

## **The Place of Hispanic Linguistics in Language Departments: A Call to a Broader Perspective on Our Disciplines**

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### **Introduction**

Hispanic Linguistics has long formed part of the American university and, specifically, of language departments housing Spanish within the university, though its status has varied both over time and between universities. In the past few decades, there has been considerable growth in the field of Hispanic Linguistics, as evidenced, among other things, by the number of conferences that have emerged dedicated either to the field as broadly construed or to subfields of Hispanic Linguistics, the growth in the number of graduate programs in Hispanic Linguistics, and the substantial increase in the number of job postings for experts in Hispanic Linguistics even beyond those universities with graduate programs in the field. The undeniable growth of Hispanic Linguistics within the American university, and the lack of any apparent decline in the momentum the field has gained as a result, bode well for its future within the academy. While the strength of Hispanic Linguistics as a field is undeniable, the same cannot be said of its place within university language departments, where linguistic studies finds itself housed alongside literary and cultural studies and where, quite often, there are very few, if any, common interests held by colleagues in these fields.

Discussion of the place of Hispanic Linguistics within language departments is a topic that has been addressed in this publication since the inclusion of a section on Hispanic Linguistics (edited by Francisco Ocampo) in Volume 1 (2006) bearing the title *Debating Hispanic Studies: Reflections on Our Disciplines*. The introduction to the section on Hispanic linguistics by Ocampo and the six essays comprising the section addressed a range of topics, with the place of Hispanic Linguistics within language departments emerging as one of them. In a workshop the following year, which is summarized and responded to in the Debates section, a piece of the question

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of the place of Hispanic Linguistics in language departments is taken up under the topic “Crossing the Boundaries: Culture, Linguistics, and Literature.” Outside of this publication, more recently, Del Valle addressed the issue of the place of Hispanic Linguistics within American modern language departments in a thorough and thought-provoking—though, in my view, also controversial—essay and Van Patten questioned where the language experts (i.e., scholars who study the nature of language and its acquisition) are in language departments. These more recent essays beg a more thorough examination of the question by a wider group of linguists, and I am extremely pleased that *Hispanic Issues On Line* has taken the opportunity to provide a forum for just such an examination.

In responding to the call to address the issue of “the place of Hispanic Linguistics within the Departments of Languages and Literatures in the American University,” I will consider various issues, but primarily I hope to make the case that scholars within departments of languages and literatures—both linguists and scholars of literatures and cultures—need to see the field more broadly and recognize that there already is much commonality in our interests if only we would all open our eyes and see it.

### **Humanities, (Social) Science, and Culture**

One issue that can lead to difficulty in comprehending the place of linguistics within departments of languages and literatures is the classification of linguistics in comparison to the classification of literary and cultural studies. Given that literary and cultural studies investigate human culture and tend to employ critical methodologies, they fit neatly among the fields commonly classified as humanities. While language is crucial to the humanities—clearly, literature is dependent on language, for example—investigation of language itself (i.e., linguistics) tends to be classified most often as a social science. Linguistics differs from literary and cultural studies in that it studies an inherent characteristic of human beings (i.e., language, in general) in its various forms (i.e., specific languages), rather than something external to the being itself. In addition, while literary and cultural studies tend to employ critical methodologies, linguistics generally employs empirical methodologies. Clearly, language is not only internal to human beings—its primary use is social after all (hence its common classification as a social science), but it nonetheless differs from topics of literary and cultural studies in terms of its innateness. Thus it is also not infrequently classified as a cognitive science, and indeed its nature and the empirical methods it employs lead to terms such as “language sciences” and “linguistic sciences.” While linguistics, with language as its object of study, is sometimes classified as part of the humanities (including by the National

Endowment for the Humanities, a federal agency of the United States), it clearly is distinct from most humanities fields in sharing characteristics with various types of sciences—social, cognitive, and, in some cases, even the hard sciences. (Interestingly, linguistics is classified in the United States as a science by another federal agency, the National Science Foundation, meaning it is recognized as both a humanities field and a science field.)

While linguistics may have much in common with fields in the sciences and differ considerably from fields in the humanities, and while it is certainly not only valid but important to recognize these commonalities and differences, one must be careful not to overemphasize the differences between linguistics and other humanities fields. Regardless of the fact that it is more internal to the human than the topics investigated by scholars in literary and cultural studies, and regardless of the fact that the methodologies employed by linguists also differ from those employed by scholars in most humanities fields, the scientific study of language is the study of something very human. Gil makes this point quite clearly:

No other property, no other phenomenon is as intrinsically and exclusively human as speech. If there is one feature that defines man compared to other living beings, it is the faculty of language which allows communication with their fellow human beings through voice and spoken word. Other forms of communication do exist, but none of them have such strong and essential links to human nature. (n.p.)

Linguistics is the study of something uniquely human. Of course, other fields also investigate topics that are strongly tied to human nature. Biological and medical fields are among the most obvious, and yet no one, to my knowledge, has claimed that these science fields should be classified as humanities. What makes linguistics different is that it not only involves the investigation of something strongly tied to human nature, but also involves human creative processes, just as in human cultural production that constitutes so much of what is clearly viewed as humanities. Lipski makes the point beautifully: “Linguistics may well be a science, but climbing into tree houses marked ‘for scientists only’ and pulling up the ladder after ourselves merely sidesteps the inescapable fact that linguistics deals with human creative behavior every bit as much as literary and cultural studies” (“Hispanic Linguistics” 112). It seems to me that linguists want to see ourselves as scientists, and rightfully so, but that in doing so we often lose sight of the fact that what we are investigating empirically is not only human, but human creative production that carries social meaning, communicates ideologies and attitudes, and in these and other ways, is just like the subjects of investigation by our colleagues in literary and cultural studies.

I do not mean to imply that all work being carried out in linguistics has a subject of investigation similar to that of scholars of literary and cultural studies, but there is certainly more in linguistics that has clear connections to this work than is often recognized. While I will return briefly in the next section to the work in linguistics that is most difficult to view as humanistic in nature, here I would like to consider that a broadened perspective will show a stronger connection between linguistics and literary and cultural studies than is often seen now even by those who admit that certain areas within linguistics currently do connect clearly to these humanistic endeavors within language departments.

When thinking of linguistics as a humanistic field, and therefore in terms of bridges to literary and cultural studies, perhaps the clearest connection is in the area of critical discourse analysis. Hualde sees this as the strongest bridge between these fields (“Thoughts” 1), and Del Valle argues that this is one of the areas of linguistics that should be emphasized more among linguists in language departments in order to connect with the other scholarly areas represented in these departments. While critical discourse analysis does indeed provide a strong connection between linguistics and literary and cultural studies, there are plenty of other areas of linguistics that connect as well. Certainly within sociolinguistics there are many studies in which social identity is constructed and communicated through language use, whether in monolingual contexts, situations of languages in contact, cases of migration of speakers between regions or countries, and much more. Within pragmatics, studies investigate the choices speakers make in communicating different types of meaning via language. Historical Linguistics provides information on the developments that led to the forms of language that are used today to communicate these various meanings and identities, and while it is true that a portion of the studies look at changes within the language itself, others involve social interactions between people groups and between languages that provide historical context to the language used now. In this sense, Historical Linguistics provides a context to the human creativity of language that is not unlike the historical view often valued in scholarship on literature and culture. Phonology, morphology, and syntax may at first appear to have less of a connection to the humanities, but such a view overlooks the fact that the vast majority of sociolinguistic, pragmatic and historical studies mentioned above investigate these areas of language in addressing the questions that tie them to literary and cultural studies.

Beyond the aforementioned ways in which linguistics clearly ties to the humanistic endeavors found in literary and cultural studies, one might have to look a little harder to see connections. I propose, however, that the perceived lack of connections is due largely—though not entirely—to scholars both in linguistics and in literary and cultural studies having too

narrow a view of their fields rather than seeking out (and then communicating) the connections that are there. Del Valle makes the point that it is not that there are no projects in Hispanic Linguistics that tie in with literary and cultural studies, but rather that they are positioned in a way that makes connections seem impossible (91). While I believe Del Valle does not do justice to the possible connections, I also believe that he is on point here in noting that the apparent lack of connections is often a matter of how linguistic research is presented and contextualized. Interestingly, while Del Valle places the blame on linguists, Hualde places the primary responsibility for the lack of connections between the fields on literary scholars who have moved away from the study of literature “in favor of the study of ‘culture’, where culture can be any societal institution or practice that strikes the scholar’s fancy, including, for instance, cooking recipes in colonial Guatemala or contemporary flamenco dancing, but generally focusing on some element of power relations in a given society” (“Hispanic Linguistics” 104). He points out that, “as scholars who used to study Spanish literature shift their interest to other objects of criticism, their common ground with Spanish linguists becomes harder to see” (104). Taking Del Valle’s and Hualde’s comments jointly, we can see that neither linguists nor scholars of literature and culture are putting themselves in a position to see (much less facilitate) connections between these areas. Both tend to position themselves in a way to be incapable of seeing the relationships between linguistics and literary and cultural studies.

Interestingly, while the view from scholars in both areas appears to be narrow—at least narrow enough to not see connections with scholarship in the other area—the shift to cultural studies that Hualde blames for a larger gap than in the past between linguistics and literary and cultural studies may actually be an area where a broadened perspective can lead to mutual appreciation and connections between these areas. In the “Crossing the Boundaries: Culture, Linguistics, and Literature” workshop, one of the topics discussed was the definition of cultural studies. Hualde summarizes the result of the discussion: “It was agreed that ‘cultural studies’ is an ill-defined term, but that probably it should remain ill defined, since it may include all and any aspect of human culture (although it tends to focus on issues of ideology and identity)” (“Thoughts” 2). When cultural studies is considered more narrowly, such as considering it to deal with ideology and identity, then much of linguistics falls outside of its scope. But if scholars in Cultural Studies will consider the field in broader terms, so that it includes “all and any aspect of human culture,” then linguistics most definitely can be seen as a part of Cultural Studies. I believe that we can see linguistics as the study of culture in two ways. First, as noted above, linguistics involves the scholarly study of one type of human creative production, and as any language is clearly social and is shaped by the cultures that speak it, it is also

a form of cultural production. The fact that the forms that this production takes may be different from many other forms of cultural production (especially in being oral) is of no concern, as scholars of cultural studies examine cultural production in all sorts of forms (literature, film, urban development, and animal practices, such as bullfighting and violence, among many others). Second, linguistics can be seen as the study of culture in that language is a cultural phenomenon. Even when not viewing language as cultural production, it is nonetheless a cultural phenomenon and worthy of scholarly investigation. Del Valle claims that Spanish language should not be seen as a natural fact, waiting for our scientific study, but as a cultural artifact and cognitive construct that is always understood in context (98). While I disagree with Del Valle's resistance to the scientific study of language, I agree with him that language is a cultural artifact (or cultural phenomenon, as I referred to it above) and a cognitive construct. It is part of culture, and therefore its investigation and seeking to understand it from a variety of perspectives should be a welcome piece of cultural studies. While not all those who specialize in cultural studies will have as strong of an interest in linguistic work, this makes it no less valid as an area of cultural studies. This is no different, for example, from some scholars focusing on film and having less interest in things such as animal practices; this does not make such practices any less valid as topics for investigation within cultural studies.

It is of interest that Del Valle describes language not only as a cultural artifact, but also as a cognitive construct. This term indicates that language is part of cognition, and therefore to understand it requires understanding cognitive processes, which means that linguistics needs to be concerned with cognitive science. All sorts of questions arise, then, such as whether language makes use of more general cognitive processes or makes use of specialized processes. Investigation of questions of this sort requires that linguistics be a science in addition to being humanistic in the common sense of that word. Does this mean, however, that more scientific linguistic scholarship is unrelated to cultural studies? Definitely not. Rather the scientific aspect of linguistics helps us to understand what underlies the behaviors and decisions that are seen when investigating language as a cultural phenomenon and as a form of cultural production. That is not to say that there is not some research where a connection is hard to imagine—Lipski mentions laboratory-based research on jaw movement and eye tracking among them (“(After) Thoughts” 2)—but much of even the scientific research in linguistics is a tool to understanding the cultural aspects of language. Empirical, scientific research on language is a tool that can shed light on culture in a way that other tools cannot, and scholars of cultural studies should welcome such a tool rather than exclude it and insist on a limited set of tools in the cultural studies toolbox.

## Linguistic Research Today

It is commonly noted that linguistics and literary studies have diverged and are thus not as related as they once were. This was mentioned above where I noted that Del Valle places the responsibility on linguists while Hualde places it on scholars moving from literary to cultural studies. Ocampo notes that the present situation is rooted farther back in time, noting that the American tradition of linguistics was based on anthropology and the study of North American native languages, with no written texts to analyze, which distinguished it from the European philological tradition where the study of language was associated with the study of literature and, therefore, there was a clear connection between the two and, within academia, they were housed within the same unit (98). While there is validity in all of the views just noted, I question the importance of these facts when considering the present situation. It is easy to look back and see divergences between related fields. This happens over time as research evolves. In fact, Ocampo's comments about the divergence of linguistics from philology miss the fact that this was nothing new, but was history repeating itself. Turner points out that as early as the third century BC philologists in Pergamum diverged from those in Alexandria by spending "more time analyzing language than wrestling with textual problems," and that they tended to focus on etymology, phonetics and grammatical problems, issues that were not at all central to Alexandrian philology (13). Thus more than two millennia before the divergence between American and European traditions that Ocampo notes, there were more linguistically-focused branches of philology. But fields and methodologies change—in fact, Turner notes that the Scholastics of the middle ages limited their interest in texts to philosophical, scientific and ethical works (26) and had little to no interest in engagement with the philological heritage (29), which essentially disappeared from the European scholarly landscape for a couple hundred years. Fields shift and change, and divergences lead to new developments and understandings. Trying to hold onto the old way of doing things does not allow for advancement and flies in the face of the intended outcome of scholarly investigation. So, while the divergence of linguistics and literary studies is interesting, what is of more interest is to examine where things stand today. Given that, and leaving aside how we got to this point, what do we see when we look at linguistic research today, and what aspects of that research do and do not show promise for connections to literary and cultural studies?

I have made the point that linguistics, while having aspects of science, is also very much a humanities field. Further, I have claimed that linguistics involves the study of culture, in that language is a cultural phenomenon and is a form of cultural production. While I view both of these points as not only valid but also important in seeing the relationship between linguistics

and literary and cultural studies, we must keep in mind that linguistics is a broad field with different perspective and different approaches, some of which appear to have minimal resemblance to each other. In fact, I have witnessed rather entertaining interactions at conferences between respected linguists who have vastly different approaches and can barely communicate with each other for lack of mutual understanding. Given the wide range of perspectives and approaches within linguistics, how can we characterize the field in its current state?

While it is a gross oversimplification, I believe we can divide linguistics into empirical and non-empirical approaches. This distinction requires some clarification, as any linguist might say she is using actual language data and, therefore, her research is empirical. When I make this distinction, I am referring not only to the data being analyzed, but also to the analysis itself and its theoretical couching. Theoretical models that provide a model of language behavior that is not grounded in actual human behavior are non-empirical. That is, if we create a model that produces the same result, as do humans in their use of some aspect of language, but the model does so in a way quite unlike the way language is actually processed by human beings, I would label this as non-empirical. On the other hand, a model based on actual human behavior is empirical. In this case the model not only produces the right results, but does so based on knowledge of how human beings actually process language. That is, if a model is based on knowledge of human cognitive processing of language, it is empirical; if it is not based on such knowledge, it is non-empirical.

In various fields of linguistics, there are linguistic theories and models—some of them incredibly popular—that are used to analyze data in a way that does not represent how humans actually process language. I will give just one example, used above all in phonology, but also in syntax: Optimality Theory (OT). OT has been in existence for fifteen years and resolves problems with some of its predecessors (see Archangeli for a clear and simple overview). It assumes a universal set of constraints to account for tendencies that exist cross-linguistically, but frames them as violable constraints that each language ranks differently in order to account for variation between languages. It builds markedness into the model, since each constraint is a statement about markedness. It gives constraints a clear and limited role, a problem that other theoretical models had because they needed to rely on constraints, but mostly as a patch to make an analysis work. All in all, OT can be seen as an elegant model that makes considerable improvement over other theoretical models that had been in existence. However, while OT may be elegant, there is no research that demonstrates that the human mind uses the types of mechanisms that OT proposes in actually processing language. In that sense, it is a non-empirical theoretical model. Models of this type can hardly be said to relate to humanistic

investigation, including cultural studies, as analyses employing them say nothing about human behavior.

On the other hand, empirical linguistic studies do tell us about human behavior and thus fit into the broad interpretation of humanistic investigation and cultural studies that I propose here. An example of such a theoretical model is the usage-based model that Joan Bybee, especially, has proposed for morphology and phonology. While much could be said about the specifics of such a model (experience with language affects its representation, categorization is based on identity or similarity, generalizations are not separate from the stored representation of forms, but emerge directly from them, etc.), what makes it empirical is that linguistic data is analyzed according to what is known about human cognitive and psychological processing and principles (see Bybee, chapters 1–3, for an overview).

Linguistic research can be considered empirical, then, when it is analyzed using a theoretical model that is based on actual human language processing. Of course, not all linguistic research is analyzed within an established theoretical model, whether empirical or non-empirical. Can this research also be empirical? Yes, in some cases. The primary issue is not the theoretical model, but whether the research informs us about human behavior. I will mention here just two examples. Much work in Spanish intonational phonology, for example, has focused on how certain intonation patterns communicate pragmatic meaning. Regardless of the theory, if any, used to analyze the intonation patterns themselves, determining what patterns are used by speakers when they desire to communicate certain meanings tells us something about human will in speech production and is, thus, empirical. Work in variationist sociolinguistics examines how social factors (whether intrinsic, such as the sex of the speaker, or extrinsic, such as her socio-economic status) affect language use and thus inform us about how various factors affect human behavior. Linguistic research can be seen as empirical when it informs us about human behavior—whether this be through new data or through analyzing existing data within theoretical models that represent actual processes used in human language processing.

Hualde states clearly his view of the importance of empirical research in linguistics when he says, “I believe that the most important recent developments [in the field of linguistics] have to do with an increased emphasis on empirically sound work” (“Hispanic Linguistics” 102). Specifically noteworthy, however, is his comment about the importance of such work for connecting with other disciplines: “A consequence of this more empirical approach is that Linguistics is coming out of its self-imposed isolation” (102). The examples of disciplines he gives are more scientific in nature (psychology, speech and hearing science, computer science, electrical engineering), as the empirical approach lines up with scientific research

methodologies. However, empirical approaches to linguistics also allow connections with humanistic fields, such as cultural studies, in that they inform us about human behavior.

Gil points out that university education in many countries has been divided into two large and opposing fields: humanities and sciences. She notes that “The phenomenon of speech does not fit in well with either and this separation has made it hard to apply the multifaceted, multidisciplinary approaches the field requires, whether it be in the classroom or in the scientific literature” (n.p.). It should be clear at this point that linguistics is an area of scholarship that crosses the boundary between humanities and science. In order to recognize the value of linguistics to humanities, humanities scholars need to recognize that the scientific aspects of linguistics do not take away from the significance of linguistic research for understanding human behavior, including language as both cultural phenomenon and cultural production.

### **Recommendations for Departments of Languages and Literatures**

Hispanic Linguistics is most often, but not always, housed within departments of languages and literatures. While scholars in Hispanic Linguistics are linguists in every sense of the word, and thus should have good connections with their colleagues in departments of linguistics (as well as other programs, such as cognitive science, psychology, and others, depending on their specific research area), they are linguists who have dedicated themselves to a deep knowledge and investigation of the Spanish (and less often Portuguese) language. They are scholars who are up to date on the latest research in general linguistics, but who have a passion for Spanish and most often find more value in teaching courses on Hispanic linguistics than general linguistics. Thus being housed in the same department where Spanish language and literatures are taught makes perfect sense.

Just like linguistics as a field crosses the boundary between humanities and science, so do scholars in Hispanic Linguistics cross the boundary between general linguistics and Spanish studies. That they choose to dedicate themselves to Spanish, and in spite of their expertise in linguistics, opt to teach in language departments, should be respected and valued. While this is sometimes the case, it is not always so. While I believe Hispanic linguistics has gained ground in this area, in some institutions there is still an “us vs. them” mentality between literature and culture faculty, on the one hand, and linguistics faculty, on the other. A hire in linguistics is one less for literature and culture. Teaching more courses in linguistics means fewer

students to fill literature and culture courses. In some cases, faculty in literature and culture are supportive of Hispanic Linguistics, but only so long as it remains a small part of the department. For those departments that have such a mentality, there needs to be a shift in how Hispanic Linguistics is viewed. It needs to be valued as an important part of Spanish Studies and not as an intruder on the territory of literature and culture.

Núñez-Cedeño talks about the definition of the market in Hispanic Linguistics and that the market is defined by colleagues in literature (and I would add culture) who have little training in or understanding of the field of linguistics, since these are the colleagues who constitute the large majority of the faculty in language departments (124). Del Valle refers to these comments by Núñez-Cedeño, but then goes a bit farther and says that this points out the difference in the value of Hispanic Linguistics between the linguistics market and the modern languages market (85). While his point is valid, he then begins to tread on what I believe to be dangerous territory. He points out that scholars of Hispanic Linguistics have intellectual and professional profiles that fall outside the disciplinary scope of modern languages and later states that courses in phonology, syntax, historical grammar and acquisition of the language—the first two being core areas of linguistics and the last the most in demand on the Hispanic linguistics job market over the past several years—should not be taught in language departments, with more courses focusing on areas that tie directly to literary and cultural studies (100). Why should this be so? From what I have written above, it should be evident that I disagree with Del Valle and see the problem here being a very narrow perspective on what constitutes appropriate disciplinary content for a language department.

Del Valle wraps up his thoughts on the *malestar* of Hispanic Linguistics by stating the following: “El problema reside en que, en la medida en que la aplicación del método científico al estudio del lenguaje priorice teorías centradas en su dimensión formal, se darán pocas oportunidades de que surja una concepción del lenguaje afín a las prácticas literarias y culturales que se han convertido en objeto central de los departamentos de lenguas modernas a raíz de los desarrollos más recientes” (87) (“The problem is that, to the extent that the application of the scientific method to the study of language prioritizes formal theories, there will be few opportunities for a conception of language to emerge that is related to the literary and cultural practices that have become the central object of modern language departments as a result of the latest developments” (87, my translation). While I would argue that that scientific method does not mean prioritization of formal linguistics (which tends to be non-empirical in the sense I have described above)—and in fact I have given examples of how it can provide empirical linguistic research that furthers our knowledge of human behavior and connects with cultural studies and other areas of humanities—my main objection to Del

Valle's statement has to do with the attitude made evident at the end of it. For Del Valle, it is a problem that linguistics treats language differently from the way it is treated in literary and cultural studies, since these are the "central object" of language departments. Not only is this a narrow-minded view, but it concedes that language departments should only (or at least primarily) be about literature and culture (and this from a linguist!). The fact that there are more colleagues in such departments that study literature and culture than study linguistics should not prioritize the approaches taken in literature and culture and devalue the approaches taken in linguistics. He also states that there needs to be a reinvention or recontextualization of the object of study of linguistics and of the discipline itself (86). I am completely in favor of thinking more fully about the context and implications of any disciplinary field, but to bash the field of linguistics and say it needs to line up with the way another disciplinary field works is, I believe, utter disrespect for the discipline of linguistics. If words like this are coming from a linguist, we can be sure similar thoughts are held by some of our colleagues in literary and cultural studies.

Citing Ocampo and Lipski's text, "Hispanic Linguistics: In a Glass House or a Glass Box?," Del Valle talks about the need for linguists to build bridges to other areas. I agree to a point, but Lipski also states that it would be "absurd" for linguists to see an intersection with literary and cultural studies as necessary (and for colleagues in literature and culture to necessarily include an analysis of language in their work). Rather, he points out that seeing the full range of implications of our research "will reveal the need for building far fewer bridges across our sub-disciplines, not because bridges are not necessary, but because many of them are already in place and are only waiting to be traversed" ("(After) Thoughts" 5). The problem is that too many do not see the bridges. We must see the larger implications of our research and of the research of our colleagues—its implications for other disciplines—and, in terms of Hispanic Linguistics, this will be much more likely when linguists and scholars of literature and culture adopt a broader understanding of cultural studies that sees linguistics as a valid contributor to cultural knowledge.

When we take a broader view of culture, there will be more mutual respect between colleagues in different disciplines, but this is not something that will happen without work. Linguists and scholars in literatures and cultures will not only need to open their minds to different types of research and recognize more fully the implications of their work, but they will also need to work to make the broader implications clear. This is primarily a question of presentation (and having opportunities for presentation to our colleagues, such as departmental colloquia). Thinking from the side of linguistics, we will need to present our data and analysis in a way that is accessible to the non-specialist, but we will also need to make explicit the

connections with humanities and with culture, more specifically, so that our colleagues in literary and cultural studies are presented with how our research is relevant to these areas without having to try to imagine (perhaps incorrectly) how it might be. This may require some practice to get right, but most of us have had experience explaining our research to non-experts in job talks, funding proposals, and other venues. What might be new is explaining the relevance of our research beyond the discipline of linguistics, but as we learn to think more broadly and also start paying more attention to the research of our colleagues, this will begin to happen more naturally.

In sum, I clearly see the place of Hispanic Linguistics as being squarely in departments of languages and literatures, but I also see a need for a wider recognition that this is indeed its place. In order for that to happen, faculty in language departments need to value Hispanic linguistics as an important part of Spanish Studies and not as some marginal area of the department. In addition, faculty in both linguistics and literary and cultural studies need to take a broader view of cultural studies that sees linguistics as a valid contributor to cultural knowledge. Finally, and this will facilitate the previous point, linguists need to present their data and analyses in a way that is accessible to the non-specialist and make explicit the connections between their research and humanities and, more specifically, cultural studies. When these things can be accomplished, the unity that exists between the disciplines housed within departments of languages and literatures will become more evident and will likely lead to interdisciplinary collaborations within our departments that, for many of us, currently appear to be far from realistic.

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