

Spanish for Veterinarians

A PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION

Second Edition

Bonnie Frederick & Juan Mosqueda



Blackwell
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Drs. Mosqueda and Frederick also wrote this book's companion volume, *Spanish for Animal Scientists and Food Animal Producers*, published by Blackwell.

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Preface

This book is an introduction to the Spanish specific to veterinary medicine, and is not intended to make you a fluent Spanish speaker. Instead, it is designed to prepare you for the clinical conversations between a vet and a client. After studying these chapters, you will not be able to argue politics or discuss poetry. However, you will be able to ask what the animal's symptoms are and how long it has had the problem. Moreover, you'll be able to understand the gist of the client's answer. If you approach this study with that practical goal in mind, you should be able to learn a working Spanish fairly rapidly.

Because the aims of this book are so specific and practical, many elements of the Spanish language are not included. For example, you won't find the conditional verbs here. Even though they're lovely verbs, they aren't essential to the vet–client interaction, which depends mainly on present-tense and past-tense verbs. The presentation of the language isn't traditional either. The explanations are written for veterinarians, not grammarians, so you won't find terms such as “pluperfect” here. Purists may cringe, but the goals are clarity and ease of understanding, not purity.

A note about the dictionary: It, too, is presented in a nontraditional way. Most Spanish–English dictionaries are divided into two parts, one from English to Spanish, and the other from Spanish to English. That has always seemed awkward to us, so we've placed all the language in one section so that you can look up words rapidly. The Spanish letters *ch*, *ll*, and *rr*, which are alphabetized separately in Spanish dictionaries, are not separate in this one; instead, they are included according to the English alphabet. As with the grammar, practicality is our goal, not following the customs of language professionals.

Although you should try for good pronunciation, accurate vocabulary, and clear sentences, you should also know the Great Teachers' Secret: Comprehensible communication can be carried out in imperfect Spanish. If you slip up and say *el anemia* instead of *la anemia*, your client won't stalk out in a huff.

Moreover, the client will get the idea that you're talking about anemia, a subject likely to be of such interest that the *el/lla* question is forgotten and probably not even noticed. Really rotten pronunciation does block comprehension, but mildly bad pronunciation does not. We are not encouraging you to be lazy or offhanded in your studies; we are saying that you should relax and speak up. Bad Spanish is better than no Spanish at all. Good Spanish is both useful and a pleasure.

There are many Spanish-speaking countries, each with its own variations in the language. Colombians speak slightly differently from Peruvians; Cubans speak differently from Spaniards. In your area of the United States, listen for dialectal differences in both pronunciation and vocabulary. For instance, there may be many Dominicans in your city, and their Caribbean Spanish is quite different from, say, the Andean Spanish of Bolivia. When writing this book, we tended to favor Mexican Spanish for the simple reason that there are so many people of Mexican background in the United States. However, the language presented here should be comprehensible to all Spanish speakers.

If you work more with large animals than small ones, you should obtain the companion volume to this one, *Spanish for Animal Scientists and Food Animal Producers*.

Meanwhile, ¡buena suerte y bienvenidos al Español para Veterinarios! (Good luck and welcome to *Spanish for Veterinarians!*)

Acknowledgments

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