

The Cambridge Handbook of Bilingualism. De Houwer, A., & Ortega, L. (Eds.) (2019). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 664 pages. ISBN: 978-1-107-17921-9 Hardback. DOI: 10.1017/9781316831922.

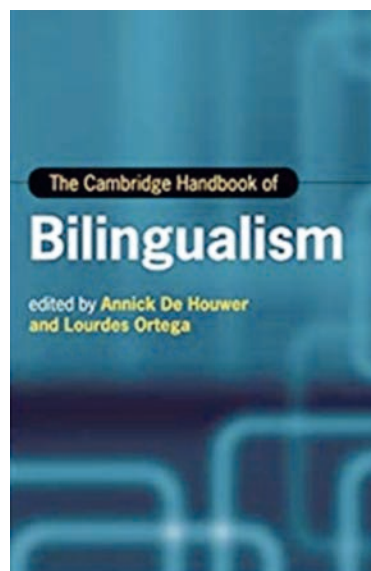
MARÍA ELENA GÓMEZ-PARRA
Universidad de Córdoba

In the past years, studies and research on bilingualism have experimented a striking advance due to the relevance of language learning across international educational policies. The deciding support of prominent organizations (e.g. UNESCO, OECD and European Commission, among others) is one of the key factors, together with globalisation and the human need to establish (and keep) what sociolinguists define as «contact».

The arguments in favour of bilingualism are unquestionable in this era, and the benefits it brings to humans are undisputable. This volume arrives at a moment when research is invaluable due to both interdisciplinary crossing of data (e.g. cognitive science, neurolinguistics, psychology, education, linguistics and, even, economy and policies) and intradisciplinary insights from new findings.

The structure of this volume has been wisely and carefully designed to cover most content areas, which nowadays are familiar to researchers on the field: (I) Bilingual learning and use at five stages of life; (II) The larger contexts of bilingualism; (III) Contexts for bilingual learning and unlearning; (IV) The dynamics of bilingualism across the lifespan; (V) Bilingualism research across disciplines; and (VI) Bilingual connections. These sections offer a wide and updated view of bilingualism which provide the reader with a holistic understanding of why bilingualism is a non-new phenomenon which impacts 21st century life in a deep way. The magnitude of being a bilingual speaker is measured against the challenges that this society poses to the human being, seen through the kaleidoscope of a plethora of complementary disciplines.

The reader, thus, will come up with a thorough understanding of the concept of bilingualism and of the many facets that the researcher needs to cover when a comprehensive scientific debate is planned: how bilingualism evolves across the different stages of life and the way age impacts on its evolution; the institutional effect of policies, economy and the law on the language status in a society; bilingualism under the lens of education, where different types of programmes are set; and the most appealing discussion of hot topics such as *translanguaging*, *monoglossic ideologies*, *code-switching*, *early second language acquisition* or *unlingualism*.



Thus, the face value of this volume is that of a piece of work which, on the one hand offers the researcher good food for thought and, on the other hand, has the power to inspire the non-professional reader to open a new window to knowledge about a phenomenon which is becoming increasingly common because, in MacLeod and Stoel-Gammon's words (2005: 118): «bilinguals make up the majority of world's population».

REFERENCE:

MacLeod, A.A. & Stoel-Gammon, C. 2005. Are bilinguals different? What VOT tells us about simultaneous bilinguals. *Journal of Multilingual Communication Disorders*, 3(2), 118–127. doi:10.1080/14769670500066313.