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Francis Sales, George Ticknor, and the Beginnings of Spanish Language Instruction in the United States

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Abstract: While George Ticknor's scholarship on Spanish literature has recently attracted considerable attention, his 1832 lecture on the teaching of "living languages" had largely been ignored. This essay addresses this imbalance, emphasizing the extent to which Ticknor's ideas about teaching drew upon those of his often forgotten assistant, Francis Sales, and his advocacy of the "natural method" of language instruction pioneered in the United States by Nicolas G. Dufief.

Keywords: George Ticknor, Francis Sales, Nicolas G. Dufief, Language Instruction, Spanish Language, Hispanism

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1. Introduction

In recent years, scholars from various disciplines have focused new attention on the life and scholarly career of George Ticknor (1791-1871), Harvard's first Abiel Smith Professor of French and Spanish Languages. Of particular importance in this regard is the valuable volume of essays, *George Ticknor y la Fundación del Hispanismo en Estados Unidos,* edited by José M. Del Pino, and which appeared in 2022. In keeping with Miguel de Unamuno's 1906 reference to Ticknor as "the author of the first history of Spanish literature worthy of the name" (my translation) (Unamuno, 1997, p. 59), that volume focused on different aspects of Ticknor's scholarship as reflected in his three-volume *History of Spanish Literature*, first published in 1849.

In comparison, its various contributors paid scant attention to Ticknor's career as a teacher, let alone his famous 1832 lecture "On the best methods of teaching the living languages." In fact, with the exception of the discussion of that lecture offered by Alfred Coester in 1936, by Henry Grattan Doyle the following year (1937b), and, just recently, by Alberto Bruzos Moro (2022), scholarship examining Ticknor's ideas about language instruction has been minimal at best.[1] And with the exception of Doyle's 1937 notes on that lecture, it does relatively little to explore the sources for Ticknor's thoughts about language instruction, let alone the extent to which they drew upon, and profited from, the ideas and classroom practices of Francis Sales, Harvard's instructor of French and Spanish languages from 1817 until 1852. The aim of this paper is to correct this imbalance. Far from being his Ticknor's "assistant," as Doyle referred to him, Sales's classroom techniques appear to have been served as the principal source of Ticknor's thoughts about "living languages" and how they should best be taught.

[1] I refer here to Coester (1936); Doyle (1937a); and Bruzos Moro (2022).

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2. "Living Languages"

First, a quick recap of Ticknor's 1832 lecture, which was delivered in Boston on August 24 at the third annual meeting of the American Institute of Instruction (AII). Established in 1830, the AII aimed at the improvement of "popular" education in Massachusetts' public schools. Towards this end speakers at the Institute's the inaugural meeting advocated various recommendations to improve the curriculum offered in the state's "infant" and secondary schools, including the introduction of courses in geography and mathematics aimed at the promotion of "useful knowledge." While that knowledge included schooling in both Latin and Greek, it apparently did not extend to instruction in foreign languages, a subject that none of the speakers at the meeting elected to address.[2]

The failure of the AII to address this particular lacuna is one that Ticknor addressed in his lecture of 1832. Although Ticknor had relatively little experience teaching a foreign language (see below), he had strong opinions about the necessity of foreign languages and also how they ought to be taught. These opinions had roots in his studies at the University of Göttingen and earlier travels across Europe. Ticknor also had first-hand knowledge of the curriculum in Round Hill School, a private academy in Northampton, MA—founded in 1825 and brainchild of two of his long-time friends, George Bancroft and Joseph Green Cogswell, both of whom left their positions at Harvard College to start a school with a curriculum modeled on that of a German *gymnasium*. Instruction at Round Hill emphasized the need for tuition of modern languages, notably in French and German, but also in Spanish, justifying the latter's addition by pointing out that "the great changes which are taking place in the southern parts of our continent give it at this time peculiar importance" (Cogswell & Bancroft, 1923, p. 14).

[2] For the proceedings of this meeting, see American Institute of Instruction (1931).

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Ticknor evidently admired and appreciated what his friends were attempting to achieve at Round Hill, and a visit there in 1825 appeared to have convinced him that the emphasis it accorded "living languages" as opposed to Latin and Greek could serve as model for Massachusetts' public schools. Such was the message he sought to bring to the members of the Institute. But how were these languages to be taught? What methods and modes of instruction did Ticknor recommend?

Ticknor addressed this topic at the very start of his lecture with the statement: "The most important characteristic of a living language—the attribute in which reside power and value, is a spoken one that serves for that constant and principal bond of union between the different individuals of a whole nation, with which, they could not, for a moment, be kept together in a community." By this he meant that the aim of language was to "facilitate personal intercourse," that is, verbal communication, and for this reason he added that "the easiest and best method" to learn a living language "is inevitably to learn it as a spoken one" (Ticknor, 1937, p. 19).

Ticknor here was targeting traditional methods of language instruction that had privileged knowledge of grammar and syntax, together with mastery of reading and writing a foreign language, as opposed to verbal conversation. He recognized the importance of both grammar and reading skills, yet he emphasized that the books students be required to be read "should be chosen with reference to the habits and peculiarities of the spoken idiom that produced them, and in studying the language itself, it should be pursued less as a foreign language than as one which they may claim among their birthrights." This, he added, was "the natural method" of language learning. It was also "the most effectual and the easiest" (Ticknor, 1937, p. 24).

The lecture continued in this vein by adding that "there seems little reason to doubt the Grammar should not, at the outset, be made so prominent, as has been generally made, nor its embarrassing and difficult portions be so regularly gone through and pressed upon the young minds of this class of pupils." Rather he

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suggested that students learn to read the language by introducing them to "an easy reading book, which will be amusing to their age—as an example, he recommended Madame Guizot 's *Nouvelles et Contes pour la jeunesse* for French, Francesco Soave's *Novelle morali* (1782) for Italian, and the Brothers Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* for German; but, oddly, nothing comparable for Spanish. Ticknor concluded his recommendations about language learning by advising that the teacher, rather than act as a demanding task master, ought to facilitate "the progress of his pupils by all the means in his power, and explaining everything to them, translating their lessons for them, as far as he can." Without saying so directly, Ticknor was arguing that students learned best when their teachers, in lieu of demanding drills on grammar, adopt a more relaxed, conversationally-based method of language instruction, noting in particular that "their recitations, instead of being merely strict examinations, become opportunities for acquiring further knowledge and making easier progress." He reiterated the importance of this method of instruction by applauding "the success of those teachers who do not rely merely on the dead letter of the book" (Ticknor, 1937, pp. 30-31).

Learning, in short, ought to be a pleasant experience, also fun. Yet this recommendation and support for "natural" teaching had little in common with Ticknor's own style of lecturing, said to be "learned and beautiful" but also quite humorless and reserved. Rather, it better reflects what is known about the classes and teaching philosophy of his "subsidiary," Harvard's long-time instructor of both French and Spanish, Francis Sales.[3]

[3] See Tyack (1967, pp. 91-92), and "Reform of Harvard College," (*United States Literary Gazette*, 1825, p. 338). The author of this essay claimed that while Ticknor's lectures were "agreeable and valuable," his salary of $1,000 was too much for a non-resident professor living in Boston.

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3. Sales: A Brief Biography

The best starting point for Sales's life and teaching career is the autobiographical sketch he drafted in 1853 and currently housed in the Harvard University Archives.[4] It can be complemented with another, short account of his life that Sales included in a letter directed to French politician Dominique-François Arago (1786-1853) in 1849.[5] Both confirm that Sales, *née* François Sala, was born and baptized a Roman Catholic in 1772 in Thuir, a small town of roughly 2500 inhabitants located near Perpignan in the Pyrénées-Orientales region in the south of France. They also indicate that he was the third of six children in the family of Joseph Sala, a small landowner (*proprietaire*) and his wife, Catherine Roca—both possibly of Catalan or Spanish descent. Otherwise, details are few. Presumably, he was raised speaking French—Ticknor later reported that he spoke it "badly,"—a reference to his pronounced southern accent—, but Sales undoubtedly could also speak Catalan, the regional language.

Following his father's death in 1781, Sales reports that he expected to be sent to a seminary in Perpignan, in preparation to become a priest. In 1783, however, his life took an unexpected turn when his maternal uncle, Joseph Roca, the head of an academy located in Cádiz, invited his nephew to live with him in that bustling port city in the South of Spain in order to complete his education.

As Sales tells it, the journey took him overland from Thuir to Barcelona, then via ship to Cádiz, a city he described as the "mercantile and opulent emporium of all of Spanish America." Once there, he enrolled in his uncle's academy, studying Latin together with "Castilian," as well as courses in algebra and geography. He also studied

[4] Harvard University Archives: HUG 1763, Papers of Francis Sales: autobiographical sketch.
[5] Harvard University Archives: HUG 1763, Papers of Francis Sales, letter to Dominique-François Arago, Oct. 1, 1849. Arago was a minister in the provisional government established following the Revolution of 1848. He previously served as a congressional deputy for Pyrénées-Orientales, the region in which Sales was born. For more on Sales, see Coester (1936, pp. 283-302); Jaksic (2007, pp. 228-232); and Kagan (2019, pp. 178-79, 181, 236).

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French, but as he was already quite proficient in that language, his instructor asked him to serve as his "assistant." Sales did not know it then, but the teaching of languages—both French and Spanish—would become his life's work.

Soon after the start of the French Revolution in 1789, Sales returned to Thuir to visit his family, but following the execution of Louis XVI in January of 1791, he returned to Cádiz, working for about a year in a German counting house. It was also then that he made the acquaintance of "a young man from Boston," Thomas Foster (1772-1863), possibly a member of the prosperous merchant family headed by William Foster and his brother James. That "young man" came to his assistance on March, 1793, when, following the outbreak of hostilities between Revolutionary France and Spain (the so-called "War of the Convention"), Spanish authorities ordered the expulsion of French citizens from Cádiz. It was at that point that his American friend invited Sales to accompany him to Boston, and so he decided "to find his fortune in the New World." He traveled with Foster to Boston aboard an American ship, Bald Eagle, helping his friend to smuggle out of Spain three merino sheep together with a painting attributed to the Sevillian artist Bartolomé Murillo, *Jacob and Rebecca at the Well.* Not all of the sheep survived the journey, but the painting was later donated to the Boston Atheneum.[6]

Upon arrival in Massachusetts, Sales reports that he lived for a time in the "country" in an effort to improve his command of English, but soon settled in Boston, and married [who?] in 1795. Three years later, following the passage of the "Alien and Sedition Act," a measure aimed principally at French citizens residing in the United States, Sales became a naturalized citizen, officially changing his name from François Sala to Francis Sales. By then, he was already working as a language instructor, offering group classes in Spanish and French every evening and private tuition in these languages during the day—in 1803 one of his pupils was the recent graduate of

[6] For details, see Kagan (2019, p. 236).

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Dartmouth College George Ticknor, who later reports that Sales tutored him in French and "a little Spanish" (Ticknor, 1876, vol. I, p. 6). An advertisement appearing in the *Boston Patriot* in 1814 indicates that Sales—then residing at 14 Franklin Place, a townhouse that was part of a housing development designed by Charles Bullfinch in what is now downtown Boston—also prepared to work as a translator who, in addition to translating French and Spanish documents into English, would also be able to translate from both Italian and Portuguese.[7]

Sales was still working as a language instructor in November 1816 when he received a letter from President John Kirkland of Harvard, possibly on the recommendation of Ticknor, offering him an appointment as a "teacher to initiate the students in the elements of the French and Spanish Languages," with a salary set at $1000 per year. He quickly accepted, and started teaching at Harvard in January, 1817, and continued to do so until his retirement in 1852, just two years before his death at the age of 84.[8]

Initially, Kirkland and the Harvard Corporation considered Sales a "subsidiary" to George Ticknor, the College's newly-appointed Abiel Smith Professor in the French and Spanish Languages. Ticknor had accepted that position July, 1816, albeit on the condition that he not be "expected to teach a language of any sort," and that he able to continue his studies in Europe, primarily to improve his knowledge of Spanish. As it turned out, Ticknor only returned to Boston in July, 1819, and assumed his teaching duties at the college starting in September, 1819, with a survey course in French literature. The survey in Spanish literature had to wait until the fall semester, 1821, when Ticknor taught it for the first time in a course open only to advanced students entering their senior year.[9]

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[7] *Boston Patriot*, Oct. 14, 1814, "Spanish and French Languages."
[8] In his will, Sales left a bequest to the college, established a prize for the Harvard undergraduate "who shall have commenced the study of that language [Spanish] and whose scholarship will be determined by the proficiency of his Spanish composition." That prize is still awarded.
[9] For more on his teaching see Tyack (1967, p. 87); Quincy (1940, 2, p. 224); and Leavitt (1961, pp. 593-594). Also Coester (1936).

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Owing principally to Sales, that survey is apt to have enrolled students who already had some familiarity with the Spanish language, possibly some of its literature as well. Having pledged to teach with "zeal and fidelity," Sales continued to do so until his retirement in 1852. His students revered him. Charles Sumner, who graduated from the college in 1830, fondly remembered Sales for his "unique elegance in dress, kind in manner, and bountiful [?] effort to teach," whereas Henry Wadsworth Longfellow described him as "genial, joyous, and friendly." [10] The image of Sales crafted by James Russell Lowell, who earned his Harvard BA in 1838, is not much different, as he remembered "Mr. S." for his good humor, geniality, and teaching skills, a character he referred to as "a good-hearted beggar, cardinal, and confessor rolled into one." Lowell's memory was partly reinforced by the fact that Sales had a reputation for being an easy grader and for his failure to maintain what the college authorities believed was the necessary and proper degree of decorum and discipline in his classroom (Lowell, 1854, pp. 481-82). The recollections of Andrew Preston Peabody were somewhat similar. Writing while serving as the university preacher in 1888, he ruefully observed that:

> It was probably never known how good a teacher Mr. Sales could have been, if he had had teachable pupils. But the modern languages then formed no part of the college curriculum. They were extra and voluntary studies, and were not taken into the account in determining a student's rank. Of pupils in Spanish, Mr. Sales had only now and then one who expected to need the language for some practical purpose. His French classes were large, but were composed mainly of students who sought amusement rather than instruction, and whose chief aim was to impose on his long-suffering good-nature, and to put him to his wit's end in the vain endeavor to preserve some show of discipline. (Peabody, 1888, p. 48)

These memories, together with the supposed relaxed atmosphere of Sales's classes, are consistent with what we know about his teaching philosophy, much of which aligned with what was then called the new, or "natural" method of foreign language instruction to which Ticknor in his 1832 lecture referred.

[10] Harvard University Archives: Papers of Francis Sales, HUG 1763: Letter from Charles Sumner to Miss Sales, August 9, 1854.

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4. The "Natural" Method of Language Instruction

That method, with its roots in the educational philosophies of such thinkers as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Abbé Condorcet, challenged what one of its chief advocates, Nicolas G. Dufief, defined as the "old, *stale*, *threadbare grammatical system*" (Dufief, 1804, p. viii). Dufief was referring here to a system of foreign language instruction that emphasized the mastery of grammar and syntax over conversation. That same system privileged writing over speaking, which students generally learned through oral recitations of certain written passages they were required to memorize.

This is not the place to present a complete overview of the state of foreign language instruction at the start of the nineteenth century, but when it came to learning Spanish, the individual who seemed to embody the "grammatical system" about which Dufief griped was Felipe Fernández Argumedo (1741-1815). A native of Jerez de la Frontera and a priest, Fernández Argumedo was something of an *ilustrado* who figured among the founders of that city's progressive Real Sociedad Patriótica in 1787. Some time thereafter, and for reasons that remain obscure, he emigrated to London where he worked as a Spanish teacher—his pupils reportedly included such dignitaries as Lord Holland, later to become a patron of another Spanish émigré, José Blanco White.[11] Fernández Argumedo was also the author *A New Practical Grammar of the Spanish Language,* first published in London in 1797 and which followed the grammatically-based system of learning authorized by the Real Academia Española and outlined in its *Gramática de la Lengua Castellana* of 1771. That same system is equally evident in a companion volume, *Exercises on the Rules of Construction of the Spanish Language*, a volume Fernández published in 1798. The opening sentence of its introduction, emphasizing the importance of written exercises and the memorization of rules, constituted the hallmarks of the "grammatical system"

[11] For Fernández Argumedo, see Jiménez and De la Rosa (2008-2009).

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criticized by Dufief: “This book is a collection of perfect and imperfect sentences, in which the rules of the Spanish Grammar are set forth by some examples, and some English sentences, to be translated into Spanish according to the rules” (Fernández [Argumedo], 1797 and 1798).[12]

Nicolas Gouin Dufief (1776 - 1834), a native of Nantes, was one of hundreds of French émigrés who found their way to Philadelphia in the wake of the French Revolution and the outbreak of the slave revolt in the French Caribbean colony of Saint Domingue in 1793.[13] Starting in September, 1795, he started offering French lessons, emphasizing that he would teach his pupils to speak with a “Parisian accent,” and by 1796, he was offering additional instruction in what he advertised as “steganography, or the art of secret writing.” By 1800 Dufief had also entered the book trade, having made a name for himself after acquiring and then selling in public auction books from the library of Benjamin Franklin. He soon opened a book store of his own, specializing in the sale of both French and Spanish books and with Thomas Jefferson becoming a regular client.[14]

As far as his language classes are concerned, Dufief confessed that he initially used the traditional method—grammar first, conversation second—, but after several years of experience, he jettisoned that approach for another he described as an “analytical” system. By “analytical” he implied ‘scientific,’ a system modeled on the recent experiments of the French chemist Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier (1743-1794) and grounded upon first-hand observation. For this reason Dufief claimed that his

[12] Fernández [Argumedo] also published editions of *Gil Blas* (1808a) and *Don Quijote* (1808b) as well as an English-Spanish Dictionary (1811).
[13] For this community, see Furstenberg (2015). For Dufief, see Stern (1988).
[14] For Dufief and Jefferson, see Philips (1926, pp. 57–71); Adorno (2022). Jefferson’s correspondence with Dufief for the years 1810-12 is available on line at Founders Online, National Archives: https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-03-02-0058
Dufief’s varied activities, as language teacher and bookseller, require additional study.

ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN

"analytical system" was better attuned to the "organization of man and … suited to every capacity."[15]

Dufief first announced this new analytical method in a "prospectus" published in several Philadelphia newspapers on September 5, 1800. In the *Philadelphia Gazette* he claimed that this new "analytical" method of language instruction—privileging the acquisition of individual words together with familiar and idiomatic phrases commonly occurring in social communication"—followed the manner in which mothers teach language to their children. Students would begin by pronouncing these words in English, then in French, and guided by their instructor, would learn to insert them into simple phrases.[16]

Three years later, Dufief expanded on this "analytical" method in the guise of another "prospectus" announcing "nature's method of teaching language" and soliciting subscribers willing to underwrite its publication in the form of a two-volume book. Published in newspapers in Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Washington, Savannah and other cities, the prospectus attracted more than three hundred subscribers, with Thomas Jefferson, "President of the United States," ordering six copies, the President of Princeton's College of New Jersey, Rev. Samuel Stanhope, signing up for two, and the prominent Philadelphia bookseller, Mathew Carey, no fewer than sixteen. The first edition of Dufief's *Nature Displayed, in her Mode of Teaching Language to Man […] Adapted to the French,* appeared in 1804.[17] Aided by a series of rave reviews in various newspapers and periodicals, that edition quickly sold out, prompting Dufief to issue a second edition in 1806, another in 1810, and by 1834, the year of his death, at least five or six more.

[15] For more on this system, see Dufief (1804): "Preliminary Discourse." See also Dufief (1806), in which he outlined his "system" in a pamphlet that accused William Rawle, a prominent Philadelphia lawyer whose children he had once tutored in French, of plagiarism.
[16] *Philadelphia Gazette*, September 5, 1800.
[17] The list of subscribers can be found at the close of Dufief (1804).

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The enterprising Dufief, however, was convinced that his "natural" or conversational approach could be easily applied to the acquisition of other languages, notably Spanish. He also understood that interest in the latter, especially among commercial circles in Boston, New York, Philadelphia and cities doing business with Cuba and other parts of Spanish America, was growing rapidly. As a book seller, he would also have been aware that the Philadelphia publisher, Thomas Bradford, had attempted to corner that market as early as 1798 by issuing an unauthorized, pirated edition of Felipe Fernández's *A New Practical Grammar of the Spanish Language.* Eager to maintain his hold on that same market, in 1809 Bradford commissioned a Spanish instructor, the Irish exile Matthew O'Conway, to prepare a new, updated version of that grammar, specifically noting that "I never had so many applications for [Spanish] grammars at present. There is a great demand for them in New York and other parts of the continent, and I wish to strike off an edition of a grammar that is considered the best" (Barnwell, 2018, p. 114).[18] Unfortunately for Bradford, O'Conway turned out to be something of a cheat. Having completed work on the new grammar, he backed out on his agreement with Bradford and opted to self- publish with help from a local printer, Thomas Hobson. This arrangement led to O'Conway's *Hispano-Anglo Grammar,* which appeared in 1810.

Although O'Conway never saw much of a profit from this new grammar—in fact, he sold his copyright to Hobson soon after the volume's release—its appearance is apt to have persuaded the enterprising Dufief to produce a Spanish grammar of his own. From his perspective, O'Conway's *Hispano-Anglo Grammar,* modeled on that of Fernández, was decidedly "old school." He also imagined that a Spanish grammar, using the same method as outlined in his *Nature Displayed*, would prove a commercial success.

[18] See also Flick (1899-1900). Note that O'Conway also published a Spanish reader: O'Conway (1809).

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Dufief consequently commissioned two of Philadelphia language instructors, Manuel de Torres y Trujillo (1767-1822) and Louis Hargous, "professor of universal grammar," to prepare another grammar book based on the conversationally-grounded "analytical" system he had developed for French but adapted to Spanish.[19] This collaboration led to *Dufief's Nature Displayed in Her Mode of Teaching Language to Man*; *Being a new and infallible method of acquiring languages with unparalleled rapidity*; *deduced from the analysis* of *the human mind*, *and consequently suited to every capacity*: *Adapted to the Spanish* (Dufief, 1811). In keeping with the original French version, it emphasized the importance of an oral, or conversational, approach to learning Spanish. It also included a section entitled "Syntax Made Easy," together with another section specifically aimed at meeting the growing demand for "commercial Spanish." Entitled "The Commercial Secretary," it offered a bi-lingual sampling of letters, invoices, accounts of sale, bills of lading and exchange, etc."[20] Dufief also included a section, "El Lector Español," seemingly intended to offer teachers a way to have their students improve their spoken Spanish by staging a play. For this reason, "El Lector Español," included scenes from two light-hearted, eighteenth-century Spanish language comedies: Carlos Goldoni's *El Cortejo Conocido* y *El Consorte Prudente* and Carlos Gibert y Tutó's *El Médico Supuesto*. The grammar's concluding section, "Elegantes Extractos en Prosa y en Verso," featured short readings from a variety of Spanish authors.

[19] Native to a village near Córdoba in southern Spain, Torres emigrated to Colombia in 1778, where he became a successful merchant and landowner. His participation in an independence uprising in 1794 led to his arrest, but he escaped prison and fled to Philadelphia in 1796, remaining there until his death at age 58—working initially as a language instructor, later as a merchant and arms dealer supplying weapons to various South American "insurgents" who fought for independence from Spain. Following Colombian independence, Torres was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States.

[20] Presumably, the material in the "commercial secretary" was the work of Manuel Torres, who, apart from his work as a language instructor, was also a merchant involved in trade with Spanish America. The South American market also helps to explain why Dufief issued the grammar with a title and introduction printed in both English and Spanish. The Spanish title reads: *Naturaleza Descubierta por N.G. Dufief, en el modo con que ella enseña el lenguaje a los hombres.* For Torres, the best introduction remains Bowman, Jr. (1970).

ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN

In the end, the Spanish version of *Nature Displayed* was not as successful as the one adapted to French. Dufief explained that he issued it in an "unusually large impression owing to great demand for elementary books in the Spanish language" (Dufief, 1825, n.p.). That demand led to a second edition in 1817, followed in 1825 by a third that was updated and revised with the assistance of Columbia University's professor of Spanish language, Mariano Velázquez de la Cadena (1778-1860), a recent convert to the "natural" method of language instruction pioneered by Dufief.[21]

5. Francis Sales: Harvard's First (and Largely Ignored) Instructor

Francis Sales, Ticknor's assistant at Harvard, was another such convert. Save for Ticknor's comment that Sales spoke French with a pronounced southern French accent, nothing is known of Sales's method of teaching either French or Spanish prior to his appointment at Harvard in 1817. [22] At the outset, however, it appears that his approach to language instruction was decidedly "old school," and when it came to teaching Spanish, his go-to grammar was probably that of Fernández. The first sign of a change in his method dates from 1881: his decision to embark on a translation into English of Auguste-Louis Jossé's *Éléments de la grammaire espagnole,* a volume first published in 1799 and which quickly achieved wide acceptance in France.

Jossé (1763-1841) was a French Catholic priest who found refuge in London sometime after the execution of Louis XVI in 1793. Once there, together with Felipe Fernández, he worked as a language instructor, although certain criticisms of Fernández that Jossé included in the first edition of his *Elements* suggest that the two

[21] Although Velázquez de la Cadena's *Elementos de la lengua castellana ….* (1820) was decidedly "old school," he quickly adapted to Dufief's more "natural" methods and subsequently championed the so-called "modern" method of language instruction associated with Heinrich Gottfried Ollendorff during the 1840s. See Nevada Gómez (2017). A full-fledged biography of Velázquez de la Cadena, his writings and career, remains an important desideratum.
[22] For Ticknor's comment on Sales's French accent, see Ticknor (1876, vol. I, p. 6). Ticknor notes that Sales later "corrected" his accent.

Francis Sales, George Ticknor, and the Beginnings of Spanish Language Instruction in the United States
Estudios del Observatorio/Observatorio Studies. 092-07/2024EN
ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN

were rivals rather than friends. These comments include criticisms of Fernández's lack of "judgement and reflection," the multiple errors in his grammar, together with that volume's slavish reliance on RAE's grammar of 1771, a work Jossé considered suitable only for native speakers of Spanish (Jossé, 1799, pp. viii-ix).

Jossé, however, was no Dufief, and his grammar was decidedly "old school" even though the "Introduction" expressly noted that "grammar is the art of speaking." Notwithstanding that statement, the exercises Jossé offered did little to promote spoken language as opposed to mastery of syntax and the written word.

The grammar apart, Jossé published several other books, including one recounting the lives of "celebrated children," (Jossé, 1801) an edition of Antonio de Solís's *Historia de la Conquista de México* (Jossé, 1809a), dedicated to Charles August Bennet, V Count of Tankerville, along with a students' edition of Tomás de Yriarte's *Fábulas literarias* (Jossé, 1809b), which included a useful vocabulary.[23] Otherwise little is known about his career in London, let alone the students he taught, although his attitude towards language instruction, much like that of Dufief, appears to have changed as a result of experience as well as the passage of time. These changes are evident in the third and substantially revised edition of *Éléments* Jossé published in Paris in 1818. In a notable departure from the original, first published in 1799, as well as the second of 1804, Jossé, in a nod towards Dufief's "natural" method, added an entirely new section devoted to "familiar phrases and expressions" which students could practice together with a useful vocabulary of everyday words.

The 1818 edition of *Éléments* is the one that Sales adopted as his own. The timing is unclear, but he apparently arranged to obtain the copyright for an American edition of Jossé's grammar in 1821, undoubtedly following discussions with Ticknor. That decision was also predicated upon certain "errors" Sales found in other

[23] See Jossé (1801, 1809). He composed his *Juvenile Biography; or the Lives of Celebrated Children* (1801) in French and it was translated into English by "Mrs. Munnyng".

Francis Sales, George Ticknor, and the Beginnings of Spanish Language Instruction in the United States
Estudios del Observatorio/Observatorio Studies. 092-07/2024EN
ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN

grammars, presumably those by Fernández and O'Conway.[24] As for Dufief's *Nature Displayed,* although Sales would have appreciated the merits of his conversational approach, it is likely that he judged it unsuitable for students at Harvard, some of whom, especially those who expected to enroll in Ticknor's lecture course, required a solid grounding in grammar and syntax. Better, therefore, to acquire the rights to Jossé's book and adapt it in ways that Sales set out to achieve.

The result was a remarkable journey and the publication of no fewer than fourteen editions of Jossé-Sales's text, prior to his death in 1854—each with alterations and corrections that reflected Sales's own philosophy of language instruction. In the original edition of 1822, Sales did little to alter Jossé's text. The only noteworthy addition was an "Introduction" comparing his new grammar to a "key" offering access to the "boundless field for scientific, political, commercial advantages" created by the "independence movement in Spanish America," together with "the attainment of knowledge, honours and wealth" (Jossé, 1822, p. 3).

In comparison, by the time of the release of the third 1827 edition, Sales had introduced several major changes, among them a new section on "Spanish exercises," complemented by a vocabulary section featuring words used in "familiar conversation" and which "ought to be known by students." He also added "extracts from some of the best Spanish writers," notably such Enlightenment authors as Benito Feijoó and José de Cadalso, together with examples of Spanish poets as composed by such authors as Julián de Montemayor, Fray Luís de León, Francisco de Quevedo, Baltasar Gracián and others. More original was the section dedicated to what Sales entitled "*chistes*," his

[24] Sales seemingly made his decision to translate and adapt Jossé's grammar prior to the appearance of Mariano Cubí y Soler, *A New Spanish Grammar adapted to every class of learners* (1822). A native of Malgrat de Mar (Barcelona), Cubí y Soler (1801-1875) taught Spanish at St. Mary's College in Baltimore from 1820 until 1828 and at the University of Louisiana in New Orleans from 1837 until 1842. In addition to several books on phrenology, he was also the author of *Extractos de los más célebres escritores y poetas españoles* (José Robinson, 1823); *Diccionario portátil, de las lenguas española é inglesa*. Tomo II. Inglés y español; and *El traductor español*; *or*, *A new and practical system for translating the Spanish language* (1826). See Pentón Herrera y Morales-Rivera (2020).

Francis Sales, George Ticknor, and the Beginnings of Spanish Language Instruction in the United States
Estudios del Observatorio/Observatorio Studies. 092-07/2024EN
ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN

term for short, amusing anecdotes or extracts from various authors that students evidently read aloud in class—small wonder his students found Sales's classes both amusing and entertaining. Drawing upon his own counting house experience in Cádiz, and his recognition of the country's commercial ties with Spanish America's newly-independent states, he also included a section with samples of "mercantile correspondence." In other words, by the mid 1820s, Sales was already practicing the kind of interactive instruction that Ticknor would subsequently recommend in his lecture of 1832. Put simply, Sales had added bits of Dufief to Jossé, making for a much more engaging, more conversational approach to learning a "living language."

Sales's efforts to enliven language learning did not end there, with the updated edition of Jossé. In his 1823 *Syllabus for a Course of Lecture on the History and Criticism of Spanish Literature,* Ticknor provided his students with a short-hand guide to the sources and texts that served as the basis of his lectures (Ticknor, 1823). The *Syllabus*, however, was no reader, as it lacked extracts offering students an introduction to Spanish poetry and prose. That lacuna is one Sales endeavored to fill. Experience had also taught him that the short readings incorporated in the revised version of Jossé's grammar fell short of meeting his students' needs and demands. He therefore proceeded to prepare a new book of readings published as *La Colmena Española* in 1825. It included extracts from a variety of literary and historical texts interspersed with the kinds of "*chistes*" Sales liked to teach. There was also a helpful Spanish-English vocabulary at the foot of every page. While Ticknor may have advised on the book's contents, the final selection appears to have been left wholly to Sales.

What's certain is that the *Colmena* was a runaway commercial success, re-issued in no fewer than twelve editions over the course of the next forty years, a figure that suggests that the book was used in classrooms located well outside the perimeter of Harvard Yard. Such in fact was the volume's success that it confirms George Lowell

Francis Sales, George Ticknor, and the Beginnings of Spanish Language Instruction in the United States
Estudios del Observatorio/Observatorio Studies. 092-07/2024EN
ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN

Austin's later assessment of Sales as having the "honor of having done more than any other man to spread the love of Spanish literature in the United States" (Austin, 1888, p. 216).

Almost equally successful in helping to spread that love were Sales's other publications, each designed to foster his students' interest in, and appreciation of, Spain and its culture. One was a new edition of José de Cadalso's *Cartas Marruecas* (1827) that showcased accents to help students better pronounce difficult, multi-syllabic Spanish words. Sales followed this with another book that combined an edition of the *Fábulas* of Tomás de Yriarte with another of Fernández de Moratín's *El Sí de las Niñas* (1832). Intended for classroom use, this two for one edition contained a glossary of certain words and expressions that represented Sales's response to what he referred to as "the incessant complaints of students that they cannot find certain words and modes of speech in Neuman's and Baretti's dictionary," then the Spanish-English dictionary in widest use.[25]

Once again, therefore, Sales appears as an early promoter of the kind of interactive teaching Ticknor espoused.[26] The same applies to his *Colección de obras maestras dramáticas* (1828), which incorporated editions of Lope de Vega's *Estrella de Sevilla,* Calderón de la Barca's *El Príncipe Constante* together with his *El Mágico Prodigioso,* as well as Agustín Moreto's *Desden con el Desden.* It was the first collection of seventeenth-century Spanish dramas aimed at North American students but, in keeping with Sales's efforts to make language learning "pleasant," he is likely to have assigned different roles to his students and have them recite their lines in class, presumably with Sales taking the lead and showing students the words to be pronounced.

[25] Sales (1832, p. 6). The dictionary to which Sales referred was Neuman and Baretti (1823) [and many later editions].
[26] In keeping with this same idea but thinking primarily of the market in Mexico and other parts of South America, in 1826 Sales also published a *Cartilla ó Silibario y Método Práctico de enseñar a los niños de los estados de la América Meridional.* It too was an amazing commercial success—16 editions by 1849!

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ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN

Sales's crowning achievement was his 1836 edition of the *Don Quijote*, based upon the 1819 RAE edition, but with notes adopted for use by American students. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Ticknor's successor in the Smith chair, made use of it in 1838, the one and apparently only time he ever taught Cervantes to undergraduates at Harvard. On the other hand, Sales's edition remained the *go-to* North American edition of this famed Spanish classic until the appearance in 1860 of another by Eugenio de Ochoa, which included an introduction by George Ticknor.

6. Conclusion: Whose Living Language?

To conclude, let's return to Ticknor's famed 1832 lecture "On the best methods of teaching the living languages." Though he specifically referred in it to the "natural" method of language instruction, Ticknor never cites Dufief, he alludes to his *Nature Displayed* by emphasizing the importance of a conversational, as opposed to a purely philosophical or purely structural and grammatical, approach to language. "Living languages", in his view, ought to be spoken, not just written, and indeed he believed that literature, especially great literature, was best understood and appreciated when students understood the sound of the words they encountered on a printed page.

If Ticknor's lecture failed to acknowledge Dufief, neither did it signal the extent to which his ideas about language teaching might also have come from such other authors as Mariano Cubí y Soler, a Baltimore-based instructor of Spanish whose *New Spanish Grammar adapted to every kind of learners* (1822) defined grammar as the "art of speaking and of writing …with propriety." (Cubí y Soler, 1822, p. 13).

Even more surprising is the absence in the lecture of any reference to or mention of Sales, a teacher whose classroom Ticknor is known to have visited and one whose methods of language instruction personified what a "living language" was all about: regular, close and direct contact with students, familiar conversation, jokes,

Francis Sales, George Ticknor, and the Beginnings of Spanish Language Instruction in the United States
Estudios del Observatorio/Observatorio Studies. 092-07/2024EN
ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN

along with teaching by example, as opposed to requiring students to recite certain passages from readings or to just copy them from a printed book. Absent Sales, the lecture seemingly summarized what Ticknor had gleaned from observing his talented assistant with such statements as: “students need to be taught, not just required to learn.” Teaching, in short, was to be interactive, entailing interchange; and most importantly, it ought to be pleasant, or as we might put it today, downright, unmitigated fun at the risk of violating the regime of strict classroom discipline that members of the Harvard Corporation, true to the college’s origins as a seminary, were still keen to maintain.

Various sources suggest that Ticknor defended Sales’s methods of language instruction and, as I am proposing here, celebrated them in his 1832 lecture. As for Sales himself, although sources documenting his method of classroom instruction are scarce, there is more to be learned about his significant contribution as an instructor at Harvard and, equally importantly, his impact on both Ticknor, and Ticknor’s successor as Smith professor, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. I may be overstating the case, but this review of Sales’s publications and teaching philosophy suggests that credit for much of the imaginative pedagogical program Ticknor outlined for “living languages” in 1832 actually belongs to, as Alfred Coester once put it, “a forgotten forerunner” (Coester, 1936, p. 283).

Francis Sales, George Ticknor, and the Beginnings of Spanish Language Instruction in the United States
Estudios del Observatorio/Observatorio Studies. 092-07/2024EN
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Francis Sales, George Ticknor, and the Beginnings of Spanish Language Instruction in the United States
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ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN

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Estudios del Observatorio/Observatorio Studies. 092-07/2024EN
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Estudios del Observatorio/Observatorio Studies

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Estudios del Observatorio/Observatorio Studies. 092-07/2024EN
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ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN

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Estudios del Observatorio/Observatorio Studies. 092-07/2024EN
ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN

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Estudios del Observatorio/Observatorio Studies. 092-07/2024EN
ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN

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Estudios del Observatorio/Observatorio Studies. 092-07/2024EN
ISSN: 2688-2949 (online) 2688-2965 (print) doi: 10.15427/OR092-07/2024EN