



## Book Review

**Silvina Montrul & Maria Polinsky** (eds.). 2021. *The Cambridge handbook of heritage languages and linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, xvii+970pp. ISBN: 978-1-108-48726-9 (hbk). **Kim Potowski** (ed.). 2018. *The Routledge handbook of Spanish as a heritage language*. London: Routledge, xiv+591pp. ISBN: 978-1-317-56306-8 (hbk).

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<https://doi.org/10.1515/jwl-2023-0009>

The purpose of this review is to provide a comprehensive examination of two volumes, *The Cambridge Handbook of Heritage Languages and Linguistics*, edited by Silvina Montrul and Maria Polinsky, and *The Routledge Handbook of Spanish as a Heritage Language*, edited by Kim Potowski. This review illustrates their mutual reinforcement in the study of heritage languages. The three editors of the reviewed two volumes have made important contributions to the field of heritage language acquisition and use, focusing on different aspects. Their research sheds light on the complexities of language development in multilingual individuals, heritage speakers' linguistic and cognitive abilities, and educational needs of the group.

*The Cambridge Handbook of Heritage Languages and Linguistics* presents a compendious collection of research in the field of heritage languages, concisely defined in the book as “minority languages learned in a bilingual environment” (p. 1). The book presents expert contributions organized into different thematic areas, offering a diverse range of perspectives that comprehensively showcase the current state of the field. The editors begin the volume with an introductory chapter which provides an interesting discussion of the *heritage speaker* concept, taking into account the challenge posed by the group's heterogeneity, which is highlighted in this section. It also emphasizes the vulnerability of heritage languages and the importance of preserving them. Moreover, this chapter offers an overview of recent research efforts in the field of heritage speakers, including studies of specific linguistic phenomena of this group, linguistic socialization, and heritage language teaching and education. This introduction is followed by 37 chapters distributed in the four main sections of the book. “Part I: Heritage Languages around the World” provides a sociolinguistic examination of immigrant languages in the US and Europe, minority languages in Asia and Europe, and Indigenous languages in Latin America, Canada, and Australia. The 14 chapters of this section highlight the diverse nature of heritage languages and their communities around the world, reflecting the

multitude of linguistic, sociodemographic, or ideological factors, among others, that shape their unique configurations. The editors emphasize the goal of having a chapter on heritage languages for every country, but acknowledge that this has yet to be achieved and more effort is needed in areas where chapters are currently lacking. The second section of the book, “Part II: Research Approaches to Heritage Languages”, delves into the various theories and methodologies that have been employed to investigate heritage languages to date. In 8 chapters, this section encompasses a range of approaches, including generativism, emergentism, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and contact linguistics, as well as different methodologies such as corpus linguistics, narrative-ethnographic studies, and other emerging methodologies. In this context, this book facilitates the exploration of diverse perspectives in the study of heritage languages, presenting a rich and varied collection of insights that will prove valuable to researchers working in this area. “Part III: Grammatical Aspects of Heritage Languages” covers the main structural aspects of heritage languages such as phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse, and pragmatics. The studies in the 6 chapters of this section suggest that heritage languages have a systematic nature, characterized by similarities to the base language and a need for restructuring in some cases. Furthermore, the chapters provide insightful comparisons between heritage speakers, first language (L1) speakers, and second language (L2) speakers who have achieved equivalent proficiency levels. These findings pose thought-provoking questions that hold significant implications for the field of theoretical linguistics. The global increasing presence of heritage language learners in classrooms highlights the urgency for the development of educational resources to meet their specific needs. In response, the editors have added a final section, “Part IV: Heritage Language Education”, to this book. The 9 chapters of this section present various educational models designed for different heritage language learner profiles, outline the reasons for the availability of heritage language education opportunities in certain contexts, and suggest directions for future growth in this field.

*The Routledge Handbook of Spanish as a Heritage Language*, edited by Kim Potowski, constitutes a guide on Spanish as a heritage language and covers its use and teaching. It offers an overview of Spanish heritage speakers in their social, linguistic, and educational aspects which form three of the four main chapters of the handbook. The focus lies predominantly on studies in the United States, but a fourth chapter of the handbook is devoted exclusively to Spanish as a heritage language outside the United States, with a special focus on Europe. In 36 chapters, the authors examine both macro and micro elements of Spanish as a heritage language as well as challenges faced by speakers of Spanish outside its territorial boundaries. In the introduction, the editor, Kim Potowski, provides an overview of the global situation of Spanish as a heritage or minority language. She covers demographic estimates of

Spanish and the coexistence of Spanish with other national languages in migration contexts, with a focus on the role of Spanish in the United States where most Spanish speakers live. The first section of the volume, “Part I: Social issues” discusses social issues of Spanish as a heritage language in the United States in detail over 8 chapters, including its use in political discourse and language policies, its demographic representation, its presence in the linguistic landscape, the role in Spanish-speaking communities, connection to Latino identity, social hierarchy, and its relationship to heteronormativity. The focus of the second part of the volume, “Part II: Linguistic aspects”, is on different features of linguistic contact between Spanish and English in heritage speakers of the United States. In 10 chapters, the section covers aspects related to phonetic, lexical, morphosyntactic, pragmatic, neurophysiological, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, and macro-bilingual practices. Moreover, the authors examine different aspects of Spanish as a heritage language, including its dialectal variation, language use, online processing, lexical decision, sociodemographic factors, dialectal contact, and socialization of children. The 10 chapters in the third section “Part III: Educational issues” collect research on teaching Spanish as a heritage language. The section explores various aspects of Spanish heritage language education and its significance. The authors examine topics such as teaching methods, critical language awareness, program administration, community service learning, study abroad experiences, and literacy development. The book highlights the differences in proficiency between heritage speakers and L2 students and the challenges faced by heritage speakers when learning other languages. The authors also discuss the importance of incorporating professional Spanish and community service learning into heritage language education, as well as the benefits of dual language programs for both Spanish and English-speaking students. The book provides suggestions for supporting literacy development and offers a comprehensive overview of the field of Spanish heritage language education. The fourth and final section of the volume “Part IV: Spanish as a minority/heritage language outside of the U.S.” examines Spanish as a minority or heritage language in different countries outside the United States. This section focuses on the experiences of immigrant communities in maintaining their cultural identity and language through various education and language programs. In 7 chapters, the authors explore the challenges faced by these communities in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, UK, Canada, and Mexico. The different chapters highlight the importance of heritage language education and the impact it has on preserving cultural identity and language. It also offers solutions for addressing the challenges faced by immigrant communities in maintaining their cultural identity and language.

Overall, the two volumes provide a helpful reference for heritage languages research. They give a broad overview of the approaches, subjects, and methods that

have been central to heritage language study in recent years. The volumes are designed to be useful for both new researchers who are looking to gain a foundational understanding of the field, as well as more experienced researchers who are seeking additional information to support their ongoing work. In essence, these volumes offer an insightful look into the intricacies of research on heritage languages and their speakers. They demonstrate the value of scientific collaboration and knowledge-sharing in advancing our understanding of this complex topic, despite there being numerous unknowns still to be uncovered.

The two handbooks both cover the key themes in the study of heritage languages. Linguistic phenomena are thoroughly examined in both books, covering fundamental subjects such as morphosyntax, semantics, and phonetics, as well as less explored areas like pragmatics and discourse. Additionally, both volumes address the educational challenges of teaching heritage languages, with a focus on different educational stages and degrees of formality. The books also cover emerging topics in heritage language research, including linguistic variation and returnee speakers.

*The Cambridge Handbook of Heritage Languages and Linguistics* presents a collection of innovative approaches to the study of heritage languages and raises important theoretical questions for traditional linguistic theories. Moreover, it encompasses a broad range of languages from around the world. This diversity is particularly noteworthy as it expands the scope of heritage language studies beyond the Anglo-Saxon context. On the other hand, *The Routledge Handbook of Spanish as a Heritage Language*, although centered on the Spanish language, offers theoretical and methodological perspectives that can be useful for researchers of other languages as well. Furthermore, it provides a deeper examination of the social aspects surrounding heritage languages. It reveals the critical role that non-linguistic factors, which are frequently given less attention in other studies, such as socio-political, ideological, and identity-related aspects, play in shaping heritage languages.

While these two compendiums offer broad coverage of the subject, there is a limited examination of the processes of linguistic socialization and family language policy. A deeper analysis of the linguistic attitudes of the speakers themselves or of multilingual families would also have been a valuable asset. These are crucial aspects of heritage speaker language development, yet they are underrepresented in these compendiums. Furthermore, both volumes repeatedly emphasize the importance of preserving heritage languages, making it necessary for them to provide insightful final reflections on the key strategies for revitalization and maintenance. As is mentioned in both volumes, there is an ongoing need for further research in this field that may serve as a call to action for researchers to continuously explore open questions and for educators and language policy-makers to address the needs of heritage languages and their speakers.