



## **ORTOGRAFÍA DE LA LENGUA ESPAÑOLA AND THE PAN-HISPANIC POLICY OF THE REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA**

### **A ORTOGRAFÍA DE LA LENGUA ESPAÑOLA DENTRO DA POLÍTICA PAN-HISPÂNICA DA REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA**

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**Abstract:** This essay analyzes the current linguistic policy of the Real Academia Española (RAE) and the consortium of Spanish-American academies based on a standardized and unified conception of language underpinned by the ideological notions of a (Pan-Hispanic) nation and language (of the old empire). The analysis involves a comparison of the *Ortografía de la lengua española* [Spelling of the Spanish Language], published in 1999, whose motto “*unifica, limpia y fija*” [“unify, clean, and resolve”] sums up the linguistic policy practiced by the RAE, with texts on linguistic and glotopolitical policies.

**Keywords:** orthography; RAE; language policies.

**Resumen:** Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la actual política lingüística que la Real Academia Española y el consorcio de academias hispanoamericanas llevan a cabo, con una concepción de lengua estándar y unificada, cuya base subraya la noción ideológica de una nación (panhispánica) y una lengua (la del antiguo imperio). Para ello, se cotejarán la *Ortografía de la lengua española*, publicada en 1999, cuyo lema “*unifica, limpia y fija*” resume la política lingüística practicada por la RAE, y textos que tratan de políticas lingüísticas y glotopolítica.

**Palabras-clave:** ortografía; RAE; políticas lingüísticas.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Since the end of the 19th century, when Cuba became independent and Spanish American nations found themselves within a new order in which the influence of the United States was increasingly prevalent, more and more ideological projects emerged. They tried, on the one hand, to strengthen the relationship between Spain and its former colonies. On the other hand, they rejected an influx that intended to maintain the dependency relationship between the empire and the American countries.

This strengthening relationship between Spain and the Spanish-American countries appeared first in Europe. At the beginning of the 20th century, the idea of *Hispanidad* began to be widely spread. Thus, the establishment of October 12 as the *Día de la raza* would be paradigmatic for this project.

In this sense, the essay by Miguel de Unamuno called *Americanidad*, whose central idea is the spiritual reunion between Spain and the Spanish-American countries, is not surprising. It is clear how, in the face of the lack of modernization that marked the

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turn of the 19th to the 20th century in the Iberian Peninsula, a desire for “unity” and rapprochement emerges. That would be beneficial especially to the Spanish people.

However, also in the context of Hispanic America, several intellectuals quickly realized that the imperialist exploitation, which the continent had suffered before by the Spaniards, had been replaced by a significant influence of the United States in the political and economic order. In *Ante los bárbaros* (1903), the Colombian José María Vargas Vila, just five years after the end of the Spanish-American War, already claimed that the United States “invadiram o México, aprisionaram Cuba, Haiti e Santo Domingo, conquistaram Porto Rico, despedaçaram a Colômbia e roubaram o Panamá.”<sup>2</sup> (VARGAS VILA *as cited in* CAPELATO, 2003, p. 7). The historian Maria Helena Capelato (2003) points out that the main voice against the influence of Americans in Hispanic America in the first decades of the 20th century was the poet Rubén Darío. Although the author endorsed the independence of Cuba, in a war marked by the help of the United States, he also saw years later that the American nation had acquired an antagonistic role in the continent due to their use of force and violence.

In addition to their opposition to the United States, many Hispanic American intellectuals were concerned with the loss of a national identity. They remarked that countries such as Argentina received a significant number of immigrants who had come from different countries. In the face of this mixture of different ethnicities, recovering Hispanic roots seemed fundamental to them. In other words, the resistance at the end of the 19th century was primarily motivated by the breaking of a relationship of dependence with Spain in different places, especially with Cuba and the last independence of the century. At the same time, the influx of American ideas was increasingly strong. Thus, as González Aróstegui (2003, p. 47) claims, a search for rapprochement with Spain was sought in terms of “race, language and religion”. The author points out that it is in this context that controversies about *Pan-Americanism* and *Pan-Hispanicism* began to emerge. The questions that synthesized the thinking of several intellectuals of the moment revolved around these two questions: 1. To what extent should the American spirit be assimilated; 2. To what extent should *Hispanicity* be maintained.

Fernando Ortiz, one of the most important Cuban intellectuals of the 20th century, also contributed to this debate by publishing *La Reconquista de América* (1911). In this work, the author publicizes the point of view of Oviedo's professors at the Hispanic-American Congress of 1900 on Pan-Hispanicism:

El panhispanismo, en este sentido significa la unión de todos los países de habla cervantina no sólo para lograr una íntima compenetración intelectual, sino para, también, conseguir una fuerte alianza económica, una especie de “zollverein” (asociación), con toda la trascendencia política que ese estado de cosas produciría para os países unidos y en especial para España, que realizaría así su misión tutelar sobre los pueblos americanos de ella nacidos.<sup>3</sup> (ORTIZ, 1911, p. 5 *as cited in* GONZÁLEZ ARÓSTEGUI, 2003, p. 07)

However, Ortiz makes it clear that this point of view, given by the Spaniards and endorsed by the Generation of 1898 – composed of names such as Miguel de Unamuno and Azorín –, aims at propagating Hispanic moral interests, language and, especially, economic privileges. In short, more than eighty years before the Real Academia published

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<sup>2</sup> They invaded Mexico, imprisoned Cuba, Haiti and Santo Domingo, conquered Puerto Rico, tore apart Colombia and robbed Panama.

<sup>3</sup> Pan-Hispanicism, in this sense, means the union of all the Spanish-speaking countries, not only to achieve an intimate intellectual understanding, but also to achieve a strong economic alliance, a space of “zollverein” (association), with all the transcendence policy that this state of affairs would produce for the united countries and especially for Spain, which would thus carry out its tutelary mission over the American peoples born from it.

its *Ortografía de la lengua española* and affirmed that a modern policy of Pan-Hispanicism was being introduced, Ortiz already had pointed out that, under the motto of “tame neo-imperialism”, Spain was trying to put into practice a policy of unity that was based on a latent Spanish hegemony. This policy was always presented as a “motherland” and representative of Hispanic-American nations. Lauria and López García (2009) also point out the relevant role that Madrid, and consequently the Madrid variant, had in this planning proposed by the Spanish State:

(...) se impuso, así, un modelo de lengua monocéntrico en el cual el uso considerado culto (sobre la base de modelos literarios del Siglo de Oro) de la variedad de Castilla pasó a ser el único foco legítimo de irradiación de la norma lingüística correcta (ortográfica, morfosintáctica y léxica) tanto para España como para América.<sup>4</sup> (LAURIA; LÓPEZ GARCÍA, 2009, p. 54)

Thus, the linguistic planning that the RAE and the Spanish State has been implementing should not be thought as the product of a policy developed in the late 1990s, but — at least — a century earlier.

## 2. ORTOGRAFÍA DE LA LENGUA ESPAÑOLA

The Real Academia Española published its *Ortografía de la Lengua Española* in 1999. The book’s foreword pragmatically revealed the Academy’s point of view on Spanish. In the first lines of the introductory text, the RAE declares that in the years preceding the publication, many Spanish speakers requested the academy for clarifications on the Spanish orthographic rules. For this reason, the Spanish institution, together with the Spanish-American academies, wanted to publish an “Ortografía verdaderamente panhispánica”<sup>5</sup> (REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA, 1999, p. 12). However, the academy does not clarify from the beginning what a “truly” Pan-Hispanic orthography would be. Since there is the seal of official academies from Hispanic American nations, one can understand, therefore, that the text must respect the variations of the different countries.

The idea of unity, of a “homogeneous” language spoken in Europe and in other nations that maintain Spanish as one of their official languages, is constant in the prologue of *Ortografía*. In the first few paragraphs, it is stated that:

Predominó la idea y voluntad de mantener la unidad idiomática por encima de particularismos gráficos no admitidos por todos: poco a poco, las naciones americanas de nuestra lengua se mostraron conformes con la ortografía académica y la hicieron oficial en las diversas repúblicas.<sup>6</sup> (REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA, 1999, p. 14)

In the above excerpt, the notion that unity is not negative because it is overlapped with “graphic peculiarities” of different regions can be seen. Similarly, it is curious how the RAE affirms that Hispanic American nations have shown themselves to be “in compliance” with academic orthography, making it official in their nation states. This statement by the Academy seems to ignore the historical process unfolding since 1492,

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<sup>4</sup> Thus, a monocentric language model was imposed in which the use considered cultured (on the basis of literary models of the Golden Age) of the Castilian variety became the only legitimate focus of irradiation of the correct linguistic norm (orthographic, morphosyntactic and lexical) for both Spain and America.

<sup>5</sup> Truly pan-Hispanic orthography

<sup>6</sup> The idea and desire to maintain the idiomatic unity prevailed over graphic particularisms not accepted by all: little by little, the American nations of our language were satisfied with the academic spelling and made it official in the various republics.

marked by the genocide of indigenous populations across the American continent and the consequent attempt to erase indigenous cultures and languages.

To justify the idea of unity seen by the Academy as truly positive, the RAE makes use of an argument of authority with the statement of Venezuelan philologist Ángel Rosenblat:

La unidad ortográfica es la mayor fuerza aglutinante, unificadora de una amplia comunidad cultural: por debajo de ella pueden convivir sin peligro todas las diferencias dialectales. [...] El triunfo de la ortografía académica es el triunfo del espíritu de unidad hispánica.<sup>7</sup> (REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA, 1999, p. 14)

Although aware that languages change over time, the RAE still emphasizes its role as guardian of the linguistic unity because it is crucial to maintain the “essence” of Spanish:

La Real Academia Española ha elevado la categoría de objetivo prioritario en los estatutos vigentes el de “velar porque los cambios que experimente la lengua española en su constante adaptación a las necesidades de sus hablantes no quiebren la esencial unidad que mantiene en todo el ámbito hispánico”. Quiere esto decir que nuestro viejo lema fundacional “limpia, fija y da esplendor”, ha de leerse ahora más cabalmente, como “unifica, limpia y fija” y que esa tarea la compartimos, en mutua colaboración, con las veintiuna Academias de lengua española restantes, las de todos los países donde se habla el español como lengua propia.<sup>8</sup> (REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA, 1999, p. 15)

According to Lauria and López García (2009), since the founding of the RAE and until the beginning of the 20th century, the Spanish Academy has always highlighted its objective of

“fijar las voces y vocablos de la lengua castellana en su mayor propiedad, elegancia y pureza”. De ahí que se representara tal finalidad con un emblema formado por un crisol en el fuego con la leyenda “Limpia, fija y da esplendor”, obediente a la intención declarada de combatir todo aquello que pudiera alterar la elegancia y la pureza del idioma, y de fijarlo “en el estado de plenitud” alcanzado por la literatura en el siglo XVI.<sup>9</sup> (LAURIA; LÓPEZ GARCÍA, 2009, p. 61)

It is not in vain that in order to seek an authoritative argument for the ideal of unification, cleanliness and fixation, the RAE resorts to the figure of Andrés Bello. The Venezuelan philologist, author of the famous *Gramática de la lengua castellana destinada al uso de los americanos* (1984 [1847]), stated that his text was based on the works of the Spanish Academy. Bello also summarizes quite clearly the ideal of unity and of attempting to conserve the Castilian language in the American continent with the standard norm of the peninsular Spanish:

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<sup>7</sup> The orthographic unit is the greatest unifying, unifying force of a broad cultural community: underneath it all dialect differences can coexist without danger. [...] The triumph of academic spelling is the triumph of the spirit of Hispanic unity.

<sup>8</sup> The Royal Spanish Academy has raised the category of priority objective in the current statutes that of "ensuring that the changes that the Spanish language undergoes in its constant adaptation to the needs of its speakers do not break the essential unity that it maintains throughout the Hispanic sphere". This means that our old founding motto "clean, fixed and gives splendor", must now be read more fully, as "unifies, clean and fixed" and that we share this task, in mutual collaboration, with the twenty-one Spanish-language Academies remaining, those of all the countries where Spanish is spoken as their own language.

<sup>9</sup> “To fix the voices and words of the Castilian language in their greatest property, elegance and purity”. Hence, this purpose was represented with an emblem formed by a crucible on fire with the legend "Clean, fix and give splendor", obedient to the declared intention of combating everything that could alter the elegance and purity of the language, and to fix it "in the state of plenitude" reached by literature in the 16th century.

No tengo la pretensión de escribir para los castellanos. Mis lecciones se dirigen a mis hermanos, los habitantes de Hispanoamérica. Juzgo importante la conservación de la lengua de nuestros padres en su posible pureza, como un medio providencial de comunicación y un vínculo de fraternidad entre las varias naciones de origen español derramadas sobre los dos continentes.<sup>10</sup> (BELLO, 1984, p. 32)

Two ideas stand out from the passage extracted from Bello's grammar: the preservation of the language from “nuestros padres”, which ignores any indigenous heritage and credits the “paternity” of the Spanish-American people to Spain. Bello also claims that linguistic unification is a sign of fraternity between the various nations that have Spanish as their first language. Andrés Bello's thought follows the same line of argument as the RAE. This is the reason why it is not surprising that the book explicitly references the philologist. The Real Academia is, to explain in detail, self-praising:

Hasta ese momento la Academia se había limitado a proponer normas y aconsejar empleos, bien es verdad que con notable éxito, pues el propio Andrés Bello declaraba que no sabía que admirar más, “si el espíritu de liberalidad con que la Academia ha patrocinado e introducido ella misma las reformas útiles, o la docilidad del público en adoptarlas, tanto en la Península como fuera de ella.”<sup>11</sup> (REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA, 1999, p. 14)

This relationship between Andrés Bello's Grammar and the RAE *Ortografía*, as well as other texts from Academia Española, is relevant for several reasons. For this paper, it is essential that we think, as Zamorano Aguilar (2017) points out, of the remarkable influence that both Bello's text and the RAE regulations have on Spanish-American grammars. As the author calls our attention, all texts published on American soil – with the exception of *Gramática castellana*, by Amado Alonso and Pedro Henríquez Ureña – followed the ideas of the RAE and Andrés Bello. In fact, none of the Spanish-American Academies proposed national grammars for their States, reinforcing the relevance of these texts in the Hispanic context.

### 3. LANGUAGE AS HYPOSTASIS

In the prologue to its Orthography, the Real Academia Española states that the evolution of academic orthography is regulated and hierarchized according to three fundamental parameters: pronunciation, etymology and usage. Based on these parameters, the RAE states that the Spanish language has a writing system that has been fully adapted and corresponds to the oral language since 1844.

[...] tal visión de futuro y tanto tino como para conseguir encauzar nuestra escritura en un sistema sin duda sencillo, evidentemente claro y tan adaptado a la lengua oral que ha venido a dotar nuestra lengua castellana o española de una ortografía bastante simple y notoriamente envidiable, casi

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<sup>10</sup> I do not intend to write for Spanish people from Spain. My lessons are directed to my brothers, the inhabitants of Latin America. I consider important the preservation of the language of our parents in its possible purity, as a providential means of communication and a bond of brotherhood between the various nations of Spanish origin spread over the two continents.

<sup>11</sup> Until that moment the Academy had limited itself to proposing norms and advising jobs, it is true that with remarkable success, as Andrés Bello himself declared that he did not know what to admire more, “if the spirit of liberality with which the Academy has sponsored and introduced herself the useful reforms, or the docility of the public in adopting them, both on the Peninsula and beyond. ”

fonológica, que apenas si tiene parangón entre las grandes lenguas de cultura.<sup>12</sup> (REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA, 1999, p. 16)

This correspondence between the language spoken by the inhabitants and the norms imposed by an academy disregards what Marcos Bagno (2011) calls the hypostasis of a language. Starting from the definition provided by the Houaiss dictionary, the Brazilian linguist argues that the standard norm is the clearest example of transforming a language into a hypostasis. In short, it is the process of standardizing a language by to synthesizing it into an institution, or into a “cultural monument” like the RAE does. In the words of Bagno (2011):

O processo de transformar uma língua numa hipóstase passas sempre pela sistematização da forma escrita dessa língua, pela criação de uma *ortografia*. A escrita confere à “língua”, mera abstração, uma aparência concreta, de coisa tangível, material, que se pode tocar, ler, ouvir [...] É a hipóstase total, concluída, consumada. [...] a língua escrita (hipostasiada na escrita literária dos grandes clássicos do idioma) permanecerá sempre, no imaginário coletivo, no senso comum, como algo superior; mais sublime e mais digno de veneração do que a língua falada.<sup>13</sup> (BAGNO, 2011, p. 363-364)

The Real Academia Española addresses the question about the possibility of modifying its orthography in the future. If the interrogation seems progressive, the answer, on the other hand, corroborates the conservative stance of the RAE throughout its discourse:

[...] De ningún modo. Y prueba evidente de ello es que, a petición de varias Academias americanas, el texto de esta edición contiene **algunas novedades, mínimas, de doctrina**, destinadas a regularizar ciertos aspectos relativos a la acentuación gráfica.<sup>14</sup> (REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA, 1999, p. 17).

In other words, the proof that new editions may incorporate modifications would be given by the fact that Hispanic-American academies participated of the publication together with the Spanish Academy. Once again, the RAE conveys an idea of unity, which would be possible through the support of other academies part of a consortium with the “main” academy, whose headquarters are in Madrid. However, two questions remain untouched by the Spanish Academy: do Spanish-American academies incorporate and account for linguistic variations in the different regions of each American nation? In the same way, how does the orthography aggregate the relationship between Spanish and indigenous languages?

No obstante las manifestaciones de apertura a la diversidad (un aparente giro cardinal de su interés, acompañado de una renovación de sus objetivos prioritarios tanto desde el punto de vista

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<sup>12</sup> [...] such a vision of the future and as much skill as to manage to channel our writing into an undoubtedly simple system, evidently clear and so adapted to the oral language that it has come to provide our Castilian or Spanish language with a fairly simple and notoriously enviable, almost phonological, which hardly has a parallel among the great languages of culture.

<sup>13</sup> The process of transforming a language into a hypostasis always involves systematizing the written form of that language, creating an orthography. Writing gives “language”, a mere abstraction, a concrete appearance, of a tangible, material thing that can be touched, read, heard [...] It is the total hypostasis, completed, consummated. [...] written language (hypostaticized in the literary writing of the great classics of the language) will always remain, in the collective imagination, in common sense, as something superior; more sublime and more worthy of veneration than the spoken language.

<sup>14</sup> [...] Not at all. And it is evident from the fact that, at the request of several American Academies, the text of this edition contains some minimal novelties of doctrine intended to regularize certain aspects relating to graphic accentuation.

político como teórico), creemos que la modificación terminológica de “lengua pura” a “base común” oculta la prosecución de una misma estrategia estandarizadora. La “unidad básica” supone dilucidar la base de la lengua, aquello común a las prácticas lingüísticas de las diferentes regiones, es decir, presupone diferenciar entre una lengua ideal y las realizaciones geográficas de la misma para luego discernir los elementos subyacentes a todas las realizaciones lingüísticas. La base del idioma, por tanto, dejará fuera los elementos extranjeros y todos aquellos que tiendan a diferenciarse del patrón arbitrario, es decir, buscará mantener lo “puramente” castellano.<sup>15</sup> (LAURIA; LÓPEZ GARCÍA, 2009, p. 60)

In other words, transforming a language into hypostasis, as the RAE proposes with its orthography, makes clear its linguistic planning project. This is a terminology widely used in studies on glotopolitics and synthesized by Robert Cooper in the following terms: “O planejamento lingüístico compreende os esforços deliberados para influir no comportamento de outras pessoas a respeito da aquisição, da estrutura ou da correspondência funcional dos seus códigos lingüísticos”<sup>16</sup> (COOPER, 1997 *as cited in* LAGARES, 2010, p. 87).

With linguistic policies as a theoretical background, what is investigated in linguistic planning is not only the content of what is planned, but why and how it is planned and who benefits from the planning in the first place. In fact, the publication of orthographic rules may seem insignificant or merely normative at first. If we analyze it as a glotopolitical decision, however, we verify that there are acts of power, in the words of Lagares (2010, p. 89), coming from micro-powers that create and disseminate “discursive behavior guidelines” and ideologies. This view by Lagares confirms Louis Althusser's classic definition that ideology is a system, with its own rules and logic of representations (that may be ideas and concepts) provided with an existence and a historical role in a given society. (ALTHUSSER, 1968 *as cited in* ARNOUX; DEL VALLE, 2010, p. 04). Given the fact that, throughout the 20th century, there have been several attempts to define what a linguistic ideology would be, José del Valle tries to group and define them as:

[...] sistemas de ideas que articulan nociones del lenguaje, las lenguas, el habla y/o la comunicación con formaciones culturales, políticas y/o sociales específicas. Aunque pertenecen al ámbito de las ideas y se pueden concebir como marcos cognitivos que ligan coherentemente el lenguaje con un orden extralingüístico, naturalizándolo y normalizándolo, también hay que señalar que se producen y reproducen en el ámbito material de las prácticas lingüísticas y metalingüísticas, de entre las cuales presentan para nosotros interés especial las que exhiben un alto grado de institucionalización.<sup>17</sup> (DEL VALLE, 2007, p. 20 *as cited in* ARNOUX; DEL VALLE, 2010, p. 05).

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<sup>15</sup> Despite the manifestations of openness to diversity (an apparent cardinal turn of interest, accompanied by a renewal of its priority objectives both from the political and theoretical point of view), we believe that the terminological modification from “pure language” to “base common” hides the pursuit of the same standardizing strategy. The “basic unit” supposes to elucidate the base of the language, what is common to the linguistic practices of the different regions, that is to say, it presupposes differentiating between an ideal language and the geographical realizations of the same and then discerning the underlying elements to all the realizations linguistic. The basis of the language, therefore, will leave out foreign elements and all those that tend to differ from the arbitrary pattern, that is, it will seek to maintain the “purely” Castilian.

<sup>16</sup> Linguistic planning comprises the deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of other people with respect to the acquisition, structure or functional correspondence of their language codes.

<sup>17</sup> [...] Systems of ideas that articulate notions of language, languages, speech and / or communication with specific cultural, political and / or social formations. Although they belong to the realm of ideas and can be conceived as cognitive frameworks that coherently link language with an extralinguistic order, naturalizing and normalizing it, it should also be noted that they are produced and reproduced in the material realm of linguistic and metalinguistic practices, from among which are of special interest to us, those that exhibit a high degree of institutionalization.

In the above excerpt, several elements in Del Valle's speech call our attention: the naturalization and normalization of a certain system of ideas and the reproduction of this practice in the material sphere, as does the Real Academia Española with its normative publications. Xoán Lagares (2010) states that any instrument that plans to “describe a total Spanish”, be it a grammar or an orthography, whose real intention is to prescribe it beforehand, “é um empreendimento político que tem como objetivo estabelecer um centro normativo que dê unidade, primeiro no imaginário e depois nas próprias práticas, ao espaço comunicativo do espanhol no mundo”<sup>18</sup> (LAGARES, 2010, p. 91).

Lagares underlines the “peculiar” constitution of a transnational political space for Spanish, forged by the union of Academies from different countries, always under the direction of the “main” Academy, the Real Academia Española. With that being said, the role of linguistic planning that Orthography has is clear. Not in vain, in the “Política panhispánica” section of the Real Academia Española website, it is emphatically stated that “The panhispánica linguistic policy took a new step in 1999, with the publication of the orthography, jointly revised first by first all the academies, as the Academy warns. This trans-nationality engenders the idea of unity and blurs its real purpose.”

This planning proposed by the Real Academia Española was strengthened with *La nueva política lingüística panhispánica* in 2004. When presenting the achievements of the 2000 *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas*, the RAE states that its dictionary tries to account for the various regional varieties that “Spanish Peninsular” and “American Spanish” present. At first, this generalization may sound incongruous. However, the continuation of its argument clarifies the ideal of homogenization of the Castilian language, as it had been made clear in *Ortografía* five years earlier:

Sin embargo, la expresión culta de nivel formal, y especialmente la escrita, presenta un alto grado de homogeneidad en todo el ámbito hispanohablante. Es, por tanto, la que constituye el “español estándar”: la lengua que todos empleamos (o aspiramos a emplear) cuando sentimos la necesidad de expresarnos con corrección.<sup>19</sup> (REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA, 2004, p. 09)

In the Orthography, the RAE does not categorically describe who the authors of the text are. On the other hand, in the *Diccionario panhispánico*, the Academy says that the authors are “[u]n equipo de filólogos especialistas en español normativo, integrantes del Departamento de “Español al día” de la Real Academia Española” (REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA, 2004, p. 14). This means that the group was not formed by specialists in variationist sociolinguistics. On the contrary, they were specialists in normative Spanish, with no information on their training and/or lines of research.

Within the same publication that introduces *La nueva política lingüística panhispánica*, the RAE also briefly describes the *Diccionario académico de americanismos*. Although the work is presented as the design of a dictionary that covers the geographical, social and cultural variations of Hispanic America, the meetings were planned to take place in Madrid. Moreover, once again the RAE does not have scholars specialized in linguistic variations, developing a document that groups different forms of Spanish in Hispanic America in a unity called American Spanish.

#### 4. PAN-HISPANIC DISCOURSE AND ITS “POSITIVITY”

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<sup>18</sup> it is a political undertaking that aims to establish a normative center that gives unity, first in the imagination and then in the practices themselves, to the communicative space of Spanish in the world.

<sup>19</sup> However, cultured expression at a formal level, and especially written, presents a high degree of homogeneity throughout the Spanish-speaking world. It is, therefore, what constitutes “standard Spanish”: the language that we all use (or aspire to use) when we feel the need to express ourselves correctly.



In the article “El panhispanismo, ¿colonialidad del poder: génesis discursiva de una nación”, Graciana Vázquez Villanueva (2008) highlights the political and ideological role that the idea of a Hispanophony and Panhispanism has been playing since the 20th century and how a possible neocolonial linguistic ideology is confirmed through these instruments. That is, for Spain, it was fundamental to forge this idea of unity. This was because America was always placed in an inferior position in the postmodern and capitalist world order brought to work during the 20th century. Thus, although colonialism ended in 1898 with the loss of the last Spanish colonies – especially Cuba –, it paved the way to coloniality, which provides for the unity between Spain and Latin America, but highlights “el rol tutelar de España y la subsidiaridad de América Latina en la concentración tanto del poder económico como del imaginario cultural y lingüístico.”<sup>20</sup> (VÁZQUEZ VILLANUEVA, 2008, p. 53).

This construction of a notion of unity reached its peak, according to María Florencia Rizzo (2017), with the disclosure of *La nueva política lingüística panhispánica* in 2004, a document published five years after the *Ortografía*. Although the document came out with the signature of the Real Academia Española, there was the seal of the Spanish State, the Instituto Cervantes and – again – the Hispanic-American Academies. Florencia Rizzo underlines how the publication of this document is part of a *contexto glotopolítico* led by Spain. It includes the teaching and certification of Spanish as a foreign language and the organization of international Spanish-speaking congresses. Although these events may convey the idea of a space for debate and plurality about Spanish, in fact:

(...) estos encuentros operan como espacios significativos de difusión pública de proyectos y obras panhispánicas y de consolidación de representaciones sobre la lengua que sostienen los discursos oficiales, así como las decisiones programáticas plasmadas en aquellos trabajos.<sup>21</sup> (RIZZO, 2017, p. 235)

Daniela Lauria and María López García (2009) conducted a deep analysis of *La nueva política panhispánica*. The authors describe the document as an instrument that the RAE used with the role of self-legitimization, within its common language project. This idea of unity, which the Spanish State finances, has a fundamental economic and political role. In *Language and Symbolic Power*, Pierre Bourdieu highlights how an official and state language fosters the constitution of an economic market. In the case of Spanish, Spain uses the language to exercise power not only upon its own country, but also upon the Spanish American states:

The official language is bound up with the state, both in its genesis and in its social uses. It is in the process of state formation that the conditions are created for the constitution of a unified linguistic market, dominated by the official language. Obligatory on official occasions and in official places (schools, public administrations, political institutions, etc.), this state language becomes the theoretic- al norm against which all linguistic practices are objectively mea- sured. Ignorance is no excuse; this linguistic law has its body of jurists - the grammarians - and its agents of regulation and imposition - the teachers - who are empowered universally to subject the linguistic performance of speaking subjects to examination and to the legal sanction of academic qualification. (BOURDIEU, 1991, p. 57)

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<sup>20</sup> the tutelary role of Spain and the subsidiarity of Latin America in the concentration of both economic power and the cultural and linguistic imaginary.

<sup>21</sup> (...) These meetings operate as significant spaces for the public dissemination of pan-Hispanic projects and works<sup>2</sup> and for the consolidation of representations about the language that support official speeches, as well as the programmatic decisions embodied in those works.

In Bourdieu's argumentation, the reference to a unified language market stands out. In other words, this centralization, as well as homogenization, is a fundamental component within the policy of implementing a standard rule.

This linguistic market imposes itself since commonplaces are constructed in the imagination of speakers, which Marc Angenot called *Ideologemas* (ANGENOT, 1982 *as cited in* ARNOUX; DEL VALLE, 2010, p. 12). These commonplaces operate in a discursive field and impose themselves in different ways depending on the period in which they act. Arnoux and Del Valle (2010, p. 15) exemplify some *ideologemas* that dominated/continue to dominate the glotopolitical field: “Una nación se define por la posesión de una lengua y debe tener su propio Estado; las sociedades tecnológicamente avanzadas poseen lenguas superiores”<sup>22</sup>. This description provided by the authors is extremely important when we think about the actions of the Spanish government and the Real Academia Española. It is not surprising that the Franco government demanded that the country had a language and a religion – the Catholic doctrine. At the same time, the idea that Hispanic America is part of this state, although in a peripheral position, is also relevant for this project.

The second *ideologema* is also significant when we think of Spanish and Pan-Hispanic politics. The idea that advanced societies have superior languages is a common sense among many Hispanic-American speakers, which means that there has always been an attempt to terminate indigenous languages since they are often seen as a symbol of “technologically inferior” cultures. This ideology goes against plurilingualism and strengthens linguistic unification and homogenization.

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is clear how the Real Academia Española presents an ideological project perfectly aligned with the Spanish government undertaking. The Pan-Hispanic politics was built during the 20th century, with the Spanish-American War and the consequent decrease in Spanish influence on the American continent as its starting point. However, it was in 1999 that the RAE claimed that the publication of the *Ortografía de la lengua española* was setting a new course in Pan-Hispanic linguistic policy.

As the prologue of *Ortografía* highlighted: “Unifica, limpia y fija”, the integration between unification and the idea of cleanliness is part of the linguistic planning proposed by the RAE. In this way, the transformation of the Spanish language as a uniform hypostasis in the entire Hispanic world transforms the language into something superior and sublime, as I underlined with Marcos Bagno's words.

Therefore, in order for there to be a rupture with the linguistic market led by the RAE and the Spanish State, it is necessary that the different Hispanic-American and Spanish regions produce descriptive grammars that take linguistic plurality into account. In addition, they must consider the influence of other languages upon the Castilian, either of Catalan or Galician in Spain, or of languages such as Guarani and Quechua in Latin America. However, these descriptions should not be produced by literary academies, influenced by the Spanish Academy, but by linguists who take into account the contributions of variationist theories, historical linguistics and linguistic policies. In the face of Pan-Hispanicism, pluralizing the Spanish language must be the objective in the field of linguistic policies.

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<sup>22</sup> A nation is defined by the possession of a language and must have its own state; technologically advanced societies possess superior languages

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