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WOMEN AS LINGUISTIC CODIFIERS IN MODERN EUROPE. A COMPARATIVE
SOCIO-HISTORICAL BRITISH AND SPANISH FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

Considering the role of grammars as cultural products, influential on the education of women and children of the past, this contribution aims at assessing the extent to which nineteenth-century Spanish women were allowed to enter a community of discourse constituted by grammarians and linguistic codifiers of the vernacular. Following socio-historical lines of study, this new path of exploration intends to give visibility to women as authors and receivers of grammatical discourse and to provide comparative material to previous research in the field, particularly that on eighteenth-century British women grammarians. First, school grammars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are

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reanalysed from the point of view of ideological discourse. British female grammarians and their audiences are then taken into consideration in order to establish a social and historical framework which may serve as a basis for comparison. The Spanish setting is described and conjectured profiles of women as authors and receivers of grammar-books are given. Finally, a preliminary list of names and works is provided, laying the base for future research.

Key words: women grammarians, linguistic codifying, nineteenth century grammar, England and Spain.

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1. Introduction

Considering the role of grammars as cultural products, influential on the education of women and children of the past, this contribution aims at assessing the extent to which nineteenth-century Spanish women were allowed to enter a community of discourse constituted by grammarians and linguistic codifiers of the vernacular¹. Following socio-historical lines of study, this new path of exploration intends to give visibility to women as authors and receivers of grammatical discourse and to provide comparative material to previous research in the field, particularly that on eighteenth-century British women grammarians.

The article is organised as follows. In section 2, the search for Spanish nineteenth-century women grammarians in a wider European framework is justified. Despite the lack of specific studies on the subject, current works on Spanish school grammar textbooks and on the history of women education invite scholars to contribute new approaches. In section 3, school grammars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are reanalysed from the point of view of ideological discourse. Section 4 is devoted to British female grammarians and their audiences in order to establish a social and historical framework which may serve as a basis for comparison. Section 5 finally describes the Spanish setting and conjectured profiles of women as authors and receivers of grammar-books, according to what is known so far. A preliminary list of names and works is provided, laying the base for future research. In a final section relevant conclusions are put forward.

2. Why study women grammarians in a comparative context?

Tieken-Boon van Oostade maintains that “the study of the role of women as part of a general movement to teach little girls the basics of vernacular grammar and to involve their mothers in the process” may represent a singular feature of British culture. This would apparently constitute a sufficiently justified point of departure to carry out a comparative research into an almost unexplored area of Spanish linguistics (2000a: 11; 2000b: 876-77).

¹ This research has been funded through the project MICINN-FFI2011-24172.

However, the idea of investigating the presence of women grammarians in pre-twentieth century Spain, as triggered by what is already known on British female linguistic codifiers of the past, proves a tricky issue, mainly due to the asymmetry of contributing factors. The emergence of a normative English standard as a national enterprise in a country with a surprisingly high degree of literacy constitutes a well-researched area. Substantial work on British linguistic codifiers, where female authors have also found their place, has succeeded in offering the community of scholars a closely-knit sociolinguistic web of eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain. Conversely, Spain has lacked a similar approach until very recently. The country's low literacy rates in what is usually defined as a pre-modern economy and society, the existence of a dominant Language Academy and the different concerns of its researchers so far have undoubtedly conditioned the task. Notwithstanding, a comparative enterprise seems worth addressing and clearly benefits from current Spanish work carried out along two different paths: the recently established area of investigation on vernacular, school grammar-books as cultural products and the longer-standing, but still lacking study of the role of women in education.

Though apparently the particular realm of modern female grammarians constitutes a new and yet scarcely documented path in Spanish Linguistics², the study of potential women codifiers of the language seems to bring together topics of utmost salience for sociolinguists, historical linguists and education scholars, many of whom invite to contribute further insights to the subject.

Grammar as a cultural product seems to have attracted the interest of both Spanish and English academics. The critical analysis of meta-linguistic texts as part of an active ideological project, aimed to validate specific systems of values and beliefs, which will subsequently filter down as part of a national identity, holds a long-standing tradition in

² There is no particular study on Spanish women grammarians, as far as I know. Ballarín et al 2000 devotes just a few lines to grammar textbooks written by women. Anecdotally, Vinyoles 2007 mentions briefly the case of two Spanish women grammarians of the eleventh century, living in Vic: Guisla and Alba, wife and daughter respectively of another grammarian Guiberto, of Lombardian origin. On the role of women in the early teaching of science, see Delgado Martínez (2009).

England at least since the 1980s. Historians of the language have insistently searched for alternative histories enriching a monolithic view of language development, which clearly involve the analysis of grammars and other language-codifying books (Crowley 1991: 7; Watts, etc). Since the 1990s this line of thought has borne witness to a new turn of the screw; grammar writing has ceased to pertain to an exclusively male realm. Bringing to the fore female authors and audiences, English studies like those by Percy (1994, 2009, 2010), Tieken-Boon-Boon (2000a, 2000b, 2008), Cajka (2003, 2008) etc. have not only contributed to give women grammarians their visibility in history, but have also thrown new light upon the history of vernacular language teaching and learning, as well as on gendered education. The field is yet open to further insights which may come up from a comparative stand³. Spain has apparently been slower at adopting a similar critical stance towards the historiography of modern grammar-books⁴. However there is a currently active team of researchers devoted to the study of school grammars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with a special interest in what they call ‘external grammatography’ and an explicit focus on ideological issues. And they also invite scholars to explore Spanish school grammar textbooks in detail for original contributions, reporting on the lack of attention they have been given as minor

³ Tieken-Boon (2000a:11) calls for research aimed to discover whether similar developments were taking place elsewhere: “In the context of who’s who in the history of world linguistics it might be worthwhile to investigate whether similar developments were taking place elsewhere”. Iversen (2012: 613) likewise states that children’s dictionaries have rarely been the object of research and that much work is to be done on women lexicographers. Ballarín (1989: 245) insists on the multiplicity of issues concerning the Spanish history of women education which should be yet addressed. On the need of further investigation on the teaching of the vernacular in Spain, see García Folgado 2005: 9). On the lack of research devoted to the education of nineteenth century lower class Spanish women, see Pueyo (1989: 27).

⁴ Well-known, however, are the results of contributions to International Conferences organised by the *Sociedad Española de Historiografía Lingüística*. Research projects like CODIGRAM *La codificación gramatical de la lengua española 1626-1821*, developed by M^a José Martínez Alcalde, are also worth mentioning.

or discredited texts (García Folgado 5)⁵. San Vicente & Calero's relevant collection of articles (2012: 7) openly mentions the need to critically analyse Spanish didactic texts of the past as ideological discourses and compare them with those of other cultures and languages. Last, but not least, Ballarín's collective project «Contribución de las maestras a la construcción del conocimiento educativo contemporáneo en España 1847-1914» represents a serious effort to focus on women teachers as builders of knowledge. Consequently, the examination of Spanish women authors and audiences of nineteenth century grammar textbooks seems relevant and called for.

This article is conceived of as a qualitative preliminary approach to the subject, where attention will be given to chronological, geographical and social factors affecting the existence of women as authors and audiences of grammar textbooks. The basis for a comparative English Spanish approach will be established, previous to a second contribution, devoted to seven of these writers⁶.

3. Grammar books as cultural products. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

As seen from a lay contemporary standpoint grammars may look inoffensive, objective and unbiased treatises. However, though it is probably true that grammar books have historically undergone a process of de-ideologisation (San Vicente & Calero 2012: 13), the study of women as authors and audiences of grammar books makes it strictly necessary to consider these texts from a critical point of view, i.e. as cultural products constrained by historical and ideological parameters. This implies shifting the focus of analysis from language books to language users⁷. Under these premises, the idea that

⁵ García Folgado & Carsten (2012) report that research on school grammars has been carried out from 1996, with a notable increase from 2005. Related concerns are raised by the so called MANES project on textbooks. Specialised publications on school textbooks by Fundación Sánchez Ruipérez are also to be mentioned.

⁶ AUTHOR (en prensa) Women grammarians in nineteenth century Spain. In search of the other voice.

⁷ Many ongoing studies on the history of British normativisation and Spanish linguistic historiography seem to favour this perspective. The role of grammarians as language experts shaping the image of good use; the readership of grammar books as target of a potential market; grammars as commentaries of the world they were written, or the role

grammars represent strongly ideological instruments used or imposed by institutions in educational environments reveals common agreement. And this is particularly valid for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when grammar production escalated throughout Europe⁸.

Grammar books were to a good extent derived products of the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason, very much connected with the fostering and universalisation of education and the promotion of vernacular languages for both utilitarian and nationalistic reasons. Studies have proved that codifiers of the vernaculars represented an institutional community of discourse, with a broadly agreed set of public goals defined by a body of meta-linguistic texts and practices. This clearly implies that authors and their selected contents deserve special attention.

In this connection it is to be highlighted that as language and usage experts, authors of grammar books made their proper selection of a) a language; b) a language variety and c) specific audiences. And selections invariably and necessarily involve ideological

of language in the education of women constitute preferred areas of attention. In some of these fields, however, much research is still lacking García Folgado 2005:4; San Vicente & Calero 2012: 8.

⁸ While Percy (2010) mentions the publishing of around 240 grammars of English just in the eighteenth century and Yáñez-Bouza (2011) reports to have traced “the whereabouts of ca. 348 eighteenth-century grammar writers”, there are no precise figures for eighteenth or nineteenth century Spain. Medina (1992) is not exhaustive; García Folgado (2005:10) barely refers to the notable number of school grammars written from the sixteenth century onwards. Similarly Calero (2010: 68, 81) observe the significant development experienced by grammar production during the nineteenth century, reaching a climax in the period 1860s-1890s (see also Calero 2010:68). Montoro (2008) restricts her catalogue to 36 books in the library of Hospital Real de la Universidad de Granada. Finally, Esparza and Niederehe (2013) records 3279 entries of books on Spanish as “object of description” for the period 1801-1860. However, this figure being chronologically limited might well be misleading, due to the geographical scope of the work and the treatment of re-editions as individual entries. See also Calero Vaquera (2010:67) on the emergence of grammar school books in Spain.

leanings. More precisely, during the eighteenth century both English and Spanish became re-valued against Latin⁹, which lost its status as the language par excellence. Construed as full-fledged languages, they were promoted to proper objects of study and used for a safer and more efficient (elementary) instruction. Furthermore, both in Britain and Spain vernaculars were built into the single language of single nations, to be expanded and taught —with greater or lesser success— throughout multilingual countries as part of a unifying identity, a national pride¹⁰. Debates for a fixed, rational and structured form of the language led, in turn, to the raising of particular varieties into standard forms, a restricted collection of good and correct uses to be prescriptively imposed, together with other codes of behaviour.

As vernaculars emerged as a principal branch of education, further selections and adaptations of linguistic usage were instantiated according to aims and audiences. Consequently, the contents of grammar books as represented in examples, dialogues, proscriptive commentaries on varieties or authors selected as authorities come to the fore as critically relevant for the construction of social identities, in particular that of gender¹¹. Very broadly, as education was expected to create new citizens and promote economic development, grammars would contribute to build boys into educated citizens

⁹ The process implied different political and cultural overtones. In the case of Spain the noble origin of the vernacular was highlighted through its similitude with the Classical tongue, which gets it re-valued as close to perfect. From the end of the seventeenth century Spanish is perceived as a language qualified for teaching and science writing. However, it is not until the eighteenth century that the teaching of Spanish as a mother tongue acquires a certain relevance (García Folgado 2005: 12, 24).

¹⁰ Probably due to the fact that literacy was more a desire than a reality, the expansion of a national language in Spain didn't prove as strong as in other European countries (García Folgado 2005: 35). On nationalistic nuances in Spanish grammars, see San Vicente & Calero (2012: 13).

¹¹ The ideas that didactic knowledge is built upon the social opinion on what students and citizens should know and that humanistic knowledge is judged essential for the cultural identity of the community, as observed by Rodríguez Gonzalo (2000: 64), reveal important in this respect.

and girls into proper domestic women¹² (Cajka 2008: 192, 220; Del Amo 2009: 10; Iversen 2012: 613).

Moreover, under these circumstances, there arose an increasing demand of grammar textbooks, which created a potentially profitable market, specially targeted at the ever growing, urban middle classes. Not only did these groups form the bulk of book buyers but they were in search of both greater social acceptance and better jobs. Mastering the vernacular as intended in grammar books would apparently confer social benefits for some and an advantageous money-making for others.

Finally, it is not difficult to imagine that the values of authority, respectability and profit projected in or through grammars turned these books very much into a male issue, where women represented the passive role of a coveted audience, if any. Ideas, values and official policies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries made it difficult for women to be recognised as agents in such public roles. Consequently, women as authors would receive varying degrees of visibility, usually standing as non-prominent, even unidentified figures. The presence of an institutional single voice, as that represented by the Language Academy in Spain, could only make things more difficult. Strongly intertwined with centralising policies, its established force extremely limited the space left for other —male or female— standpoints (San Vicente & Calero 2012:12)¹³.

In sum, for the purpose of this and similar papers, grammar books are to be considered cultural products of a major and emblematic significance, pursuing more a didactic than a scholarly goal. Their symbolic relevance is furthermore enhanced by the fact that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries linguistic, political and cultural ideas formed a close-woven net invading all areas of social organisation (Zamorano, 2012: 64). Hence, grammars must be analysed as most highly-prestigious instruments at the service of an ordered society, contributing not only to the codification of languages and transmission of knowledge, but most importantly to the shaping of the moral, social and

¹² In addition, see various specialised contributions in San Vicente & Calero 2012.

¹³ The thirst for fixity and order in a language “lost in anarchy” (Medina 1992: 16) seems to be quelled by the creation of the Academy and its codifying purpose. The first official Grammar of Spanish is released in 1771, after which many abbreviated versions were to follow. A spelling guide (*Ortographía española*) had been published in 1741.

religious behaviour of their speakers (Capel 1986: 302; García Folgado, 2005: 36; San Vicente & Calero, 2012: 9).

4. Eighteenth century British female grammarians: a socio-historical portrait of authors and audiences

The group of a so-called “forgotten group of grammarians” (Cajka 2003) has been the focus of attention of mainly Anglo-speaking researchers interested in the eighteenth century social history of English since the 1990s. Contributions by Linda C. Mitchell, (1988), Morton (1990) Carol Percy (1994, 2009, 2010), Smith (1999), Ingrid Tieken-Boon (2000a, 2000b, 2008), María Rodríguez-Gil (2002, 2006, 2008) and the late Karen Cajka (2003, 2008) have shed light on this issue and set the path for future investigation. The field seems to have naturally expanded to the analysis of the role of women in modern British lexicography (Iversen 2012). Works such as Brown’s (2001) on religious hidden goals of earlier grammarians have proved also enlightening. This section, devoted to establishing a suitable framework for comparison draws extensively from their work.

The abovementioned surveys refer rather extensively to the undertaking of nine identified female authors, who published a successful collection of around twelve discrete grammar books, as well as large grammar sections in all-in-one-books, reaching a total of over one hundred editions well into the nineteenth century. (Cajka 2003; Percy 2010). More precisely, scholarly literature revolves around the life and career of Anne Fisher, Elleanor Fenn, Ellin Devis, Jane Gardiner, Blanche Mercy, Mrs Eves, Mrs M. C. Edwards, Mrs Taylor and Dorothea Du Bois¹⁴. Not surprisingly there always remains the obvious problem of identification of women authors who might have written anonymously or under a pseudonym. Actually, this had been the case of some of the abovementioned females initially (Percy 1994, Tieken-Boon 2000a).

Most of these women came from affluent, well-connected families. Fisher, the wife of a printer, would probably be better described as middle class as would Gardiner, the daughter of the local teacher and scientist John Arden. They were all well educated women and shared their professions as mistresses of their schools in urban areas:

¹⁴ Elizabeth Elstob’s pioneering work on Anglo-Saxon studies does not fall within this group of women authors.

London, Birmingham, Manchester, Beverly and Carlisle. Some followed that path to generate financial support for themselves and their families (Gardiner, Du Bois), but others, like Fenn, were apparently driven into their careers out of more philanthropic ideals.

As is well known, they carried out their activities in a politically stable eighteenth-century Britain, a country where education on the vernacular and in the vernacular represented a public issue with solid foundations. Literacy rates especially among the urban middle classes had already achieved comparatively high standards by then¹⁵, and children and women proved a particular concern of institutional policies, aimed at improving their educational opportunities (Hodson 2007; Hickey 2010: 7).

Subsequently, grammar textbooks authored by women seem to have been written under the demand of a large reading public. Not only was grammar part of the official educational curricula, but there is solid evidence of the popularity of these particular textbooks largely aimed at a female audience. Rodríguez-Gil (2006) points out that progress in the teaching of English is to be observed parallel to the increase in the number of books offering guide for self-improvement; Percy (2010) suggests that ambitious parents had sufficient interest in their girls' education, both to inspire and to reward some authors; a fact strongly connected to the fast increase in the number of women educators during the last quarter of the eighteenth century (Cajka 2008). Furthermore, quoting Cajka, Percy (2010) indicates that some of the grammars written by women –probably Fisher's, Fenn's, Devis', even Gardiner's- were as popular as some canonical women's novels or more. Finally, as mentioned above, most of these books were reedited well into the following century.

¹⁵ According to McInstosh (1998: 24) between 1700-1790 literacy rates remained fairly steady for men, around 60%, while they rose in women from 40% to 50%. Recalling several studies on the issue, Kord (2003: 40) similarly indicates that England and Scotland were well ahead of continental Europe in this respect. She reports an overall literacy rate of society 45% in 1714; 60% around 1750; for women 25% in 1714 and 40% in 1750. The rate reaches an estimated 64% in 1780, after a sharp rise. Last it is to be noted 40% of literacy among the working class.

The number of potential readers makes it feasible to think that initial grammars of the vernacular language started a commercial interest, a fact which could also apply to female grammars (Rodríguez-Gil 2006, Watts 2012: 205). Their authors might well have written their texts for their schools first and then put them out to public sale (Cajka 2008). There is evidence that Fisher found a market in Newcastle, London and Leeds (Tieken-Boon 2000a), that du Bois, “the least grammarian of all” (Cajka 2008) was a bestselling author, whereas Fenn profitably marketed her grammars as an introduction to Lowth (Percy 1994: 128).

Notably enough grammars by female authors were not only popular, but well received and publicly reviewed, which gives an idea of their impact and importance. Fenn’s manual received critical success and Devis’ was praised for its intellectual worthiness and promotion of serious study as a good precursor to more comprehensive ones (Percy 1994: 126; Cajka 2008: 204).

Following a practice of eighteenth century authors to readily name their target groups (Hickey 2010: 8), women grammarians made an explicit mention of their audiences in book titles. Audiences turned increasingly specialised, as in other elementary textbooks, distinguished by age or sex, as observable for example in Devis’: *For the use of young ladies by a lady* (Percy 1994: 123). Though some of the grammar books may have been aimed at young people of both sexes (as Edwards’), their focus most often fell on girls and young ladies at an elementary level of instruction. In other words, a “novice audience” (Percy 1994: 122), as represented by daughters (4-15 years old) from affluent families attending these authors’ private schools; children whose parents who couldn’t afford a governess, but wanted something better than a school; young women preparing to enter the upper society or ladies for whom a grammatical knowledge of English was becoming essentially necessary, but reaped no advantage from English grammars (Cajka 2008: 203). It is not risky to claim that most learners drew from urban environments, maybe provincial towns with little availability of grammars.

However, a particular concern with the “domestic mother-teacher”, as Iversen (2012: 616) labels them, is to be noted. Maternal responsibility had expanded to include formal instruction in such skills as reading and arithmetic (Percy 1994: 127). Thus, grammars responded to the increasing responsibility of women providing them with the materials and self-confidence to educate their girls. This specific target learner is recognised in titles such as Fenn’s *The mother’s grammar, being a continuation of the child’s*

grammar; The child's grammar. Designed to enable ladies who may not have attended to the subject themselves to instruct their children; The friend of mothers: designed to assist them in their attempts to instil the rudiments of language; Parsing lessons for young children... for the assistance of parents and teachers, etc. (Cajka 2008).

In this respect a comment on the role of women as “exemplary speakers and auditors of the vernacular” (Brown 2001: 139), seems justified. According to Brown, in the seventeenth century the ostensible attention to women’s educational needs also emerged –at least partially- from a continuing effort to reform religion. Women would act as mediators of the propagation of the Puritan culture and proselytizers within the family¹⁶. Though the Puritan zeal was long gone in the 1700s, the seventeenth century emphasis on plainness, traditionally identified with the unlearned or unsophisticated vernacular of women, may still have lingered on. A plain style of women as opposed to that of learned men, foreign and corrupt, was to be enhanced. It was the domestic mother, valuably malleable, who would hand on the purest English to coming generations, as part of a national identity. It may be claimed, therefore, that the instruction of mothers on the vernacular presents a special tinge of expertise and religious backing in England, which might prove of importance in a comparative framework.

Women grammarians are also said to have shared a new emphasis on developing their own methods. Focused on students and their interests, they often built up strategies out of actual experience in their schools¹⁷ (Cajka 2008). Even though some of the books were based on prior male-authored handbooks¹⁸, their most immediate goal was apparently to simplify them, lightening the teaching load, to render study easy and useful. Latin-based grammars favoured by male authors proved difficult, inadequate, or

¹⁶ “Set against the errant gentleman, the domestic woman represents pure, plain and wholesome English Protestantism mediated through language” (Brown 2001: 139).

¹⁷ Iversen 2012 confirms a similar trend among lexicographers: “Several dictionaries specifically for children in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries compiled by women who drew on their experience as educators”.

¹⁸ Fenn’s and to a lesser extent Gardiner’s and Mrs Edwards’ works were based on Murray. Mercy follows Lowth (Tieken-Boon 2000a).

too masculine for misses. Consequently, more rational, speedy, highly structured patterns were to be put forward, often straightforward and succinct. Similar values seem to have led Gardiner and Mercy to make her grammar conformable to French parameters, as a preparation to further French instruction for girls. (Tieken-Boon 2000a; Cajka 2008; Percy, 2010).

Aware of the disadvantages of conventional learning by rote –not always successfully avoided as verified in Devis’-, different plans were tested. Traditional and popular methods, such as question and answer or the so called conversational learning, combined with more innovatory techniques. An idea of learning by amusement through grammatical games and dramatic techniques, based on French models was fostered, though not always achieved (Percy 1994: 127, 135; Cajka 2008: 206). Blanch’s grammar, including *Scholar* and *Instructress* books, is recognised exceptionally modern in its approach. A great amount of practice, fill-in-the-blank quizzes, and cooperative learning constitute singular features of her textbook. Similarly, Fisher’s own meta-language and her examples of false grammar and error spotting have attracted the attention of scholars (Percy 1994: 136). Last in this respect, women grammarians insisted on the relevance of making content closer to experience and the surrounding environment. Attention was turned to the familiar, the immediate and the concrete and pictures were given notable importance in some of their schemes (Percy 1994: 125, 131; Rodríguez-Gil 2006; Cajka 2008).

In addition to the most immediate goal of female grammarians as mentioned above, their textbooks fulfilled other purposes too. They promoted the idea of the importance of the mother tongue in the female curriculum and would help their audiences to acquire a good command of English, to speak and write properly for everyday purposes and commercial life (Rodríguez-Gil 2006). According to Hager (2009: 88), quoting Cajka, this emphasis on expanding the publicly legitimate standard among women meant for authors like Du Bois to give women the power to become independent. Eves’ primary goal was similarly the eradication of vulgarity and of social disdain towards women.

Noble as these purposes might have been, female grammars no doubt contributed to maintain an ordered society and the moulding of behaviours. A reality which reveals ever more clear from an analysis of their contents. Though not all grammar books under

consideration showed the same degree of elaboration¹⁹, scholars agree that they reflect a pervasive anxiety about correct English, insisting on the connection between social and linguistic ignorance and adopting a non-polemical tone, very much in accordance with the conservative educational curricula advocated by prominent authors of the time (Percy 1994: 137). Well grounded in the concrete and domestic spheres, none of these grammars suggests that education should remove a female from her traditionally ascribed realm. Many of the contents emphasised good morals, maxims and aphorisms were explicit, at times oppressive²⁰, and even the author's educational philosophies may be claimed to have played a part in the construction of prototypical good girls and good boys²¹.

Notwithstanding the above, researchers also acknowledge that these grammars hint at a more proper balance of social roles or even suggest women's independence of mind. (Cajka 2008: 210). More precisely, parallel to the invocation of a distinctively female world, limited and concrete, the texts prove that examples get adapted so that they feel more appropriate to women and that too gendered examples are left out or substituted by less biased ones in subsequent editions (Cajka 2008: 197).

Finally, whilst largely perpetuating dominant ideologies of domesticity and gender identities, researchers highlight the fact that eighteenth century British female grammarians contributed to reinforce the link between women and learning, challenged the stereotype of the ignorant female language user, and covered the gap of a special audience with special needs. Considered as a whole, female grammarians initiated a trend, created a subgenre of elementary education and gained a community of peers (Percy 1994: 129). In this connection, the conclusion may be drawn that eighteenth century female grammar writing constituted very much a genderlect. No longer referring to variation according to speaker sex, this concept is used to describe heavily

¹⁹ Mrs M. C. Edwards' and Mrs Taylor's books constituted brief treatises with scarce examples. Mercy's and Gardiner's were more substantial and Devis' is much praised (Percy 1994, Cajka 2008).

²⁰ See Stocker (2004) on Fenn's work.

²¹ Iversen 2012: 613 abounds on the idea in reference to lexicographers.

context-dependent, community-based varieties, as re-valued in current sociolinguistic terms; just as the one described in this section.

5. The case of Spain. In search of the other voice

Contrary to what happens in Britain, female Spanish grammarians have received scarce attention yet, despite some encouraging beginnings. However, a potential context may be outlined, where qualitative and quantitative differences and similarities are highlighted.

5.1. The nineteenth century and the education of women

To reconstruct a frame where Spanish women could act as authors or intended audiences of school grammars one should turn to the nineteenth century. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Enlightenment was shared by a scarce minority of educated high class people, who shared many of the theoretical concerns of the new thinking, mainly those of education, order and utility²². However, the fact that Spain didn't achieve a modern stage in economy, as embodied in significant industrial and agricultural revolutions, prevented the practical application of the ideals and turned the needs for education lower²³. In addition, the nineteenth century represents a period of political turmoil in Spain, very much dominated by religion and conservative positions²⁴. An urban middle class could only grow slowly and the extent of liberal thought kept limited to a weak bourgeoisie (Ballarín 1989: 20; García Romero 2001; Sole 1988). Consequently, more liberal ways of thinking and action are only to be found in the periphery of the system and to a very limited extent.

²² See, among others, Ruiz Torres (2008) and Fontana (2008).

²³ See among others, Ballarín (1989: 248): “No hay necesidad económica que propiciase una mayor instrucción femenina puesto que ni la industria ni la agricultura se encontraban en un nivel de desarrollo que requirieran la instrucción de la mano de obra”.

²⁴ On the obstructive influence of the Church on education and society see Ballarín 1989: 250; Jagoe 1998: 119; Zamorano 2012: 67, González Pérez 2010: 135; Sánchez-Rodríguez 2005, to mention just a few.

Recent studies agree that from the eighteenth century there was a notable increase in the number of books targeted at a female audience: domestic economy and medicine guides, good moral books and novels proliferated. High class women could apparently enjoy extensive reading and become writers in newspapers and magazines²⁵. However, in terms of business, the modest nature of the publishing market casts a poor image in comparison to European standards. The main reason may well be that a general access to education was still difficult for women, as the extremely low rates of literacy suggest (Sánchez-Rodríguez 2005). The market of textbooks for girls would consequently be reduced to a minimum.

In fact, although general instruction was officially fostered from the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the truth remains that illiteracy rates kept extremely high throughout the following hundred years —a reality that affected women and children most severely²⁶. Different reasons have been given to explain the high illiteracy rates of these

²⁵ The group of eighteenth century women writers have consequently been a much more common focus of attention for researchers. Concepción Arenal, Emilia Pardo Bazán, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda or Angela Gassi, Faustina Sáenz de Melgar, Pilar de Sinués, Joaquina Balmaceda are much better-known names. However, there is still a gap and further investigation is needed for a complete catalogue of authors and texts. See Pérez and Ihrie 2002 and *The Atlantis Project: Women and Words in Spain, 1890-1936* [<http://atlantis.kirstyhooper.net/>].

²⁶ Despite the fact that most sociologists would agree that literacy estimates of the past proves a very problematic issue (as discussed in Kord 2003: 40-41, among others), most consulted authors refer to figures over 80% of illiterate women in Spain in the 1880s. According to Ortega (1988), “foreign travellers were surprised at the low levels of literacy of Spanish young women and the strictness of parental supervision”. And well over the turn of the century Baroja famously claimed that “Antes que el obrero y el trabajador, estaban la mujer y el niño más abandonados por la sociedad, sin armas para la lucha por la vida” as quoted by Sole 1990: 77).

two groups during the nineteenth century²⁷. Most authors refer to the deficiencies of children elementary education. And all of them insist on the fact that the education of girls and women teachers was never properly addressed. More particularly, official legislation proved inefficient throughout the period, but especially during the first half; funding was insufficient; female teachers didn't receive any instruction and when they did, it was extremely poor, different from and subordinated to that of males; they obtained low salaries –if at all-, often dependent on the Church or local governments. Inspired by an active Catholic Church, religious fanaticism also played an important part, as did deeply rooted mentalities, parents' conservative ideology and a lack of awareness, which also blocked the girls' way into schooling. High rates of school absence and drop-out affected girls most, since it was often thought more profitable to educate sons, leaving girls devoted to religion and needling.

It is to be noted that while in Britain education constituted a solid public enterprise, the education of women in Spain didn't seem to prove a State concern. Most Spanish researchers insist on the breach separating official action and reality, particularly concerning girls²⁸. There are an overwhelming number of detailed studies on the subject converging to the conclusion that official legislation represented no more than good-willed projects, and what is more, thought openly or covertly for boys (Del Amo 2009: 9). This was going to condition the production of grammar books for women and by women, which would then be forced to remain in a peripheral sphere.

²⁷ For this section, I draw from Ortega 1988; Ballarín 1989; Pueyo 1989; Sole 1990; Jagoe 1998; García Romero 2001; Del Amo 2009; González Pérez 2010; San Vicente & Calero 2012.

²⁸ Despite the fact that Sánchez-Rodríguez (2005) admits that between 1768 and 1857 women won their first battle against illiteracy, quotes and references ratifying this issue are overwhelming: “En España la alfabetización fue más un deseo que una realidad clara” (García Folgado 2005: 35); “Las enseñanzas de la Normal no rebasan el nivel de una muy deficiente educación primaria. Las maestras de 1880 no aprendían ni por tanto enseñaban” (Sole 1990: 234). See also Arenal's words in Sánchez Rodríguez 2005 (note 75); Concepción Sáiz's in Sole 1990: 58; Pueyo 1989: 144; Ballarín 1989: 252-3.

Despite official efforts, up to the late 1860s nothing of importance occurs. Even the much celebrated “ley Moyano” (1857), enforcing obligatory education for 6-9 year- old children, and the creation of an official Women Teacher Training School proves controversial to the critical eye, to say the least²⁹. Let it suffice to mention Ballarín’s insightful statement (1989) that, contrary to expectations, its centralising readiness established a gendered model of education which ended up in detriment to women. Religious establishments with a conservative attitude were promoted for girls, reducing women professional possibilities and the newly established Teacher Training School for Women is said to have been dying by 1869 after a poor and severely criticised track record (Ballarín 1989: 253; Sole 1990: 58; see also Sánchez Rodríguez 2005; González Pérez 2010: 135).

It was political events of a revolutionary nature that would introduce a turning point in women educational circumstances, which would extend until the end of the century amidst political upheavals and ideological controversy³⁰. The so-called *sexenio democrático* -1868-1874- inspired a profound wish of regeneration through education³¹. A group of active intellectuals, unhappy with the social reality of their country set off to start a programme of reforms very much in line with democratic policies under a strong influence of foreign ideas and institutions, mainly English, American, German, as well as French (Vázquez 2001: 28, 37).

Among this group of liberal thinkers, the figure of Fernando de Castro deserves special mention here, as a man probably ahead of the times. Led by a rational and utilitarian ideology very much in accord with European values, he strived to reduce the degree of

²⁹ References abound. For a more detailed information on laws concerning education for the period 1812-1850s see Sole (1990: 33-48); San Román 1998; Sánchez-Rodríguez (2005); García Folgado (2005); Del Amo (2009).

³⁰ The relevance of this change may be better understood through the eloquent title of Concepción Saiz Otero’s book, worth recalling here: *La Revolución del 68 y la cultura femenina: un episodio nacional que no escribió Pérez Galdós*.

³¹ For specific policies see Rabazas 2000:291.

female illiteracy, through cutting-edge initiatives³². In 1869 the most influential *Asociación para la Enseñanza de la Mujer* (AEM) was created, aimed at “contribuir al fomento de la educación de la mujer en todas las esferas y condiciones de la vida social” (Vázquez 2001: 20). It is from this institution, recognising the importance of women for the progress of society, that an early Spanish framework for female grammarians should be reconstructed.

5.2. The AEM

The AEM actually responded to an existing need to reduce the breach between female illiteracy and the needs of the modern world. For that purpose, it started a greatly influencing Training School for female instructors or governesses, as was common in nineteenth century Europe (Jiménez Sureda 2009: 28), a School of Commerce for Women, a Telegraphy Training School (1878) and a School of Music, (1878), all of them providing a solid and effective professional instruction to a minority of women. Later an elementary school for 6- to 9- year-old girls was created in 1883/4, as well as a School for female adult education in 1894 (for women older than 13) and a School of Languages (1884). Subjects were chosen adequate to women in a down-to-earth-revolutionary curriculum, so as to guarantee a good performance at work for the future woman or wife.

More specifically, the AEM responded to the demands of middle class women, who proved to be at once the group most socially subdued and most permeable to education³³

³² For Fernando de Castro’s biography, see Chacón (2006); for his initiatives, see Jagoe 1989; Sole 1990 with original documents, facts and figures); García Romero (2001) Vázquez (2001), Del Amo (2009); Gómez Ferrer (2011). The AEM was a forerunner of the much better known *Instituto Libre de Enseñanza*, with a similar concern to “educar a las jóvenes de nuestro país con unos cánones a la europea”, among others (Vázquez 2001: 25-6).

³³ Both the working and the higher classes were prevented against education. According to Ballarín, aristocratic women received an irregular education, often conceived of as pointless or the lesser evil. The lower classes were simply disregarded in a gendered and unequal system. For a more detailed assessment of AEM students’ social status, see Sole (1990: 143). As discussed there, Manuel José Galdo concluded that most

(Ortega 1988). On the one hand, deprived of the working life of the lower-class woman and of the social life of the higher classes, they felt restrained to a domestic sphere, with no activity of their own Ballarín (1989: 252). On the other hand, the well-known process of impoverishment which had affected the middle classes in the mid century forced women to contribute to the family economy. As prejudice prevented them to go down the social ladder and their education –mirroring that of the aristocracy- did not provide them with any useful knowledge, they would increasingly demand a better instruction to gain access to a worthy career³⁴ (Ballarín 1989: 252, Vázquez 2001: 28; Martino 2000: 554).

The new climate and qualitative change introduced by the AEM probably deserves a more refined assessment, for which a note on its ideological tenets seems imperative. Revolutionary as it was, the AEM's conception of women remained constrained to the (male) ideological framework of the European bourgeoisie. Women were thought to be at the very base of any intent to reform the country's political and social institutions and to enforce progress. (Vázquez 2001:18). Unambiguously, a new educated woman was needed who would help to create new social beings within the family –the centre of a liberal bourgeois world. They would ideally regenerate their husbands and instruct their children to become better citizens. And this ideology would filter down the AEM's

applicants to the AEM teacher training School came from the low middle ranks of society, whereas Cossío stated they stemmed from provincial well-off middle groups. As for the Elementary School, the examination of entries in the registration book for 1886 confirms that most of the students came from low middle class families, daughters to door-keepers, telegraph clerks, cooks, carpenters, tailors, upholsterers, watchmakers, etc. A smaller number of students had been born into families of a higher status, whose fathers or tutors were registered as lawyers, doctors, architects or dentists. A third group were daughters of widows who apparently wanted a better professional education for their daughters.

³⁴ The education of women had largely been restricted to the teaching of good morals and crafts in a female domestic environment. In addition, prejudice against public education has been reported to affect many middle class sectors, who considered it just adequate for the lower classes (Ortega 1988; García Folgado 2005).

teaching, inspiring no doubt the future behaviour of women educated at its premises. This being the case, however, the AEM's resistance to challenge time-honoured institutions shouldn't cloud the fact that for the first time women were recognised a social function and the right to their welfare and independence as agents of economic development for the first time. And this affected not only wives and mothers, but also widows and unmarried females³⁵ (Pueyo 1989, Sole 1990: 29; García Romero 2001; Vázquez 2001; del Amo 2009, etc.).

Before closing this section a key feature must be recalled in a comparative framework. Though successful and largely influential in the long term, the AEM's ambitious initiatives comprised a peripheral activity for more than thirty years³⁶. Geographically and socially-limited, secular and private, it represented a side-line in the global mapping of education. More precisely, as suggested above, the education of women remained a marginal issue to official policies and public perception. In addition, the AEM benefitted just a minority group of the middle classes living in main cities; its influence was particularly strong in Madrid, though also felt in Seville, Valencia and Oviedo (Vázquez 2001), to where it expanded through provincial powerful private institutions like *Sociedades Económicas del País*, among others (Sole 1990: 94 ff). However, most important is the fact that the AEM advocated for the abolishment of both ignorance and religious prudishness. Very much anti-conventional, it aimed at educating women separate from the patronising Church (Ballarín 1989: 24; Vázquez 2001; Pueyo 1989: 145). That is, it fostered a more rational and utilitarian religion which would not impair the introduction of new ideas, a divisive standpoint at the time. In fact, from 1875 the

³⁵ A clear patronizing bias has been recognised in this Spanish nineteenth-century bourgeois feminism, its results being reported to have been below expectations. Also called *feminismo gineriano* by Pardo Bazán. (Vázquez 2001: 28; see also: Sole 1988; Sánchez Rodríguez 2005; Jagoe 1998).

³⁶ It is to be noted that the AEM managed to raise awareness in public opinion, in due course, promoting the celebration of relevant Pedagogical Conferences in 1882, 1888 and 1892 which changed both the private and the official domain of Spanish women education, as recognised in the literature. (See Ballarín 1989: 250), Vázquez 2001: 23; Gómez Ferrer 2011: 49, among others).

AEM's policies became officially discredited and were received with hostility by a majority of conservatives. This created a profound discontent in more progressive sectors of teachers and university professors who determined to go on out of the official sphere to guarantee their independence (Sole 1990; Rabazas 2000: 291; Vázquez 2001: 24). This marginality suggests that the nineteenth-century activity of woman teacher-grammarians under consideration will exhibit a higher degree of invisibility and controversy than in other countries.

5.3. Potential author and audience profiles

So far evidence has been provided to believe that most relevant or visible Spanish female grammarians should be searched in the track of this reforming impulse triggered and instantiated by the AEM from the 1870s, precisely the time when a feminisation of instruction has been reported (Ortega 1988; Sole 1989; García Romero 2001; del Amo 2009: 8; etc.). Though some might argue that the chronological framework of the study should be expanded back in time, -since underprivileged women are known to have been devoted to teaching young girls or children of both sexes at least from the end of the eighteenth century-³⁷, it is widely acknowledged that during this long span of time -1790s-1870s- only a minority of these women had received any kind of education in Spain; at best some training in France (Ballarín 1989: 253). The fact that these early non-professional women most commonly held a very poor qualification would impair not only their teaching, but even more clearly the kind of materials they might use or produce for their daily activity³⁸. Largely devoted to the teaching of good manners and needling and only exceptionally reading and writing, it is difficult to assume that they

³⁷ King Carlos III allowed the creation of (private) schools for girls, up to 5 years old in 1783 (San Román: 2000).

³⁸ Authors like San Román 1998 -as in Del Amo 2009-, Cortada 1999; González Pérez 2010, among others, refer to a revealing three-group classification of nineteenth-century female teachers, according to their roles and level of instruction: *needling/ illiterate teacher* 1783-1838; *maternal teacher* 1838-1876; and 1868-onwards *rational intuitive female teacher*.

would bring out grammar-related publications of any kind. And if they did, their works would most likely represent unsubstantial leaflets difficult to trace. For the purposes of this contribution at least, it sounds more accurate to set the focus on the group of more educated women arising from the sphere of influence of the AEM, capable of further planning and reflection.

Potential authors, therefore, would be middle class women, trained under new ideological tenets, whose influence was to be expanded slowly throughout the country. It is likely that their production was probably most fruitful from the late 1880s into the early decades of the twentieth century. And, for reasons that will be explained below, the demand for their work is presumably to be sought in the private realm of female instruction, where the official control of textbooks and the influence of the Academy was not so strong.

Studies ratify that from the 1870s many of the AEM's former students devoted their lives to teaching or teacher training after leaving the institution. There's news that some acted as heads of schools or oriented their careers to private, mostly secular instruction (Sole 1990: 271-2); also that they were much involved in the education of women and children, as triggered by a new feminist conscience, however moderate or bourgeois (Sole 1988; Sole 1990: 85; Ballarín 1989; Capel 2009). A few of them stayed as teachers in the AEM, but to my knowledge the teaching of grammar in the institution was largely in the hands of men³⁹.

More precisely, it is not too-far-fetched to argue that many of the new "intellectual" teachers⁴⁰ and potential authors of grammar textbooks would get employed as governesses by high or high middle class families in positions which had traditionally been the preserve of foreign women, mainly French and German. (Sole 1989: 32, 125; Ballarín 1989: 253).

³⁹ A closer look at the names is needed. Vicente Vigneaux and Jose María Pontes are better-known teachers of grammar-related subjects (Sole 1990: 227,229). More research on Joaquín Sama and Pedro Alcántara is needed in this connection (Rodríguez Pérez 2007).

⁴⁰ Bibliographical sources use this label of *intelectuales* (as opposed to that of *literatas*) to refer to this group of women writers.

In addition, scholars confirm an expansion of private schools, usually set up by women from the 1850s. In the late 1860s this type of urban academies apparently multiplied, probably promoted by a liberal change in legal conditions (García Romero). It is also generally recognised that establishments of an innovative nature were created, aimed at the training of women teachers, heads of schools and female instructors (Sole 1990:163). And yet others set up to attend the demand of illiterate working women or middle class young ladies, for whom there were very scarce official institutions. It appears reasonable to think, hence, that AEM's graduates were among this group of business owners. Last in this catalogue, the sphere of influence of the new "intellectuals" expanded to official pre-elementary children schools, most of them ruled and managed solely by women, as legally enhanced⁴¹.

Consequently, from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, women educated in a new sensitivity may have felt the need to write grammar-related books for the following audiences: children of both sexes at a pre-elementary, elementary -and more rarely secondary- level of instruction; girls in particular; female teachers; mothers, who were in charge of the primary instruction of girls in a domestic environment (Ortega 1988); and poorly instructed female adults, a target group increasingly demanding in provincial towns well into the twentieth century (Sole 1990: 118-9, 138; Flecha 1996; Sanchez Rodríguez 2005; González Pérez 2010).

The consideration of potential audiences prompts us to insist on the distinction between private and public institutions as a potential factor contributing to further research. It is to be noted that save for the very brief period of the *Revolución Septembrina*, official textbooks were selected and controlled by the state and religious sectors⁴². In the case of grammar manuals governmental control proved even stronger, due to the overriding

⁴¹ From 1882 women were in charge of the education of pre-elementary school children, according to law. See also *Real Decreto 2 noviembre de 1888. Gaceta de Madrid 309* (4th November 1888) 369-371. (Diego & González 2009: 378-9).

⁴² For a discussion on the control of the state on the contents and distribution of textbooks, see Rabazas 2000, among many others. Ballarín et al. 2000: 347, in turn, speculate that this state control of textbooks makes it advisable for researchers to seek for the voice of women out of the educational sphere.

presence of the Spanish Academy. As Folgado (2005: 18, note 4) ratifies, after 1771 the institution exerted a deep influence on grammar production for primary and secondary education: it not only clouded works outside its authoritative codifying schemes, but also generated a theoretical stasis. Simplified versions of its construction of the vernacular –adapted to the various stages of education- were mandatory in public schools from 1877 (Diego Pérez 2000: 333) and the tendency to reedit the same textbook with few modifications remained a key feature of official education. However, though the Academy may seem to have exerted a strict control in official institutions, a more relaxed practice in the selection of teaching materials must have been common in the private sphere and the peripheral education of young children and women. Though more solid evidence is needed, this was precisely the realm where seemingly many of the female intellectuals pursued their occupation to a large extent.

Kind of production

Expert sources confirm the existence of a relevant activity in grammar writing carried out in Spain from the end of the eighteenth century. Hundreds of textbooks under the titles of *gramáticas*, *compendios*, *epítomes*, *tratados de análisis*, etc. aimed at the learning of the vernacular grammar through new and more efficient schemes were published by non-university male-teachers –often clerics (Calero 2010: 81; García Folgado 2005: 38). As expected, the production of school grammar books observed a notable increase during 1860-1890, given the fact that grammar was part of the curriculum at all levels of instruction (Medina 1992; Calero 2010: 80). The potential publications of female grammar instructors would then follow this trend of writing basic works rather than comprehensive grammar books, to provide children or novice audiences with a simple and quick learning method, adequate to their special needs. (García Folgado 2005: 38).

Children had been apparently an explicit target audience of male-authored grammars from the very outset, as Balbuena's (1791) *Arte nuevo de enseñar niños y vasallos a leer, escribir, y contar las reglas de Gramática, y ortografía castellana...* confirms. However, there is a well-founded suspicion that many of these grammars for children must have been just for boys (Medina 1992). As outlined above, girls and women represented marginal groups in a general mapping, though there are hints that they also called for the interest of male grammarians as a special target. Mention should be made to small treatises, like Angel María Terradillos' (1859) *Compendio menor de gramática*

castellana para uso especial de las niñas...; or summaries of grammar contained in all-in-one texts, like *El educador de las niñas. Manual completo que comprende todos los ramos de primera instrucción mandados estudiar en las escuelas de este sexo*⁴³. Under these circumstances, it may be argued, thus, that the ample lack of appropriate materials (del Amo 2009: 14) and most importantly the newly acquired female world-view would trigger the action of women grammarians who had themselves tasted the benefits of education. Preliminary results in Ballarín et al. (2000: 359) seem to prove this trend. Following this line of thought, it may be the case that titles including an overt mention of girls would not only increase from the 1870s, but also comprise a specific, if only partial, selection of contents, parallel to those in books for boys. Similarly, it is conceivable that some differences may be found between male and female-authored books in this connection.

Very little is known about explicit attention to mothers by grammarians and it is still to be confirmed that mothers became a target audience of female writers. Evidence has proved that mother-teachers were openly aimed at in two early male-authored books - 1825 and 1833 respectively- by José Mariano Vallejo⁴⁴: *Teoría de la lectura o método analítico para aprender a leer... tan sencillo que se puede poner en ejecución hasta por las mismas madres sin molestia suya ni de los niños*; and *Modo de poner en ejecución*

⁴³ Full references: *El educador de las niñas. Manual completo que comprende todos los ramos de primera instrucción mandados estudiar en las escuelas de este sexo. Publícalo la casa titulada la Educación dirigida por D. José González. Es propiedad del mismo. Madrid 1858/ 1859*; a similar publication is *El Instructor del bello sexo : ó sea breves tratados de religion, moral, gramática, aritmética, higiene, economia doméstica y urbanidad [Texto impreso] : Para uso de las escuelas de niñas / Por D.R.T. y n. Zaragoza 1857 (Impta. de V. Andrés). (Original spelling maintained).*

⁴⁴ Full references: *Teoría de la lectura o método analítico para aprender a leer... tan sencillo que se puede poner en ejecución hasta por las mismas madres sin molestia suya ni de los niños. 1825. Madrid. Imprenta que fue de García*; *Modo de poner en ejecución el Nuevo método de enseñar a leer publicado bajo el título de teoría de la lectura en toda clase de escuelas, sean o no de enseñanza mutua, en las clases particulares por las madres, padres y tutores de los niños... 1833. Madrid. Miguel de Burgos.*

el Nuevo método de enseñar a leer publicado bajo el título de teoría de la lectura en toda clase de escuelas, sean o no de enseñanza mutua, en las clases particulares por las madres, padres y tutores de los niños... However, these titles are taken from Esparza (2012), whose catalogue ends in 1860. It can thus be suggested that future bibliographical research of a similar degree of exhaustiveness may very likely render a larger list of books, some of which may arguably be written by female authors.

A last comment will be devoted to expected methodological innovation. It can be assumed that women educated under the influence of the AEM would have a say in this regard. Researchers like Vázquez (2001) highlight the innovative nature of methods used in Castro's institution, very much inspired in foreign models and adapted to serve home needs. Anti-dogmatic learning, intuitive, playful approaches and dialogic teaching were promoted over the traditional learning by rote. Furthermore, contact with the surrounding world, nature and experience was particularly valued, even the rejection of conventional textbooks, in line with Froebelian models. It is possible to hypothesise, then, that some of the AEM's learning principles would have filtered through the pages of grammar-related books written by females. Future research on this issue will provide more definitive findings.

Preliminary records.

A preliminary list of authors and titles published between 1800-1900 is offered below. For that purpose a close revision of various catalogues was needed. Specifically, the catalogues of the Spanish National Library, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas⁴⁵ and AEM were consulted, as well as the bibliographical indexes provided by Simón-Palmer (1991), the Manes Project (Universidad de Educación a Distancia), Esparza et al. (2012) or Ballarín et al. (2000). Names of potential writers as suggested in individual dissertations and specialised articles, like Sole (1990: 271-2), were also

⁴⁵ CSIC was originally closely related to the so-called Institución Libre de Enseñanza, a well-known establishment derived from the same intellectual atmosphere and group of people which gave rise to the AEM and much better known.

checked. Simón-Palmer and Esparza proved most useful at a rather discouraging task, for which further investigation is much needed⁴⁶.

The present selection of 24 entries required a wide –and, thus, debatable– interpretation of the concept of grammar as a subject. Considering both sociolinguistic factors and the traditional definition of grammar as “the Art to properly speak and write”, the inventory of records was decided to include not only books explicitly labelled as grammars, but also simplified, even rudimentary, books aimed to teach how to read and write, others devoted to the art of writing, and even practical guides to correspondence. In this connection, beginner’s books and practical guides seem to prevail. As conjectured, future research should also comprise the revision of all-in-one books for children and girls, where grammar could be devoted some space. Reading books (and official catalogues of grammatical topics to be covered in exams) were excluded, if only provisionally⁴⁷.

As brought up above, women production seems to increase in number and consistency at the turn of the century, earlier works being apparently simplified primers. In this regard and even though a closer analysis of individual works is still needed, Solo de Zaldívar and Jaume y Gauserán’s books prove quite different from Cabrerizo’s. Data from the catalogue confirm that few titles explicitly mention a female audience yet (see Rosario García González, Pilar Pascual de Sanjuán, Julia Pérez Perelló). Girls, misses and young ladies seem to be preferred as target groups of other type of texts more

⁴⁶ Simón-Palmer (1991) is a continuation of Manuel Serrano Sanz’s *Library of Spanish Women up to 1833*. The author complains about the difficulty to access women writers, due to the abundance of pseudonyms, the lack of attention received and the fact that female production was restricted to the sphere of magazines.

⁴⁷ As represented, respectively, by Monreal de Lozano et al. 1883. *Discursos, diálogos y poesías... para niños y niñas, redactados por...* Madrid: Borrás, Mestre y Cía., and Concepción Sáiz y Otero. 1895. *Escuela Normal Central de Maestras. Programas de gramática y Lengua española y nociones de Literatura. Grado normal*. Madrid. Imp. Juan Iglesia or Dolores Montaner’s *Programa de gramática castellana*. Toledo: Imp. Rafael Gómez-Menor, 1900. This kind of publication is included in, for example, Ballarín et al. 2000.

vaguely related with grammar and language. Besides, as drawn from the titles, the majority of publications claim to be summaries, synopses, abridged catalogues of grammatical notions or workbooks, pursuing a basic command of correct Spanish, and to write properly for everyday and commercial purposes.

However, many questions keep still unanswered, referring not only to the authors and contents of selected entries, but also to semi-identified works (“Una profesora de la Compañía de Santa Teresa de Jesús”) or wholly unidentified books which might hint at women writers, as the slightly later publication by H. C. 1904. *Gramática teórico-práctica de la lengua castellana con un tratado de análisis lógico y nociones de literatura. Libro de la alumna*, [explicitly planned for girl students] might well illustrate.

Finally, this preliminary overview merely reveals that grammar textbooks written by women during the nineteenth century followed a long-standing practice of didacticism, a path already well-trodden by male authors since the late eighteenth century. Apparently straightforward and succinct, they kept limited to elementary levels of instruction, where creativity or theoretical reflection was largely out of place; and most importantly they were scarce in number and difficult to trace. It is to be noted that, however meagre, the number of publications clearly increases during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Our list is as follows:

Grammar-related works written by Spanish females 1800-1900		
The Word <i>grammar</i> explicitly mentioned in the title		
1839	Luisa Gallardo Solano	Compendio de Gramática castellana para uso de niños. La Habana. Imprenta del Tiempo.
1880	María Kessler Fergusson (MKF cript)	Ejercicios adaptados para la enseñanza de la gramática castellana. Madrid. Imp. Sociedad Tipográfica. 80 pp.
1887	Dolores Montaner	Nociones elementales de Aritmética, Higiene y Gramática castellana para el uso de las Escuelas primarias. Ocaña. Imp José Peral. 60 pp.
1890	Antonia Jaume y Gauseran	Compendio de las cuatro partes de la Gramática castellana para uso de las escuelas de primera enseñanza. Madrid. Hijos de Vázquez. 132 pp.

1890	Rosario García González. El Mentor (Pseudonym)	Elementos de ortografía castellana dispuestos por un método fácil y breve para las escuelas de niñas y niños y también para las de adultos. Córdoba: Lib. El Diario de Córdoba.
1894	Profesora de la Compañía de Santa Teresa de Jesús, Una	Rudimentos de gramática teórico-práctica. Librería y Tipografía teresianas 101 pp. (2º ed 1899).
1900	Solo de Zaldívar, Ana María	Nociones de gramática Española teórico-prácticas. Sevilla. Imp. y Libr de los Sres. Hijos de Campo. 234 pp + 3 hs.
1900	Laura Brackenbury	La enseñanza de la gramática.
Readers and literacy primers		
1854	Ana de Cabrerizo	Cartilla o silabario para uso en las escuelas. Valencia Cabrerizo.
1863	Sierra y Orenga, Casimira	Cartilla para uso de las escuelas públicas de primera enseñanza. Madrid. F. Abienzo.
1885	Lucenqui y Pimentel, Walda	Lecciones de teoría de la lectura y de la caligrafía. Badajoz. Maruri.
1887	Ruiz Fidela y Ruiz Cipriano	Tratado de caligrafía y ortología. Lérida. Tip Mariana.
1887	Bone Eufrasia	Elementos prácticos de lectura.
1888	Pascual de Sanjuan, Pilar.	Programa de ortología, o sea teoría de la lectura para las alumnas de segundo curso. Barcelona, Antonio J. Bastinos (J. Jepús).
1892	Amor y Arias , Filomena	Lecciones de Ortología y Caligrafía para la enseñanza de la lectura y la escritura. Valladolid: Imp. Luis N. de Gaviria,
1896	Una Profesora de la Compañía de Santa Teresa de Jesús	Método racional de lectura. 3º ed Barcelona, Librería y Tipografía Teresiana. 1896
1899	Perez Perelló, Julia	Cartilla de lectura para las niñas. Alicante. Antonio Reus.
Correspondence manuals		
1877	Pascual de Sanjuan, Pilar	Epistolario manual para las señoritas. Modelos de cartas propias para la niña, la joven y l mujer por... Epistolario moral literario de Joaquina Balmaseda y otros. Barcelona. Lbr: Juan y Antonio Bastinos.
1896	Lucenqui, Walda	Tratado de redacción de documentos. Badajoz. La Minerva extremeña.
All in one books which may comprise grammar-related contents		
1827	Poveda, Ana María	Manual de señoritas o arte de aprender. Madrid. Impr Fuentenebro

1829	Cabeza, Felipa Máxima De:	La señorita instruida o sea Manual del bello secso. Aumentada por Maria Paula de Cabeza. Madrid: Piñuela.
1860	Serrano de Tornel, Emilia	Almacén de las señoritas. París: Rosa y Bouret.
1881	Ferrer de Otalora, Micaela	Apólogos y diálogos. Obra dedicada a la instrucción. Madrid: Imp Gregorio Hernando.
1889	González Herrera, Justina	Tratado sobre las primeras materias y sus aplicaciones, o sea, explicación de un Museo escolar. Madrid: Suc. de Rivadeneyra.

6. Conclusions

This contribution, focused on the social role of women grammarians from a historical and cross-cultural point of view, has cast illuminating, yet preliminary, conclusions of a qualitative nature on Spanish women's public visibility, authority and commitment to the codification of vernacular language in modern times. Chronological, geographical and social parameters defining the Spanish framework have been established as necessary for a more refined research along this new path, where the presence of women as authors and receivers of grammatical normativising discourse should be critically analysed.

In comparative terms, the activity of Spanish female grammarians cannot be traced further back than the 1870s without risk of a distorted picture. The rise of a new group of intellectual women-teachers largely promoted by the AEM seems to stand out as a determining social parameter.

It is the peripheral nature of these women's activity, as compared to that of their British counterparts, which seems most noteworthy. Almost till the turn of the century women did not constitute a serious concern for educational authorities. The long-standing high rates of female illiteracy impaired both the existence of a large readership of grammar-related texts and the public reception and reviewing of published works. No commercial interest seems, thus, to tinge the Spanish female production. Centralising policies, intertwined with the presence of an obstructive Church and a Language Academy seem to further block the reception of the works under consideration, which would be largely relegated and discredited.

As for the profile of female authors, they would belong to a weakened middle class rank of society, closer to skilled workers than to aristocratic philanthropic or well-off circles. During the nineteenth century they would pursue their activity on a reduced number of main cities and preferably in private and secular environments, where the control of textbooks proved weaker and a pragmatic ideology prevailed.

Their audiences' profiles seem restricted to elementary school children, female teachers, mother-teachers and illiterate women. Consequently, basic works of a didactic rather than a scholarly character were produced, though more substantial grammar books seem to emerge at the turn of the century. However, no pretension of comprehensiveness is observed.

Though as products of a male, moderate and bourgeois feminism no radical innovations are to be expected, nevertheless their proposals must be qualitatively appreciated in as much as they contributed to reinforce the links between women and learning in a particularly thorny ground as is the teaching of the vernacular.

A preliminary list of authors and titles is offered in section 4. However, more research needs to be undertaken on individual authors and the further recognition of unidentified authors, writing anonymously or under a pseudonym. Future studies should also address a quantitative and qualitative mapping of male- and female-authored grammar-books. Similarly, a qualitative review of basic guides and grammar-material included in all-in-one books as compared with more substantial manuals might prove illuminating. There's abundant room for the examination of books' contents. The books' degree of dependence on those officially released by the Academy should be assessed, as well as their greater or lower extent of accommodation to a female audience. Examples should be addressed from both a linguistic and a cultural point of view, as critically relevant for the construction of gender identities. The degree of innovation allowed in grammar textbooks as opposed to books devoted to the teaching of other subjects also deserves further attention. Last, but not least, further work is needed on possible innovations of women grammarians regarding teaching methods.

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