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Language as object of research versus language as political object: changing horizons in Galician linguistics

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Abstract:

The emergence of the study of Galician from a Linguistics perspective occurred quite late (1960’s and 1970’s) compared with the other languages spoken in the Iberian Peninsula but its development has finally helped made Galician into what can be considered a “legitimate object of study” at the local, national, and international levels. This essay highlights the distinction between the effects of works of linguistic research (language as a research object) and works of political interest (language as a political object), while describing the new developments in the study of Galician linguistics which are identifying Galicia as “an authentic linguistic laboratory” to study the situation of minorized languages in contact with languages of power.

1. Introduction

In studies relating to Galician linguistics, it is common to refer to the late point at which research began on the Galician language or to the brief history of Galician linguistics. This is an undeniable fact, but one that should be seen in perspective. Although it is true that from the first Spanish grammar (Nebrija, 1492) to the first in Galician (the *Compendio de gramática gallega-castellana* [*Compendium of Galician-Castilian Grammar*] of Francisco Mirás, 1864), almost 400 years had passed, the study of linguistics, in the sense that we currently understand it, emerged in the Iberian Peninsula only in the 20th century, albeit with some notable exceptions, such as the works of Gonçalves Vianna on Portuguese phonetics (e.g. *Essai de phonétique et de phonologie de la langue portugaise* [*Essay on Portuguese Phonetics and Phonology*], see Vianna, 1883). The first significant work on Spanish linguistics was the *Manual elemental de gramática histórica Española*, [*Basic Manual of Historical Spanish Grammar*], by Menéndez Pidal (1904), followed shortly afterwards by *Elementos de gramática histórica gallega* [*Aspects of Historical Galician Grammar*] by García de Diego (1909). Linguistics Studies were implemented at quite a late stage in Spanish and Portuguese universities, but in Galicia they did not appear until the mid-1960s. It is from that moment that work on the Galician language began in Galicia. Previously, the only work undertaken in that regard was by foreign and some Spanish linguists, such as the aforementioned work by García de Diego.

Studies on Galician linguistics therefore developed significantly from the 1970s with the creation of the Instituto da Lingua Galega [Galician Language Institute] and the implementation of Galician linguistics studies at the University of Santiago de Compostela. This process occurred in tandem with political change in Spain, with the end of the Franco dictatorship (1975) and with the process of standardizing Galician. At this time, the priorities were the standardization and development of varieties to meet the new requirements. However, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, once the most urgent needs of the standardization process had already been met, a significant shift towards research lines and objectives began, enabling the study of Galician linguistics at an international level. As shall be argued in this study, it is in this change of direction that Galician linguistics is currently engaged.

Throughout this journey, it should be borne in mind that the emergence of Galician linguistics was conditioned by several well-known factors. Galician was a minorized

language in a community that did not have its own political institutions until 1979: the language of a (until recently) largely rural, unindustrialized society, undergoing intense emigration. It was the majority language, but it was above all the language of the powerless classes and thus had little social prestige. All this, together with the non-existence of higher education and linguistic research centers until the 1960s, explains the later and precarious development of a tradition of linguistic studies in Galicia that was focused on Galician.

In this analysis, some preliminary reflections regarding the two facets of the linguistic work on Galician (section 2) shall be shared; the background and work undertaken before the 1970s shall be briefly discussed below (section 3), in order to focus on the most significant achievements before 2000 (section 4) and on new developments in Galician linguistics studies (section 5). Section 6 contains a brief conclusion. Because of space limitations, reference to specific works shall be greatly reduced, and only a few examples shall be included. Whenever possible, reference shall be made to other bibliographic or historiographical works in which more detailed information may be found. To cite only the most significant works in each discipline would lead to a very large number of bibliographic references that would be impractical in a work of this size. This is an example of the degree of development of the studies of Galician linguistics, but it entails the omission of important references both to studies undertaken in Galicia and beyond. My purpose is to reflect on the lines followed and the lines to be followed in the future, so the omission of references to works or people who have relevant roles in this process should not be construed as a lack of consideration.

2. Language as a political object and language as a research object

In the public discourse, statements can be found to affirm that languages are “means” or “tools of communication”, and from this position the corollary can be made that speakers should adopt the most appropriate instrument to cover this function, since there are languages that are “more useful” than others. It may be shown that these are fundamentally ideological discourses but this is not the place to do so. It is obvious that languages are part of the core of the cultural and social life of a community, and consequently the work on a language always has meanings and implications that go beyond pure linguistic research. Languages matter, and people make frequent observations, comments and judgements about language and speakers (e.g., Rymes, 2020), whether it is

their own or someone else's. Languages are linked to individual and social identities. It can even be argued that languages make us, or allow us, to be who we are (Joseph, 2010).

On a more abstract level, it can be argued that languages are political objects (Regueira, 2019) in terms of their role in society and therefore many states legislate on which languages can be declared "official" (legitimized for uses related to established power) and used in certain social spheres. However, political power not only deals with regulating the status of languages: it also regulates their form. States legislate on the standard form of languages or in some cases delegate that function to other institutions. In the Galician case, the Galician Parliament expressly delegates through the additional provision of the Linguistic Normalization Law (Law 3/1983 of 15 June) to the Real Academia Galega [Royal Galician Academy] (RAG) the power to determine "questions regarding the regulation, updating and correct use of the Galician language". Therefore, it is clear that the competent institution in this area is the Galician Parliament, and the RAG can only exercise this function by delegation. The spelling reform of German, agreed in 1996, was an international treaty signed by the governments of Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The Portuguese Orthographic Agreement was also an international treaty signed by the different Portuguese official language countries following its discussion and approval by the respective national parliaments. It is therefore for parliaments and governments to decide on the spelling and the rules of the standard¹ and this is because the standard language is an institution, an important political object.

¹ One anonymous reviewer pointed out that "[t]his is not true in countries like the United States or Great Britain (and others) which do not have Language Academies and where language norms are not dictated by the state. There are other institutions that take care of that: school systems, dictionaries, which take action based on the use and prestige of specific forms." This is true, but only to a certain extent. In Germany, for example, the rules of spelling are stated by the Duden dictionary, but the official status of the Duden spelling had to be confirmed by political and governmental agreements (by the Bundesrat in 1902 and the ministers of culture of the German states in 1955) (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duden>). The spelling reform of 1996 was agreed between governments, as stated in the main text. Ultimately, governments and political institutions have the final say, unless they have no need to do so. This applies even to the United States and the United Kingdom, where different spelling reform proposals have been discussed in their respective parliaments, such as the Spelling Reform Bill (<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1949/mar/11/spelling-reform-bill>), submitted to the UK Parliament in 1949 (and defeated by only three votes), and the Simplified Spelling Bill, which was submitted in 1953 (<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1953/feb/27/simplified-spelling-bill>). On the successive attempts to reform the spelling of British English, see Iglesias Rábade (1995). Furthermore, in 1906 the US Congress passed a bill that banned the simplified spellings proposed by the Simplified Spelling Board in anything printed by the US Government Printing Office (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English-language_spelling_reform). Thus, the British and American parliaments also make decisions about spelling.

In European nation-states, the language policies of the states aimed at establishing a homogeneous “national language” (cf. del Valle and Gabriel-Stheeman, 2002, on Spanish linguistic nationalism), giving rise to the standard language ideology that has become dominant in these states (Milroy and Milroy, 1999). The linguistic standards in force in these states are based on the varieties of the courts of the kingdoms of the Modern Age and the upper classes that succeeded them (Regueira, 2005, 72-75); the pronunciation of the legitimized variety became a prominent social marker (i.a. Mugglestone, 1995; Lippi-Green, 2012; Silverstein, 2014). We should not forget, as Coulmas states (2018, 63), that “language often serves as the stage on which power relations involving inequalities of various kinds are acted out”. Therefore, questioning the linguistic hierarchy imposed by the centers of power of the state involves challenging the established order. Consequently, the promotion of minority languages is seen as a problem for homogeneity and even as a threat to national unity (UNESCO, 2003). According to information published in the press in 2018,² the French president, Emmanuel Macron, went so far as to say that the use of the letter “ñ” (foreign to French) in a Breton name meant “breaking the will of our rule of law for maintaining the unity of the country and equality without distinction of origin”. On the other hand, the emergence of minority languages in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is inextricably intertwined with processes of the national construction of the communities that speak them, or at least the visibility and constitution of these communities as a political subject (Joseph, 2004).

In the Galician case, the re-emergence of Galician as a written language is linked to the process of building a Galician national identity, based fundamentally on a history, culture and language different from those dominant in the Spanish state (Beramendi, 2007). The creation of a literature in Galician is part of a larger political project in which the language plays a key role. The well-known and oft-repeated words of Castelao may be recalled: “Se aínda somos galegos é por obra e gracia do idioma” [“If we are still Galicians, it is thanks to the language”]. Therefore, efforts focused on producing a native historiography, literature and, with the emergence of nationalism, works in other cultural forms (music, theatre, etc.). With regard to language, the objective was to provide the language with legitimation tools, such as dictionaries and grammars, as well as the search for a standard form for the written language. It follows the model of the state languages,

² *El Confidencial*, 18th July 2018, vid. https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/2018-07-08/francia-lettra-n-polemica-nombre-macron-fanch_1589445/ (21st July 2021).

which had those instruments that in the popular mentality were seen as necessary in order “to be a language” (cf. González Seoane 2018, 408). From this point of view, this process of constructing the standard is a fundamentally political task undertaken in the language that aspires to be a “national language”.

In recent times, Galician has been the subject of intense work in terms of its standardization and development. As Haugen stated (1966, 26), language planning is part of politics, not language science. The choice of the standard variety and all subsequent stages of the elaboration process (Haugen, 1987; Ramallo and Rei-Doval, 2015) are based on political decisions, inevitably marked by the political, social and linguistic ideology of their promoters. This includes linguists participating in the selection and elaboration (and “purification”) of the standard variety, who, as Zimmermann (2003) points out, act as members of the language community, from where the attitudes on which the purism is based arise, and not as linguists, “obschon sie manchmal so tun, als ob es sprachimmanente Gründe für den Purismus gäbe, die sie als Spezialisten herausfunden hätten” [although they sometimes pretend that there are reasons for the purism inherent in the language that they have discovered as specialists] (323).

It can be questioned whether the development and implementation of a standard form is necessary or desirable (Regueira, 2005). From my point of view, in a society that assumes the standard ideology, in which Galician has low social prestige and is subjected to the prejudice of “dialectalism” (Piñeiro, 1967; Santamarina, 1998), the standard language enables Galician to advance in society and assume functions that previously were only covered by standard Spanish (cf. Moreno Cabrera, 2000, 59). From the perspective of the Galicianist and nationalist movements, the attainment of a linguistic standard was regarded as an unavoidable necessity within the process of national construction that has been taking place since the 19th century.

On the other hand, the study of Galician language has a relatively recent history as well. Modern linguistics began with the historical-comparative method (e.g. Bopp, 1816) and continued throughout the 19th century with Neo-grammarians (Paul, 1880). The most relevant shift tends to be identified as having occurred at the beginning of the 20th century, with the publication of *Cours de linguistique générale* [Course in General Linguistics] by Ferdinand de Saussure (1995 [1916]), which laid the foundation for the dominant concepts of linguistics throughout the twentieth century. From this point of view, languages are seen

as systems of oppositions between units at different levels (as the famous formulation attributed to Saussure affirms, “un système où tout se tient” [“a system in which everything is interconnected”], cf. Regueira, 2016, 25), in the structuralist view, or later as rules grammars (in generative theory). Languages, therefore, are conceived as objects outside speakers, as stated by Saussure (1995[1916]): “La langue, distincte de la parole, est un objet qu’on peut étudier séparément [“Language, distinct from speech, is an object that can be studied separately”] (31): “as if it were in fact an autonomous natural object”, as Lass (1980, 120) stated. In the latter part of the 20th century, however, tendencies emerged that challenged this conception, such as sociolinguistics, sociophonetics, pragmatics, corpus linguistics or conversation and discourse analysis, amongst other branches. Now, the emphasis is on how language is used in communication and social interaction, debunking the idea of a system external to speakers and also the notion of the ideal or representative speaker.

It is in this sense, as stated in the introduction, that linguistic studies were late to emerge in the Iberian Peninsula. The perspectives outlined above make it possible to distinguish linguistic studies (that is, outside of prescriptive interests and aimed at the knowledge of the language, both in terms of linguistic structures and uses as well as in sociolinguistic aspects, such as variation, linguistic change or attitudes to the language, amongst others) from works intended to develop and maintain the language as political object, such as standardization, with all the instruments associated with this variety (norms, grammars and dictionaries, essentially).

In a situation characterized by minoritization and during a process of social normalization (both in terms of the corpus and the status of the language), it is understandable that the efforts of Galician linguists were essentially aimed at meeting requirements concerning language planning. For some time, linguistic studies were even undervalued, as they were seen as a distraction from the priority objectives of defense and “normalization” of the language, and a requirement for ideological commitment was placed on linguists. However, it was gradually accepted that language work was needed not only as a provider of solutions for language planning but also to “normalize” Galician as an object of linguistic study. On the one hand, it is obvious that language policies cannot be implemented without a sound knowledge of the linguistic reality, both in terms of the uses and the linguistic attitudes of the current or potential speakers, and without understanding what the speakers are doing with the language in its social interactions

(whether in the private or public sphere). On the other hand, positioning Galician as a legitimate object of study for any linguist is also an objective of “social normalization” (in the sense of making Galician a “normal” language, a language like any other in its field), intended to confer prestige upon the language. In this regard, significant advances have been made in recent decades, as shall be seen below.

3. Precursors: linguistic research prior to the 1960s

As is well known, Galician underwent important development as a written language in the Middle Ages, as a vehicle for the so-called “Galician-Portuguese lyric” as well as literary and documentary prose. However, Galician was replaced by Spanish as a written language in the late Middle Ages, just as the use of printing began to develop. The first known printed texts in Galician date from 1612 (Mariño, 1998, 251; 2008, 144) and the first complete book is from 1863 (*Cantares gallegos* by Rosalía de Castro), if we do not count the translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew published by Louis Lucien Bonaparte in 1861. During the Modern Age, there was no relevant cultural production in Galician, with some exceptions: these are what have been called the “dark centuries” (Monteagudo, 2016).

With the advent of the Enlightenment, Galician was part of the concerns of enlightened figures, such as the Benedictines Juan Sobreira,³ who started collecting lexicographic material (Sobreira, 1979), and Martín Sarmiento,⁴ who produced works on onomastics and etymology (Sarmiento, 1998-1999), as well as an outline on the history of the Galician language, in which he expressed ideas that would later be supported by Romance linguistics (Sarmiento, 1974). These works remained unpublished and partly unfinished; their impact was therefore very limited. There was no continuity in studies on Galician until the period of the Rexistamento or Galician literary revival.

During and after the Napoleonic Wars, Galician began to be used as a language of political propaganda and for the composition of some poems, but it was in the second half of the 19th century, during the Rexistamento, when a literature and culture expressed in

³ Juan Sobreira Salgado (1746-1805), a fellow of the Order of Saint Benedict, authored works on Galician geography, botany and language, which remained mostly unpublished until the twentieth century.

⁴ Martín Sarmiento (born Pedro José García Balboa, 1695-1772), also a member of the Order of Saint Benedict, was a scholar and writer. His works in Galician and about Galician remained unpublished until the twentieth century.

Galician began to be created. Galician was part of a larger political project: the constitution of a national idea of Galicia (Beramendi, 2007). The ideologues of the Rexurdimento mostly belonged to the urban middle classes (lawyers, pharmacists, journalists, doctors, civil servants) who no longer spoke Galician (Mariño, 1998, 400). However, without being a central element, Galician would be an important part of this political project.

During this time, the first attempts were made to provide Galician with a grammar and a dictionary. Between 1863 and 1884, three grammars and four dictionaries were published (not to mention another grammar, by Marcial Valladares, from 1892 and which remained unpublished until 1970; see Fernández Salgado, 2004). Of these works, *Gramática gallega* [*Galician Grammar*] by Juan A. Saco Arce (1868) can be highlighted, “obra de grande mérito e calidade para o seu tempo” [“a work of great merit and quality for the time”] (Cidrás and Dubert-García, 2017), and the *Diccionario gallego-castellano* [*Galician-Castilian Dictionary*] by Valladares (1884). All these works take Spanish as a reference language and are written in Spanish. At the end of that century, discussions also began on some issues relating to Galician's orthographical representation, which continued into the first decades of the 19th century (Hermida 1987).

The language as a political object was therefore of crucial interest to Galicianists. The general motivation of all these studies was the desire to contribute to the dignity of the Galician language and, through it, to the regeneration of Galicia (González Seoane, 2006, 25-26). However, a grammar and a dictionary were not a priority in the ideological program of national construction (Cidrás and Dubert-García, 2017, 113) nor were there figures equipped with the proper training enabling them to carry out these tasks. Therefore, the only precedent of linguistic studies published at this time were the “Observaciones sobre la pronunciación del dialecto gallego” [“Observations on the pronunciation of the Galician dialect”], three and a half pages of precise phonetic observations written by Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte as an introduction to the Galician translation of the Gospel of Saint Matthew (1861). These also went unnoticed (Kabatek, 1992).

In the first decades of the 20th century, Galician took huge steps forward in social uses (Monteagudo, 1999). Not only did literary and essay writing develop in Galician, but also foreign works were translated; Galician was the first language, after French, into which several chapters of *Ulysses* by Joyce were translated in 1926 (see McKevitt, 2003), which is evidence of the ambition of Galician nationalism's political and cultural program

at the time. At that point, Galician appeared in the public sphere, and would be the language of the cultural and public policy activities of the nationalists and the Galicianists. However, little progress was made in establishing a standard, with the exception of some dictionary- and grammar-related essays (see Regueira, 1996, Fernández Salgado, 2000). The standard was established on a de facto basis, through the works of the authors of the time; in fact, if we read the works of Castelao,⁵ for example, in their original version, we find that standard Galician is already present there in its basic form, some minor issues aside.

Regarding this state of affairs, the work of the Soria-born author Vicente García de Diego (1909), already mentioned in the introduction and which involves the application of the methods of historical linguistics to Galician, is of interest, and even more so the work of a group of linguists from Hamburg University, led by Fritz Krüger (Regueira, 1991, 1996). This group, with a strong historical-comparative training, applied in Galicia innovative methodologies at the time for the study of some rural varieties, which were understood as more conservative and less “contaminated” by modern ways of life and which would, therefore, provide access to considerably older cultural forms (Regueira, 1991, 157). This aim was in line with the search for the *Volkgeist* of the peoples who spoke romance languages, which was the general objective of the works of Krüger. The title of the journal of the Romance Language Seminar of Hamburg University, of which Krüger was a co-editor and in which they published their works, is revealing: *Volkstum und Kultur der Romanen* [*Ethnicity and Culture of the Romance People*] (1928-1944).

To achieve this aim, they applied a method called *Wörter und Sachen* (*Words and Things*), where linguistic forms (and their etymology) are studied in connection with the material objects they designate (and with their history). This was a genuine research program on the Galician-speaking territories and on the boundary between Galician and Leonese, to the east, and Portuguese, to the south. These boundaries, in particular, were the subject of various works by Krüger. Three of his disciples carried out studies on three extreme points of the Galician territory: W. Schröder, on the Fisterra fishing boats in the west, W. Ebeling on farming implements in the Lugo mountains, in the east, and finally Hans-Karl Schneider, who deviated from his colleagues' methodology for a complete study

⁵ Alfonso Daniel Rodríguez Castelao (1886-1950) was a leading figure in twentieth century Galician culture and politics and is considered the father of modern Galician nationalism (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfonso_Daniel_Rodr%C3%ADguez_Castelao).

of the phonetics and morphology of the Lower Limia, on the border with Portugal. They were all members of the German National Socialist Party (NSPD) and were subject to a purge at the end of World War II, leading to their removal from the university. Their work, published in German in the journal *VKR*, had little impact because it was not widely distributed in Galicia and at the time there were no linguists who could benefit from it.

After the end of the Spanish Civil War, which led to the elimination of Galicianism (even physically, with the murder of some of its most significant figures and the exile of others), Galician was prohibited in the public sphere and studies on Galician were limited to some works on etymology and onomastics, carried out fundamentally, again, by two Germans: Harri Meier and Joseph M. Piel (Regueira, 1991). From the 1950s, works on dialectology began to appear slowly, authored by Madrilenian Alonso Zamora Vicente and by Dámaso Alonso, with some important contributions, into the 1960s, from Ramón Lorenzo (Regueira, 1996).

In the mid-1960s, there were still no trained teams or linguists (with a few exceptions) and no research program on Galician. As late as 1967 Pilar Vázquez Cuesta (1967, 192) stated that “el área ocupada por el gallego resulta una zona casi virgen y de la que es difícil hablar con seguridad” [“the area occupied by Galician is an almost virgin field and it is difficult to discuss it confidently”]. The remains of Galicianism gathered around the Galaxia publishing house created in 1950, but they were concerned with recovering Galician literature and in the field of linguistics had only published the *Diccionario enciclopédico gallego-castellano* [*Galician-Castilian Encyclopaedic Dictionary*] by Eladio Rodríguez (1958-1961), completed before the Spanish Civil War.

However, Galician society underwent significant changes in the 1960s. Cultural associations were created and clandestine political parties whose ideology was nationalist and left-wing were founded (Beramendi, 2007, 1077-1088). In the wake of this movement, a new, although still quite small, public sphere in Galician began to appear in urban areas. It was during this period when studies of Romance Philology began at the University of Santiago de Compostela and the teaching of Galician was introduced in the university. From there, the revolution that took place in subsequent decades began to take shape.

4. Linguistic studies in Galician universities: the role of the Galician Language Institute

From the creation of the Romance Philology Section at the University of Santiago de Compostela during the 1962-1963 academic year and the introduction of the option in Galician Language and Literature in the 1965-66 academic year, academic work on Galician began. Constantino García, the new professor of Romance Philology, began to supervise studies aimed at covering the lack of information on the spoken language, focusing on rural and coastal varieties which were already considered in danger of disappearing due to the socioeconomic and cultural changes that were taking place, such as urbanization and the loss of traditional rural culture (cf. Lorenzo, 1962, 52; García, 1978, 459). The center of interest was the lexicon of traditional trades, which was perceived as the most differential and most interesting from a philological point of view, following the lines of classical dialectology. At the same time, the phonetic and morphological description of the different varieties of Galician started. These works led to the completion of a number of undergraduate theses and three doctoral dissertations that began to fill the gaps in the knowledge of the linguistic reality of Galician (Regueira, 2008).

In order to cover new demands to match the new social situation of Galician (discussed in the last paragraph of section 3, above) during this period, there were publications on the Galician grammar of Carballo Calero (1966), another grammar by Carré Alvarellos (1967) and a Galician-Castilian dictionary by Franco Grande (1967). In addition, Saco's grammar was republished (1967, the original being published in 1868). Despite their limitations (Regueira, 2007, 11-12), Carballo's grammar and Franco Grande's dictionary enjoyed broad dissemination until 1980.

However, it was from the creation of the Galician Language Institute (ILG) in 1971 when events began to accelerate. In 1971, the ILG published the first manuals for learning Galician (1971-74), the launch of the journal *Verba. Anuario Galego de Filoloxía* (1974) and the collection of materials for the *Atlas Lingüístico Galego* [*Galician Linguistic Atlas*] (1975) (Álvarez and Sousa, 2017). In 1977, the university degree in Galician Philology was created. In 1981, Galician was recognized as the official language of Galicia, together with Spanish. The following year, *Normas Ortográficas e Morfolóxicas do Idioma Galego* [*Orthographical and Morphological Rules of the Galician Language*], produced by the Galician Language Institute and the Royal Galician Academy, were declared official and in

1983 the Galician Linguistic Normalization Law was passed. In 1986, the first complete reference grammar was published and the first monolingual dictionaries appeared.

The first ILG activities focused on the study of Galician, especially on its dissemination and related teacher training. In 1974, one of the most ambitious projects was launched: *Atlas Lingüístico Galego (ALGa)*.⁶ The success of the ILG in the following years placed it at the center of Galician linguistic endeavors. This success was due to several factors: on the one hand, it initiated university research on Galician, a facet that was almost completely neglected at that time; on the other, the ILG work team's structure was hardly pyramidal at all, meaning that researchers enjoyed an important degree of autonomy, decision-making and innovation. This was something new, in an area (and generally throughout the Humanities) in which research was usually conducted individually (cf. Alonso Pintos, 2017, 50-51).

Understandably, the following years focused on tasks of a political nature: the development of the linguistic standard and the promotion of learning Galician. Since the establishment of the Galician Autonomous Government, the ILG has had a central role in the training of primary and secondary school teachers, as well as officials of the local, regional and state administrations. The ILG also played a leading role in the development of the language standard and subsequent discussions, which were especially intense in the 1980s (regarding this process, see Alonso Pintos, 2006, and Ramallo and Rei-Doval, 2015). The central role of the ILG in this process was due to this group at the time already having an enormous amount of linguistic data gathered throughout the Galician-speaking territory (and it was the only group that was doing linguistic research on Galician). Furthermore, Ramón Lorenzo, a member of the ILG, was the most relevant figure in the field of Galician historical grammar. The Galician Royal Academy did not have the data or personnel with the proper training to carry out the tasks of standardization which led to it approaching the ILG in order to jointly elaborate the language norms that were made official in 1982.

The task of the ILG in the standardization of Galician was not limited to the establishment of orthographical and morphological rules. Two researchers, Antón Santamarina and Manuel González, produced the *Vocabulario ortográfico da lingua*

⁶ The role and activities of the ILG are discussed in studies by Francisco Fernández Rei (1991) and Serafin Alonso Pintos (2017); on ALGa, see Álvarez and Sousa (2017).

galega [*Orthographical Vocabulary of the Galician Language*] (VOLGa), which was first published in 1989, and which served as the basis for almost all subsequent dictionaries. The ILG also developed the legal and administrative lexicon required to cover the new needs of the autonomic and local administration. The people who supervised the production of these dictionaries were also members of the ILG or related to it. The ILG wrote the grammar that served as the main reference source until the end of the 20th century (Álvarez et al., 1986), and also played a central role in the standardization conflict that dominated the 1980s and, to a lesser extent, the 1990s, until the 2003 standardization agreement (Alonso Pintos, 2017, 56).

In 1990, the universities of A Coruña and Vigo were created, marking the beginning of a diversification of university work on the Galician language. From the point of view of the introduction of new lines of research in linguistics, the most outstanding have been the works of Celso Álvarez Caccamo, in A Coruña, in the tradition of the interactional sociolinguistics of John Gumperz, but his work had little impact upon subsequent research. No teams of significant stature were formed at any of the new universities; the ILG has therefore continued to be the center of reference for linguistic research to this day.

In the course of that decade, significant changes took place that took Galician to a new dimension in the field of dissemination, knowledge and recognition beyond Galicia. The event that symbolized this transformation was the 19th Romance Linguistics and Philology Conference at Santiago de Compostela University in 1989, where Galician was the official language, together with French (the official language of the Romance Linguistics Society). The fact that Galician was the official language and not Spanish led to a boycott by some members of the Spanish Philology establishment, but the conference was a success and recognized Galician as a Romance language on an equal footing with the other major languages. This recognition was consolidated in the *Lexikon der romanistischen Linguistik*, an encyclopedia of Romance languages in 8 volumes (1988-2005), in which Galician and Portuguese shared a volume (Holtus et al., 1994). Furthermore, several German Romance specialists had already examined Galician, especially the sociolinguistic situation, during the second half of the 1980s (see Regueira, 2007).

Beginning in 1988, a summer course on Galician language and culture has been organized for foreign students annually. Organized by the ILG and the RAG, it continues

to be taught today and is now called *Galego sen fronteiras* [*Galician Without Borders*]. These courses enabled research and teaching on Galician language and culture to develop in numerous universities throughout five continents, although mainly in Europe and in North and Latin America. Many students who attended these courses went on to work on Galician in different fields (research, translation and creative), and were one of the key elements that allowed, years later, a network of Galician study centers to be established in universities in Europe and America. Many of the people in charge of these centers were former students of the courses. During the same period, the International Association of Galician Studies was founded and developed. It organizes regular conferences in which researchers on Galician language and culture from Europe and America gather. In the early years, these activities were highly criticized by certain sectors of nationalism, which considered it a waste of money for an activity not relevant to the social normalization of the language.

Moreover, at the time, some of the first research using modern methodologies on the sociolinguistic situation in Galicia was criticized, in particular those carried out by researchers from outside the world of Galician nationalism, such as Guillermo Rojo or Mauro Fernández (on the development of sociolinguistics and associated controversies, see Rei-Doval, 2018). These linguists were seen as “technicians” researching Galician in the same manner as an entomologist studies an insect, in a frequently used comparison. Therefore, ideological combat was prioritized in these sectors as part of the defense of language and nation, in a line that could be represented by a figure such as Pilar García Negro (see García Negro, 1991). Criticisms of this kind were also aimed at downplaying the value of language studies in general and those conducted at ILG in particular, in the framework of debates on the standard form of language during the 1980s and 1990s. Over the years, this type of criticism has become rarer and today few people discuss the value of linguistic research on Galician or its dissemination within international academic fields.

Reference works continues to be published in the late 1990s, such as a historical grammar (Ferreiro, 1996-1997), the history of the language (Mariño, 1998, 2008) and grammar (Freixeiro, 1998-2003; Álvarez and Xove, 2002). New lines are also being launched within Galician linguistics, such as acoustic phonetics (see González and Regueira, 2016), prosody (see Fernández Rei and Regueira, 2017) and also language variation in society (e.g. Regueira, 1994, 1999). These lines would be developed further into the twenty-first century.

However, the most innovative language research was carried out outside Galicia. As far as language variation and attitudes are concerned, a very relevant contribution came from Johannes Kabatek, who had been a student in the first summer courses of Galician language and culture and published his doctoral thesis in 1996 on variation and linguistic attitudes. He has continued to open up new avenues for the qualitative sociolinguistics of Galician (on the work of Kabatek, see Regueira, 2017). However, it is in North American universities where linguistic work on Galician has been initiated and intensified in recent years and in most cases by researchers with Galician roots. These studies have focused on phonology and the works of Obdulia Castro (who published a Galician phonology, Castro, 1998, see Fernández Rei and Regueira, 2017, 100), Fernando Martínez-Gil and Sonia Colina should be highlighted, amongst others (see Fernández Rei and Regueira, 2017, 100-101). The impact within Galicia of these publications was limited because, on the one hand, there were few linguists working with phonology in Galicia and their theoretical training was weak (they were fundamentally self-taught in phonology), and also because of the low penetration in Galician universities of the linguistic frameworks within which these works were carried out (Autosegmental Phonology and Optimality Theory) (Regueira, 2007, 20). In the 21st century, relevant works on phonology and prosody of the Galician language, amongst other topics, have continued to be published, and the new situation of linguistic research in Galicia may be more favorable towards a more enriching communication in both directions. This is shown by the reception of the most recent works, both in the field of phonetics, which are being used in research carried out in Galicia, as well as that of syntax (e.g. the work of Timothy Gupton, 2014, has been reviewed in the ILG, see Cidrás, 2018) (see section 5, below).

5. New century, new horizons: the shift for linguistics

At the beginning of the new century, the so-called “agreed language norms” was approved,⁷ putting an end to disputes over orthography within the field of Galician. A re-integrationist movement continues, introducing a new ideological discourse, not based on orthographic discussion but aimed at promoting the approach to Portuguese. At this point, the Galician standard has been consolidated and, despite some shortcomings, studies of a “political” nature are no longer a priority; in addition, all the standardization issues are

⁷ See <http://consellodacultura.gal/cdsg/paxinaarq.php?id=807> (21st July 2021).

carried out through the RAG (dictionary, grammar, terminology). In meeting these needs, then, it becomes necessary to refocus efforts and set new objectives.

The development of these new pathways is conditioned by structural limitations, on the one hand, and by internal and theoretical factors, on the other. These two dimensions are related. The crisis of the humanities in Spanish universities has prevented the renewal of research teams and the incorporation of new researchers in Galician universities. This makes it difficult to open new lines of research in which Galician linguistics is deficient, as well as new theoretical orientations, which are usually associated with developments promoted by young researchers.

In this context, the ILG continues to be not only the largest and most productive group in the area of Galician linguistics but is also one of the most powerful groups in the area of Humanities in Galician universities. I shall therefore refer in more detail to the developments produced at this center. Considering the scarcity of human and material resources that characterizes linguistic research in Galicia, where it is common for only two or three people to work in some areas, it does not seem realistic to try to cater effectively to each and every one of the possible lines of interest, from onomastics and lexicography to sociolinguistics (quantitative and qualitative), speech technologies, phonetics, grammar and all other possible areas. Therefore, at the ILG in recent years, there has been an effort to concentrate work on some lines that are deemed a priority or worthy of preferential attention. So far, those lines have been mainly linguistic contact and change, prosody, perceptual studies, corpus linguistics and new developments in dialectology.

Due to the aforementioned lack of renewal of research staff, these changes in orientation are slow and difficult, especially considering that they require a major theoretical and methodological renewal. However, the commitment made to collaborate with teams from other areas, in the pursuit of an interdisciplinarity that has proved very fruitful, has been of great importance and is now seen as almost a must. The creation of an interdisciplinary network with teams from the universities of Santiago de Compostela and Vigo, led by the ILG group, has therefore marked a milestone. It has remained active between 2012 and 2018, involving telecommunications, computer and statistics teams, amongst others.⁸ Another important aspect is the collaboration with universities in Portugal and Brazil, which has been very intense in terms of activities for ILG researchers in recent years, with joint projects undertaken and a continuous exchange of visiting researchers

⁸ See <http://ilg.usc.gal/tecandali/index.php/21-principal/2-inicio> (21st July 2021).

maintained. It also maintains collaborative relationships with numerous European and North American universities, and, of course, those throughout Spain.

Despite the difficulties, some important steps have been taken on this path towards renewal and a change of strategy in Galician linguistics research. In dialectology, research has been conducted with dialectometric techniques (e.g., Sousa, 2020). In relation to the AMPER pan-Romanic project, prosodic dialectology research has been carried out, with relevant studies undertaken on Galician prosody in relation to that of Portuguese (e.g., Fernández Rei et al., 2016) and perceptual studies of intonation (e.g., Fernández Rei and Engroba, 2014); a platform for experimentation in perceptual work was also created (FOLERPA).⁹ On the other hand, the foundations for the development of corpus linguistics have been laid, and at present there is a corpus of medieval language (TMILG),¹⁰ written language (TILG),¹¹ rural language (AGO)¹² and oral language in all its varieties (CORILGA).¹³ A language corpus has also been set up at the Ramón Piñeiro Center (CORGA).¹⁴

This shift allowed some lines to be addressed regarding social variation, language contact (with Spanish and, partly, with Portuguese), variety contact (especially the influence of the standard), the perception of these varieties, language attitudes, and other similar topics. Some work undertaken in recent years also opens up new paths with the incorporation of new theoretical frameworks, such as interactional sociolinguistics and language and identity issues, for example (e.g. Regueira, 2016), or discourse analysis applied to gender identity (Basanta, 2018). Some language landscape work has also been done (e.g. Regueira et al., 2013), with some more elaborate developments (Zas and Prego, 2016).

Other interesting developments have also taken place at other universities, such as the work of Estefanía Mosquera, in A Coruña, on SMS language (Mosquera, 2017). In Vigo, Fernando Ramallo has carried out relevant work on “new-speakers” of Galician (in collaboration with Bernadette O’Rourke, e.g. O’Rourke and Ramallo, 2015) and work was undertaken that initiated new routes, such as qualitative sociolinguistics (Iglesias Álvarez, 2003; Pinto, 2018). Moreover, Xavier Gómez Guinovart has developed language

⁹ See <http://ilg.usc.gal/FOLERPA/> (21st July 2021).

¹⁰ See <https://ilg.usc.gal/tmilg/> (21st July 2021).

¹¹ See <https://ilg.usc.gal/TILG/> (21st July 2021).

¹² See <http://ilg.usc.gal/ago/> (21st July 2021).

¹³ See <http://ilg.usc.gal/corilga/> (21st July 2021).

¹⁴ See <http://www.cirp.gal/corga> (21st July 2021).

technologies and applications focused on the Galician language. Furthermore, in Vigo, the team led by Carmen García Mateo has developed a speech recognition device and a speech synthesizer for Galician in collaboration with researchers from the ILG and the Ramón Piñeiro Center (e.g. Piñeiro et al., 2018).

Beyond Galicia, research is still underway on Galician, especially in US universities, where, to name just a few examples, relevant contributions to phonetics have been made (Amengual and Chamorro, 2015; de la Fuente and Pérez Castillejo, 2019). In phonology, several authors have published significant works. Amongst these, Sonia Colina and Fernando Martínez-Gil have published a number of articles within the framework of the Optimality Theory on, amongst other topics, the gheada (Colina 2013; Martínez-Gil 2004) or mid-vowel reduction (Martínez-Gil, 2019). In syntax, in addition to the aforementioned work by Gupton (2014), contributions of interest are also taking place, such as Brown and Rivas (2019). Work on the Spanish spoken in Galicia is also being carried out at US universities (especially at Minnesota), whereas in the Galician universities work on this variety is scarce.

Researchers at Galician universities are therefore now in a better position to establish meaningful dialogue with those at other universities, in particular with those in the US. The small size of the teams working on Galician renders it essential to collaborate with researchers not only from other places, but also from other disciplines and other areas of interest. On the other hand, the gap in theoretical training between researchers working in Galicia and those who do so at German, British or American universities is rapidly narrowing. Following the tradition of studies inherited from previous generations, linguistic training in Galician universities was based on the tradition of historical linguistics (Romance, especially) and on the study of the linguistic code coming from the tradition of European structuralism. However, increasing numbers of people are being trained in sociolinguistics (both quantitative and qualitative), interaction, discourse analysis, pragmatics, grammaticalization, experimental phonetics and perceptual linguistics, amongst others, researching within the same theoretical framework as their colleagues in the international academic world.

This shift places Galician linguistics in Galicia in a position to take the step of entering the international sphere, in the sense that studies on Galician language could appear in journals and books with an international scope. Since the 1990s, above all, Galician is an accepted language in the field of Romance studies and today it is not

possible to conceive of books, atlases, encyclopedias or studies on Romance languages without considering the presence of Galician. However, in the international field, in studies on aspects of general linguistics or of a global scope, the presence of Galician is still very limited. In order to change this, the first step may be to place studies by researchers who have already earned an academic position in publications with a global circulation.

Some steps are already underway, and publications on Galician (sometimes by authors from American universities but also by an increasing number of authors from Galician universities) have been appearing or will appear in mainstream journals and in books published by Oxford University Press, John Benjamins, De Gruyter, Routledge, Niemeyer and Peter Lang, amongst others. The presence of Galician is increasingly common in specialized international conferences. However, it is not just a question of publishing work carried out in Galicia: Galician must be seen as an object of “legitimate” study by researchers from any European or American university. To advance in this direction, it is necessary to have reference works written in English and for that purpose a *Manual of Galician Linguistics* shall soon be available from the international publisher, De Gruyter.

In this sense, the creation of a Galician studies section within the MLA is a breakthrough. In recent years, there are frequent meetings where Galician is present in both American universities (such as *Lusophone and Hispanic Linguistics Symposia*, at the universities of Madison and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, or the *North American Symposia of Galician Studies*, that have been held at different American universities) or English and Irish universities, within the annual conferences of the Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland, amongst other events. In this strategy, the International Association of Galician Studies must also play a leading role.

The main objective of these strategies is to develop linguistic research on Galician fully, covering areas that remain untouched or scarcely covered but which are crucial for a full understanding of Galicia’s linguistic situation. In these objectives, the research on the Spanish of Galicia should be included, in collaboration with researchers working in this field or interested in doing so, in order to have a more complete picture of Galicia’s linguistic reality. Everyone who lives in Galicia observes in the streets, in their families and in their own classrooms a variety of linguistic behaviors, practices, attitudes and linguistic ideologies. We see that languages work in Galician society in a very complex way and the net separation between “Galician language” and “Spanish language” is a

methodological division established by us linguists but which does not always correspond to the behavior observed in society (cf. Regueira 2019). Galicia, in this sense, is an authentic linguistic laboratory which we are unable to use for research, partly because of ideological reasons, partly because of a theoretical training gap and also due to a structural scarcity of resources.

In addition, it is obvious that a language policy that seeks to expand the use of Galician amongst the population, and especially amongst the younger population, must start from a more complete knowledge of reality. Language policies cannot be formulated on the basis of ideological premises without regard to the reality of the speakers, their practices or their linguistic ideologies. Criticizing the “wrong” uses that appear in the public sphere or indoctrinating on the “quality” of the language without trying to understand these practices and the factors involved in these processes bears no result, as can be seen in Galician society today. In Regueira (2019), I attempted to develop the idea that, in order to effectively influence the linguistic practices of the different areas of Galician use in the public sphere, it is necessary to investigate all these questions: today, we have the tools to do it. Far from being a “distraction” or an attitude that some might criticize as an “entomological study”, linguistic research in the areas of language variation, contact and change is essential for language planning.

On the other hand, the objective of “standardizing” Galician research, of getting Galician into the international academic world as a possible object of study, like any other language in the world, cannot be considered of minor importance amongst people interested in the situation of Galician. This aim is not a chimera, and today we can find on the Internet a number of academic papers (undergraduate, master's and doctoral theses) written in Minnesota, Toronto, Oxford, Stockholm, Brno, Münster, Marburg, Kassel, Munich or Turin, amongst others, on aspects of the Galician language. It is worth going down that path.

6. Conclusion

This work has outlined a panorama of Galician linguistics, from its beginnings to the present. It began by highlighting the distinction between works of linguistic research and works of political interest, understood as those intended to establish a standard language, with all the instruments that accompany those linguistic varieties (mainly grammars and dictionaries). It is clear that many concepts used in the field of language as a political

object, such as “correction” or “error”, are meaningless in the field of linguistics. It should be kept in mind that for some linguists, even the concept of language is impossible to handle, or to put it in other words, the concept of “a language” does not correspond to any object of analysis that linguistics can handle (e.g. Harris, 1990, 45).

Understood in this sense, Galician linguistics has suffered a certain delay and less development with respect to the studies on state languages within our environment. Nevertheless, when studies of linguistics in Galician universities were established and research on Galician began, the breakthrough was spectacular. It should be recalled that even in the early 1960s, Dámaso Alonso (1962, 16) lamented the lack of studies with these words: “debido al increíble atraso de los estudios de lingüística gallega, esta lengua, en su estado moderno, es casi una incógnita; lo es, desde luego, su vocalismo. Falta casi completamente una recogida sistemática de materiales: labor de años" ["Due to the incredible delay of the studies of Galician linguistics, this language, in its modern state, is almost an unknown one and of course, so is its vocalism. A systematic collection of materials is almost completely lacking: it will take years of work"]. The existing bibliography on Galician was very scarce, but the path taken during the last fifty years makes these statements unrecognizable today, and even in some respects (such as dialectology or quantitative sociolinguistics), the Galician linguistic domain is better studied than neighboring state languages. This is not about falling into triumphalism, as there is still some way to go and weaker areas to strengthen, but the effort made should be duly recognized, considering in addition that most of this period was dedicated to carrying out work aimed at consolidating Galician as a political object.

At this point, Galician linguistics is now in the process of asserting its presence in the international sphere and becoming a “normal” language, one more language amongst the other Romance and Indo-European languages, also with regard to linguistic research. Galician linguistics should have something to say within the field of international linguistics and in part it is already beginning to make itself heard within that discourse. It is in the context of this endeavor that we find ourselves, reorienting lines and constantly updating theoretical frameworks. In order to achieve this objective, scientific communication and collaboration between linguists working in Galicia and those outside Galicia, both in the United States and Europe, is essential, not to mention the necessary communication with Portuguese and Brazilian research centers. The first steps on that path have been taken. The objectives are ambitious, but the development experienced in recent

years and the increasing collaboration between teams and the researchers allow us to face this challenge with optimism.

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