The study of the teaching and learning of foreign languages in general, and English in particular, seemed to have been relegated to a secondary level among Spanish scholars, at least as regards the production of a comprehensive and detailed survey, and analysis, of the methods and approaches used by teachers in the arduous and often unnoticed task of providing learners of foreign languages with the necessary tools that they may need to understand those languages in the past, and to communicate both fluently and accurately at present. Conversely, applied linguists of various nationalities, notably British, American and Australian, have dedicated wholes books to provide an adequate description of the most significant methods as well as accounts of their personal experience in the classroom. Most of these manuals have been published over the past three decades, the reason being the importance that English has assumed in the world scene as an international language, almost as a lingua franca in many fields, to the extent that English has been described as the «the last jewel of the British crown» for the revenue it brings to the United Kingdom and other English-speaking countries.

Consequently, the Spanish teacher and/or researcher has had to rely solely on those manuals as their starting point when carrying out research on the teaching and learning processes of English, and of other languages too. The implications for the researcher are the rejection of the so-called Grammar-Translation or Traditional Method as the starting-point and a strong emphasis placed on the methods that appear in the United States or the United Kingdom leading to the establishment of the Communicative Method (or Approach, as is also referred to) in the 1970s. Thus, although excellent in many respects, many of these manuals provide us with a biased account of all the previous methods, even though a certain objectivity is assumed: Richards and Rodgers (1986) compare various methods so that the reader can make the appropriate choice even if one feels that the decision has already been taken; Larsen-Freeman (1986) reproduces authentic classes following each of the methods analysed and presents the reader a series of questions as regards the effectiveness of each method; Rivers (1968) and later Rivers & Temperley (1978) do not attempt to hide their dislike of certain methods and their preference for others. In all cases, the evolution seems to culminate in the Communicative Method, although other linguists underline what is described as the pendulum effect in the teaching of languages (Nunan 1991: 1-6), which points to the fact that the ultimate method has to be found.

In this scene, Spanish applied linguists have produced excellent research papers on the teaching of English, which either stress the importance of the Communicative Method or attempt to reform it taking into account factors such as age, motivation, purpose, groups, etc. usually starting from the rejection (or acceptance) of the Traditional Method and with reference to the evolution of the teaching of languages since the 1940s. Prof. Sánchez’s book offers a new tool to the teacher and/or researcher to carry out a systematic approach to the theory and practice of language teaching in the 1990s and beyond.

In Los métodos en la enseñanza de idiomas, Prof. Sánchez underlines the existing dilemma between theory and practice in the teaching of languages and goes on to establish
the clear connections between them to the extent that study and research on methodology is carried out within what is now known as Applied Linguistics, which has theory as its basic component, even though it differs from its near cousin Theoretical Linguistics in its attempt to put to practical use the theoretical knowledge that linguists have. Prof. Sánchez scrutinizes the elements that play a fundamental role in the teaching of languages, and extends the traditional view of three key factors, what to teach, how to teach it and where to teach it, to a more comprehensive series of factors which also include where the language is learned, why the students learn it and the students' ultimate purpose in learning a foreign language. The implications of considering all these factors in the teaching process will be of great importance, since the potential number of disciplines that may be necessary to analyze will be increased: Linguistics, Psychology, Sociology and Sociolinguistics, etc. Given such a wide spectrum of fields intervening in the teaching of languages, Prof. Sánchez abandons some of the myths and clichés affecting both the teacher and the student, and goes on to ascertain what should be understood by methodology. Once again, he is faced with an abundant range of definitions which he does not regard as satisfactory, and, taking into consideration all the elements aforementioned, provides the reader with the guidelines to understand his subsequent analysis of methods and approaches: the linguistic component, the necessary techniques to achieve the objectives and, perhaps the most slippery element, a theoretical base derived from a series of convictions as regards fields of action in the classroom.

From Chapter 2, and once he has established his objectives, Prof. Sánchez starts the historic description and detailed analysis of the methods used in the teaching of languages from the year 3000 BC, and his aim will be to study the evolution until reaching the 1990s in Chapter 10. And it is precisely this innovative approach to the description of languages the most outstanding feature of the book. Previous manuals have presented methods and approaches in isolation, even though they make clear connections among them and point out the pervading elements that each new method received from its predecessor. In the Los métodos en la enseñanza de idiomas, it is unnecessary to make connections since the author focuses on the historic evolution as such. Thus, in Chapter 2 he presents the difficulties encountered by the researcher who attempts to uproot the very origins of language teaching in ancient cultures (Persia, Egypt) since very little information remains about the procedures used in those days. The researcher can only infer what the scene may have been from the evidence gathered form Greek and, specially, Roman times. We are offered the view extended among the upper-classes in Rome, where families had Greek slaves who could instruct their children and teach them Greek. The importance of learning a second language did not disappear in the new European states of the Middle Ages, even if Latin ceased to exist as a national language. The author underlines the fact that, in spite of the new Romance languages and the difficulties to have access to written manuscripts, Latin was still considered a language of social distinction. At that time the Church had the knowledge and, therefore, the power to enlighten prospective language-learners. The habitual procedure consisted in memorizing long stretches of the classics, but Prof. Sánchez underlines the importance of attaining a certain command in the oral form too by means of exchanging words with the teacher: these dialogues, usually elicited through a series of questions, are connected with the method used to teach the Christian catechism, and are viewed as a clear antecedent of structuralism applied to language teaching, which will gain its momentum in the second half of the 20th century.

The connections between the teaching of Latin, which would eventually become a dead language, and that of the new European languages would become so close that the methodology used for centuries would be related to the study of the morphology, syntax, vo-
cubadary and translation of texts to the extent that, as the author points out, «ha supuesto un pesado lastre a lo largo de muchos siglos de enseñanza de idiomas» (p. 37). Nevertheless, the author stresses the fundamental role played by the appearance of formal and systematic grammars of Latin for the consolidation of the grammar-translation method as opposed to what must have been the teaching of living languages before the Middle Ages. Even during the formation of the various European states and empires, languages must have been taught to communicate rather than for scholarly purposes, since they lack social prestige (reserved for Latin) and there did not exist a formal description of the grammar of vulgar languages such as French or English (Nebrija’s grammar would be an erudite’s grammar rather than a language teaching method). Therefore, languages needed to be learnt to communicate (e.g. with the Spanish conquerors or with the French-speaking English functionaries).

The gradual importance acquired by European languages would eventually result in a systematic study of their grammatical rules, which would be understood as equivalent to a new methodology in the teaching of languages. Prof. Sánchez, a specialist in the history of teaching Spanish as a foreign language, underlines Miranda’s, and Oudin’s work on Spanish grammar as the model to be followed by other grammarians and language teachers in the centuries to come: «el procedimiento gramatical reafirmado por la obra de Oudin no es idéntico al que más tarde pasará a denominarse método tradicional. Para llegar a serlo le faltan, entre otros rasgos identificadores, los enunciados en forma de reglas, las listas de vocabulario y los ejercicios de traducción» (p. 47). The translation of texts from and into the target language would become an extended exercise which would help language learners improve the knowledge of the target language.

However, the establishment of the grammar-translation method does not impede the reformers of the Renaissance to attempt new approaches to language teaching and learning which will enhance the communicative component of any foreign language. Luis Vives, in the tradition of Erasmus of Rotterdam, will emphasize the outstanding value of language as communication as opposed to formal grammatical descriptions. The 16th and 17th centuries will witness a move towards the conversational component of the language and Prof. Sánchez provides remarkable evidence of the dialogue books of the period which would help the learner to attain a certain degree of what would be later described as competence within an approach reminiscent of the functional-notional method of the 20th century. The author also emphasizes the importance of these dialogue books in later centuries, and, contrary to the extended view, «el hecho de tratar el método conversacional o de diálogos en el siglo XVI y XVII no debe inducir a la creencia de que esta metodología está también limitada a esos siglos» (p. 56).

In Chapter 4, Prof. Sánchez explores a number of alternative approaches or techniques which had a limited influence in their period, although some of them can be regarded as obvious antecedents of 20th century methods. The author discusses whether double translation was a method or a technique before making a brief but illuminating reference to William Bathe’s lanua linguarum ..., published in 1611 by the University of Salamanca, where the Irishman taught Latin. Bathe distinguished between the «regular method» (or deductive in today’s terms) and the «irregular method» (or inductive, which Bathe considered more adequate to teach living languages) and introduced the possibility of a third option which combined both methods. Bathe’s book is presented in conjunction with Comenio’s work (widely studied by Prof. Sánchez), which conceived the learning of languages as a whole process commencing at an early age and for which Comenio designed an ambitious project rather than method, described as natural and direct, and aimed at the teaching of the vernacular languages.
This tendency to deprive language teaching methods of the preponderance of the grammatical component is shared by other thinkers and pedagogues, such as Locke or Pluche. The proponents of natural methods will emphasize the importance of inductive learning and of using the language from the early stages of the process together with the memorization of vocabulary. More radical is the method suggested by A. de Salazar, who acquired a reputation as a grammarian and linguist in 17th century France. Salazar is mentioned by Sánchez in connection with a «new» method which returned to classic Greece to underline the need to learn by walking and conversing in the target language in a Socratic fashion. Together with the above mentioned, Chapter 4 also includes specific reference to other methods used up to the 19th century, which vary in their inductive or deductive approach to language learning. Prof. Sánchez provides the reader with a complete description of the linguistic and pedagogical base as well as the type of task and aims of each method. This systematic view is perhaps one of the most outstanding features of his treatise, which gives it an overall coherence and makes it an excellent reference book.

Chapter 5 presents the readers the first official steps of the 18th century towards the introduction of foreign languages in European educational systems, from the Spanish Real Instituto Asturiano, which explicitly mentions the need to learn English and French, to the establishment of foreign language teaching in German secondary schools by the mid-19th century. Sánchez describes this century as el siglo de los métodos, since grammar-based methods coexist with the so-called natural methods. He states the importance of the former at a time when there was a lack of knowledgeable language teachers and, consequently, the practical aspects of a language were left aside. Grammar-based methods played a fundamental role in this interim stage and authors like Ahn and Ollendorff would become immensely popular among language teachers, since their methods were widely used in Europe and America well until the second half of the 20th century. Prof. Sánchez refers to the critical approach by the opponents to these methods and their manuals and suggests the need to achieve a less biased view: «En realidad han sido evaluados de manera demasiado peyorativa, especialmente porque el juicio que nos ha sido transmitido deriva de personas fuertemente influidas por los postulados de la metodología estructuralista» (p. 101). Thus, the language was taught by eliciting comparisons with the mother tongue, by presenting situations in which it was used and by offering short texts for translation where the students could practise the vocabulary and grammar structures introduced in each unit. Units were short in order to allow the learner to assimilate the information provided. Sánchez underlines the aspects which differ considerably from other traditional grammar-translation methods, notably the practical interactive use of the foreign language with the teacher and the fact that the description of grammatical rules is substituted by a technique through which sentences and phrases are presented, the students had to memorize them and finally they practise them in a conversation conducted by the teacher.

Although Ollendorff hinted the importance of using the spoken language (which, in turn, was highly criticized by grammarians like Sweet), the natural methods that appear in the 19th century focused on the interactive element in the learning process, and conversation in particular. Sánchez examines the main principles of natural methods in general, and goes on to analyse the most relevant ones, providing abundant examples and a comprehensive view of their features. His effort is aimed at striking the right balance between the innovations proposed by the teachers and pedagogues of the 19th century and the traditional techniques that they inherit from previous centuries, such the importance of speaking and listening, and the fact that learning a language is paralleled to a child's language acquisition processes: children do not learn grammatical rules or pronunciation; however, they managed to learn a language to a level which equals perfection.
Still, numerous and diverse are the approaches to a natural way of teaching languages. Sánchez stresses the role played by pedagogues and/or teachers such as Pestalozzi, Duftief, Prendergast and Rosenthal. Pestalozzi is presented as a model teacher who delighted his students with innovative techniques which render the learning process both pleasant and profitable. For this reason perhaps, the reader might miss explicit bibliographical references to this pedagogue who wrote a series of books in which his ideas and techniques as a teacher were presented, even if he did not leave a systematic treaty on how to teach. As Sánchez puts it: «Como profesor, Pestalozzi no tenía rival. su manera de llevar la clase hacía posible que transcurriesen las horas sin cansar a los alumnos» (p. 109).

More complex are the methods suggested by the other three pedagogues, and, as indicated by Prof. Sánchez, perhaps too demanding for some, since, contrary to other approaches, requires well-qualified teachers able to use the language fluently and correctly in the four skills, frequently without referring to any books, to encourage students to use it themselves. The most interesting of the three methods is Duftief's because it introduces many of the factors that will be taken into consideration in the 20th century and, perhaps for this reason, were not as widely accepted as might have been expected. As Sánchez states, «la complejidad del manual de Duftief torna a éste poco atractivo. No obstante, el sistema de Duftief es mucho más rico, variado y motivador que el de Ollendorf» (p. 113). Among the factors emphasized by the three are: the interactive use of the language; the learning process occurs inductively rather than deductively; the oral skills are presented in a first stage, the language should be learnt to be used rather than to discuss about it (although explanations are not forbidden; quite the opposite, they can be of great help to the learner); the use of the foreign language in the classroom; repetition drills to exercise given difficult points.

In the last two sections of this chapter the author examines the new techniques presented by the German Reformers and Gouin’s method based on series of sentences. Both take the aforementioned aspects another step away from the traditional methods in that they stress the importance of learning living languages rather classical ones as well as the importance of removing the central role that grammar had played in other methods, and the Reformers claim that the learner must think in the language rather than translate from the language. By presenting the reader with all the reforms, ideas, techniques and approaches in the 19th century, Prof. Sánchez rightly underlines the fact that the expectations for a truly reformed method at the turn of the century will not be met and, as he starts Chapter 6, the reader encounters the traditional method again.

Consequently, this chapter presents once again the pendulum effect in the teaching of languages, explicit here in the swing between the traditional method and the direct method. The author follows the evolution of the grammatical methods of the past to reach the modern age with few innovations, namely the fact that languages are taught in the understanding that they will serve for communication. However, communication is restricted to certain contexts, certain age and social groups and certain activities. In the detailed, and critical, analysis presented in pp. 136-141, we are faced with all the constraints that this system imposes on the learner: the hierarchical organization of the classroom where the teacher represents authority and the source of undisputed knowledge, the establishment of a strict syllabus which emphasizes the need to teach the grammatical rules deductively before the students may attempt to use the language, the passive role of the learners, the use of translation activities to exercise rules and vocabulary, the critical attitude towards mistakes and the urge to correct students... Thus, the reader, who has already become familiar with the author’s dislike of this method or series of methods characterized by memorization, deductive teaching and learning of grammar and vocabulary, and li-
miter space for the language as oral communication, can now ascertain Sánchez’s reasons to reject a method which has become outdated in view of the new international scene where languages are needed to establish relationships of various types rather than to develop intellectual faculties or satisfy the learner’s admiration for a particular culture.

The direct method represented almost the only alternative to the traditional method in the first half of the 20th century. Proposed and used by Heness and Sauveur, and later by Berlitz, who took all the credit for its application in the classroom through a series of manuals and guides for a great range of languages, the direct method is not, as the author underlines, new. Quite the contrary, Berlitz receives the tradition of the natural method and adapts it to his own tastes and interests to the extent that his schools became immensely popular. As with the natural method, Berlitz focuses on the spoken language. He also rejects the use of translation tasks, grammatical rules must be learned inductively, and native speakers are preferred as teachers. This aspect is worth mentioning because the debate is still present in many minds, particularly since the advent of the communicative approach. Sánchez refers to the shortcomings of untrained native teachers, which may remind the modern reader of many a private English school at the turn of the 20th century: ‘Pero tenía la contrapartida de que los profesores solían ser siempre jóvenes, poco o nada formados en el método a desarrollar, gentes “de paso” muy frecuentemente, o gentes que se dedicaban a la enseñanza para sobrevivir mientras sus objetivos principales se centraban en otras áreas’ (p. 143).

The central years of the 20th century will see a radical change in the approach to foreign language teaching. The author links this change to two reasons: on the one hand the gradual academic interest in this discipline, which will eventually result in adopting the label «scientific», as Applied Linguistics becomes a subject studied by scholars in Western universities, and, on the other hand, the outbreak of the Second World War, which will prompt the appearance of the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), whose objective was to obtain proficient speakers of the language so that American soldiers could go unnoticed amongst native speakers. These factors will consolidate the role played by the recently-emerged researchers into this field, called applied linguists, as they aim at bridging the existing gap between theoretical linguists and foreign and second language students. These changes will affect the organization of language syllabuses, methods and materials. Its clear outward signs are the emergence of an abundant range of materials, which will be of great help to the students to the extent that the traditional teacher can be substituted by the language laboratory. Sánchez describes this period as being characterized by a «culto a los materiales y a su elaboración» (p. 155) perhaps because the repetitive component of the new Audio-lingual and Situational Methods, together with the technological advances of the period, makes it ideal to use audio-players, overhead projectors and slide projectors. All these factors gave way to a golden age for language teachers since, as Sánchez points out: «Nunca hasta entonces los profesores de idiomas habían estado tan concienciados sobre su profesión, ni habían trabajado tanto y con tanto entusiasmo para hacer bien y eficazmente su trabajo» (p. 157).

These two methods, plus a third one developed in France under the abbreviations SGAV, coincided in their rejection of grammatical explanations and the use of translation exercises, the need to correct the mistakes made by the learners, the importance of repeating structures in context, the use of oral materials and the interactive nature of the class. The author emphasizes the systematic way in which the three methods structured their syllabuses as opposed to the spontaneity of older manuals and approaches, and, above all, their structural base related to Skinner’s psychological theories, adapted to the linguistic sphere and developed in Verbal Behaviour (1957), and later openly criticized by Chomsky.
in *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965). This chapter also includes an interest discussion on Richards and Rodgers’ suggestion that the situational method preceded the audio-lingual method (1986: 31 ff) and Germain’s attempt to relate the French SGAV method to the direct method (1993). The author analyses both views and comes to the conclusion that both British and French linguists try to remain at a distance from the theories and methods developed by American linguists. Sánchez establishes connections between the situational method and British linguists’ theories of language, but emphasizes the fact that textbooks were basically traditional in their format until the 1970s, whereas the SGAV method, although influenced by the use of audiovisual material in the direct method, has a clear structural base (the learner has to listen and repeat the sentences until full understanding and correct pronunciation is reached).

The author starts Chapter 8 by making reference to the radical changes introduced in the educational systems in the West after the establishment of the democratic states as we know them today. This political change will also affect students’ and teachers’ roles in the classroom to the extent that we will soon witness the appearance of what is now described as the *student-centred classroom* and *learner-based teaching* (Campbell & Kryszenwaska 1992: 5-11). This new approach to language teaching is prompted both by political changes and the leading role played by European institutions in their attempt to homogenize language teaching in Europe, and by linguists, who have now come to the forefront by suggesting and considering practical applications susceptible of being used in the classroom. The author also mentions the shift from structuralism to generativist grammar, although generativists will find the references to Chomsky’s theories scarce. Sánchez may follow Chomsky’s own doubts about the application of his theories to language learning (1987), which had already been pointed out by other applied linguists (Van Els et al. 1984: 20). In fact, the first proponents of the new approach, such as Halliday, had grown in the structuralist tradition, although they would soon understand the need to base language teaching not on situations adapted to suit structures and vocabulary, but quite the opposite. If language was to be understood as communication, then language teaching should aim at creating the authentic contexts in which real language was used. In this sense, the author underlines the importance of Van Ek and Wilkins’ work for the Council of Europe, through which new aims were established: a series of communicative notions, a series of functions within communicative situations, and a series of structures and the lexicon used in those situations. The author quotes Van Ek in his attempt to make clear that these are the aims rather than a method to teach languages, but the implications for the language teacher will soon be developed, although the author remarks that at that stage «aún falta por desarrollar el cómo llevar a la práctica los principios enunciados y los materiales presentados en los programas-nacionales funcionales» (p. 193).

Sánchez emphasizes the role of a new discipline, *Pragmatics*, which would mark the development of the new methodology: «La complejidad lingüística solo es observable en el *uso de la lengua*, no en la formalización teórica abstracta de la realidad (...) Tanto el *uso* lingüístico como el *habla* tienen un único punto de referencia (...): el acto de comunicación mediante un sistema lingüístico concreto (...) de ahí que la metodología comunicativa quede totalmente integrada dentro del *paradigma de la pragmática*» (p. 196). Once the author has established the basis for the new approach, he underlines the need to strike the right balance in order to avoid any exclusions: all the linguistic and paralinguistic components receive the attention required, although some be prioritized. Thus, the communicative method emphasizes communication (either oral or written), the context, the relationship between the speakers, the reasons why they communicate and the role of grammar as communication, not as an objective.
Consequently, this method includes warm-up activities to provide the appropriate contexts for the tasks, oral and written comprehension must be prepared to communicate with the learner, exercises are aimed at consolidating vocabulary or structures by creating the situations where they can be used (rather than by using drills), grammatical explanations are not banned but must be restricted to help students with communicative functions, learners must work in groups or pairs in interactive activities... Sánchez concludes this chapter with a reference to the flexibility of the method, since prohibitions do not exist and the potential range of activities at the teacher’s disposal is enormous: «La metodología comunicativa se diferencia de los métodos habituales en un hecho sobresaliente: abunda poco en restricciones y prohibiciones» (p. 212).

In Chapter 9, Sánchez presents a group of methods that have never been fully integrated into mainstream educational systems. The author points out that these unconventional methods are not based on the language but on other non-linguistic features of the human being, such as feelings, emotions, social relationships, intellectual qualities, etc. which are specific to humans. For this reason, these methods are defined as ‘humanistic’, a label with which other linguists may not fully agree. However, and although other authors study them individually (Richards & Rodgers 1986; Larsen-Freeman 1986), Sánchez finds and clearly describes the characteristics that all of them share. Humanistic methods are not exclusive to the 20th century, although the most remarkable four (the Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response and Community Language Learning) appear in this century in an attempt to facilitate language learning by putting linguistic theories aside and considering other elements which influence the learner’s personality and mind. Thus, various psychological theories play a fundamental role in the techniques used to promote language learning, although their achievements are anything but incontestable. Sánchez is particularly critical of Gattegno’s Silent Way, as he remarks on the contradictions of his techniques (in some respects Gattegno’s method is based on structuralist theories whereas in other cases he seems to oppose them, p. 232): «Lo que se aprecia como realmente distintivo y novedoso son algunas de las técnicas utilizadas en clase. En cuanto al resto (...) Gattegno no hace sino recopilar elementos ya existentes en otros enfoques» (p. 238).

Despite these critical remarks on some of the techniques of humanistic methods, the author also underlines the importance of many aspects which were later adopted by the Communicative Method such as the emphasis placed on the communicative component of language, the fact that the learner was treated as a human being with certain needs that had to be taken into consideration, the attempt to improve on the teacher-student relationship, the need to use interactive activities and exercises...

To close his treaty on the history and evolution of language teaching methods, Prof. Sánchez includes a final chapter, El método integral, in which he anticipates what, for some, may sound as a heresy: the eventual disappearance of the Communicative Method, or rather its gradual substitution by another method, because as he points out: «la falta de adecuación de un método no es sino reflejo de que se dan elementos en el proceso docente y discente que ya no responden a las necesidades del aula» (p. 249). The author suggests not a totally new method, but one which derives from the experience provided over the past twenty-five years by the Communicate Method. This new method should take into consideration aspects such as the communicative value of language, which occurs between two or more speakers or writers, the grammar of the target language as well as the context and the culture in which communication takes place. Sánchez also focuses on the relevance of other social and psychological elements and certain factors such as age, the learner’s needs, motivation, etc., all of which can affect the learning process. In this sense, the author remarks: «El método integral ha de situarse dentro de un corriente integrado-
ra» (p. 259) and, consequently, would not exclude exercises or techniques on which previous methods may claim to have exclusive rights. Sánchez makes clear that he does not propose an eclectic method, but rather one which takes into consideration all the complex factors that intervene in the learning process.

Los métodos en la enseñanza de idiomas is a comprehensive and authoritative treaty on the history and evolution of methods in the teaching of languages. The author does not only present them in chronological order, but he successfully puts them in perspective and analyzes their origins and characteristics systematically. And, although some may find the references to theoretical linguistics scant, others will consider this as an asset rather than a drawback, which will undoubtedly help to establish it as a reference book for future language teachers and an invaluable starting-point for postgraduate students and researchers with a view to pursue their academic interests in Applied Linguistics to language teaching.

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