

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Computer Applications in Second Language Acquisition: Foundations for Teaching, Testing and Research by Carol A. Chapelle

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sizes verbal interaction and a creative blending of language activities, *De viva voz* may be the ticket.

This new book promises an approach and content based on “vivid communicative exchanges” (p. xi) and, in large measure, it delivers. Holding to a splendidly succinct 12 chapters, the author resists giving us the whole Hispanic world and a bag of chips. A teacher using this book stands a fighting chance of completing it within a year. The text package includes a student audio CD or cassette. Language lab CDs or cassettes are free to adopting schools.

Each text chapter begins with a list of goals, followed by vocabulary and related drawings. Home, school, and sports along with vacations, environment, and technology are some of the chapter themes. Grammatical structures, explained in English and billed as *Estructuras comunicativas*, take up a significant part of each chapter. They are followed by related *Actividades* that often involve student-to-student interaction. For rote practice, students must turn to exercises in the workbook. A strong feature of the *Actividades* is their imaginative, interactive quality, and each chapter has a significant number of these activities. Interspersed snippets labeled *Lengua* and *Estrategia comunicativa* dot the chapters. They seem sometimes to make a distinction without a difference from the grammar explanations.

Throughout the text, culture is generally writ small. Although the last chapter provides a quick overview of boom literature and Golden Age drama, students are more likely to see the predominant cultural themes such as rainforest loss in Latin America and World Cup winners. These *Notas culturales* are offered in small doses in each chapter. Although a belletrist will lament the lack of literature and art, students may find these blurbs keyed to their interests.

Literature makes its way into *De viva voz*, mainly through the back door of the final chapters, where we find the famous *Carta a Dios* and a Horacio Quiroga story. The six *Lecturas de interés* also include memories of a Mexican childhood in California, an article about chocolate, and another about the Internet. Appropriately glossed and contextualized, the readings seem somewhat of an afterthought in a text whose principal focus is on speaking and listening.

Pronunciation is covered at the beginning of each text chapter and is recapitulated in the lab manual. A free accompanying lab audio CD or cassette drills text pronunciation for students. A verb appendix at the end of the text is followed by a Spanish-English vocabulary.

Although it is interesting and encouraging to see Web search activities woven into the chapters,

it should occur to text authors to give students an introduction, even if minimal, to appropriate use of the Internet. Such an overview might include, among other things, a list of appropriate and reliable sites (e.g., the LANIC site at the University of Texas), the significance of the .edu domain, searching in Spanish, search strategies, and Internet caveats.

The heart of this text's method is found at the end of each chapter in a section named *De viva voz*, in which communicative exercises encourage students to declaim, negotiate, draw, make lists, interview, and play act. Here the author's background in the Rassias method, acknowledged in the preface (p. xvii), most clearly shines through. Classroom teachers will surely find something to awaken student interest among the word and guessing games, the peer-to-peer conversations, and the personalized lists, debates, and dramatic activities. The alleged outcome of these activities is “to help novice and low-intermediate language learners become markedly more conversational and comfortable with the Spanish language” (p. xiii).

For those considering adoption of a new intermediate program, *De viva voz* should make the short list at schools where an energized, dynamic classroom atmosphere is the primary driving force in producing more conversationally competent students. The lack of a video component or the tangential nature of the Internet may put off some prospective adopters in programs where media are a driving force. Others may find the text too stripped down or too bereft of the cultural context of the Hispanic world. But those who wish a direct, imaginative, and dramatic way to introduce second-year grammar into a communicative context should give the *De viva voz* package serious consideration.

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TECHNOLOGY

CHAPELLE, CAROL A. *Computer Applications in Second Language Acquisition: Foundations for Teaching, Testing and Research*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. xvii, 215. \$59.95, cloth; \$21.95, paper. ISBN 0-521-62637-4, cloth; 0-521-62646-3, paper.

One of the great strengths of this book, as noted in the preface by the series editors, is that the au-

thor was a renowned scholar in the fields of second language acquisition (SLA) and second language testing well before she began investigating the use of computers to enhance both learning and research in these fields. This broad background is evident throughout the superbly researched volume.

This book fills a need, first, in providing a thorough delineation of the domain of computer-assisted second language acquisition (CASLA), and second, in suggesting a coherent set of principles for evaluation. Chapelle combines the presentation of underlying theoretical constructs with extensive knowledge of research and practice in the field. The book is divided into six chapters, with the first two chapters defining CASLA through its historical development and then in relation to the fields other than applied linguistics that have influenced it. The next three chapters examine each of three subfields—computer-assisted language learning (CALL), computer-assisted language testing (CALT), and CASLA research—and focus on evaluation issues pertaining to computer applications in each subarea. The final chapter suggests directions for future work.

The first chapter provides a concise history, starting with mainframes in the 1960s and 1970s and progressing to the first generation of microcomputers in the early 1980s. By the late 1980s, due to the rapid developments in hardware and software, CALL projects had expanded both in number and in scope. Beginning in the early 1990s, the use of local area networks (LANs) expanded the characteristics of CALL activities. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of how the Internet has introduced universal access to materials and information, as well as hybrid applications for learning and teaching. For each of these historical phases, Chapelle highlights the most notable and lasting CASLA projects, providing readers with a complete and informed overview. Undoubtedly, future accounts of this field will focus more heavily on the ever-evolving capabilities and uses of the Internet.

The second chapter succinctly discusses six disciplines that have informed CASLA: educational technology, computer-supported collaborative learning, artificial intelligence, computational linguistics, corpus linguistics, and computer-assisted assessment. The primary concerns of each of these disciplines and the corresponding goals of CASLA are presented in a useful table at the end of the chapter. Perhaps a field that might have been included is that of cognitive psychology, whose theories such as the generative theory of multimedia learning (Mayer, 2001), dual-cod-

ing theory (Paivio, 1990), and cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988) may be applied to CASLA.

Chapter 3 presents a cogent and comprehensive evaluation of CALL as an instructional solution to the problem of instructed SLA. Chapelle first briefly outlines theory concerning ideal conditions (cognitive as well as sociocultural) for instructed SLA and then proceeds with a thorough presentation of principles for CALL evaluation, making an important distinction between judgmental and empirical evaluation. The tables are helpful in delineating the underlying issues. The examples of software and programs illustrate the principles set forth and demonstrate Chapelle's extensive knowledge and familiarity with current and earlier work, in terms of both software and research.

In chapter 4, the rapidly expanding field of CALT is discussed with the same focus on starting with accepted principles of test validation and applying them to language testing with a different delivery medium. As an expert in language testing, Chapelle lays out a rigorous set of qualities that determine the usefulness of a test and critically applies these criteria to a wide variety of computer-assisted tests. She acknowledges that despite some progress in CALT research and development, improvement both in theory and practice in language testing will need to draw on the computers' capabilities.

Chapter 5 on computer-assisted SLA research overlaps and complements the previous two chapters. It first describes selected examples of previous research on specific conditions for instructed SLA, particularly implicit versus explicit instruction. Chapelle wisely cautions readers about the limitations of generalizing results in laboratory settings to second language classroom instruction. The second part of the chapter offers key examples of research on learners' knowledge and language ability, as well as their strategies and the automaticity of their language-learning processes.

The final chapter is the capstone of the volume and solidifies its contribution to the field by synthesizing the overlapping themes in the three subfields of CALL, CALT, and CASLA research. It also suggests ways of combining the successful methods and techniques of previous research to further fruitful investigations on such topics as the operationalization of learning conditions. The thoughtful suggestions for future CASLA software development exhibit Chapelle's understanding of the technological capabilities, as well as the fundamental issues in SLA. This unique combination of expertise is what makes the vol-

ume an invaluable resource for SLA researchers, CALL and CALT developers, and instructors alike.

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TESTING

JOHNSON, MARYSIA. *The Art of Nonconversation: A Reexamination of the Validity of the Oral Proficiency Interview*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001. Pp. xi, 230. \$30.00, paper. ISBN 0-300-09002-1.

In the overview of the book, the author presents the two questions that drive her argument: (a) Is the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) a valid instrument for assessing language speaking proficiency? and (b) What is speaking? Curiously, the author considers the first question practical and the second theoretical.

In the first chapter, "The Genesis and Evolution of the OPI System," Johnson traces its origins from the 1950s to the present. Curiously, there is no mention of the SOPI, the new-generation tape-mediated Simulated OPI that is currently available. In chapter 2, "A Critical Appraisal of the OPI," the author evaluates the OPI, accompanied by a historical definition of validity and criticisms of the OPI made by researchers such as Bachman, Lantolf and Frawley, Van Lier, Ross and Berwick, Young and Milanovic, and Johnson and Tyler. The third chapter is a discussion of the second question (What is speaking? or What is a speech event?) that starts with the theoretical bases provided by Hymes, Levinson, Grice, and the conversational analysts (e.g., Sacks & Schegloff) and the discourse analysts (e.g., Schiffrin, Van Lier, Allwright). This discussion leads to a summary of the prototypical features of a conversation, an interview, and a classroom interaction in terms of the turn-taking mechanism, the repair mechanism, the topic and the question type.

These chapters set up the insightful chapter 4 that follows, entitled "A Discourse Analysis Study of the OPI." The data were 35 audiotaped OPIs, 10 at each level and 5 at level 1 of both male and female test takers. But there is a problem here: The OPIs are telephonic OPIs, not the standard face-to-face OPI used in U.S. government institutions. The key question, therefore, is whether the

telephonic OPI and the face-to-face OPI are equivalent or similar in terms of turn taking, topic nomination, and repairs (among other features), given that visual interactive clues are absent in the telephonic OPI and that linguistic features of phone conversations need to be deployed. Therefore, there is a difficulty in accepting the author's argument, given that it is directed at the face-to-face OPI, but is formulated based on evidence from the telephonic OPI. Because the author does not discuss this critical difference, it could constitute a serious flaw of the study.

This problem notwithstanding, the first strength of the book lies in its discourse analysis (DA) of the telephonic OPI through carefully transcribed and analyzed data. The author concludes this chapter by stating that "the DA study results indicate that the OPI speech event represents an interview of two types: a survey research interview and a sociolinguistic interview. It is not representative of real-life conversation as the ETS claims" (p. 120).

The author then uses native speakers' perceptions of a speech event by having four OPI English testers from the Defense Language Institute and four naive native speakers (i.e., not language testers) of English investigate the telephonic OPI from an outsider perspective. These participants listened to 16 OPIs (4 for each base level) and filled out Semantic Differential (SD) forms. The OPI was divided into six categories, with four pairs of words for each of the categories. Some categories are the following: for format, the pairs of words were formal/informal, conversation-like/interview-like, natural/contrived, spontaneous/controlled; for tester, the pairs were spontaneous/controlled, uncooperative/cooperative, active-involved/passive-uninvolved, formal/informal; for questions, the pairs were varied/repetitive, unnatural/natural, conversation-like/interview/like, formal/informal, and so on. However, no quantitative analysis of the SD study is presented. Instead, readers are referred to Johnson's (1997) dissertation, and we are left with the author's conclusion of this analysis: "The findings of the SD study support the DA study findings reported in chapter 5. They confirm that the OPI does not test speaking ability in a real-life context—conversation" (p. 139).

The second strength of the book is its rather brief essay on the application of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory to language testing. Here the author draws on ideas from Vygotsky and Bakhtin in an attempt to formulate the features