to Read, Write, and Spell," represents another well-executed work. Fayol maps the elements of learning to read in French as a first language, noting the particularities of French phonology and orthography as well as how they map onto one another. A particular strength of Fayol's account is that it serves as a useful introduction for those unfamiliar with the processes of learning to read and spell in an alphabetic language, yet it remains interesting to readers who already know a great deal about early reading in another language, but would like to learn about what this looks like in French.

Franz Joseph Meissner's chapter (12) examines Plurilingual Education at multiple scales—in European Union policy, in national planning, in local schooling, and even in students' first-hand experiences. Meissner outlines the shifting definitions and attitudes toward plurilingualism in these contexts, and he points out disparities in what counts as plurilingualism (speaking multiple Romance languages or English) and what does not (speaking less valued "immigrant languages," like Turkish or Albanian). Meissner concludes with a timely and eminently reasonable list of suggestions for plurilingual education, drawing on lessons from RL teaching and learning. One of the most helpful of these—the teaching of intercomprehension, or the use patterns and knowledge from one language to make educated guesses about another—may be a new contribution from Romance linguistics for those work outside of that field.

Finally, Marcus Reinfried's History of Romance Language (RL) Teaching (14) outlines ideologies and methodologies in RL teaching from the time that RLs diverged from one another in the early Middle Ages. In this succinct and useful chapter, Reinfried also succeeds in one of Fräcke's missions for the volume: bringing non-English research to the English-speaking SLA scholars. The chapter draws on 50+ references written in languages other than English, effectively introducing an entirely new body of work to English-only readers.

The two chapters that provided a broad survey of theories and perspectives in first/second language acquisition (6, 10) were also helpful, if somewhat less current than other chapters. Alessandro Benati's chapter (10) offers an overview of research and theory in SLA by way of posing key questions and then providing the answers that SLA has given us. He asks, for instance, how L1 and L2 learning are similar, whether there is such a thing as "innate" language capacity, if there is a role for individual differences in language acquisition, and whether input, interaction, and output affect SLA. Although there are of course other, newer questions to be asked in SLA these days, Benati's questions are indeed foundational and deserve a place in a handbook on language acquisition, as they are still being asked and answered by new theories and approaches. Yet, Benati sticks to the foundational answers to these questions. He unequivocally pronounces that "children are usually considered to be better learners that adults" based on "neurological, cognitive, and psychological differences" (p. 138), although the nuances of this question have been up for debate for quite some time (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1999; Marinova-Todd, Marshall, & Snow, 2000) and mounting work suggests that when all else is equal, experience trumps age (Consonni et al., 2012; de Carli et al, 2014; Luk, de Sa, & Bialystok, 2011; Sheng, Bedore, Peña, & Fiestas, 2013). Benati also presents the ideas of Chomsky on universal grammar, Krashen on comprehensible input, Gass and Long on interaction, and Dörnyei on motivation, without the work that has questioned, built on, and expanded these ideas (i.e. van Lier's "From Input to Affordance," 2000; Norton on "investment" rather than "motivation," 1995, 2000; and then Kramsch, 2009, on "desire" rather than investment).

Van Patten's chapter on Language Acquisition Theories (6) also takes a traditional approach to surveying the field, dividing it into three broad domains of language acquisitions theories—linguistic/psycholinguistic, cognitive, and socio-interactive. Although he concludes with a call for the use of multiple theoretical perspectives, and for less competition between theoretical approaches, he does not highlight any of the recent approaches that already cross paradigms, such as *chaos/complexity theory* (Larsen-Freeman, 2012), *dynamic systems theory* (de Bot, Lowie, & Verspoor, 2011), Vygotskian *socio-cultural theory* (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), *sociocognitive theory* (Atkinson, 2002, 2014), and *systemic functional linguistics* (Byrnes, 2009). (For a good overview of these efforts to "bridge the gap," see Hulstijn, Young, Ortega, Bigelow, DeKeyser et al., 2014.) Van Patten also describes *emergentism* (Ellis, 2006, 2011) as a strictly cognitive theory, yet emergentism is one of a family of usage-based theories of language learning that seeks to explain how exposure to linguistic forms through social interaction structures an individual's language knowledge (in addition to R. Ellis's work, see the work of Tomasello, Bardovi-Harlig, Eskildsen, among others).

While Benati and Van Patten stick to classic theories and divisions, throughout the manual, other authors do discuss new conversations in SLA: In chapter 19 ("Language Learner"), for instance, Rio and Brudermann introduce chaos/complexity theory and socio-cultural theory. In chapter 20, ("French"), Spaëth and Narcy-Combes discuss translanguaging (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Garcia & Wei, 2013) and code-meshing (Canagarajah, 2007), ideas that highlighting the hybridity and fluidity of multilingual language use.

3. Chapters on teaching and learning in romance-language contexts

The last two sections of the manual move from language acquisition theory to overviews of where and by whom Romance languages are spoken, taught, and learned. Chapters 19-25 each tackle—and are titled after—one Romance language (or RL family). Some, like Joan Juilà-Muné's chapter on Catalan (19) and Antônio Robert Monteiro Simões's chapter on Portuguese (22), focus on the micro-linguistic processes of these languages. These authors lay out the characteristics of the two languages, at the phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical levels. Juilà-Muné also carefully outlines which of these elements give Catalan-as-an-L2 learners of varying L1 backgrounds the most difficulty. Other chapters take a wider, sociopolitical view of the teaching and learning of their languages. Valérie Spaëth and Jean-Paul Narcy-Combes ("French," Chapter 20) use France's colonial history to frame their discussion of French's status in various locations, like Vietnam or North Africa. In some locations, French remains an official language and an L1 of many people,

where in others, it may be an official language, but one that is not learned until school. Spaëth and Narcy-Combes use this discussion to then account for who learns French in these locations and in what context.

Janice Aski's chapter on Italian (21) takes a sociolinguistic approach to understanding who speaks and learns Italian and how. She gives a brief history of the relationship between Italian *dialetti* (really, languages) and Italian standardization, and she highlights some recent changes to this relationship, as elements of dialect and of casual spoken Italian are increasingly incorporated into an Italian "neostandard." Aski then explores what this means for teaching and learning Italian, both for L1 speakers in Italy and for FL learners in other places. She provides useful suggestions for how some of the recent changes to the standard might be taught in FL classes. Roland Verra and Christiane Fäcke's chapter on Rhaeto-Romanic (23) focuses on three related languages—Friulian and Ladin in Italy and Romansh in Switzerland—that have had three very divergent trajectories in their history, geography, and legal status. The authors use these histories to illustrate how a language can become crowded out by the dominant languages around it, or can remain a vital language alongside more dominant ones. Based on these analyses, Verra and Fäcke argue for a unified approach to language preservation, through families, schools, cultural groups, and policies protecting language rights.

The final chapters in the book, 26-32, also address where, and by whom, Romance languages are spoken, taught, and learned, but they do this through a focus on places—France, Canada, Peru, Romania, Italy, Portugal and Brazil, and Spain—and the ecologies of languages in those places. These chapters dovetail with Verra and Fäcke's chapter, showing how history continues to shape ideologies, policies, and education. Terry Nadasdi's chapter (26) takes a variationist sociolinguistic approach to discussing the varieties of French spoken in Canada. He shows how distinct social and political histories in Montréal, Ontario, and Acadia have shaped the varieties of French spoken there as well as the statuses of these varieties. Nadasdi also emphasizes the role of group identity in these processes. Several chapters take an appropriately critical stance on the histories that they recount. In the chapters on Spain (32) and Brazil (30), for instance, authors Ana Halbach ("Spain") and Filomena Capucho and Regina Silva ("Brazil") highlight the cost of linguistic unification in both places, in Spain under Franco, by force, and in Brazil, through "state violence [...] in the form negligence, omission, or police brutality, and the violent class struggle that was historically fought and is still ongoing' with repeated massacres of indigenous people over disputed land" (p. 578).

Many of the chapters also highlight a disconnect between national policy and on-the-ground language practices, particularly in terms of what counts as L2 learning and who counts as multilingual. In chapter 28, Rita Francheschini illustrates that Italy and the Italian speaking regions (including Croatia and Slovenia) have always been multilingual, with Italians speaking standard Italian as well as regional languages. Yet, as she points out, these competencies are never included in statistics of how many Italian speakers speak an L2, nor are they considered to fulfill the aim of the EU's common framework for languages that calls for all European citizens speak three European languages. Francheschini argues that "authorities do not focus on the factually lived and historically present local multilingualism as a means of addressing the requirements of a new globalized world. English is superimposed" (p. 545). Capucho and Silva note a similarly uneven valuation of bilingualism in Brazil, where bilingualism in indigenous languages+Portuguese is seen as problematic while elite bilingualism in European languages+Portuguese is considered prestigious. This phenomenon is one that will also be familiar to readers working in a North American context, where English speakers who learn an L2 are applauded, while speakers of other L1s are encouraged to abandon them as quickly as possible in favor of English.

4. The verdict

Presented with the monumental task of selecting work to represent current and significant language acquisition work in Romance linguistics, editor Christian Fäcke has done a remarkable job. This manual would be a valuable for anyone looking for English-language—but not English-centered—resources regarding language acquisition. It would also be an excellent source for those looking for language or country-specific overviews. And while manual and handbook chapters generally read well as stand-alone pieces, reading these chapters in sequence proved to be enjoyable and fruitful. Together, the chapters in this volume not only paint a detailed and clear picture of the field, they reveal important similarities and contrasts between perspectives and contexts.

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