REVIEWS


The Centro de Lingüística Aplicada in Santiago de Cuba has a long academic tradition in Hispanic Studies, Lexicography and Computational Linguistics. It suffices to mention some of their most outstanding publications, such as the *Diccionario Escolar Computarizado* (1994), the *Diccionario Escolar Ilustrado* (1998), the *Diccionario Ortográfico del Español* (1999, in collaboration with the Istituto per i Circuiti Elettronici, CNR, Italy) or the *Diccionario Básico Escolar Caribeño* (2005).

The *Diccionario Básico Escolar* (DBE) is an outstanding example of the kind of research on pedagogical lexicography that is being carried out at this research centre. Designed as a teaching tool, the DBE intends to cater for the needs of primary and secondary school pupils alike. For this reason, the lemmas and the words used in examples and definitions have been selected from a core, interest-centred vocabulary which has been extracted from the *Léxico Activo Funcional del Escolar Cubano*, a selection of Cuban popular books and children’s literature, as well as relevant Cuban newspapers such as *Granma*, *Juventud Rebelde* and *Trabajadores*.

‘Education’ is a key concept in this dictionary — not only in the academic sense, but also in a social and even political sense, as stated in the Preface. Not in vain, the DBE is dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the attacks on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Barracks by Cuban revolutionaries in 1953.

Estamos seguros de que el *Diccionario Básico Escolar* constituirá un instrumento de carácter social y educativo, porque los alumnos del segundo ciclo del nivel primario, secundaria básica y preuniversitario podrán contar con una obra que les ayudará en su formación lingüística, cultural, científica, ética y patriótica.

This semasiological dictionary claims to contain over 8,000 entries and 20,000 senses (p. ix) of general and specialised terms for passive and active usage of the language. There is a wealth of lemmas related to elementary and middle school grades: *educar*, *educador*, *claustr*, *colegio*, *escuela*, *maestro*, *pizarra*, *pupitre*, etc., as well as to the various subjects taught: mathematics (*ecuación*, *integral*, *multiplicación*, *valor*), geometry (*bisección*, *cuerpo*, *equiláter*, *obtuso*, *prisma*), biology (*aeróbio*, *guao*, *haz*, *mejorana*, *vascular*), zoology (*boa*, *crisálida*, *garza*, *mosquito*), linguistics (*bislabo*, *interjección*, *objeto*, *preposición*, *yuxtaposición*, *vibrante*), literature (*epopeya*, *soneto*, *vate*), chemistry (*base*, *I* — Iodine symbol), architecture (*capitel*, *fuste*), computing (*etiqueta*, *programa*) ... Most terms pertaining to restricted registers are conveniently marked by means of abbreviations within the entries: ‘Mat.’ (mathematics), ‘Geom.’ (geometry), ‘Gram.’ (grammar), ‘Ling.’ (linguistics), ‘Quim.’ (chemistry), ‘Dep.’ (sports), ‘Electr.’ (electricity), ‘Arq.’ (architecture), ‘Med.’ (medicine), ‘Der.’ (law) etc., or, else, there are clear indications within the corresponding entries. Stylistic and usage marks in the microstructure indicate levels of informality: colloquial (‘coloq.’, ‘pop.’), familiar (‘fam.’) and derogatory (‘despect.’). All diasystematic tags, as well as the grammatical marks, belong to the list of abbreviations in the Front Matter (p. ix).

Anglicisms currently used in Cuban Spanish are also included: unchanged (*net*, *internet*), adapted as to their orthography (*blümer*, *zíper*) or, most commonly, formally unchanged but adapted in their pronunciation. For example, the following anglicisms,
marked as *anglic.*, appear unchanged in their written form but with a non-standard, hispanised pronunciation: *cake* is phonetically represented as [kæːk], *iceberg* is pronounced as [aɪsber], *short* as [ʃɔːr], *show* as [ʃəʊ]. In some cases, pronunciation variants are offered, as in the case of *jacket* (‘[yaˈkɛt]’ and *jeep*4 (‘[jɪp o ˈjɪp]’) (sic). Orthographical variants are occasionally provided within the same lemma, either in the case of alternative forms of anglicisms (e.g. ‘*pullover o pólver*’), or general words (‘*cactus sm. invar. o cacto sm.*’; *jabado, a o jabao, jaba*; ‘*quízás o quizá*’) and words in Spanish of Amerindian or other foreign origin (e.g. ‘guáctica o guásima’, ‘*kimono o kímono*’, ‘*yoruba o yorúba*’, ‘*yudo o judo*’, ‘walkiria o valquiria*’).

Special attention has been paid in the nomenclature to the Caribbean varieties, with special reference to Cuban Spanish.5 Cubanisms are diasystematically marked as *cub.* (‘cubanisms’): *cachuambé, chicharrita, chatino, federada, guataeca, jaba, yarey, zunzún* (or *zunzuncito*). However, the phrase ‘En Cuba’, is a common opening in the definition of Cuban words not formally marked as such, e.g. *gandul, guajiro, guariao, guisaso, integrado, jamonada, libreta* (second sense), *macao, maquinista, marcedor, matul, mosaico* (second sense), *murumaca, paquete* (third sense), *pedraplén*, etc.6 Words from American (Caribbean mostly) varieties currently used in Cuba are marked as ‘amer.’ (e.g. *corojo, fajazón*), ‘cub. and amer.’ (feriado, ferromozo, guacamayo, guataca), but also by means of phrases like ‘En Cuba y Puerto Rico’ (panetela, yagua); ‘En las Antillas’ (guagua, guanaco); ‘Voz caribe’ (guayo), ‘En América’ (jíbaro, panqué), (‘voz americana’) (caguayo), and so forth. It is worth pointing out that, remarkably, Cuban cultural and place derived words (e.g. abakúa, garapinta, manzanillero, santiaguero, zonzo) are not indicated as such, and neither are American words with characteristic feminine suffixes, like *gritería* (Spain: *griterio*) and *zapatera* (Spain: *zapatero*).

An outstanding feature of the *DBE* macrostructure is the inclusion of a ‘mini pictorial dictionary’ in the middle of the dictionary, i.e. a series of illustrations that contain numbered drawings and their corresponding denominations for invertebrate and vertebrate animals, minerals, building tools and materials, flowers, the vegetable kingdom, musical instruments, plastic arts, dramatic arts and cinema, information and communication devices, clothing, the school, the hospital, means of transport, the earth’s geographical features and the cosmos.

The pedagogical orientation of the *DBE* can also be seen in the 79 model verb patterns included in a forty-six page appendix at the end, together with clear indications as to orthographical rules for Spanish accents and syllable structure. All verbs are grammatically classified as transitive (‘vtr.’), intransitive (‘vintr.’), pronominal (‘vpr.’), defective (‘vdefect.’), impersonal (‘vimpers.’), and further cross-referenced to their corresponding verb pattern within the entry, for example, *tornar* belongs to pattern 4, whereas *criar* belongs to pattern 22. All entries for verbs provide their corresponding past participle form at the end.

**disminuir** vtr. (65) Acortar, reducir o reducirse la extensión, intensidad o número de algo. *Al final del trayecto el chofer disminuyó la velocidad.*

dis-mi-nuir; disminuido (p.p.)

Grammatical categories and further subcategorizations are clearly indicated by means of abbreviations: masculine (‘sm.’) and feminine substantives (‘sf.’); adjective (‘adj.’), indefinite adjectives (‘adj. indef.’), possessive adjectives (‘adj. poses.’); interjection (‘interj.’); adverb (‘adv.’), interrogative adverbs (‘adv. interrog.’), adverbs of manner (‘adv. de modo’), adverbs of place (‘adv. l.’), adverbs of time (‘adv. t.’), adverbs to express doubt (‘adv. interrog.’) and affirmation (‘adv. a.’); conjunction (‘conj.’); preposition (‘prep.’); pronoun (‘pro.’), personal pronoun (‘pron. pers.’),
relative pronoun (‘pron. relat.’), interrogative pronoun (‘pron. interrog.’), indefinite
pronoun (‘pron. indef.’), exclamative pronoun (‘pro. excl.’), demonstrative pronoun
(‘pron. demos.’) and possessive pronoun (‘pron. poses.’). At the end of entries,
lemmas are split into syllables, and synonyms (‘SIN.’), antonyms (‘ANT.’) and other
related terms (‘af.’, abbreviation of afín, ‘related word’) are given as appropriate:

gallardo, a adj. 1. Que tiene buena presencia y se mueve con mucha elegancia.
Mi bandera es gallarda y hermosa. SIN. apuesto, atractivo, bizarro. ANT. feo,
desgarbado. 2. Valiente y bueno con los demás. Luis es muy gallardo, defendió a su
amigo públicamente. SIN. bizarro, valeroso, bravo. ANT. cobarde, vil.

gal-lar-do, a; gallardos, as (pl.).

In the case of substantives, plural forms (‘pl.’), augmentatives (‘aum.’) and
diminutives (‘dim.’) are also indicated at the end of the entry.7 It should be mentioned,
though, that the selection of diminutives and augmentative affixes appears somewhat
arbitrary: for example, under the entry for barriga there is only one diminutive form
(barriguita) from a range of alternative forms (barriguilla, barriguica, barriguina), and,
similarly, only one augmentative (barrigona) from several possibilities (barrigota,
barrigaza) has been selected.

fiera sf. 1. Animal salvaje carnívoro de dientes afilados y garras, que es muy
agresivo. El jaguar es una fiera muy peligrosa. 2. fig. Persona de carácter violento y
agresivo. Cuando Leandro se molesta, se convierte en una fiera. SIN. salvaje, bestia.

fie-ra; fieras (pl.); fierecita fierecilla (dim.)

barriga sf. Vientre, parte del cuerpo correspondiente al abdomen. La vaca preñada
tiene una gran barriga.

ba-rri-ga; barrigas (pl.); barriguita (dim.); barrigona (aum.)

Different senses of polysemous words are numbered within the entry and figurative
senses are clearly indicated through a diasyntematic tag (‘fig.’) or an abbreviated phrase
(‘por ext.’, abbreviation of por extension, ‘by extension’). Homographs and homonyms,
however, are included by means of different entries (see, for example, the two entries for
calabozo). Definitions are written in a clear, simplified Spanish, suitable for upper
elementary and junior high students. It is little wonder that encyclopaedic definitions are
particularly abundant in the DBE: abeja, caimán, calamar, canguro, halcón, guitarra,
iguana, lagartija, lagarto, lámpara, langosta, larva, murciélago, musica, tallo, tamal,
tamarindo, víbora, zeolita, etc. For the sake of clarity, there are plenty of illustrative
examples for each entry. It should be noted, though, that some of the words used in the
examples do not belong to the nomenclature: for example, the word cóctel is used in an
example for homenajeado but is not defined within the dictionary.

Phraseological units belong to the microstructure of the DBE. They are highlighted
in round, bold typography and clearly marked with various tags for phraseologisms
(‘fras.’), proverbs (‘ref.’) and idioms functionally equivalent to grammatical categories
(‘loc. adj.’, ‘loc. adv.’, ‘loc. conj.’, ‘loc. nom.’, ‘loc. prepos.’ and ‘loc. verb.’). To illustrate
the rich gamut of phraseological units included in the dictionary, it suffices to
mention the number of idioms within the entry for palabra: malas palabras, ser (alg.)
de pocas palabras, cruzar palabras, medir las palabras, palabra por palabra, no tener
palabras, dejar (a alg.) con la palabra en la boca, en una/pocas palabras, decir (alg.) la
última palabra, ser (algo) palabras mayores, pedir la palabra, dar la palabra, palabra
de honor, persona de palabra, faltar a la palabra and no tener palabra. Polysemous
units are provided with numbered senses within the corresponding entries (cf. encogerse de hombros and seguir los pasos).

Diatopically restricted phraseological units are systematically indicated in the DBE. For instance, base de taxi/omnibus appears as ‘loc. nom. cub.’ (‘Cuban nominal idiom’) under the entry for base. Some diatopical restrictions marked as cubanisms or americanisms do not qualify for inclusion: the idiom no dar pie con bola (listed under dar) is not restricted to Cuba; in fact, it is an extremely frequent idiom in Peninsular Spanish. On the contrary, some Cuban phraseological units, unknown in the Peninsular variety, are not diatopically marked at all, such as tener la pata caliente, ley de fuga or the proverb El que nace para medio y su destino es fatal, cuando llega a real y medio, se le pierde el real, to name but a few.

Definitions and specially examples in the DBE are a vehicle for the transmission of cultural, social, ideological and political values. In the first place, the dictionary contains abundant examples illustrating secular Cuban culture and history. For instance, under the entry for the noun virgen (‘virgin’), fifth sense (‘Virgin Mary’), there appears an example that contains a reference to Our Lady of the Charity of El Cobre Sanctuary9, Cuba’s most sacred pilgrimage site: “Hilda le llevó flores a la Virgen del Cobre”. Place names and names given to the people from different Cuban regions and places are provided within the entries, either as lemmas or as examples: cf. manzanillero, santiaguero, Holguín (in an example for octavo), Santiago de Cuba (in an example for intermedio), Cayo Gramma (in an example for lancha), etc.

It should be borne in mind that the Cuban revolution has greatly affected Cuban culture. Consequently, there are numerous references to the 1959 Revolution and early Cuban revolutionaries. The examples for idioms obras completas (under obra, second sense) and autor intelectual (under intelectual, first sense) make direct reference to José Martí10, an important literary figure who founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party, which fought the War of Independence against Spain; cf. “Las Obras Completas de José Martí constan de 28 tomos” and “José Martí fue el autor intelectual del histórico asalto al cuartel Moncada”. In the same vein, the example for yate contains a reference to Fidel Castro’s early revolutionary activities: “En el yate Gramma, viajó Fidel Castro a Cuba con sus valientes expedicionarios”. Similarly, an example for ideal (sense four) makes reference to Cuban mambises: “El ideal de los mambises era la libertad de Cuba”. The ideological bias can be further seen when comparing the definitions of mambi in the DBE (‘Cuban revolutionary patriot’11) and in the Diccionario de la lengua española, DRAE (‘Cuban and Dominican rebel’).

**mambi**, sa adj. y s. Patriota cubano que se alzó en la manigua y luchó contra el dominio colonial español. [DBE]

**mambi o mambis**, 1. m. En las guerras de independencia de Santo Domingo y Cuba en el siglo XIX, insurrecto contra España. [DRAE]

Ideology-loaded examples are scattered through the DBE (cf. ideología, insurreccional, capitalismo, criminal or comunismo, to name but a handful). Within the entry for contrarrevolucionario there is an outstanding illustration of the Cuban cry “We shall see who is more resistant!”12: “Muchos contrarrevolucionarios han tratado en vano de destruir la obra social y política de la Revolución Cubana”.13 And, finally, we would like to single out a naïve, yet ‘perlocutionary’ wink at the USA people:

**yanqui** adj. y s. Se llama así a los habitantes de Estados Unidos. El pueblo yanqui es noble y trabajador.14 (adj.). Los yanquis, obligados por sus gobernantes, han invadido otros países del mundo.15 (s.).
The revolutionary cause has become thoroughly embedded in Cuban culture as Cubans greatly appreciate the social benefits of the 1959 Revolution, especially in the areas of education and health care. The *DBE* is, thus, of paramount importance to fully understand past and present-day Cuba. In its future electronic version, a short-term joint venture by the University of the Basque Country and the Cuban Centre for Applied Linguistics, the *DBE* will prove an invaluable on-line tool for both users and researchers of Cuban, Caribbean and other American varieties of Spanish as a cross-national and international language.

**Notes**

1. The *Léxico Activo Funcional del Escolar Cubano* results from a computerised, statistics analysis of some 7,000 oral and written texts produced by Cuban primary school pupils. See Ruiz Miyares (1994) for an accurate account of this 700,000 word corpus-based project.

2. *Granma* is also the name of the Official Newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party.

3. ‘We are sure that the *Diccionario Básico Escolar* will be a social and educational tool for upper elementary and junior high students. This reference work will help them in their linguistic, cultural, scientific, ethic and patriotic education.’ (Our translation, USA grade equivalents have been used).

4. *Jeep* is not marked as *anglic.*, but the definition says “Voz inglesa con que se denomina...” [*English word used to denominate...*].

5. Cuban Spanish is categorized as a variety of Caribbean Spanish, which according to Otheguy, García and Roca (2000) includes the three Antillean islands as well as the coastal areas of Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela.

6. Other alternative expressions can also be found, such as “Nombre que en Cuba denomina...” under the entry for *palenque*.

7. Some adjective and adverb entries include augmentatives and diminutives as well.

8. It remains unclear what criteria have been used to distinguish between verbal idioms (*loc. verb.*) and phraseologisms (*fras.*).

9. The Basílica de Nuestra Señora del Cobre is situated at 20 km northwest of Santiago de Cuba. The first hermitage was erected in 1608, two years after the wooden image of the Virgin was found floating on the Bahía de Nipe and brought to the copper mine at El Cobre. A century later, a larger sanctuary was built. At the request of the veterans of the War of Independence, Our Lady of Charity was declared the patroness of Cuba by Pope Benedict XV in 1916. The present shrine opened in 1927. Pope Paul VI raised her sanctuary to a basilica in 1977. The image of Our Lady of Charity was first solemnly crowned in the Eucharistic Congress at Santiago de Cuba in 1936 and again later on, in 1998, by Pope John Paul II.

10. José Martí was one of the early Cuban revolutionaries, like Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, Calixto García, Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo.

11. Other differences affect the grammatical forms and functions of the defined lemma. According to the *DBE*, *mambí* can be both an adjective or a noun. In the second case, it admits both singular and plural masculine (*mambi*, *mambises*) and feminine forms (*mambisa*, *mambisas*). The *DRAE* includes *mambí* only as a masculine noun with an orthographical variant (*mambis*).

‘Many counterrevolutionaries have tried in vain to destroy the social and political achievements of the Cuban Revolution’. (Our translation).

‘North Americans are noble and hard-working people’. (Our translation).

‘Forced by their Government, North Americans have invaded other countries’. (Our translation).

References


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In this study the author describes an experiment in which a number of Hong Kong learners of English used bilingualised dictionaries while reading an English text. The subjects had to think aloud while trying to understand the text. The book contains a review of the literature on reference needs and skills, on bilingualised dictionaries and on think-aloud procedures, as well as a detailed description of the methodology followed and a discussion of the results of the experiment. There were four research questions:

(1) How can we analyze and describe look-up strategies in the bilingualised learner’s dictionary?

(2) What look-up strategies do students use when they are reading and need to find the meaning of a target word in a bilingualised English-Chinese learner’s dictionary?

(3) To what extent do different look-up strategies make use of the bilingualised entries in the English-Chinese dictionary?

(4) To what extent are look-up strategy patterns specific to individual students or are there common patterns among the students? (p. 2)

I must say that the literature review, as far as dictionaries and dictionary use are concerned, is based on somewhat outdated material: most books and papers date from the eighties; moreover, there is no discussion of the results obtained until then. Some of the arguments that are listed against the use of monolingual dictionaries (p. 18) are frankly odd, e.g. number 5: ‘Even when restricted defining vocabulary