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О ЗАРОЖДЕНИИ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОГО ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКОГО СОЗНАНИЯ В ИСПАНИИ ЭПОХИ ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЯ

Аннотация

В статье исследуется языковой менталитет испанского общества на рубеже XV–XVI вв., когда в Европе наступает период все более осознаваемого растущего интереса к национальным языкам, на которых говорило подавляющее большинство населения. Именно в ту эпоху испаноязычное лингвокультурное сообщество впервые обратило взор на свой родной язык, столь же прекрасный и достойный всяческого уважения, как греческий и латынь. В результате исследования доказано, что в XVI веке в умонастроении испанского общества обозначился переход к политически обоснованному конкретной исторической ситуацией осознанию приоритета кастильского языка. Показана роль трудов, написанных профессиональными грамматистами того времени, в зарождении чувства национальной идентичности испанцев.

Ключевые слова: апология кастильского языка, испанское национальное самосознание, профессиональное лингвистическое сознание, испаноязычное лингвокультурное сообщество.

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RENAISSANCE IN SPAIN: EMERGENCE OF NATIONAL LANGUAGE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY*Abstract*

The aim of the article is to describe the attitude of the Spaniards to their native language. The turn of the 16th century saw a considerable growth of interest in the languages spoken by the majority of the population in European countries. It was at that time that the Spanish-speaking community first recognized the value of their mother tongue and saw its merits as equal to those of Latin and Greek. As a result it is proved that in the Spanish mindset of the 16th century the recognition of the priority of the Spanish Castilian took shape. It should be emphasized that this comprehension is politically grounded in a concrete historical situation. The role of the works written by the Renaissance humanists and the professional grammarians in the emergence of the national identity sense of the Spaniards is shown.

Keywords: apology of Castilian, Spanish national self-identity, professional linguistic mentality, Spanish-speaking community.

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Introduction

The turn of the 16th century saw a considerable growth of interest in the languages spoken by the majority of the population in European countries. A step forward to satisfy this interest was a Castilian Grammar printed by Antonio de Nebrija in 1492. The book rather perplexed the royal court; nevertheless this work played a historical role changing the mentality of the Spanish-speaking community and attracting their attention to their mother tongue [1, P. 10].

Later Renaissance humanists contributed greatly to uphold the role of national languages. They limited their Latin studies to commenting on the original texts, thus getting rid of the awkward Latin “neologisms” invented in the 15th century. The necessity to develop national languages to have sufficient resources to express new ideas and notions became very obvious. The use of new grammatical forms and new words, registering them in dictionaries served to establish the norms of Spanish Castilian. Spain gave the world the finest works of literature. Their authors tried and refined to perfection the new ways of expression, new figures of speech and new genres. As Ramón Menéndez Pidal put it, the humanists clipped the wings of Latin and introduced the Romance languages into the world [7].

Method

Due to the fact that the research includes two areas of knowledge — linguoculturology and ethnolinguistics — its methodology is based on diachronic (historical data analysis), comparative and contextual methods. Such a view allowed to identify axiological concepts of the native speakers and to relate them to the cultural space in a certain period of time. In this article, the language mentality is understood not as a way of thinking, represented as a technique of turning a thought

into a linguistic unit, but as a system of evaluating attitudes toward one's own language.

Discussion

The basic postulate of the Renaissance said that, however high the value of classical languages was, the mother tongue was as beautiful and should be respected. Formerly only classical turns of phrase had been considered truly fine, but the Renaissance thinkers attributed the same quality to the phrase in Romance languages as well.

Thus, the Renaissance humanist ideology influenced the society in two ways: on the one hand, the classical values were still extolled, though seen in a new light, on the other, the same ideas gave rise to the so-called linguistic nationalism [1, P. 11].

Results

Among the first manifestations of Spanish national self-consciousness was the 1496 book on the art of poetry *Arte de la poesía castellanaby* Juan de Encina, which was followed in the 16th century by Gonzalo Argote de Molina's *Discurso sobre la poesía castellana* (1575), Juan Díaz Rengifo's *Arte poética* and the works by Jerónimo Mondragón (1593) and Alonso López Pinciano (1596). Collections of proverbs and sayings were published by Correas, Hernán Núñez, Juan de Mal Lara. The Latin-Spanish and Spanish-Latin dictionaries compiled by Antonio de Nebrija and *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* published in 1611 by Covarrubias codified the rich resources of the Spanish language.

The 16th century saw the emergence and development of national languages in other Romance countries which was manifested in the works praising their merits. It is remarkable that all these works included words like “defence” and “praise” in their titles, as, for example, *Defence et illustration de la langue françoise* by Du Bellay (1549), *Difesa della lingua fiorentinae di Dante* by Carlo Lenzone

(1557), *Diálogo em louvor da nossa linguagem* by João de Barros (1540), *Libro de alabanzas de las lenguas* published by Rafael Martí de Viciana in the middle of the 16th century. In 1929 M. Romera Navarro published an anthology of 16th century Spanish texts under the title *La defensa de la lengua española en el siglo XVI*. Paying tribute to the enlightened mother Latin, all the 16th century authors distanced themselves and their mother tongue from this language. At the same time they tried to convince the readers of the superiority of their native language over the rest of the Romance languages. This nationalism was in harmony with the spirit of the times when national languages and national self-identification were emerging.

Speaking of the 16th century perception of their native language by the Spanish-speaking community, we should mention their assurance of its absolute superiority to the other Romance languages, the attitude noticed by many French and Italian contemporaries and seen as overconfidence by Henri Estienne in his 1579 work *Projet du livre de la précellence du langage françois*.

The emergence of the Spanish language to its new status began in 1492 when the first Castilian grammar book was published; this became a signal event in the history of the country and the language. Antonio de Nebrija who wrote it was the first to advance the idea of living language normalization similar to that of the classical languages. In the preface added to the subsequent edition of his work Antonio de Nebrija expressed his belief that the grammar book served *the empire's expansionary goals, and the idea was shared by his many compatriots at the time. According to* Antonio de Nebrija, the status of Spanish was so high that it could sooner lose it than make it more elevated [6, P. 687].

The expansion of Spanish all over the world was mentioned by all 16th century authors. On April 17, 1536, Charles V, the King of Spain and the Holy Roman Emperor, addressed the international audience of the Papal Court in the noble Spanish language that deserved to be known and understood by every Christian [7, P. 47]. In 1599 Fray José de Sigüenza wrote that the grandeur and world-wide expansion of Spanish eclipsed the greatness and popularity of Greek and Latin. In 1635 Juan de Robles dared to compare the status of Spanish with the status of Latin in the time of Cicero. Herrera believed the status of Spanish was almost equal to that of ancient Classical languages and certainly exceeding that of living modern languages. In 1651 Fray Jerónimo de San José in his *Historical guide* declares Spanish culture to be superior to that of Rome or Greece at their peak.

Thus we see that in about 150 years, due to the unique political and cultural situation in the Spanish-speaking community, the Spanish language, literature and book culture achieved the status previously enjoyed by only Classical languages and authors, and even surpassed them. Learning Latin was becoming less and less popular and was considered a loss of time (see Pedro Simón Abril, the author of *Greek Logic and Greek Grammar*).

The privileged position of Spanish among other Romance languages was recognized by most Spanish and European authors in general; its situation was unique and greatly contributed to the emergence of the Spanish national idea and national identity.

In spite of being praised as elegant and noble in comparison with French and Italian, according to Juan de Valdés, Spanish was too little used in secular literature, which was natural at the time, since the position of Latin as a bookish language was still quite strong. Villalón also pointed

out some shortcomings of his mother tongue in his 1558 Castilian grammar.

The 16th century authors tended to hold apart the inherent characteristics of the language and its value as an instrument for literary work. They described Spanish as an elegant, beautiful and harmonious, noble and dignified language, stressing at the same time its flexibility, its graceful and succinct turn of phrase (elegancia, lindeza, armonía, agudeza, majestad, magnificencia, nobleza, gravedad, abundancia, riqueza, variedad) [1, P. 14].

It should be mentioned that European authors applied similar words to describe their own native languages other than Spanish, but in each description there is a certain dominating characteristic. As far as Spanish is concerned, dignity was the most prominent characteristic of the language as well as of the Spanish people in general. According to Fernando de Herrera, the Spanish language is the most dignified and majestic among the Romance languages. Dignity was mentioned as the most remarkable feature of the 16th century Spanish national character and it might be extended to the Spanish language which came to embody the national moral and psychological traits, thus itself deserving special respect and veneration. The early 17th century author Gonzalo Correas believed Spanish was superior to all modern Romance languages and Latin for its grandeur, euphonious sound, clarity, simplicity and popularity.

According to *Erasmus of Rotterdam*, each language has its own unique features (propiedades), distinguishing it from all other related languages. Brevity and flexibility (brevedad, agudeza) turned out to be the most outstanding characteristics of Spanish speech (especialización hispánica). As Valdes put it, the beauty of Castilian is in being able to say the most in the fewest words (“...todo el bien hablar castellano consiste en que digáis lo que queréis con las menos palabras que pudiéredes” [9, P.167]. Castillejo agreed that clarity and brevity were the most noticeable features of Spanish (“Nuestra lengua es muy devota de la clara brevedad” [8, P. 69]. Agility and flexibility of Spanish speech was seen as a special Spanish talent (don propio de los españoles) by Medina.

In the light of all this, of special importance is Lope de Vega's opinion that in translation both the original and the target languages lose their characteristic features. Juan de Valdés, Fernando de Herrera and Lope de Vega believed it was impossible to transpose the language characteristic features either in translation or imitation, which manifests their clear understanding of distinctive features of national languages and their “stylistic signature”. The same opinion was expressed in the works of Juan de Valdés, Alfonso Ordoñez, Castillejo, Garcilaso, Morales, Miguel de Cervantes, Vincenzo Maria Bornini, Du Bellay who wrote of enormous difficulties a translator has to face. Mastering another language is not the main difficulty; a translator has to gain an insight into the language character and distinctive features. That is why Valdés advises to look at the meaning of the words, not the words themselves (“no mirar a la palabra sino al sentido” [9, P. 177] and follow the spirit of the target language, Castilian (puro estilo castellano) in his case, whose spirit and style he considers unique and unrivaled.

If Valdés recognizes the difficulty of translation from one language into another, his contemporaries Doctor Viana and Gonzalo Correas plainly stated utter impossibility of translation from other languages into Spanish due to the latter language uniqueness, while translation from Spanish into any other language was quite possible, in their opinion. According to Doctor Viana, the absolutely singular turn of

Castilian phrase makes it impossible to convey its beauty in other languages, and any attempt to do this is ludicrous (“Las redondillas de la [lengua] castellana son tan propias suyas que a ninguna de las otras las concede, y si alguna vez han querido intentar a hacerlas ... han las compuestas tales que son dignas de risa” [8, P.72]. Remarkably, the title of Gonzalo Correas’ work is “The Art of Castilian”(*Arte de la lengua española castellana*), which shows his appreciation of the national language; it should be mentioned that in the early 16th century the term “art” was applied to only Greek, Latin and Hebrew.

In the 16th century a translation of a book was seen as the property of the receiving nation. As Miguel Sanchez de Lima in his 1580 work *El arte poético en Romance Castellano* put it, Castilian translations of classical authors like Homer or Vergil were so numerous and true to the original that there was no need to read their Latin versions any more (“...tantas y tan buenas cosas hay escritas en nuestro Romance Castellano, que no hacen falta ya las obras latinas, pues ya tenemos a Homero, a Virgilio, y otros muchos y muy buenos autores traducidos de tal suerte, que ninguno siente falta de latinidad” [11, P. 156]. The same was true of Juan Boscán’s translation of *Libro del cortegiano* (1528) by Baldassare Castiglione.

Thus, a high appreciation of the native language with its very distinctive style was in agreement with the spirit of the time. Ambrosio de Morales in his work *Discurso sobre la lengua Castellana* (1546) regrets that Castilian does not have its due from its speakers, but the author is for polishing and refinement of his native language within the classical tradition, he does not set any political goals as far as the language is concerned. In his work written later in the same century Francisco de Medina sets the new trend in understanding the role of his native language; he recognizes its merits and sees it as a language on its own. Medina discusses the role of Spanish Castilian in the current political context. What puzzles him is the indifference of the Spanish, ruling half of the world, to the treasure of their mother tongue. To him the grandeur of the Spanish language is the reflection of the magnificence of the empire itself, which naturally means Castilian Spanish is to be studied and learned [1, P. 21].

Our analysis of the 16th century authors has shown that in about a century the mentality of Spaniards transformed, changing the humanistic, non-politicized view of the national language into the full awareness of its superiority to other languages, just as the Spanish nation was seen superior to other nations due to the Spanish political superiority. Even though the 16th century Spanish people were not much interested in formal learning and rules of grammar, the interest in the origin of their language was growing as Spanish national consciousness was developing.

The question of the origin of Castilian was first raised by Antonio de Nebrija who was convinced that the Spanish had received their language from the Romans before the fall of their empire. Juan de Valdés maintained Castilian originated, to some extent, in Greek and Hebrew, Latin being its root language. The anonymous author of *Util i breve institucion* (1555) agreed with Antonio de Nebrija, adding that the Spanish language had been somewhat marred in contact with other languages. Another anonymous author who wrote *Gramática de la lengua vulgar de España* (1559) mostly agreed with this opinion. Cristóbal de Villalón in his 1559 book *Gramática de la lengua vulgar de España* differed from Nebrija seeing the foreign influence as positive and serving to enrich Spanish vocabulary.

In 1616 the first work on the origin of Castilian *Del Origen i Principio de la Lengua Castellana* by Bernardo de Aldrete, a canon from Córdoba, was published. The author conclusively showed that the roots of Castilian were in Latin; he described his native language as a noble daughter inheriting all the splendor of the illustrious mother (“i como hija noble de tan excelente madre le cabe gran parte de su lustre i resplandor” [3, P. 67]. Bernardo de Aldrete was trying to show that not only the grammar of Castilian, but the words as well came from Latin, and he quite successfully defined and described the phonetic changes that had taken place in Castilian. In Amado Alonso’s words, Aldrete laid the foundation of Castilian comparative and historical grammar and phonetics, even though he was just an erudite historian who never, in fact, drew the line between the Latin and the Spanish Castilian language.

What all the above-mentioned theories have in common is establishing a relation between Castilian and Latin. Nevertheless, there existed other theories. The authors of one of them saw the origin of Castilian in the Basque language; another theory maintains Spanish Castilian had “biblical” roots and was as ancient as Latin or even older. The author of the latter theory Gregorio López Madera, a lawyer from Madrid, advanced his own hypothesis called ‘la teoría del “castellano primitivo”’ or, ‘la teoría “tubálica”’. His work *Discursos de la certidumbre de las reliquias descubiertas en Granada desde el año de 1588 hasta el de 1598* (1595 and 1601) traces the origin of Castilian to the biblical times; the author followed the tradition of the royal chroniclers Florián de Ocampo, Ambrosio de Morales and Juan de Mariana calling the pre-Roman settlers of the Iberian Peninsular “Spanish” [1, P. 22].

The interest in the history of the nation was simultaneous with the interest in the origin of the national language. The Spanish people became aware of their common past, in the same way as they were aware of their imperial present and future. At first the interest in the history of the nation was just idle curiosity on the part of some educated people, but by the middle of the 17th century it took the form of aggressive nationalism and the feeling of national superiority, based on the idea of extremely ancient roots of Spanish and, therefore, its superiority to other languages. The adherents of this theory were Bartolomé Jiménez Patón, Gonzalo Correas and Francisco de Quevedo.

Another aspect of interest in their national language was the sensitivity of the Spanish to its style. After Nebrija, the best formula for good style came from Juan de Valdés, a diplomat and theologian who followed the ideas of the Renaissance Humanists. He was the first to proclaim “I write like I speak” (sin afectación ninguna escribo como hablo) and this formula determined the future of European culture of writing. The tendency to less affected style was in agreement with the spirit of the time; lucidity and clarity (llaneza) became the key collective concept during the Golden Age. Nevertheless, this tendency did not exclude preciousness and the use of affected phrases in spoken language, sometimes the spoken and written style of the same author might differ considerably. This co-existence of the two stylistic models in Spanish became its “stylistic signature” that made it different from the French language, for example.

Conclusion

The tendencies we have described allow us to see the general attitude of the Spanish to their mother tongue in the 16th century. In many cases we can only observe the dawn of the future developments, but the general mood and the

preferences of the Spanish-speaking community are very clearly seen.

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