A Political History of Spanish

The Making of a Language

Spanish is spoken as a first language by almost 400 million people in approximately sixty countries, and has been the subject of numerous political processes and debates since it began to spread globally from Iberia in the fifteenth century. *A Political History of Spanish* brings together a team of experts to analyze the metalinguistic origins of Spanish and evaluate it as a discursively constructed artifact – that is to say, as a language which contains traces of the society in which it is produced, and of the discursive traditions that are often involved and invoked in its creation.

This is a comprehensive and provocative new work which takes a fresh look at Spanish from specific political and historical perspectives, combining the traditional chronological organization of linguistic history and spatial categories such as Iberia, Latin America, and the US, whilst simultaneously identifying the limits of these organizational principles.

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The Making of a Language

Edited by

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Emblem of the Tongue and Sword

Dos armas son la lengua y el espada
Que si las gobernamos cual conviene
Anda nuestra persona bien guardada
Y mil provechos su buen uso tiene.
Pero cualquiera de ellas desmandada
Como de la cordura se enagene
En el loco y sandio causa muerte
Y en el cuerdo y sagaz trueca la suerte

"The sword and the tongue are two weapons
that, if we handle them as we should,
will ensure our security
and bring us great advantage.
But, if either escapes our control,
as if robbed of all good sense,
it will bring death to lunatics and fools
and ill fortune to the wise and sane."

EMBLEMA 66.

Dos armas son la lengua, y el espada,
Que si las gouernamos qual conuiene,
Anda nuestra persona bie guardada,
Y mil prouechos su buen uso tiene:
Pero qualquiera dellas desmãdada,
Como de la cordura se enagene,
En el loco y sandio causa muerte,
Y é el cuerdo y sagaz trueca la suerte.

Mm 2   Si é.

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Part I

Theoretical underpinnings

1 Language, politics and history: an introductory essay

José del Valle

> *"Language is too important historically to leave to the linguists"*
>
> Peter Burke (1987: 17)

> *"It is our ambition to add to the history of language and languages a dimension of human agency, political intervention, power and authority, and so make that history a bit more* political*"*
>
> Jan Blommaert (1999: 5)

Historical grammar and the scientificization of language studies

The origins of a good number of scholarly articulations of language and history can be traced back along the path that led from comparative and historical studies to historical grammar and, from there, to the schools of modern linguistics that developed from Saussure's *Cours* (1916). In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the debate over the origin of language provided the appropriate intellectual framework for the development of a specialized discourse on language that would eventually result in the crystallization of an autonomous discipline. This debate was fueled by the Enlightenment's interest in the nature of society and the human mind (Salmon 1995), and the quest for the common source of most European and Near East languages – which had been encouraged by the "discovery" of Sanskrit in the context of British colonialism (MacMahon 1995). A statement made in 1786 by Sir William Jones (1746–1794), judge of the Supreme Court in Calcutta, is often – somewhat inaccurately (Jankowsky 1995) – credited with inaugurating comparative and historical linguistics:

The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists. (Jones qtd. in Lehmann 1967: 189)

Jones's statement and the conditions of its production condense a series of lines of thinking and evoke a set of circumstances that deeply influenced how language had come to be viewed at the time. The aforementioned debate on the origins of language had resulted in discussions of how speech is linked to mental activity, and how both are linked to the environment. The doctrine developed in Johann Gottfried Herder's (1744–1803) award-winning essay *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (*Treatise on the Origin of Language*) (1772) was behind affirmations of the existence of an inalienable link between language and culture; a notion that, further elaborated by Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), would gain special traction in the context of post-Napoleonic nationalism. Jones's interest and expertise in Sanskrit was directly related to his position as a colonial officer of the British Empire and, therefore, to his responsibility to develop technologies of knowledge that would assist in "understanding" the colonized subject: "[w]hen, in 1765, the East India Company obtained the administrative rights to Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, knowledge of India's culture became a colonial necessity" (Rocher 1995: 189).

Paradoxically, Jones's statement also foreshadowed a development that in due course would channel linguistic research in a direction that radically severed language from culture. By suggesting that research focus on "the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar" he subscribed to a line of thinking that prioritized the formal dimension of language in plotting linguistic comparison and evolution (Collinge 1995: 197). It was the trend that would be dominant throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as language scholars equated progress with scientificization, and mapping the forms of grammar offered the most suitable strategy to replicate the categories and methods of science. John E. Joseph has described the process as

the gradual realignment of the study of language away from moral science, philosophy, aesthetics, rhetoric, and philology, and in the direction of the natural sciences – first botany, biology, chemistry, and comparative anatomy; then geology; and finally physics, by way of mathematics. With this has come a steady elimination of human *will* from the object of study, the necessary condition for any "science" in the modern sense. (Joseph 1995: 221)

Still within the comparative and historical paradigm, August Schleicher (1821–1868), with the *Junggrammatiker* (or Neogrammarians), played a central role in the process when he formulated a clarifying analogy that compared languages and natural organisms. The latter exhibited predictable behavior and contained within themselves the seeds of their own evolution; and these properties, Schleicher suggested, were applicable to languages, which were thus (rhetorically) rendered suitable for scientific observation. The Neogrammarians moved away from their predecessor's organic analogy but continued to focus nonetheless on linguistic forms, declaring the absolute regularity of their

evolution through sound laws (*Lautgesetze*): "every sound change, inasmuch as it occurs mechanically, takes place according to laws that admit no exception" (Osthoff and Brugmann qtd. in Lehmann 1967: 204). The central metaphor controlling the field switched from organic to mechanical, but the operations of language in the process of evolution continued to be located outside the purview of human agency.[1]

The dominance of comparative and historical studies and the progressive scientificization of linguistic research through a radical focus on the formal system of language resulted in historical grammar, a discipline that aimed at describing the linguistic processes and identifying the successive stages through which a particular language had evolved from its immediate ancestor into its present shape. The ideal was that the knowledge produced by multiple investigations on specific sections of a language's grammar – vowels, consonants, pronouns, verbs, relative clauses, etc. – at different points in time would be collected and organized into a particular type of text that would display a description of the language of origin's grammar, followed by the chronologically arranged sound laws that had generated the present state of the language. In the Spanish tradition,[2] this was exactly what Ramón Menéndez Pidal (1869–1968) did in 1904: He brought together his research on the evolution of Spanish and the notes he had developed for his course on the comparative grammar of Latin and Spanish at the University of Madrid. The result was his *Manual elemental de gramática histórica de la lengua española* (1904).[3]

The idealist challenge: redefining the relationship between language and human will

The 1904 *Manual* was one in a series of publications that made Ramón Menéndez Pidal Spain's leading scholar in matters of language and philology. It is crucial to note, however, that Menéndez Pidal's reputation was built

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[1] Saussure would in fact formulate the theory of language that would radically establish the autonomy of linguistics by isolating language from usage (*langue versus parole*), context (internal *versus* external linguistics) and history (synchrony *versus* diachrony). However, having rendered language an object of scientific investigation, he insisted on the importance of examining its entanglement with cultural and political phenomena. See Crowley 1992 for a pertinent distinction between diachrony and history in Saussure.

[2] The Spanish tradition goes, of course, well beyond Menéndez Pidal. Suffice it to remember Menéndez Pidal's disciples (e.g. Amado Alonso, Américo Castro, Rafael Lapesa) at Madrid's *Centro de Estudios Históricos* and its Latin American ramifications (partially discussed here in Toscano y García's chapter). See Catalán Menéndez-Pidal for a discussion of the Madrid School's theory of language.

[3] For a theoretical and ideological critique of historical linguistics see Milroy 1992. For an ideological analysis of Menéndez Pidal's early-career foray into historical grammar see Del Valle 1997.

through a broadly based project that included the study of the country's language, literature and history.[4] In fact, his incursion into historical grammar and therefore into the autonomous field of linguistics surprised some of his contemporaries and even triggered a critical and revealing reaction from one of Spain's most prestigious intellectual figures: diplomat and writer Juan Valera (1824–1905). In a 1905 article entitled "Gramática histórica," Valera reviewed Menéndez Pidal's book (as well as two others of much less consequence by José Alemany and Salvador Padilla) and charged against the discipline:

The doubts that I have modestly expressed . . . go against historical grammar if by such we mean not just the history of language but the philosophy of said history; not just the observed fact but also the cause, the reason, the law by virtue of which the fact is realized or must be realized unless the law is broken . . . My doubts have to do with the laws to which words are subjected in the process of change. What about them is natural or universal? What about them is arbitrary? What is positive or in force only in a limited region? What is still current and what is already old or has been abolished since who knows when? (Valera 1905: 1180–1)

Valera was not concerned with historical grammar as long as it was taken to be a purely descriptive endeavor, that is, a record of the changes that had led from the language of origin (e.g. Latin) to the language being historicized (e.g. Spanish). His main concern, however, was with the theory of language that, associated with historical grammar, identified the essence of the object in its purely formal properties and explained its operations with utter independence from human will.

I will not deny the existence of certain phonetic laws. But maybe, within those laws, without abolishing them or breaking them, the instinctive whim of different peoples – or maybe, sometimes, even just one – produces entirely different sounds or combinations of sounds from the same root . . . At first sight, for the layman – in whose number I modestly count myself – there is no such thing as a phonetic law. In the transformation of words there is nothing but constant usage, which is grounded in instinctive whim. (Valera 1905: 1179)

While instinctive whim (*capricho instintivo*) and the reasoning behind it were no match for the thoroughly elaborated notion of sound law, Valera made an extraordinarily lucid and powerful point: scientificity in language study had come at the tremendous cost of surgically removing it from speakers, from the act of speaking and therefore from the contextual conditions of language's existence.

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[4] The breadth of Menéndez Pidal's pursuits is discussed in, for example, Pérez Villanueva 1991 and Pérez Pascual 1998, two mostly hagiographic but detailed and informative biographies, and Portolés 1986, an insightful account of the development of linguistic and philological studies in twentieth-century Spain.

Valera, of course, was not writing in a vacuum. At the time of his critique of historical grammar and close to the core of mainstream linguistics, the voices of dialectologists – which paradoxically had been encouraged by the Neogrammarians – were being heard as they questioned the systematicity of sound laws and even the very existence of well-delineated language frontiers. The observation of language in context – of speakers speaking – was revealing, as Valera's instincts suggested, important flaws in the dominant theory of language evolution. There was also an alternative climate of opinion among certain scholars of language that took an anti-positivistic stand and affirmed the existence of an essential link between language and human will. Suffice it to recall the publication of Benedetto Croce's *L'estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale* (*Aesthetics as the science of expression and general linguistics*) in 1902, which placed human will at the center of language studies and rejected the model of the natural sciences, and Karl Vossler's *Positivismus und Idealismus in der Sprachwissenschaft* (*Positivism and idealism in the language sciences*) in 1904, in which – in a tradition that connected him to Croce and could be traced back to Wilhelm von Humboldt among others – language was defined as an expression of the human spirit and its history classified as a branch of the history of culture. Although Vossler continued to focus on the formal transformation of language, the forms themselves were no longer an end but a methodological strategy through which to reach the psychological make-up and aesthetic inclination of individuals and collectivities. Change originates as individual creation, as the product of intuition, and spreads throughout the community.[5]

In spite of Menéndez Pidal's initial success with historical grammar, he must have shared Valera's concerns with that discipline's possible implications. In fact, the bulk of his linguistic work – as well as that of most of his disciples in the Madrid School of Spanish Philology – developed along lines that, despite some discrepancies, were drawn on the grounds of linguistic idealism.[6] When Menéndez Pidal published the first edition of his masterpiece *Orígenes del español: estado lingüístico de la Península Ibérica hasta el siglo XI* in 1926, he had not abandoned the rigorous study of linguistic documents and the linguistic forms they revealed, but he had redefined the relationship between language and history. Language had now become a sociolinguistically complex structure and its historicity had morphed from a sequential disposition along a chronological empty grid into a dynamic relationship with the context of production. He did

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[5] For an overview of the development of dialectology and its challenge to historical linguistics see Chambers and Trudgill 1980 (13–36). For the development of the Italian Neolinguistic School's challenge see Albrecht 1995. For a thorough review of the state of Romance linguistics at the beginning of the century see Iordan and Orr 1970.

[6] For the penetration of idealism in the Madrid School see Catalán Menéndez-Pidal 1955 and Portolés 1986. Portolés is less inclined to add Menéndez Pidal to the list of idealist linguists.

identify three distinct periods on the basis of the type of language displayed by the selected documents from León, Castile and Aragon: a first period between 900 and 1030, in which he could discern a strong tendency to romanize writing; a second, between 1030 and 1170, in which a Latinizing thrust seems to have taken over writing habits; and a third phase, from 1170 onwards, in which the romanizing tendency returned for good. However, his greatest and more lasting contribution was not in his description of specific linguistic changes – which would later be corrected by others working with new data and perspectives – nor in his (from our present perspective ridiculous) view of Castilian's inherently superior features.[7] His profound contribution was his commitment to render the study of language truly relevant to history:

We must try to examine the history of these dark centuries in relation to this linguistic evolution. We must try to do it by penetrating, to the extent possible, the spirit of that remote past life; by inspiring ourselves in the aesthetic intention of those speakers, whether they were under the influence of educated or vulgar tendencies, archaizing or neological ones, emphatic or careless about speech. (Menéndez Pidal 1950: ix)

The idealist theory of language in which *Orígenes* was based led Menéndez Pidal to examine scribal practices in a context of socially significant linguistic variation and to link linguistic processes to the realm of the Law, "Reconquest" politics, and identity-building:

Castile, upon its emancipation from the tradition of the Visigoth court followed by León and upon its subsequent departure from Spain's common norm, emerges as an exceptional and innovating people. Let us remember this characteristic that will explain the essence of the Castilian dialect. And let us add a most interesting coincidence: Castile – which, known for its customary law, opposes the written law dominant in the rest of Spain – is the region that provides the Peninsula with the main literary language. (Menéndez Pidal 1950: 475)

The specifics of Menéndez Pidal's views on the origins of Spanish have been contested on the basis of philological evidence and developments in language change theory (e.g. Penny 2000), and the nationalist ideological underpinnings of his linguistic work have been highlighted (e.g. Del Valle 2002a). However, the fact remains that he lucidly embraced a perspective that, first, recognizes the operations of linguistic variation within a complex system of socially grounded norms and that, second, searches for the origins of Spanish in the interface between language and politics during the Middle Ages: in the struggles among

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[7] For example, when describing the variation that led to $ou > o$ and $ei > e$ in Castile, he states: "By soon discarding the *ou*, *ei* forms, Castile displays a more accurate acoustic taste, choosing quite early and with resolve the most euphonic forms" (Menéndez Pidal 1950: 486).

the various Iberian kingdoms and in the sociopolitical roots and ramifications of scribal decisions.[8]

Language, society and history

In many respects, Menéndez Pidal can be included (with the likes of, for example, Antoine Meillet and Hugo Schuchardt) among the precursors of sociolinguistics in general and historical sociolinguistics in particular,[9] which produced a new articulation of language and history through the mediation of social categories. Sociolinguistics – whose modern crystallization is best represented by the initial work of William Labov (1972) and Peter Trudgill (1974) – identified variation as a central phenomenon in language and rescued actual linguistic practices – the locus of variation – from the peripherality to which Saussure had pushed it (see note 1). The new discipline also found a crucial correlation between social categories such as age, gender, education or situation and the systematicity of variation, a development that brought context to bear on linguistic research. From this point on, having defined language as variable and variation as systematic, sociolinguists engaged in the accurate description of orderly heterogeneity through empirical and quantitative methods.

This new paradigm had a double implication in terms of how language and history are related. First, if a language is no longer conceived of as a highly focused and stable grammar but as a complex diasystemic structure, earlier stages in the history of that language must also be conceived as complex diasystemic structures, and research into those stages must proceed accordingly. This is precisely historical sociolinguistics' intent: In the absence of actual speech, historical sociolinguists must devise ways to treat the archival material so that it will lend itself to the reconstruction of the language's particular configuration of orderly heterogeneity at any time and to the field's signature quantitative approach.[10] There is yet a second dimension of sociolinguistics that deeply

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[8] Efforts to bring together what at the time was known as internal and external history and thus move away from the dry "dehumanizing" effect of historical grammar are best represented by Rafael Lapesa's classic *Historia de la lengua española*, first published in 1942 (Lapesa 1980). In spite of its value, this genre – which continues to be practiced to this date (e.g. Pharies 2007, a textbook, or the outstanding and truly impressive *Historia de la lengua española* (2004) coordinated by Rafael Cano) – offers limited attempts to theorize the connection between that which is identified as internal – linguistic form – and external – a series of events that define a narrative of Spain's and Spanish America's history and that only loosely connect with linguistic practices – and essentially remains within traditional paradigms.

[9] For treatments of this genealogy see, for example, Lloyd 1970 and Gimeno Menéndez 1995.

[10] The pioneering work in historical sociolinguistics is Romaine 1982. A good example of how Spanish has been approached from this perspective is Gimeno Menéndez 1995. More recently,

affected the interface between language and history. In an inspired theoretical move, synchrony and diachrony were merged into one. Variation was the essence of language and, while it was obvious that not all cases resulted in change, it became evident that all instances of change did originate in the type of variation whose meticulous representation was being designed by sociolinguistics through methods that combined formal grammar, logical-mathematical language (statistics) and elementary sociology. A sociolinguistic description of a language offered not just correlations between forms of grammar and social factors but the snapshot of a system that contained the seeds of its potential transformation. Thanks to this theoretical and methodological leap, it was now possible to see language in motion and to think of the historicity of language not only as evolution along different positions in a chronological empty grid, but as a dynamic relationship with context.

Developments in sociolinguistics led Peter Burke to see a gap between linguistics, sociology and history: a barely explored space that could and should be productively gauged and charted by a social history of language (1987). In his view, sociolinguistics had made four major historically relevant points: "1. Different social groups use different varieties of language. 2. The same people employ different varieties of language in different situations. 3. Language reflects the society (or culture) in which it is spoken. 4. Language shapes the society in which it is spoken" (1987: 3–4). Points 1 through 3 are indeed consistent with the general development of sociolinguistics and historical sociolinguistics: inasmuch as variation correlates to social categories and situational factors, an individual's usage – the choice of certain variants over others – may provide us with information on her or his social position as well as on the social structure of the situation in which the utterance or the text was produced. Following these principles, specific research projects (on, say, the use of *vos* and *tú* in eighteenth-century Castile or the use of *s* and *x* as social markers in sixteenth-century León) would produce results that would be located in a "big picture" representing the history of language X. Language X is diachronically laid out along a chronological grid and, for different points along the timeline, its structure is described *in accordance with sociolinguistic principles*, that is, with attention to how linguistic forms relate to social and contextual factors and to how socially grounded variation is the key to the dynamics of change.

However, Burke's proposal of a social history of language reaches beyond the scope of historical sociolinguistics. He demonstrates an interest not just

Conde Silvestre (2007) reviewed the field through case studies from English and Spanish. Ralph Penny's 2000 *Variation and Change in Spanish* must be included as a major contribution to the historical sociolinguistics of Spanish even though his take – following Trudgill's studies of dialect contact, Giles' theories of accommodation and Milroy's views of change through social networks – displays a more relaxed attitude towards quantification.

in sociolinguistics but also in ethnolinguistics, the sociology of language and the ethnography of communication; and tellingly declares from the outset: "It is high time for a social history of language, a social history of speech, a social history of communication" (1987: 1). These choices of objects and disciplines move the program away from formal approaches to language history anchored in the powerful imagery suggested by "grammar" – formalist approaches with which sociolinguistics by and large aligns itself – and turn it towards an integration of language within a culturally and sociologically relevant theory of communication. In keeping with this turn, tracing the history of a specific language and describing it at different points along the chronological grid, even if through the identification of variables and their social correlates, may not be the main purpose of a social history of language. Instead, more broadly understood patterns of communication may be identified, within this new field, as the object through which to pursue an ethnographic and sociological understanding of a particular community. In fact, a certain social group, a complex set of social structures or a set of social practices of a specific type is the ultimate object of study, and language is conceived of not as an isolated entity whose nature is to be identified and explained but as an integral part of a sociologically defined object. "A history of Spanish" – where "Spanish" is uncritically accepted as an object that exists out there – and "a linguistic history of Spain" – where "Spain" is identified as a linguistically heterogeneous territory and a disputed cultural and political space – construct very different sets of phenomena and invite very different scholarly approaches to their treatment.[11]

Of particular relevance to the present essay and to the book it introduces is how Burke and the sociolinguistic schools that he vindicates actually articulate language and history into an object of scholarly reflection. On one hand, language and communicative practices are described diachronically, that is, they are assumed to change over time according to identifiable patterns. On the other, they are described synchronically in their inalienable relation to specific cultural and social contexts. In this sense, what's envisioned is an articulation of language and history in which synchrony and diachrony are two sides of the same coin, in which the assumption is made that language not only has a history – it changes over time – but also and especially that it is historical – that its nature can only be understood in relation to the context of usage.

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[11] In this regard, it is worth mentioning existing projects structured around the linguistic history of a territory rather than a language: on Spain and the Iberian Peninsula, Echenique Elizondo and Sánchez Méndez 2005, Lleal 1990 and Moreno Fernández 2005; on Mexico, the two-volume project edited by Barriga Villanueva and Martín Butragueño 2010. For a lucid and productive reformulation of the relationship between language and history – and a related research agenda – see Kabatek (2003).

Language and politics

Of the four general points that, according to Burke, have been made by soci-olinguistics, the fourth is worth discussing separately. Language is said to be not a representation of society or a mere instrument of communication but "an active force in society, used by individuals and groups to control oth-ers or to defend themselves against being controlled, to change society or to prevent others from changing it" (1987: 13). Burke affirms that there is a crucial link between language and power that must be the object of sys-tematic investigation.[12] However, in providing examples of authors who have established such a link, Burke mentions the likes of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Louis Althusser and Jacques Derrida, who are not by any stretch of the imagination directly linked to the development of sociolinguistics. In fact, these authors – and whatever amount of linguistic theorizing they engaged in – stand quite critically apart from – when not openly against – the positivistic theories of language underlying most sociolinguistic research.

While it is true that sociolinguistics provided us with, first, fine tools to describe the formal relationship between language and society and, second, a daring and convincing challenge to the synchrony/diachrony dichotomy, the most productive explorations of the relationship between language and power are to be found somewhere else, in disciplinary spaces where efforts are being made to articulate language and politics. One of the crystallizations of this kind of research is Language Policy and Planning (it has even come to be known as LPP, an unquestionable sign – the generalization of an acronym – that the field has indeed acquired a significant level of autonomy). The initial development of LPP was favored by conditions created after World War II, by decolonization and the subsequent emergence of new countries whose often complex profiles – cultural, linguistic, economic, etc. – had to be reconfigured following development theories and in compliance with the nation-state model. LPP became a form of social engineering and engaged in the creation of a technical vocabulary of its own (e.g. bilingualism, diglossia, standardization, dialect, language) and in the identification of domains suitable to specific forms of linguistic intervention (e.g. schools, government, media).[13]

A second strain of LPP, to a great extent critical of the first and associ-ated with the defense of minorities' rights, grew when minoritized languages within traditional nation-states were recognized as forms of cultural expres-sion and as sources of political mobilization, and therefore demands for their normalization – i.e., for their standardization and restoration to all social

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[12] For Burke's work along this line see his 2004 *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe*.

[13] A brilliant exponent of the classical LPP model is Haugen 1972. Kaplan and Baldauf 1997 offer an excellent example of its persistence. For an overview of LPP's development see Ricento 2006 or, in Spanish, Amorós Negre 2008.

domains – gained political strength. Although the main strain was critiqued for reproducing the categories and hierarchies that had justified colonialism and for perpetuating minoritization, the positivist epistemological bases of LPP were not questioned: languages continued to be taken as objective entities and cultural (often including linguistic) homogeneity remained a requirement for community construction.[14]

There have been other paths towards the articulation of language and politics as an object of study besides LPP. The *Journal of Language and Politics* – published by John Benjamins and edited by prominent discourse analysts Ruth Wodak and Paul Chilton – is one of them:

The *Journal of Language and Politics* (JLP) represents a forum for analysing and discussing the various dimensions in the interplay of language and politics. The basic assumption is that the *language of politics* cannot be separated from the *politics of language*. The notion of 'Political Discourse' does not remain limited to the 'institutional' field of politics (e.g. parliamentary discourse, election campaigns, party programmes, speeches, etc.) but opens to all linguistic manifestations that may be considered to be political, provided that it is convincingly argued what makes them 'political.' (http://benjamins.com/#catalog/journals/jlp/main)

As one might expect from a journal edited by Wodak and Chilton, *JLP* articulates the two entities in the concept of "political discourse" and favors – or attracts – mainly contributions that fall squarely within discourse analysis. It is worth remarking that it embraces a broad understanding of politics that goes beyond the practices associated with the literally political institutions of the state.

A similarly comprehensive conceptualization of the political realm – one to which the present project stands closer – is found inside the publishing house Routledge. The Politics of Language series was defined by its editors – Tony Crowley and Talbot J. Taylor – in the following terms:

The Politics of Language series covers the field of language and cultural theory and will publish radical and innovative texts in this area. In recent years the developments and advances in the study of language and cultural criticism have brought to the fore a new set of questions. The shift from purely formal, analytical approaches has created an interest in the role of language in the social, political and ideological realms and the series will seek to address these problems with a clear and informed approach. The intention is to gain recognition for the central role of language in individual and public life. (Burke, Crowley and Girvin 2000: ii)

Thus, the project aimed at revealing language's involvement in all spheres of social life and at promoting an approach inspired by the conceptual landscape outlined by the various strains of cultural theory. Not surprisingly, the

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[14] An early exponent of this strain is Louis-Jean Calvet's 1974 *Linguistique et colonialisme, petit traité de glottophagie*. In Spain, scholars working on the Catalan-speaking areas made significant contributions to the field, e.g. Aracil 1976 and Vallverdú 1981.

program proudly exhibited a slippery resistance to rigid definitions and conceptual enclosures, and left it up to each individual contributor to formulate from particular perspectives on cultural theory her/his own take on the interface between politics and language. Within this paradigm, John Joseph, in his *Language and Politics* (2006), has produced the most elaborate articulation of these two objects to date. Embracing both the narrow and broad sense of politics, he defined language as fundamentally political, as involved not only in the organization of the affairs of the state but also – mostly, we are inclined to say – in negotiating "any situation in which there is an unequal distribution of power" (Joseph 2006: 3).

In sum, LPP has tended to produce an articulation of language and politics in which the goal is to analyze the conditions under which language becomes an object of political action mediated by "language professionals" and to assess the outcomes of such intervention. In a different vein, the analysis of political discourse and the politics of language have conceptualized language – treating it as discourse and as an object of discourse respectively – as an essential component of the political process, which unfolds within and outside of the institutional field of politics and in which regimes of normativity, questions of authority and the distribution of power are worked out. Language, in this view, has "no existence separate from the way in which we conceive of it and talk about it" (Joseph 2006: 20).

Towards glottopolitical history: metalanguage and ideology

As Arnoux (2000) has pointed out, historical approaches to language policy developed in the 1970s mainly in the context of reconstructing the circumstances under which the language policies of the French Revolution had been designed and implemented.[15] These approaches were historical, first, in that they turned their gaze back towards periods conventionally identified as "the past." However, more relevant to our purposes, their historicity was grounded in the fact that they aimed at an examination of the material conditions for the production of those policies and, significantly, at an analysis of the metalinguistic discourses that sustained or disputed political interventions in language. How has language been represented in relation to the cultural, economic and social universe? How has language been conceived in relation to legitimate membership in the community and to the modern idea of citizenship? How has the relationship between language, nation and empire been constructed? What constitutes in any particular historical instance a rightful language expert with the authority to intervene in linguistic matters? What has the relationship

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[15] See, for example, Balibar and Laporte 1974 and De Certeau, Julia and Revel 1975. A study that embraces a broader notion of politics and constructs its connection to language in a manner that has inspired the present project can be found in Grillo 1989.

been between the holders of the linguistic *skeptron* and institutions of political power? What is the political and social grounding, and what are the institutional and practical conditions of production and circulation of metalinguistic discourses? These questions, among others, articulate a connection between language, politics and history that demands the reconstruction of the social spaces and material conditions in which practices and metalinguistic discourses were deployed and that searches through the archive in order to retrieve texts that, as Arnoux argues (2000), are no longer treated as simple documents but as discourses that must be read against the grain. This glottopolitical history, as it were, must unveil their ideological underpinnings, their performative nature and the strategies through which they constituted their position in the field from which and into which they emerged.

The glottopolitical history project that we are presenting in this volume places metalanguage at the center of its pursuit and, in so doing, recognizes its debt to recent efforts to theoretically construct a "meta zone" where the dialectical relation between language and context is built and from which language studies can develop in productive new directions. Adam Jaworski, Nikolas Coupland and Dariusz Galasiński, in an effort to highlight the current centrality of this concept, have put together a broad and systematic survey of the ways in which different branches of language studies have approached metalanguage (2004).[16] They define it as "language in the context of linguistic representations and evaluations" and establish the premise that "for the analysis of language use in social life, we need to engage explicitly with a 'meta' component, a set of social and cognitive processes 'alongside' or 'about' the forms and substances of speech, writing or other symbolic material" (2004: 6). These representations of language provide us with crucial clues on the role that it is assigned in society by different social groups. Often it is the case that these representations spread throughout the public sphere and become common sense knowledge that naturalizes certain sociolinguistic arrangements which, far from being natural, result from and reproduce specific power dynamics. In other words, "metalanguage can work at an ideological level" (Jaworski, Coupland and Galasiński 2004: 3).[17]

One of the fields in language studies that Jaworski, Coupland and Galasiński identify as having recognized the centrality of metalanguage is precisely language ideology analysis. This approach assumes a theory of language that is, by and large, the result of the evolution of modern sociolinguistics from a

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[16] Jaworski, Coupland and Galasiński's book was published by Mouton de Gruyter in its Language, Power and Social Process series, edited by Monica Heller and Richard J. Watts, another major contributor to the dynamic articulation of language, politics and history. Blommaert 1990 (see below) belongs to this same series.

[17] Among the works available from this meta perspective, I will single two out for their influence on the articulation of the present project: Deborah Cameron's *Verbal Hygiene* (1995) and Alexandre Duchêne and Monica Heller's *Discourses of Endangerment* (2007).

descriptive to a critical discipline. Language is "a contextualised and con-
textualising phenomenon, . . . a set of strategic, often reflexive, socially imbued
practices" (Jaworski, Coupland and Galasiński 2004: 16). Consequently, study-
ing the sociolinguistic profile of any given social group requires going beyond
the formal description of their repertoire of *lects*, the different discursive genres
in which they are put to use and their distribution over the social landscape. The
critical approach that we embrace requires that language in society be inscribed
within the specific competing regimes of normativity that articulate linguistic
practices and social meanings. In the last decade of the twentieth century, the
study of metalinguistic discourse in relation to regimes of normativity – that
is, the historical contingency, social localization and political function of rep-
resentations of language – greatly benefited from the emergence of language
ideology studies. A group of North American anthropologists launched a project
throughout the nineties that coined the term and opened the doors to a new line
of research on language.[18] According to Kathryn Woolard language ideologies
are "representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection
of language and human beings in a social world . . . mediating link[s] between
social forms and forms of talk" (Woolard 1998: 3). The adoption of this new
term signaled, first, a willingness to problematize traditional anthropology's
naturalizing thrust in its view of culture: "Ironically, anthropology too often
has participated in a kind of naturalization of the cultural, casting culture as
a shared and timeless prime motivator. The emphasis of ideological analysis
on the social and experiential origins of systems of signification helps counter
such naturalization" (Woolard 1998: 10). Secondly, the new term indicated
that these anthropologists were taking an interest in language that focused on
the roots and ramifications of its representations: "[T]his [political-economic]
emphasis was hardly unexpected, given the acknowledged importance in much
language ideological research of understanding the language beliefs and prac-
tices of social groups as strongly connected to group interests within society"
(Kroskrity 2000: 2).

Almost at the same time, a comparable project entitled *Ideologies of Lan-
guage* (1990) was being launched by John E. Joseph and Talbot Taylor through
Routledge's already mentioned series on the Politics of Language. In this
case, most contributors came from the field of linguistics but proclaimed their
linguistic Protestantism ("we are linguistic 'protestants,' even if belonging
to distinct denominations" (1990: 2)) and examined discourses on language
– including some produced within the disciplinary boundaries of linguistics
– revealing their connection to broader processes located in the social and

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[18] Schieffelin, Woolard and Kroskrity 1998 and Kroskrity 2000a stand as the most representative
of that program.

political realms.[19] Both projects denounced the amputations suffered by language in the process of scientificization and construction of an autonomous field. In isolating grammar and thus rendering language susceptible to scientific description, there had been a separation of language from actual usage, a privileging of its referential functions and a negation of the empirical value of the speaker's linguistic awareness (Kroskrity 2000b: 4–5). According to Bourdieu, the universalization through radical formalism of rules that are ultimately those of the socially legitimate language "sidesteps the question of the economic and social conditions of the acquisition of the legitimate competence and of the constitution of the market in which this definition of the legitimate and the illegitimate is established and imposed" (Bourdieu 1991: 44). Language ideology studies, and metalanguage research in general, rescue from marginalization elements that come to be considered central to the operations of language: "the concept of language ideology is the offspring of two neglected forces: the linguistic 'awareness' of speakers and the (nonreferential) functions of language" (Kroskrity 2000b: 5). In the process, representations of language – whether produced inside or outside of the disciplinary borders of linguistics – are recognized as contextualized and contextualizing, as emerging from and central to the constitution of regimes of normativity that characterize the sociolinguistic life of a community.

One particular project within the ideology paradigm has been especially inspiring for the development of the present book: Jan Blommaert's volume *Language Ideological Debates* (1999). Blommaert explicitly sets out to engage in a historiography of language ideologies, in the study of their historical production and reproduction (1999: 1). The selected point of entry to the delineated field of study – the immediate object of analysis – is the debate; not necessarily the one-time event in which opposing opinions are presented, contrasted and discussed, but "slowly unfolding processes of discursive exchange" (1999: 11) in which civil society meets policy making, through which "the polity gets involved in shaping policies" (1999: 8). Following Silverstein and Urban (1996), Blommaert defines debates as struggles over authoritative entextualization, that is, over the establishment of preferred – maybe even optionless – readings of particular social experiences. The focus is, of course, on debates in which any aspect of language is the object of discussion and which "develop against a wider sociopolitical and historical horizon of relationships of power, forms of discrimination, social engineering, nation-building and so forth . . . Language ideological debates are a part of more general sociopolitical processes, and one of the contributions . . . may consist of a clearer

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[19] Joseph and Taylor's project, like the present volume, configures a disciplinary space that intersects not only with the history of linguistic ideas (Auroux 1989) and linguistic historiography (Koerner 1995), but also with intellectual history.

understanding of the precise role played by language ideologies in more general sociopolitical developments, conflicts and struggles" (1999: 2).

By definition, ideological representations of language are inseparable from the circumstances of their production, from the context into which they are injected. The sociopolitical embedding of linguistic ideologies invites a thorough approach to that context that recognizes its inherent complexity: "Sociolinguistics now theorises social context . . . as a dynamic interaction between language forms and an array of 'situational components,' which include cultural norms of production and interpretation, generic and stylistic conventions, communicative motivations, discursive moves and strategies" (Jaworski, Coupland and Galasiński 2004: 6). Glottopolitical history thus requires an examination of the agents of such metalinguistic discourses, an understanding of their position in the cultural and political fields in which they operate, and an exploration of the material conditions that enabled or impaired the circulation of particular discourses, their relationship to the institutional landscape of the time.[20] It requires delving into what Blommaert (1999: 3–8) calls the intrinsic historicity of metalinguistic discourses. Following Fernand Braudel's well-known formulation of *durée*, he defines history as "the study of overlapping, intertwining and conflicting temporalities in the lives of people" (Blommaert 1999: 3), temporalities that include both objective chronological phenomena and socially constructed perceptions of time. Such conception moves away from a flat historicity that relies on placing events along the chronological empty grid behind the arbitrary line that separates past from present. It invites us instead to move towards historicity as a dynamic interaction between language phenomena and a multilayered context that includes social conditions simultaneous with the phenomena themselves as well as other language phenomena – previous or subsequent – of which the one under study may be a reformulation, reinterpretation or precedent.

A political history of Spanish: the making of a language

It should not come as a surprise by now that, in this project, Spanish is approached as a discursively constructed political artifact that, as such, contains traces of the society in which it is produced and of the discursive traditions that are involved – and often even invoked – in its creation. However, it is not only for its representational value that we look at it as an artifact, but for its performative function in the field in which it is produced. As political artifacts, signs constructed with the *lengua española* or *español* signifier – in tension

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[20]   In this regard, the fragmentary and partial nature of glottopolitical history is evident inasmuch as it relies on written texts and, therefore, mostly on the representations of language produced by specific sectors of the society under study. Studies that focus on periods for which evidence of orality is available can circumvent this limitation. This may be a productive area of cooperation between glottopolitical history and historical sociolinguistics.

with others such as *romance de Castilla*, *lengua castellana* or *castellano* – have been playing a role for centuries in the construction of political consciousness and the organization of power structures. The focus of the studies that make up this volume is therefore metalinguistic discourse that, under different sets of ideological and material conditions, has produced politically relevant representations of Spanish.[21] This delimitation of the object leads us then to set the beginning of our story, through Roger Wright's study, at the time when scribal practices and explicit references to the romance language of Castile – and to the necessary elaboration of a correct variety of it: *castellano drecho* – brought to the fore the political significance of a new linguistic regime in which a written language close to everyday speech acquired value in a cultural space that until that time had been monopolized by Latin. Wright's theory, which clearly conceptualizes the birth of Spanish as a metalinguistic change rather than a process of linguistic evolution, offers the perfect setting to mark the initial point of our narrative.

In spite of this project's – admittedly pretentious – claims of originality, the overall structure of the book is ultimately deeply conventional. Some of these conventions – such as, for example, the ordering of the chapters according to the relative chronology of the events, debates and processes discussed – are less problematic. But even chronology is not free from contradictions as the variously defined objects under study cover different temporal ranges often overlapping with each other instead of constituting a clean order. We must therefore be cautious about the sequentiality suggested by the disposition of the chapters: while in some cases it may allow us to discern historical continuities and discontinuities, in others it may merely serve as a convenient expository device.

The organization of the book in four parts is even more vulnerable than standard sequential chronology. I would dare contend that Parts II, III and IV are intuitively justified. The history of Spanish has for the most part been written alongside the history of Spain; the historical presence of Spanish and its evolution in Spanish America has been written – more often than not – separately, as an offshoot of the former; Spanish in the United States has come to be recognized – especially in the last couple of decades of the twentieth century – as an autonomous object worthy of scholarly (and political) attention. And yet, even the labels chosen as titles for each part uncover the contradictions and blind spots of the traditional narrative that, to some extent, I reproduce: taking "Iberian" and "Latin American" perspectives forces us to look at Spanish transversally, that is, not only in a diachronic relation with itself but also in a dialogic relation with other languages and geographic spaces. Part III's title even suggests the existence of a transatlantic perspective which, as Arnoux

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[21] The glottopolitical angle, among other elements, distinguishes our project from Francisco Abad's *"Lengua española": para la historia de un concepto y un objeto* (2003).

and Del Valle argue in their introduction, in fact crosses the whole book and should be the basis of a trans-area approach to the historical construction of Spanish that completely reconfigures the methodological and epistemological involvement of space.[22] Part V turns out to be a revealingly odd combination that, as Fernández and Del Valle suggest in their introduction, produces vectors that may point in productive directions for the reading and rereading of the volume.

The very title of the book should expose a fundamental tension. On one hand, it names an object ("a political history of Spanish") whose objective existence is questioned from the outset; on the other, it suggests a closed structure that is contradicted by the project's open-ended character. The title and size of the book seem to promise comprehensive coverage, a totalizing narrative that would succinctly make sense out of a complex glottopolitical field. And yet, the reader will not find such comprehensive representation, nor even the desire to produce it. In fact, the tension between the title's totalizing thrust and the case-study structure of the project reveals – or so I hope – the fragmented nature of our account and the open character of this undertaking. Just as Spanish is constantly in the making, as the subtitle announces, so is the scholarly project that takes it as its object.

Thus, like its object, this project is itself historical. It is engaged with a scholarly tradition that has been traced – or constructed – in this necessarily brief introduction and that somehow loosely represents this editor's academic trajectory as a "linguist." It is also a collective project that involves a network of collaborators of different national origins, geoacademic situations and even disciplinary trainings that has developed over the years through this editor's professional circulation. In spite of its diverse and international flavor, we must not overlook its firm roots in North American academia, which itself constitutes a fascinatingly explosive intellectual and political field with tensions of its own. The fact that it is published with Cambridge University Press is not alien to the distribution of symbolic capital and the material conditions of life in US institutions of higher education. It is not alien either to struggles – which, I suspect, are not exclusive to the US – within the field of "Hispanic linguistics" over what constitutes legitimate "linguistic" scholarship and, therefore, over who gets faculty lines, student fellowships and research grants. Some of these contextual factors may be pertinent to understanding the – for many probably disquieting – publication of a political history of Spanish *in English*, a language-ideological move as worthy of critique as any of the cases analyzed in this book.

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[22] Ottmar Ette has been playing a central role in the development of TransArea studies (e.g. Ette 2011).