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Decentralization of the linguistic norm online: the Royal Spanish Academy challenged on the Internet

by

Juan Eduardo Bonnin (CONICET)

juaneduardobonnin@yahoo.com.ar

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Decentralization of the linguistic norm online: the Royal Spanish Academy challenged on the Internet

Juan Eduardo Bonnin

CONICET

juaneduardobonnin (at) yahoo.com.ar

Abstract: The main purpose of this paper is to discuss new forms of creating and observing linguistic norms in Spanish which abandon the idea of a central institutionally-defined normative discourse. Instead of accepting the linguistic instruments designed by the Royal Spanish Academy (*Real Academia Española,* RAE) as an ineludible reference against which every text written in Spanish should be measured, we will observe several heteroglossic *loci* of production of normative discourse on language in a corpus of threads expressing normative doubts in the WordReference Internet forums. In sum, we will argue that speakers *decenter* the RAE norm, locating it among many different sources of normative discourse but, at the same time, they claim a similar authoritative and *central* place for the norm they produce.

Keywords: linguistic norm – Internet - Real Academia Española – Royal Spanish Academy - normative discourse – language ideology – heteroglossia - Spanish

Introduction

I am born in a "Spanish speaking country", I have a B.A. in Letters, an M. A. in Discourse Analysis and a Ph. D. in Linguistics. That is, I can be considered a "well-educated native speaker" of Spanish, the "*hablante culto*" invoked to build the "standard variety" of Spanish. As any other speaker I have normative doubts; for instance now, writing in English, but also when dealing with texts written in Spanish. The question addressed in this paper is empirically defined by the question I ask myself: where do I go to consult "the norm"?. I do have several grammars, dictionaries, academic books and journals at home, but the first place where I go to ask for normative advice is the Internet. Not just "the Internet", which is an imaginary artifact, but the epitome of the Internet: *Google* (Cassin, 2007).

Let's assume that I doubt whether I should use "polígloto" or "políglota" (English: polyglot) to modify a masculine noun, the first form having a masculine suffix and the latter a feminine one. So I google "poligloto o poliglota". Notice that, although I thought both forms should be written with the orthographical accent over the "i", I prefer not to write it because I know that for the search engine it would not make any difference; in fact, many similar mechanisms (like my Yahoo! Webmail Search) do not recognize the orthographic accent because of their English-based orthographic system and programming language.

These are the results shown by my internet browser:

el poligloto, el polígloto, el poliglota, el políglota ...
forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=215593
10 entradas - 8 autores - 21 Ago 2006
Cuál es la palabra correcta, refiriéndose a una persona que habla varios idomas: el *poligloto*, el *polígloto*, el *poliglota*, el *políglota*? Gracias.
                                                    -   20   entradas   -   6   Feb   2010
            - 2 entradas - 13 Dic 2006
Más resultados de forum.wordreference.com »

polígloto - Definición - WordReference.com
www.wordreference.com/definicion/polígloto
polígloto,ta o *poligloto*,ta. adj. y s. [Persona] que habla varios idiomas. Que está escrito en varios idiomas: Biblia *políglota*. '*polígloto*' también aparece en estas ...

Lengua española y otras formas de decir: El políglota autodidacta
www.blogolengua.com/2011/06/poliglota-autodidacta.html
El masculino de políglota es *polígloto o políglota* (con acentuación llana o esdrújula). El Diccionario de la Academia considera preferible usar estas palabras ...

polígloto - significado de polígloto diccionario
es.thefreedictionary.com/polígloto
Definición de polígloto en el Diccionario de español en línea. Significado de polígloto diccionario. ... OBS Masculino: *polígloto o políglota*. Sinónimos. polígloto ...

Aproximate translation

the   polyglot,   the   polyglot,   the   polyglot,   the   polyglot   ...
forum.wordreference.com / showthread.php? T = 215593
10 inputs - 8 authors - 21 Aug 2006

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Which is the right word, referring to a person who speaks several languages: *the polyglot, the polyglot, the polyglot, the polyglot*? Thank you.
multilingual, multi-lingual or multilingual - 20 entries - February 6, 2010
polyglot - 2 inputs - December 13, 2006
More results from forum.wordreference.com »

polyglot - Definition – WordReference.com
www.wordreference.com / definition / polyglot
polyglot, or *polyglot* adj. and s. [Person] who speaks several languages. Written in several languages: *polyglot* Bible. '*polyglot*' also found in these ...

Spanish language and other ways to say: The autodidact polyglot
www.blogolengua.com/2011/06/poliglota-autodidacta.html
The masculine form for multilingual is polyglot or polyglot. The Dictionary of the Academy considers preferable to use these words ...

polyglot - definition of polyglot dictionary
es.thefreedictionary.com / polyglot
Definition of polyglot dictionary of Spanish online. Meaning of polyglot dictionary. ... NOTE Male: multilingual or polyglot. Synonyms. polyglot ...

Only one of these links that appear as first results for my search, the third, refers to the institution that supposedly has "a universally recognized normative value that makes it unique in its genre" (RAE, 2001: 6),[1] that allegedly is "the authority to all the Hispanic-speaking world" (San Vicente, 2011: 133)[2]: the *Real Academia Española* (Royal Spanish Academy, RAE). Actually, the RAE's web page appears only in the third results page, in the twenty seventh place.[3] To me, a well-educated native speaker of Spanish with a reasonable doubt on Spanish norm, it is invisible.

The RAE and the problem of the norm: a modern framework for a post-modern reality

Blommaert (2009a, 2010) has made a fine point regarding the relationships between academic research and the historical conditions of the data analyzed when studying the case of a refugee solicitor in Belgium. His main point was: are

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1   "tiene universalmente reconocido un valor normativo que lo hace único en su género".
2   "la Academia sigue siendo la autoridad para todo el mundo hispánico".
3   Of course, different filters applied by search engines such as Google or Bing are intended to give "personalized results" which depend on IP's geographical adress, search history, etc. However, I have performed the same search using an anonymous IP (with services such as http://anonymouse.org) and the results are still more interesting: although WordReference remains in the first place, the RAE's webpage has disappeared and it is not to be found within the first ten results pages.

sociolinguists thinking in the terms reality works? Have we updated our theoretical reflections, designed to explain modern processes, in order to understand currently post-modern actors and actions?

Research on language ideologies on Spanish has traditionally analyzed these modern problems, in many cases from a "glottopolitic" point of view (Arnoux, 2008; Lauria, 2011) or through historical analysis of linguistic theory (Del Valle and Gabriel-Stheeman, 2001). Critical analysis of RAE's normative discourse and the different strategies or resistance by Latin-American or peripheral Spanish nationalists tend to impugn the right of a Spanish-founded institution to rule over the linguistic practices held by citizens of independent Nation-States (in the case of Latin America) or by Autonomous Communities (as in the case of Catalunya, Euskadi, Galizia, etc.). It is possible to distinguish two successive international linguistic policies regarding the presence of the RAE in independent countries.

1. *The* hispanismo *linguistic policy.* The origins of the RAE are a typical example of language policy-making of modernity: attached to the Spanish Empire and the Catholic Church, the Spanish language created loyal subjects to the kings and faithful Christians to the Church. As Del Valle and Gabriel-Stheeman (2002) state, the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of multiple nationalisms within the Spanish state together with a significant decline of its political and economical powers. Entering the twentieth century, the loss of Latin-American colonies was mitigated through a series of cultural policies, the main purpose of which was to regain a central place in America through the *hispanismo*, a cultural ideology that del Valle and Gabriel-Stheeman (2002: 6) summarize as:

> the existence of a unique Spanish culture, lifestyle, characteristics, traditions and values, *all of them embodied in its language*; the idea that Spanish American culture is nothing but Hispanic culture transplanted to the New World; and the notion that Hispanic culture has an internal hierarchy in which Spain occupies a hegemonic position.

In this sense, having lost the economic, political and military preeminence of the past, the *hispanismo* accomplished two different goals for Spain in the beginning of the twentieth century: on one hand, it enabled maintaining some kind of international prestige and influence over the late colonies; on the other hand, it provided an internal

national identity to confront the emerging nationalist movements within its own boundaries (*idem*).

Within this process, given the central role attributed to Spanish language as symbol and carrier of cultural unity across the ocean, the RAE became the principal source of legitimate prescriptive discourse on linguistic norms.

Many Latin American intellectuals, engaged in the development of national and regional identities as well, confronted *hispanismo* in a *language battle* (Rama, 1982: 115 ff.) taking place in Argentina, Chile, Venezuela and other countries (Arnoux, 2008). All of these confrontations had two features in common: an impugnation to the RAE as the central institution to normalize Spanish across the world and an equally monoglossic linguistic ideology that supported their nationalist claims: not to obey Royal Spanish Academy but to create many National Republican Academies. The social conditions were very similar: the consolidation of Nation-State required the creation of national cultural institutions which could rule over their own territory, now outside the direct political authority of Spain. Contursi et al (2008) summarize three different processes in the creation of Latin-American Academies: a) by direct intervention of the RAE since 1870, who designated many Latin-American intellectuals as "correspondent members" of the Academy and especially supported the creation and establishment of obedient national academies; b) by initiative of cultural elites which emulated the nineteenth-century European model of the literary *sallons* and developed later into Academies; c) by direct intervention of the Executive Power which created, in Argentina and Uruguay, State-supported National Academies (Contursi et al, 2008; cfr. Pike, 1971; Sepúlveda, 2005).

The massive immigrant movements towards Latin-American countries, the consolidation of national identities and the search for a long-term history, and the need of a shared memory that allowed for the integration of the new, multilingual and multicultural citizens strengthened the cultural ideology of hispanismo among local intellectuals. To learn Spanish became a synonym for learning "Spain's Spanish", following the normative discourse fixed by the RAE.

2. *The Panhispanic linguistic policy.* In November, 2004, the RAE and the *Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española* (ASALE) -which reunites the

National Academies of Latin-American countries, the Academies from United States of America and Philippines and the RAE- signed together a document called *Una nueva política lingüística panhispánica* ("A new panhispanic linguistic policy") and presented it at the III *Congreso de la Lengua Española* ("Congress of the Spanish Language"), celebrated at Rosario (Argentina). It basically states that the academies have the mission of shaping Spanish as an international language capable of competing with English (Paffey, 2007). The historical motto, "*limpia, pule y da esplendor*" ("cleanse, fix and give splendour"), has been substituted by another one: "*unidad en la diversidad*" ("unity in diversity"). Nevertheless, the "new panhispanic linguistic policy" and the linguistic instruments designed for it can be described as a "hierarchical standardization model" (Lauria and López García, 2009: 56) that hides, behind its apparent horizontalism, a strong continuity with the central model of the past. As a whole, it projects over the "Spanish-speaking countries"[4] the idea of "cultural unity" with the establishment of new economic relations with consequences to linguistic education, tourism, commerce, etc. (Paffey and Mar-Molinero, 2008; Mar-Molinero, 2006; Paffey, 2007; Del Valle, 2007; Del Valle and Arnoux, 2010). As Paffey (2007: 325) states:

> These days, there are no longer forces advocating linguistic secession from the old imperial order, and the majority of the Latin American academies are affiliated to the Spanish body. The exceptions are Argentina and Uruguay which, in spite of their desire to maintain independence from the RAE, work in collaboration with it. Indeed, the Argentinean Academy of Letters was more than happy to collaborate with the RAE, Association of Academies and the Cervantes Institute in the organisation and hosting of the important Third International Congress of the Spanish Language in Rosario, Argentina in 2004. There is arguably a continued prestige to be enjoyed by the majority of Academies who remain fully associated to the RAE.

The instruments of this "new policy" are the *Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas* ("Panhispanic Dictionary of Doubts", 2005), the *Nueva gramática de la lengua española* ("New grammar of Spanish language", 2009) –and two vulgarization versions: the *Manual de la nueva gramática de la lengua española* ("Handbook of the new grammar of the Spanish language", 2010) and the *Nueva gramática básica de la lengua española* ("New basic grammar of the Spanish Language", 2011), see Arnoux (2012); the *Nueva ortografía de la lengua española* ("New orthography of the Spanish

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4   Expression that covers up a monoglossic representation of heteroglossic populations (Del Valle 2007, 1999).

Language", 2010), the *Diccionario de Americanismos* ("Dictionary of Americanisms", 2010) and the 23rd edition of the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* ("Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy"), expected to appear in 2013.

Although the "new panhispanic policy" claims to be a collective effort by the RAE and the ASALE, the hierarchical superiority assumed by (and delegated to) the RAE reproduces the "linguistic imperialism" model sustained by language promotion, cultural propaganda and business expansion (Phillipson, 1992) through government-founded institutions, such as the *Instituto Cervantes*, or NGOs and transnational corporations such as *Fundéu* or the *Fundación Santander* (del Valle and Villa, 2006; del Valle and Arnoux, 2010; Paffey and Mar-Molinero, 2008).

The general issue of the panhispanic linguistic policy is founded on modern conceptions of language, citizenship, Nation-State, Territory and (national) culture. The essentially modern processes of nation-state building on the "one territory", "one language", "one culture" even "one religion" premises were a key to the prevalence of a foreign institution to legislate on linguistic matters in Latin-American countries. The understanding of standardization as the fixation of a legitimate linguistic form "within a dialectalized territory" (Lauria and López García, 2009: 53) depends too strongly on modern political and demographical premises. Therefore, it has been rightfully addressed by current research because of the modern nature of the linguistic policies designed and maintained by State agents. Among them, the *Instituto Cervantes* is the international promoter of the RAE-defined Spanish linguistic norm (Del Valle and Villa, 2006) and the economic deals based on linguistic policies over other countries (Del Valle and Arnoux, 2010; Fanjul, 2010; Paffey, 2007) as is the case with the *Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera* ("Certificate of Spanish as Foreign Language", Paffey, 2007).

Nevertheless, overlooked both by policy-makers and researchers, speakers appeal to different orders of normativity (Del Valle and Gabriel-Stheeman, 2002) based on new linguistic instruments which sustain their effectiveness not (necessarily) due to their official institutional background but through the *effect of normativity* they locally produce on language users as a response to locally motivated normative needs (Blommaert et al., 2005; Blommaert 2009a).

Globalization, internet-based communication and the foundation of new orders of normativity

In fact, only the Dictionary of the RAE (DRAE) and the Panhispanic Dictionary of Doubts (DPD) are available on the RAE's webpage, not as complete works but as separate search-based systems which allow to search for specific lexical items. Of course, there also exist printed versions of the other works named above. The question, nevertheless, is: Who reads them? Where do these linguistic instruments produce normative effects on speakers? As I have described at the beginning of this article, despite the economic arrangements, the political effects and the symbolic representations associated to the prestige of the RAE (and the National Academies, which are almost unknown by speakers), many speakers jump directly to Google to find linguistic norms and ignore the academic prescriptive positions and "official" instruments.

This is, in fact, a typical feature of how internet users connect both virtual and "real" (or "physical") actions as a single activity or set of complementary activities (Yus, 2011: 26-31). The constitution of a "cultural forum" (in terms of Jensen and Helles, 2011) which enables an individual to communicate with many others (almost) in real time make the personalized questions and responses in an internet forum faster and (at least seemingly) more reliable than the traditional textbook. Even the relationship with traditional sources of authoritative discourse has changed: Wikipedia, "the free encyclopedia", has replaced printed dictionaries and encyclopedias for many (maybe most) internet users. The development of new internet-based devices of authoritative discourse is currently taking place in many fields; especially in the field of language.

Global connectivity being one of the key features of the Internet (Cassin, 2007), the development of linguistic instruments oriented to automatic translation and interlanguage communication has increased greatly in the recent years. Together with this process, the question of the linguistic norm arises in many cases (although not in all of them, cfr. Blommaert, 2005): where can I verify that my variety of Spanish or the options I have taken are "correct"?

One of the places to find normative discourse is the first result in our experimental Google search, the WordReference forums (http://forum.wordreference.com). In order to analyze the generation of decentered

linguistic norms, their relationships with the RAE and the effects of normativity produced, we will observe the presence (and absence) of selected Academy-prescribed norms in the options and interactions that emerge in the WordReference forums. We will argue that it is possible to observe a double process: on one hand, the RAE's position as normative agent is *decentered* and it is placed alongside with other sources: individual speakers' experiences or preferences and non-institutional, user-generated content. On the other hand, the *central* place attributed to the linguistic norm, as a naturalized hierarchical option for a legitimate variety of Spanish, remains present in the imaginary, generating a heteroglossic discourse in action which, paradoxically, claims to be monoglossically oriented.

Searching for the norm: requesting advice

Following the exhaustive analysis presented by Morrow (2006) of requesting and giving advice in an internet discussion forum about depression, we observe many common features between the two kinds of internet-based exchanges. In our case, the request for advice usually assumes the existence of only one correct option among a series of alternative forms: only one "good" value among several possible realizations of a variable.

Firstly, we observe yes/no questions – direct or indirect – regarding the correctness of an expression (or series of expressions) with regard to linguistic norm:

(1) Qué os parece, ¿es correcta la siguiente frase? (November 2010, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2421582. Accessed: September 11, 2012)

What do you think, is the next phrase correct?

(2) ¿Son las tres expresiones igualmente correctas? (October 2007, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=679299. Accessed: September 11, 2012)

Are the three expressions equally correct?

(3) ¡Hola a todos, buenas tardes!
Quiería [sic] pedirles ayuda para saber cuál es correta [sic] entre las frases:
1. Parecía desconcertado porque una persona reaccionara de aquella forma tan violenta.
2. Parecía desconcertado porque una persona había reaccionado/reaccionó de aquella forma tan violenta.

Les agradezco con antelación saludos. (June 2012, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2434843. Accessed: September 11, 2012)

Hi everyone, good evening!
I wanted to ask for help to find out which one is the correct among these phrases:
1. He seemed puzzled because a person reacts in a such violent way.
2. He seemed puzzled because one person had reacted / reacted in a such violent way.
Thanks in advance best.

In these cases, the formulation of the request presupposes the existence of only one correct option (yes or no), not providing any contextual information regarding, for instance, language varieties, extent of use, speaker's intentions, etc. These are typical questions which show the persistence of a monoglossic language ideology which relies on the existence of a centrally defined linguistic norm (Bauman & Briggs, 2003).

A variation on this kind of requests happens when the writer presents him/ herself as a person who has some competence on the matter (Morrow, 2006: 540), giving a series of options and looking for correctness but showing a preference towards one or the other. In other words, s/he presents her/himself as competent but with a reasonable doubt:

(4) Hola
Cual es la expresión correcta entre las dos siguientes:
- Lo que tengo que hacer es...
- Lo que tengo de hacer es...
Es correcta también esta?
- Lo que he de hacer es...
Gracias (June 2012, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2434556. Accessed: September 11, 2012)

Hi
Which is the correct among the following two expressions:
-What I have to do is...
-What I have for doing is...
Is this one also correct?
-What I should do is...
Thanks

(5) ¿Cuál es la palabra correcta, refiriéndose a una persona que habla varios idiomas: el poligloto, el polígloto, el poliglota, el políglota? (August 2006,

http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=215593.   Accessed:
September 11, 2012)

Which is the correct word, referring to a person who speaks many languages:
the polyglot...

(6) Puede ser un vicio pero acá van dos expresiones que se escuchan (escucho,
por lo menos) a menudo:
Debiéramos buscar otras posibilidades.
Deberíamos buscar otras posibilidades.
Será que aparte de la correcta, ¿la otra es aceptada? (June 2012,
http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2435216.   Accessed:
September 11, 2012)

It may be a vice but here are two expressions heard (which I hear, anyway)
often:
We should look for other possibilities
We should look for other possibilities [intraductible]
Is it that, besides the correct one, the other one is accepted?

(7) Buenas, en la oración que sigue ¿debería aparecer la preposición "en" o no
debería estar?: Mientras pensaba en cómo vencer / Mientras pensaba cómo
vencer. --> a mí no me acaba de gustar la preposición ahí pero tampoco es que la
vea   incorrecta,   entonces   no   sé.   (June   2012,
http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2435971.   Accessed:
September 11, 2012)

Hi, in the next sentence, should the preposition "about" appear or it shouldn't?:
While thinking about how to win / While thinking how to win.---> I don't like the
preposition there but it does not seem incorrect to me either, so I don't know.

In a similar vein, other members of the forum request help as a response to a

personal need expressed with an open question:

(8) Hola necesito saber el nùmero [sic] ordinal de 649 por favor indìquemen
[sic] (June 2011, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2184603.
Accessed: September 11, 2012)

Hi I need to know the ordinal number of 649 please tell me

(9) Hola a todos,
¿Qué   significa   en   México   "ser   novios   de   mano   sudada"?
¡Muchas   gracias!   (June   2012,
http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2439019.   Accessed:
September 11, 2012)

Hi everyone,

What means in Mexico "being a wet hands couple"?

Many thanks!

(10) El contexto es:
'Me ha gustado un montón, he aprendido mogollón y he conocido gente <u>a porrón</u>.'   (June   2012, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2439135.   Accessed: September 11, 2012)

The context is:
'I liked it a lot, I have learned mogollón *and I have known a* <u>porrón</u> *of people."*

In these cases, the open question is usually a lexicographic one which could be solved by consulting the DRAE and/or the DPD. Except for (9) −which refers to a geographically specific expression- the other two are included in the electronic versions of the linguistic instruments devised by the RAE. In this last case, the word "porrón" meaning "a lot" is presented in the DRAE; yet, the speaker (who is very competent in standard Spanish, as we can see from his/her other interventions) considered as his/her primary option to look for the linguistic definition in the WordReference forum.

Thirdly, and marking a remarkable difference with respect to the former examples, the request message does not entail a doubt nor a lack of knowledge; on the contrary, the writer points out that she/he knows the "correct form" of an expression (whatever the source of this correctness might be) but has reasons to choose another form. The request works here as an invitation to debate on the linguistic norm and its relationships with language use:

(11) Hola a todos,

Me gustaría de saber por qué usan el pretérito indefinido (PUDO) en este caso...
No debería ser "podría"? (condicional).

La frase completa es " El incendio de casas pudo ser menor si el ayuntamiento no hubiera descuidado la prevención."

Gracias!   (June   2012, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2432497.   Accessed: Sepember 11, 2012)

*Hi all,
 I would like to know why they use the past tense (COULD) in this case ...
 should not be "should"? (conditional).

 The full phrase is "The burning of houses could have been lower if the council had not neglected prevention."

 Thank you!*

(12) Me fastidia que el libro que uso en mi clase manda usar el subjuntivo después de la frase "no es cierto que". Yo diría que, en muchos casos, ambas formas son correctas, pues si digo por ejemplo "No es cierto que tengo tres hijos" aquí no hay duda ninguna y por lo tanto no merece el subjuntivo. ¿Qué dicen ustedes? ¿Será mi costumbre que no me hace verlo de otra manera? Gracias (May 2012, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2421676. Accessed: September 11, 2012)

It annoys me that the book I use in my classroom commands the use of the subjunctive after the phrase "it is not true that". I would say that in many cases both forms are correct, because if I say, for example, "It is true that I have three children" here there is no doubt and therefore it is not worth the subjunctive. What do you say? Is it because of my habit that I do not see it any other way? Thanks

(13) Desde hace tiempo he notado un fenómeno que encuentro interesante y sobre el que me gustaría conocer la opinión de ustedes, colegas foristas: el uso del adverbio *donde* en oraciones en las que el antecedente *no es de lugar*.
(...) El caso más frecuente es el uso de *donde* con antecedente temporal, un caso que en una rápida búsqueda en la prensa de diferentes países arrojó muchos ejemplos (Chile, Argentina, España, México, Colombia).
Al respecto, la RAE dice que "*es arcaico, y debe evitarse hoy, el uso de donde con antecedente temporal...*".
Sin embargo, esta situación no se limita únicamente aquí al caso temporal como expongo más arriba.
Me pregunto cuán extendido o aceptado es esto entre los hispanoablantes en general y si se considera censurable en los medios cultos.
Gracias. (The underlined hyperlinks point towards digital journals of the named countries) (December 2008, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=1193758. Accessed: September 11, 2012)

I have long noticed a phenomenon I find interesting and I would like to hear your opinion about it, fellow forumers: the use of the adverb "where" in sentences where the antecedent is not locative.
(...) The most common case is the use of "where" with temporal antecedent, a case that shows many example in a quick search on the press from different countries (Chile, Argentina, Spain, Mexico, Colombia).
In this regard, the RAE says "the use of "where" with temporal antecedent is archaic and should be avoided today ...".
However, this situation is not limited to the case of the temporal antecedent. I wonder how widespread or accepted is it between Spanish speakers and if it is considered objectionable in well educated circles. Thank you.

As we can see in (12) and (13), both writers are aware of the norm ("the book" and "the RAE") and, yet, they defy the criteria defined by them. This means that these linguistic instruments are not defining the "acceptance" or "correctness" of the usage of certain forms, as even the "well-educated native speaker" criteria is not conceded to the RAE but left to the opinion of the other members of the forum.

The examples included in this third group are longer, more argumentative and propose a more leveled relationship between the requester and the advisers. The critical relationship they maintain with the institutionalized linguistic norm (the RAE or other linguistic instruments) is based on personal tastes, extended use, regional varieties and even pragmatic strategies. In the next section we will observe that these different criteria are not only enough to question the norm, but also to support it.

Decentralization of the norm: sources for normative discourse on Spanish

The answers to the requests can be considered, in many cases, as "advice messages" (Morrow, 2006: 541) because they recommend a course of action for the requester in the sense of adopting the contents of the response in its normative value – that is, as a norm of communicative behavior. As we will see, the vast majority of responses share the same ideological assumptions on language norms as universal, homogeneous and mandatory introducing three different sources of normative knowledge: the impersonal and homogeneous *doxa*, personal opinions or tastes and authoritative discourse.

The first kind of advice message is founded on impersonal markers which avoid the use of evidentials of any kind. Especially through the use of the impersonal "se" pronoun, these answers are simple normative judgments which base their legitimacy in themselves:

> (14) *La frase correcta es la segunda,* poniendo *han*, no se exactamente el porque. Pero ese "han" va con reproducciones, que es plural (May 2012, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2421582.   Accessed: September 11, 2012)
>
> *The correct sentence is the second one, with "have", I don't know exactly why but the "have" goes with reproductions, which is plural*
>
> (15) Son correctas las tres (...) Todas correctas y significan lo mismo (...) Todas correctas.   (October   2007,

The three are correct (...) All of them are correct and mean the same thing (...) All of them are correct.

(16) Question: ¿Como número ORDINAL, se dice "doscientos treintaicinco *grados*"?.
Answer: No. Como ya puso Magnalp más arriba, se dice *ducentécimo* [sic] *trigésimo quinto*.
Question: No sabía que también se escribe g para representar "grados".
Answer: <u>Sólo</u> cuando se habla de gradros centesimales. (June 2011,

Question: As an ordinal number, it must be said "two hundred and thirty five degrees"?
Answer: No. As Magnalp wrote before, it must be said two hundred and thirty fifth
Question: I didn't know that the usage of g to represent "degrees" is also correct
Answer: <u>Only</u> when you speak about centesimal degrees

(17) Las reproduciones es el sujeto por lo que el verbo haber+colocar debe de ser el correspondiente a la tercera persona del plural. "Las reproducciones se han colocado.
Si fuera la reprodución, tercera persona del singular, sería 'la reprodución se ha colocado'   (May   2012,

The reproductions is the subject so the verb haber+colocar [have + be + place] must be the correspondent to the plural form of the third person. "The reproductions have been placed".
If it was the reproduction, third person singular, it should be "the reproduction has been placed"

The last case is a fine example of an advice message which reproduces the typical features of normative discourse: the modal verb "must be", formulaic generalizing language as in "haber+colocar", impersonal syntactic constructions, both in the requests and in the responses. Nevertheless, the actual knowledge of formal grammar appears to be low because the adviser interprets "haber+colocar" as a complex verb although it works here as a past perfect tense form which requires "haber" as an auxiliary verb.

This discourse, which claims to be monoglossically correct in the definition of the norm, is not (always) consistent with the heteroglossic writing shown by orthographic errors (i.e. "ducenté*c*imo", "no s*e* el porqu*e*"), inconsistent use of quotation marks ("ese 'han' va con Ø*reproducciones*Ø") recurrent typos ("reproduciones", "reprodución"), word separation ("por/qu(é)") and many other features of computer-mediated varieties (Yus, 2011) which can be evaluated as incorrect from the point of view of the normative order claimed by the advice giver him/herself.

A second type of answer is not exactly an advice message because the recommendation of a course of action is based on the experience and/or taste of the writer:

(18) Para mí, las 3 están bien.
Saludos. (June 2012,
http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2434843. Accessed:
September 11, 2012)

To me, the three of them are fine.
Best,

(19) Para mi también, (Duvija *dixit*) pero en vez del subjuntivo en -*ra* usaría el subjuntivo en -*se*. En mi idiolecto es así.(June 2012,
http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2434843. Accessed:
September 11, 2012)

Me too, (Duvija dixit) but instead of subjunctive suffix -ra I would use -se. It works like that in my idiolect.

(20) Yo me atrevería a decir que su uso no es propio de ámbitos cultos por estos lares.
Saludos,   (December   2008,
http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=1193758.   Accessed:
September 11, 2012)

I would dare to say that its use is not proper of well-educated speakers over here.
Best,

(21) Yo lo uso, y de la peor manera: 'Dice tal y cual, donde no sabés si lo que quiere   decirte   es   esto   o   lo   otro'   (December   2008,
http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=1193758.   Accessed:
September 11, 2012)

I use it, and in the worst way: "He says so and so where you don't know if he intends to say one thing or the other"

(22) En México es algo de todos los días, quizá yo sea muy arcaico pero la verdad no encuentro nada de malo en que se utilice.
Es simplemente un uso donde *donde* señala un espacio físico o temporal.(December 2008, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=1193758. Accessed: September 11, 2012)

In Mexico it is a part of everyday life; may be I am too old fashioned but actually I don't find anything wrong in its use.
It is simply a use where where *refers to a physical or temporal space.*

As a significant difference with the former group of advice messages, here we observe a strong presence of subjectivity and modal attitudes by the writer, who claims the relative nature of his/her advice. As a consequence, the advice is presented as an option among others and it does not invalidate other variants. In (22), there is an ironic allusion to the normative text of the RAE (which says "es arcaico, y debe evitarse hoy": *"it is archaic and must be avoided")* in order to create tension and underline the distance with an institutional authority recognized by others but not by the writer him/herself. Examples (20) and (20) are two successive responses, enacting a dialogue in which the second member argues with the first one, reinforcing the "wrongness" of a linguistic option as an identity marker: mine is the "worst way". We see here a conscious subjective option intertwined with a linguistically indexed identity shaped in opposition to institutionally defined linguistic norms (Jaspers, 2005; Rampton, 2006: 370)

The third type of advice message, different from the first two, does identify a source for normative discourse, either referring to traditional linguistic instruments or to new internet-based ones. The interesting feature of this group is that they place the RAE's instruments (as the DPD, DRAE or the different grammars) on a par with others that do not have any institutional affiliation. On the contrary, the web pages cited as sources of normative discourse are, in many cases, sites which distribute user-generated content:

(23) Ahora bien, la segunda no parece apropiada porque ninguna de las definiciones de la palabra "de" parace [sic] concordar con la oración.

Mientras que <u>la palabra "que"</u> me parece que sí. (The underlined hyperlink refers to the WordReference dictionary) (June 2012, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2434556. Accessed: September 11, 2012)

Now, the second one does not seem appropriate because none of the <u>definitions of the word "of"</u> seems adequate to the sentence. On the other hand <u>the word "that"</u> seems to be [adequate].

(24) De nada, Zuzhi.
<u>Aquí</u> he encontrado una explicación de uno de los usos del pretérito pluscuamperfecto de subjuntivo que creo que es el que se aplicaría en la frase original: (The underlined hyperlink refers to a non-institutional free webpage: http://eljuego.free.fr/Fichas_gramatica/FG_pluscuamperfecto_subjuntivo.htm.) (June 2012, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2434843. Accessed: September 11, 2012)

You are welcome, Zuzhi.
<u>Here</u> I have found an explanation of one of the usages of the subjunctive past perfect which I think would apply to the original sentence:

(25) Ambas son correctas, en mi uso. Del Esbozo de la RAE:
'3.14.9.f) Con verbos modales, como *poder, deber, saber, querer*, el condicional es a menudo permutable por el imperfecto de subjuntivo en *-ra*, e incluso con el imperfecto de indicativo. (...)
Si aparece Xiao, ya lo explicará con más fundamento. Saludos (June 2012, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2435216. Accessed: September 11, 2012)

Both are correct in my use. From the RAE's "Esbozo":
'3.14.9.f) With modal verbs as can, must, know, want*, conditional is often interchangeable with the subjunctive imperfect with suffix -ra, even with indicative imperfect. (…)*
If Xiao shows up, he will probably explain it with better reasons.
Best

(26) 99.º **-** nonagésimo noveno
100.º – centésimo
235.º - ducentécimo trigésimo quinto
Quizá encuentre útil la entrada del DPD que abarca esto: <u>ordinales</u>. ^-^ (The underlined hyperlink refers to the RAE webpage) (June 2011, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2188503. Accessed: September 11, 2012)

99.°- Ninetieth ninth
100°- Hundredth

235.°- Two hundredth thirtieth fifth
*May be you will find useful the DPD on this: <u>ordinals.</u> ^-^*

In these examples, the hyperlinks acknowledge the source of normative discourse; we can consider them as an institutionally-defined version of the first two groups: (23) and (25) are more subjective while the other two generate an effect of impersonality. Although the RAE is still an important reference, in many cases it is not the only normative source and it is even discredited, as we have seen, facing the experience or judgment of the speakers. It also appears to share its place as legitimate obligatory discourse on language with other sources: from the WordReference forum or the WordReference dictionary to unknown pages with unchecked information which, nevertheless, are popular and widely consulted by web users. As we see, the multiplicity of normative sources does not affect the status of normative discourse: it only decenters the place of the RAE, placing it among many other resources at the speaker's disposal on the web.

Centrality of the norm, decentralization of the institutions

Morrow (2006: 545) has pointed out an interesting feature of the *corpus* he compiled from Internet forums: although there are request and advice messages, there was no acknowledging that the actions suggested were followed by requesters. In our case, we observe the same phenomenon: in most of the cases analyzed, there is no "thank you" message, that is, the member who formulated the request does not give any feedback to the answers received, not even if these answers contradict themselves:

(27) flljob:
"Originally posted by **Calambur**
Yo la pondría así:
No importa si usted desea vender sólo un artículo <u>o**, en cambio,**</u> va a vender artículos por valor de un millón de euros."
Yo lo pondría sin el segundo *si*.

Colchonero:
"Originally posted by **flljob**
Yo lo pondría sin el segundo *si*.!"
Pues yo no. Prefiero la frase tal como la ha redactado Calambur. Cuestión de oído, supongo (January 2011, http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=2042332. Accessed: September 11, 2012)

flljob:

> *"Originally posted by **Calambur***
> *I would say:*
> *'It does not matter if you want to sell only one article <u>or, on the contrary,</u>*
> *you are going to sell articles for one million euros'*
I would say the same without using the second "if".

Colchonero:

> *"Originally posted by **flljob***
> *I would say the same without using the second 'if'."*
Well, I would not. I prefer the phrase as Calambur has written it. It's a matter of
taste, I guess

In this case, the option offered by the user Calambur is contested by the user flljob and his/her is contested by Colchonero in the last post of the thread, which was originated by Garabatilla's doubt: "quisiera saber cómo es la manera correcta de puntuar esta frase: 'No importa si usted desea vender sólo un artículo**,o si en cambio,** va a vender artículos por valor de un millón de euros.'" (*I would like to know what's the correct way of punctuating this phrase: 'It does not matter if you want to sell only one article ,or on the contrary, you are going to sell articles for one million euros'*").

Although the request presupposes the existence of only one correct option, as we have seen in (1) to (5), the answers, explicitly based in the speakers' subjectivity, are contradictory between themselves. Even though some users acknowledge the answers ("Gracias XiaoRoel.", "Gracias, Sayas. Saludos") nothing indicates whether the answer was helpful or not to solve the problem and whether the user will follow or not the suggested linguistic conduct.

Now, the communication is not limited to these few forum members. The exchanged texts are open to any person without need of any special membership in these forums. As I did in my own experience as Internet user, searching through Google, any reader can access these pieces of advice, identify him/herself with the requester and accept or reject the norm offered. Besides the different forms of normative discourse, the multiple sources and legitimation strategies, the end user has an array of explicit options presented as equally mandatory but with different contents. For instance, the use of "donde" without locative antecedent, as shown, has its supporters and its critics, and the adoption of one or another form remains up to the speaker.

These new places to search for normative discourse on Spanish are not limited to one legitimate option or one monoglossic criteria as was the case with the traditional, RAE-defined linguistic instruments. They remain, however, monoglossically oriented in many cases although their own normative "inconsistencies" show that the effect of normativity is locally produced. Therefore, what we see is not "anti-normative" discourse; not even "anti-RAE" discourse. These new sources of linguistic norms simply decenter the RAE and place it in a par with heterogeneously defined normative sources at the speaker's disposal.

With these results, we think it is also necessary to decenter research on Spanish language policies. By studying the RAE's policies, and only them, we acknowledge its authority in a manner that many speakers no longer do. Of course, this does not mean thinking that there is a romantically acephalous body of Spanish speakers who freely create and discuss norms in a participative virtual space. As we have shown, the monogolossic language ideology which assigns a central place to normative discourse is present in almost every request and advice message analyzed. On the other hand, the institutional relationships established by the complex Pan-Hispanic apparatus in order to legitimate the RAE/ ASALE linguistic norm as the only correct in economic, cultural and political terms have determining effects on the success of these decentralized normative discourses.

Yet, we think it is necessary to begin to see what speakers do with these norms, both in terms of a synchronic analysis which can show the emergence of, and the competition and relationships between normative discourses; and from a diachronic perspective, which enables as to tell how successful can be a linguistic policy which surfs the Internet against the waves.

Acknowledgement

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