

DE LA CRUZ, J., CAÑETE, A. & MIRANDA, A. 1995: *Introducción Histórica a la Lengua Inglesa*. Málaga, Ágora.

Introducción Histórica a la Lengua Inglesa offers us a clear and detailed account of the history of the English language from its origins to its present stage. This study is the result of a group effort by a team of Malaga University who aimed to write a book for their Spanish undergraduate students of English philology and, as such, it succeeds in providing the students with an overall perspective of diachronic linguistics.

Professor De la Cruz stands out as an eminent and distinguished figure for his previous and very rigorous works on historical linguistics and, among many others, we could mention his articles “Old English Pure Prefixes. Structure and Function”, “The Origins of the Germanic Phrasal Verb”, “Linguistic Scholarship and the Linguistic Interpretation of Old English Data” and his books *La Prosa de los Anglosajones*, *Iniciación Práctica al Inglés Antiguo* or *Historia del Inglés*, this one co-written with A. Cañete.

The book begins with a “shock” for the reader. The authors very wittily have included a passage from the Old English *Apollonius* and from the Spanish Medieval *Libro de Apolonio* both with their modern translations into English and Spanish. The object of this shock pages are, beyond all doubt, to capture the student’s attention and to provoke “an automatic impression of proximity and alienation that is skilfully exploited by the authors and helps both to arouse and maintain the interest of the reader” (Fernández-Corugedo 1993: 192).

With regards to the book’s structure, it is divided into two different parts. The first part is composed of up to three different units or chapters. Chapter 1 (17-24) involves a general introduction in which the authors employ a figure of the human brain remarking the areas in which human beings usually store the capacity of communication. This introduction is followed by a general historymeter used to illustrate the chronological location of important events and a map of the main linguistic families around the world.

Chapter 2 (25-38), as many other books concerning the same field (De la Cruz & Cañete 1992: 45-84; Fernández 1982: 37-72; Berndt 1984: 16-30) contains an elaborated description of the external history of the English language from its origins to the Early Modern Age as the authors are especially interested in depicting the circumstances which actually favoured the standardization of Contemporary English. Although further accounts could have been provided on its subsequent development, the authors prefer to cite some other specialized references.

Chapter 3 (39-60) closes the first part of the book. Following the line of previous books (Brook 1972: 28-58) it is concerned with the description of the Indo-European to concentrate afterwards on the Germanic and the detailed description of its varieties and phonological and morphological peculiarities. This chapter finishes with a stock list of words showing the Scandinavian and French influence on English lexicon, on the one hand, and on English morphotactics, on the other. The French influence on vocabulary conforms an in-depth analysis since, just like Baugh's *A History of the English Language* (1971: 200-213), it is divided for a better understanding into various semantic fields, that is, governmental and administrative words, ecclesiastical words and those connected with army, law, art, meals and social life.

This first section as a whole has proven itself to be of great interest for the reader as it succeeds in providing the reader with a valuable background to set in the study of language itself. Nevertheless, it must be regarded to be, with the exception of some maps and diagrams, as almost a mere word-by-word reproduction of the introductory section found in De la Cruz and Cañete's previous book *Historia del Inglés*.

The second part comprises the foremost of the book and it is subdivided, as the authors explain using the simile of the "magic box", into three different sections which may be summarized as follows:

- Section A (63-131): words
- Section B (135-138): operations
- Section C (141-186): orthography and pronunciation

Section A is devoted to an extensive analysis of the different parts of speech, that is, nouns (63-75), adjectives (77-83), pronouns (85-99) and verbs

(101-131). Whereas some other manuals on this field (Bourcier 1981; Barber 1972) usually begin with the study of these grammatical categories in Old English to proceed with the subsequent stages of English or even carry out a retrospective historical analysis (Strand 1994), this book differs from these methods and opts to present us the analysis both synchronically and diachronically at the same time. Thus, following the line of Peters (1968: 126-172), it is a step-by-step explanation of these parts of speech presenting the history of each part independently. This methodology happens to be very profitable for didactic purposes since, with the help of illustrations and paradigmatic charts, it affords a valuable knowledge of the internal development of English which enables the students to set in some further and more specific readings on the subject.

Section B (135-138), though somewhat reduced in its content, manages to exhibit a proficient explanation of the various sentential functions of English, that is to say, negative and interrogative sentences (135-136) on the one hand, and relative and phrasal complementation (137-138), on the other.

Section C (141-186) involves the historical development of the orthography and pronunciation of English. This section follows the same methodology of section A and displays both synchronically and diachronically the development of consonants (141-152) and vowels (153-186) covering in detail all the various stages of English history, from the complex system of Old English to the modern situation in Contemporary English, along with consonantal orthographic and phonological innovations of Middle English, its subsequent development and a clear-cut description of the vowel system both before and after the so-called Great Vowel Shift.

Taking into account that this book has been designed as a course book for University students, the authors have profitably enclosed a twofold glossary which happens to be very helpful for didactic purposes. On the one hand, there is a thematic glossary (187-190) functioning as an index which undoubtedly speeds up the student's needs to consult a specific subject. On the other, the book also incorporates a diachronic glossary (191-200) which becomes of great help for the reader when studying the historical development of the English orthographical system, enabling them the possibility of self-training activities.

The last pages of the book deal with references (201-204). This bibliography is structured into three different parts. First of all, the authors cite what they consider to be the main source to carry out any type of English study (*YWES*). Second, a selection of the basic and most important dictionaries of English. And, third, a general bibliography which comprises more than 150 entries thus offering the reader a wide variety of sources for future readings and researches on historical linguistics.

The bibliography, though very exhaustive itself, turns out to be somewhat irregular in its presentation. I am referring, in fact, to those entries written by a same author in which we can observe the use of inverted commas instead of a continuous three-dash line flush with left margin followed by a period, as they are customary cited.

Furthermore, there are some other flaws in the book. In-text citations are not wholly systematic throughout the text. For instance, on page 12 we come across a reference to Swanton's book *Anglo-Saxon England* and, paradoxically, it is not listed in the general bibliography. Likewise, on page 185 the authors cite Jespersen and we never get to know which of Jespersen's books they are actually following, either *Growth and Structure of the English Language* or *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles*. In this sense, the authors should have used not footnotes but in-text citations to allude to references and this method would have undoubtedly provided the text with a more systematic form of citation. The book also contains some spelling mistakes like that on page 166 in *ffrere* instead of *frere*, or that on page 47 in *simplifacatoria* instead of *simplificatoria*, and surprisingly, this one happens to be present in *Historia del Inglés* as well.

Furthermore, the book is accompanied by *Textos y Vocabularios para la Introducción Histórica a la Lengua Inglesa*. This is a complementary handbook containing a selection of pedagogically created Old and Middle English texts with some remarks on their vocabulary, grammar or pronunciation. Unfortunately, this handbook is now being re-edited owing to the typographical slips found in the first printing.

All in all, despite all these minor drawbacks of minimum importance which I am sure that will be corrected and amended in future editions of the book, *Introducción Histórica a la Lengua Inglesa* has proven to be very efficient as a text book for university students as well as for any reader to acquire an

overall and profound perspective on the history of English. And, in this sense, we must congratulate the authors for their clear-cut methodology and presentation of data.

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