



Alberto Lombardero Caparrós

Two Centuries of English Language Teaching and Learning in Spain

1769-1970

Amsterdam
University
Press

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Two Centuries of English Language Teaching and Learning in Spain

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The language in this volume has been edited by Mary Robitaille-Ibbett.

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To my wife Mònica
and to the apples of our eyes, Irene and Marina

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Introduction: The historiography of FLT

Abstract

Introduces the main principles underlying the historiography of foreign language teaching and learning. Firstly, the chapter includes a historical overview of the most relevant academic literature in order to illustrate some of the principal approaches to this discipline in both national and international traditions. Secondly, it provides a comprehensive retrospective specifically of the Spanish tradition of the history of English language teaching and learning, from its origins in the 1960s up to the present. Lastly, a full account of the methodology pursued in the rest of the book is given. Due to the multiple variables this type of research entails, we have opted out for an eclectic methodology which mainly revolves around a synchronic and diachronic study, including off-the-beaten-track sources such as historical journalism and personal accounts.

Keywords: ELT history, Spain, methodology, eclecticism

The significance of the historiography of foreign language teaching

Over the last few decades there has been a growing interest in the history of foreign language teaching (FLT), judging by the increasing number of publications in this field. To some extent, the recent consolidated influence of applied linguistics as an independent scientific discipline accounts for this interest in the historiography of foreign language teaching. Mackey (1965), Titone (1968), Stern (1983), Puren (1988), and Caravolas (2000) regard history as one of the fundamental mainstays of FLT. Titone (1968, 2) claims that 'history can give us a perspective' whereby past experiences can illustrate present trends in teaching as well as a criterion whereby the

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historically informed language teacher may assume a more critical view in relation to modern problems and solutions. Stern (1983, 76) believes that there is a paucity of studies in the historiography of language teaching: 'Unfortunately the current state of historical documentation is far from satisfactory. Language teaching theory has a short memory'. Van Els *et al.* point out the future guidelines for a more factual and objective study of the historiography of FLT:

Historical descriptions frequently have the unfortunate tendency to develop into broad abstractions [...] Especially if the space available is limited, [...], there is a danger that the historical reality will be distorted. In the case of the history of FLT this danger is especially acute because much remains hidden. Certain periods, especially before the 18th and 19th centuries, have not yet been described for many countries, and even for the best documented period, the last 150 years, many details are still unrecorded. (1984, 140)

Approaches

The most common approach to the historiography of language teaching (henceforth, HLT) has been to describe the development diachronically from antiquity to the present day (Mackey 1965; Titone 1968; Rivers 1981). They all focus on a long-standing conflict of methods between formalism and activism – that is, between enquiry and practice – as the principal key to HLT. Mackey and Titone viewed the history of language teaching as a dual conflict between, on the one hand, the work of activist reformers between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries (Montaigne, Comenius, Locke, Basedow, Jacotot or Viëtor among others) and, on the other hand, the formalistic trend represented, particularly throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by Meidenger, Ahn, Ollendorf and Ploetz. Kelly (1969), unlike most previous writers who were concerned with the development of teaching methods, widens the scope of historical studies by extending the historical approach to a large number of other features in language pedagogy, such as the choice of languages, changes in the objectives of language teaching, the role of the teacher, and so on. By doing this, Kelly introduces a synchronic approach into the study of HLT. Stern (1983) suggests that research on HLT needs both the synchronic and diachronic approaches to complement each other: that is, the synchronic study of language teaching and learning at a given stage in history (both in its social and educational context), and

the diachronic description of the development of different features and aspects over time. Since Stern, studies on HLT have incorporated both the synchronic and diachronic approaches (see, for example, Michael 1987; Loonen 1991; Klippel 1994).

In this regard, both the Dutch and German historiography of English language teaching (ELT) includes remarkable research, in contrast with other European countries. Pieter Loonen was one of the first Dutch pioneers to deal with this discipline. His book *For to Learne to Buye and Sell: Learning English in the Low Dutch Area Between 1500-1800. A critical survey*, provides a critical outline of ELT alongside an extensive bibliography containing forty primary sources. A few years later, a sequel to Loonen's book entitled *English in the Netherlands: A History of Foreign Language Teaching 1800-1920. With a Bibliography of Textbooks* was written by F. A. Wilhelm (2005). German historiographers include Konrad Schröder (1980-85); Konrad Macht (1986-1990); Friederike Klippel (1994), and Helmut Glück (2002; 2013). Both the Netherlands and Germany seem to possess a more consolidated tradition of research into the historiography of ELT than Spain, mainly due to the fact that ELT started much earlier in those northern countries than in Spain, and therefore they have a longer tradition in the teaching of foreign languages. H. H. Stern (1983) laid the foundations for a more accurate study of the history of foreign language teaching. He classified the different approaches to the study of the history of FLT into two major groups: general surveys and studies of particular aspects. The former is subcategorized into two further types: the first comprises general chronological approaches such as Mackey (1965), Rivers (1981), Viña (2000), and Howatt and Widdowson (2004); the second includes studies on thematic treatment, such as Kelly (1969), Folgado (1988) or Wilhelm (1993). Studies on particular aspects are best represented by Maréchal (1972), Santoyo and Guardia (1982), Fischer *et al.* (2004) and Wilhelm (2005).

Other recent historiographers have restricted their field of research to national chronological surveys. Such is the case of Balz Engler and Renate Haas, editors of *European English Studies: Contributions Towards the History of a Discipline* (2000), a collection of essays dealing with more or less self-conscious national surveys designed to contribute, at an academic level, to the construction of a nascent Pan-European perspective on the history of English at tertiary level. It is a far-reaching book encompassing most European countries: Portugal, Austria, Spain, Poland, Italy, Norway, Denmark, Serbia, France, Germany, Holland, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania.

Publications on the history of foreign language teaching in Spain

Despite the lack of a solid tradition of comprehensive historical studies on FLT, there has been a growing interest in the history and development of FLT in Spain since the 1990s. Apart from some rare exceptions, most of the academic literature produced in Spain is in the form of articles or brief monographs, which are not sufficient to obtain the most accurate possible picture of the whole development of FLT in Spain.

Two exhaustive descriptions stand out in this sea of articles: the first is Calle Carabías, *La enseñanza oficial de idiomas en España: Por una redefinición de la formación teórica del profesorado* (The official teaching of languages in Spain: For a redefinition of teachers' theoretical training, 1990). He outlines the evolution of FLT and the teaching profession in Spain from 1750 to 1990. Fernández and Suso's 2001 work *La didáctica de la lengua extranjera* (Foreign language pedagogy) offers a detailed account of the fundamental theories by analysing some of the foreign language curricula both in primary and secondary schooling.

Among the most relevant articles on the history of ELT, we may cite Morales *et al.* (2000) *La enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras en España* (Foreign language teaching in Spain); three articles written by María del Mar Viña Rouco – 'The teaching of foreign languages in Europe: a historical perspective on FLT in Spain' (2002); 'Metodología inductiva y deductiva en la enseñanza de las lenguas vivas en España en el siglo XIX' ('Inductive and deductive methodologies in the teaching of modern languages in Spain in the nineteenth century', 2005), and 'Un notable antecedente del enfoque comunicativo en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras y de la apertura europeísta en España de principios del siglo XX: Memoria histórica de la enseñanza de idiomas' ('A notorious antecedent of the communicative approach in FLT and the European opening in the early 20th century. Spain: a historical memory of language teaching', 2009) – and finally, Botella and González, 'Los inicios de la enseñanza de las lenguas para fines específicos en el Real Colegio de Cirugía de la Armada de Cádiz' ('The beginnings of languages for specific purposes in El Real Colegio de Cirugía de la Armada of Cádiz', 2007).

The emergence of some academic associations specialized in the history of FLT in the recent past has also contributed to a major interest in the historiography of applied linguistics. In alphabetical order, APHELLE, *Associação Portuguesa para a História do Ensino das Línguas e Literaturas Extranjeras* (Portuguese Association for the History of Foreign Languages and Literature) in Portugal; CIRSIL, *Centro Interuniversitario da Recerca sugla Istoria degli Insegnamenti Linguistici* (Interuniversity Research Centre

on the History of Linguistic Teaching) in Italy; and, HoLLT.net (History of Language Learning and Teaching) in Great Britain. We may mention, in passing, the SIHFLES or *Société Internationale pour l'Histoire du Français Langue Étrangère ou Seconde* (International Society for the History of French Language Teaching), which happens to be the oldest association of all, created in 1987. As for Spain, a case in point is SEHL, *Sociedad Española de Historiografía Lingüística* (Spanish Society of Linguistic Historiography) which, since 1995, has published articles on the history of the teaching of foreign languages, namely Spanish.

The historiography of ELT in Spain: A retrospective

The first significant study on the history of ELT in Spain is Sofía Martín Gamero's book *La enseñanza del inglés en España: Desde la Edad Media hasta el siglo XIX* (The teaching of English in Spain: From the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century), a doctoral thesis written in 1960 and published in an abridged version by Gredos in 1961. It is interesting to note that a few years before, the new degree in English Philology had arrived, first in 1952 in Salamanca and then in 1954 in Barcelona. As the author explains in her prologue, she delves into an unknown field: the (very minority) interest in the English language in Spain during those centuries. Furthermore, her work focuses on those instruments (grammars and dictionaries) to which ELT was confined, even though the main topic in her book is Anglo-Spanish cultural relations from a Spanish perspective:

En esta obra se trata de ofrecer una historia del conocimiento y difusión de la lengua inglesa en España [...] como contribución al estudio del desarrollo de las relaciones culturales entre Inglaterra y la Península. (Martín-Gamero 1961, Prologue)

This work aims to provide a history of the knowledge and diffusion of the English language in Spain [...] as a contribution to the study of the development of the cultural relations between England and the Peninsula.

In Martín-Gamero's book, the various manuals for the teaching of English represent a cultural dimension that needs to be taken into consideration. Steiner writes that Gamero's book contains 'many inaccuracies [...] and her analysis of the contents and organization of the dictionaries and the methods of the lexicographers are often scant and inexact' (1970, 12). However, there

is no doubt that her book paved the way for further research into the study of ELT in our country. Her book is one of the most often quoted among researchers (see Caravolas 2000; Stern 1983; Viña 2000, among others).

Santoyo and Guardia (1982, 3-7), present a brief historical review of English studies in Spain in the first chapter of their book *Treinta años de filología inglesa en la Universidad española* (Thirty years of English Philology in Spanish universities). This book also provides an exhaustive compilation of all the undergraduate and doctoral theses written and defended in Spain between 1952 and 1982. From this same perspective, the AEDEAN, *Asociación Española de Estudios Anglo-Norteamericanos* (Spanish Association of Anglo-North American Studies), in their twenty-sixth Conference, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of English studies in Spanish universities with a commemorative volume called *Fifty Years of English Studies in Spain (1952-2002)*, published by the University of Santiago de Compostela in 2003. Unfortunately, no topics related to the historiography of ELT can be found in the proceedings of this commemorative congress.

Vicente López Folgado wrote a doctoral thesis bearing the title *Gramáticas inglesas publicadas en España en el siglo XVIII* (English grammars published in Spain in the eighteenth century), published by the Complutense University of Madrid in 1988. The principles underlying his thesis are concerned with the historical linguistic development of grammars, with an empirical and rationalist epistemology. He lays special stress on grammatical theory between the sixteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the intention of renewing that type of grammatical study. López's viewpoint is that of unveiling the dense ideological fabric which underlies the grammars he studies. In reality, he surveys four grammars: two of them from the eighteenth century (Steffan 1784; Connelly 1784) and the other two from the early nineteenth century (Shipton 1812; Casey 1819). As with Martín-Gamero (1961), there is no chronological primary source bibliography of all the grammars published in Spain that would better enable the reader to assess the development of English teaching materials. The real innovation in López's work, though, is his epistemological approach in tackling these historical grammars from an empirical stance. On top of that, he also refers to modern grammar theories in order to shed light on some complex historical linguistic points, which contribute to a better understanding of the evolution of historical linguistics. His historical work shares some common ground with that of Martín-Gamero, as both provide a cultural background to the diverse grammars mentioned in their works. However, the linguistic content stands out in López since it provides both a retrospective study of grammar theory and a thorough linguistic description of such grammars.

This variety of approaches to the same theme of historical linguistics is an explicit indicator of the complex nature of language teaching, according to Stern (1983).

Calle Carabías (1990) describes the historical development of FLT in Spain, although he narrows down his research to the study of the teachers' activity in official secondary schooling since, according to this author, it is the only level where there are field-specific teachers. His study extends from 1750 until the late 1980s, mainly focusing on FLT teachers' training. Sureda (1992) delves into the historiography of ELT in Menorca during the British occupation of the island in the eighteenth century in a book called *L'aprenentatge de la llengua anglesa en el primer període de la dominació britànica a Menorca (1708-1756). Un alter mite a trencar? (The Learning of English in the first period of British domination in Menorca (1708-1756). Another myth to bust?)*. There is no mention of primary sources in terms of English manuals: suffice it to say that communication between the local Menorcan people and the British took place in French, since it was the *lingua franca* of the moment.

With the onset of the twenty-first century, there has been an upsurge in historical accounts of ELT in Spain touching upon a wide array of aspects never studied before. Viña (2000) deals with foreign language methodology or didactics in her published thesis *La enseñanza de las lenguas vivas en España (1800-1936), con especial referencia a la lengua inglesa (The teaching of modern languages in Spain (1800-1936), with special reference to the English language)*. She takes a quick look at some didactical French and English manuals as FLT materials, although the main aim of her work is to relate the methods used in FLT to a wider conceptual and methodological framework. Other contributions to the historiography of ELT include Monterrey's two-part article *Los estudios ingleses en España (1900-1950)*, (English Studies in Spain (1900-1950), 2003). The first part examines the curricula of both secondary and university education, while the second deals with the ideological and cultural context. Fernández Menéndez has written three different articles all dealing with ELT historiography: '*Relación entre la antigua Carrera de comercio y el desarrollo de estudios ingleses: referido a la ciudad de Santander en el siglo XIX y primeros años del XX*' (The relation between the former Commerce Studies and the development of English studies: referred to the city of Santander in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, 2009); '*Métodos para la enseñanza del inglés durante el siglo XIX y primera mitad del XX*' (Methods for the teaching of English during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, 2011); and '*La lengua inglesa y su profesorado en la legislación educativa de segunda enseñanza y de estudios mercantiles, 1836-1953*' (The

English language and its teaching staff in the educational legislation of secondary schooling and commercial studies, 1836-1953, published 2012).

Scholars in other disciplines belonging or close to the general field of linguistics have also begun to revisit their past history in a move towards a historiography of their own. In the case of translation studies, see *Historia de la traducción en España (1750-1830)*, (The history of translation in Spain (1750-1830)), by Lafarga and Pegenaute (2004), and in lexicography, Molina García and Sánchez Benedito (2008) *Diccionario Nuevo de las dos lenguas Española e Inglesa by Connelly and Higgins (1796-98)* (New dictionary of the Spanish and English languages by Connelly and Higgins (1796-98)). Steiner wrote a seminal work entitled *Two Centuries of Spanish and English Bilingual Lexicography (1590-1800)* (1970), which laid the foundations for a more fixed tradition in the historiography of lexicography by and large. Other works, mainly monographs, on the history of lexicography include those by Santoyo (1974), Rizo and Valera (2000), Cazorla (2006), Fuster (2006) and Garriga Escribano and Gállego Paz (2008), to name just a few. To round off this section, a final word on a new trend in the all-encompassing historiography of ELT: the history of the teaching of pronunciation. This is best represented by Javier Villoria Prieto, who focuses on three eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Spanish pronunciation manuals for learning English, written by three key figures: Francisco Piferrer (2008), José de Urcullu (2007) and Juan Steffan (2011).

Methodology of the present work

Foreign language teaching and learning is, to put it plainly, a cultural phenomenon that has accompanied humankind for centuries. This work adheres to such a fact, thus adding a bit of spice to it.

Given the manifold approaches to a historiography of foreign language teaching and learning, ranging from general surveys to specific topics, as derived from the above-mentioned works, it becomes rather complex to follow a chartered route, as it were, when it comes to dealing with a specific historical tradition of ELT at a national level. It is even more complex if we consider how the different associations devoted to the historiography of foreign language teaching differ in their methodologies. Swiggers (2012) advocates a tripartite framework whereby we can approach historical studies: heuristic, hermeneutic and history writing. However innovative this may sound, however, the fact is that we still lack practical studies which may account for such a complex phenomenon.

That said, in the present work I follow an eclectic methodology which revolves around primary sources and the historical context in which they were written, rather than on the limited framework of the history of methods. It is an interdisciplinary work, departing from an applied linguistic stance with forays into other disciplines such as history, the history of education, and sociology, thus giving it a cultural varnish. Other marginal sources such as personal documents, advertisements in the local press, and literary extracts have also been consulted, all focused on the experience of foreign language learning. Later, the book also treats several theoretical works that conveyed individual ideas on the status of foreign language teaching and learning across the period we are studying, both at a national and international level.

This survey is just the tip of the iceberg. Several aspects still remain to be revealed, especially those relating to the hard-to-find marginal sources (such as diary entries, personal documents, and the like), whose surface I have only scratched in this work. The historical press abounds in references to advertised manuals, opinions on the suitability of foreign language teaching and learning, academies, and so on, which constitute very valuable contemporary insights for reconstructing our past ELT tradition. A full biographical account of all the manual writers is yet to be made; in most cases, hardly any information has been found in this respect. History is sometimes very slippery and whimsical.

The present work concludes with the inclusion of two appendices which round off this study. The first is a corpus of all the English manuals published in Spain between 1769 and 1970 –almost two centuries of history compiled for the first time in a single book. In fact, a partial corpus, from 1769 to 1900, has been available since the completion of my PhD (Lombardero 2015). What is particularly novel about this corpus is the period 1900-1970. The second appendix is an article called *La Simulació* (The Simulation). It was the very first article in the Catalan review *Quaderns D'Estudi* (October 1915, Año (Year) 1, no. 1), a monthly publication specially aimed at teachers and professors. The director was the Catalan writer and philosopher Eugeni d'Ors i Rovira (1881-1954), who also happened to be the writer of the above-mentioned article, although he signed it with the pseudonym *El Guaita*. The article deals with the topic of this survey: that is, the learning and teaching of modern languages. I deemed it highly necessary to rescue this article from oblivion, as it was written by one of the leading intellectuals of the time and his views on the topic are well worth reading for their priceless historical value.

I do not regard this work as a final destination but as a starting point that may trigger further research in the years to come. There is common agreement amongst historiographers from different traditions on the need to join efforts and work in a collaborative way, in order to unearth the past of foreign language teaching and learning at a global level. May this goal be achieved some day, so that we can proudly establish a worldwide history of our discipline which, undoubtedly, will bear sufficient fruit to improve our everyday practice as language teachers, legislators, translators, and anyone interested in foreign language learning.

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