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Re-thinking balanced bilingualism

The impact of globalization in Catalonia*

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Traditionally, Catalonia is seen as a successful example of language revitalization, through the achievement and maintenance of a fairly stable Castilian/Catalan bilingualism for the last thirty years or so. Recently, however, Catalonia has experienced significant immigration in the context of globalization. The autonomous government is now supporting an agenda in which Catalan alone is presented as the national language, the language of convergence, while Castilian, despite its long historical presence in the region, is portrayed as one of three hundred languages spoken there today. We examine how this policy interacts with everyday linguistic realities and with a preservationist agenda. Catalan speakers are divided between those who feel liberated from the imposition of Spanish identity and culture and those who fear an exclusivist nationalism which they feel would be anachronistic in the globalized world of today. Spanish speakers, in turn, feel threatened and targeted. New immigrants, coming from all corners of the world, are caught in a climate in which official language policies hardly reflect their own needs. Linguistic policies have to be re-thought to tend to the needs of immigrants while also ensuring the survival of Catalan.

Keywords: language policy, bilingualism, Catalan, Spanish, globalization, migration, linguistic attitudes, language contact, minority languages, language shift, education

The autonomous region of Catalonia is today seen by many as one of the most successful examples of language policy application over the past three decades (Woolard 1989, Fishman 1991, Commission Européenne 1996, Williams 2008). After centuries of political developments that left Catalan in a dangerously disadvantageous position with respect to Spanish, Catalonia has managed — through clear-cut language policies directed at the education system and through regulation of language use in the public space — to revitalize Catalan as a language that is understood, spoken, read and written widely by its inhabitants (CRUSCAT-IEC 2007).¹

Against this backdrop, we examine the impact of immigration since the mid-1990s on the linguistic situation of Catalonia. With the presence of a multitude of languages (it is estimated that today between two and three hundred different languages are spoken in Catalonia),² the new demographic situation breaks the traditional dichotomy between Catalan and Castilian that has dominated language policy making over the past decades. Clearly, new immigrants' linguistic choices will significantly influence the fate and future of Catalan as a minority language in Europe. We argue that, together with the increasing presence of English all over Europe, the new immigration asks for a fundamental re-thinking of conventional language revitalization policies if Catalan is to survive the new sociolinguistic pressures (cf. Strubell 2001, Comajoan 2004, Junyent 2005, Bastardas 2007). This paper reports on aspects of a qualitative ethnographic study of language attitudes in Barcelona conducted in the summer of 2007 that included interviews with both native Catalans and a variety of immigrants who had lived less than ten years in the region. While our data are derived from a limited pilot study, we found that, together with the observations accumulated by examination of the literature, and our own witnessing of media and political discourse, the study was worth reporting in the present preliminary form.

Historical context

The sociolinguistic situation of Catalonia can only be fully understood in the light of its political history (Turell 2001). The complete official linguistic map of Catalan includes Catalonia, Valencia, and the Balearic and Pitius Islands, in the political territory of Spain (Idescat 2003, Acadèmica Valenciana 2004); a narrow fringe in France (Idescat 2004, Gandou Saquer 2006); the Italian town of Alghero, in north-western Sardinia (Idescat 2004); and the independent country of Andorra, where Catalan is the only official state language (Torres 2004; Sorolla Vidal, *in press*). Throughout its modern history, Catalonia experienced varying degrees of political independence, most times ending up under French and Spanish rule, but also enjoying brief periods of self-government. On the one hand, Catalonia was economically prosperous and culturally rich, giving rise to a long tradition of bourgeois, republican and anarchist movements that fueled a strong Catalan desire for nationhood (McRoberts 2001, Pujolar 2000). On the other hand, Catalonia's pursuit of national status resulted in continuous confrontations with the nation-states aiming to control its territory — particularly France and Spain. The last of those conflicts was the Spanish Civil War, from 1936 to 1939, which culminated in the abolition of the last Catalan autonomous government, as well as all economic and cultural institutions, and the imposition of dictatorial Spanish rule under General

Francisco Franco. Thousands of Catalan civilians, including many politicians and intellectuals, were either executed or forced into exile, leaving a void in the Catalan population that was soon filled by Castilians. Many of the surviving members of the Catalan elite continued to organize political and cultural activities from exile, although, lacking the support of the international community, they could not restore Catalan sovereignty (McRoberts 2001, Pi-Sunyer 2006). While some of these exiled Catalans never returned permanently even after the end of dictatorship, many returned in glory after Franco's death and went on to occupy important positions in politics or society.

During the Franco era (1939–1975), perceived “regional *dialects*” such as Catalan, Basque and Galician, were explicitly banned from most public spaces, including state administration, education, media, and artistic life. Resistance was active for some years, but widespread political imprisonments and executions by the regime quickly put an end to any organized revolt. In the 1960s Spain started to modernize its agriculture and expand its industry and the resulting economic prosperity allowed for the emergence of mass tourism. Catalonia was at the receiving end of immigration of both national workers and tourists, and the presence of Castilian speakers on Catalan soil rose quickly. This was a welcome effect for the Franco government, which saw the dilution of the Catalan population as a way to control the so-called “Catalan problem”. Working-class immigrants came from poorer and less developed parts of Spain, especially Andalucía and Extremadura, in the south, and Galicia, in the northwest. They were, for the most part, monolingual in Castilian (although some spoke Galician), and remained that way, since there was no public or educational pressure to become otherwise. Catalans, on the other hand, already had, for the most part, competence in both Catalan and Castilian, and through the presence of Castilian in the street, schools, administration and work spaces, as well as the television and the other media, they simply expanded their knowledge of Castilian to the colloquial sphere (Bastardas 1990). In-migration from Spain peaked in 1975 and resulted in a profound transformation of the major cities in Catalonia, most notably Barcelona. There was indeed relatively little in-migration between the late 1970s and the 1990s, when immigrants started to arrive from all over the globe, bringing a new kind of linguistic and cultural diversity to Catalonia.

Franco's death in 1975 resulted in the restoration of (monarchic) democracy, and culminated in the Spanish Constitution of 1978. In part as a reaction to the centralist conception of Spain during the Franco years, the founders of the new Spanish democracy strongly identified with regional independence aspirations. Consequently, the Constitution proposed a division of the country into seventeen autonomous communities, bestowing upon them significant legislative, judicial and executive autonomy. In order to achieve what was called the *normalization* of

the Catalan language,³ several priorities were identified, most notably the progressive Catalanization of the education system. Successive linguistic laws managed to establish Catalan not only as obligatory subject matter but as the exclusive language of instruction in primary and secondary school.⁴ These measures, although consistently destined to preserve Catalan/Castilian bilingualism,⁵ generated significant opposition, especially among the immigrant Castilian-speaking population. This was not surprising, considering that data provided by the Catalan Teaching Service during the school year 1995–96 established that the group of children born in 1992 that had Castilian as their family language was larger than those who regularly spoke Catalan at home (45% versus 40.8%, respectively, with only 12% declaring themselves bilingual in both, Vila 2005).⁶ It is thus no wonder that the normalization policies implemented by the Generalitat were aimed at averting the danger of Catalan becoming obliterated by dominant Castilian.

These educational measures, called the *Model de Conjunció en Català* (Catalan Conjoint Model), are the ones currently in place in Catalonia. Recently, Vila and Galindo (2007)⁷ studied the actual use of Catalan by the first generation of students targeted by this program (children up to about twelve years of age). Their findings indicate that the model increases the use of Catalan at school and in extracurricular activities; however, they found that, outside directed educational activities, Castilian-speaking children and youngsters keep settled in their home language, and Catalan children and youngsters have a strong tendency to switch to Castilian, a practice that is observed up to university (Climent et al. 2003, Vila 2005). They conclude that schooling in Catalan, while an important measure, is not enough, and recommend that more efforts be made for Catalan to be extended to all spheres of daily life.

The continuing campaign to promote Catalan also includes the media (Steiner 2001). Of eight TV channels in Catalonia today (excluding cable), two are exclusively in Catalan, but even the remaining six channels feature short daily sections in Catalan, usually when reporting local news. Good quality programs, from documentaries to talk shows, as well as sitcoms and soap operas, are locally produced. In addition, there are a number of newspapers published in Catalan, as well as several radio stations, and the editorial industry is lively, with both original and translated works of all genres being offered, as well as competitively endowed literary prizes and significant governmental support. Also, in 2005, the *.cat* generic domain was approved to host Catalan web sites, following pressure by several Catalan cultural and administrative groups that showed growing discomfort in associating with *.es* (for Spain), although not without explicit opposition by the central government in Madrid (Atkinson 2006). Popular computer software and internet interfaces exist in Catalan as well. As for the work space, following the newly revised Catalan constitution, the *Estatut* (Generalitat 2006), companies are required

to provide services in Catalan although, in reality, this law is rarely enforced. A corps of trained Catalan teachers, equipped with state-of-the-art pedagogical materials, provides language classes for adults of any linguistic background. They are supported by a group of volunteers (called the *Voluntaris per la Llengua*, “Volunteers for Language” — created in 2003; see Generalitat 2007) that form regulated linguistic pairs with students of Catalan in order to provide them with a space for tutored conversation. Increasingly, there seems to be a consensus that, as former Catalan president Jordi Pujol put it, while it is possible to live in Catalonia speaking only Spanish, life is much more comfortable if Catalan is also spoken.

The results of the revitalization campaign led European Union linguists to conclude that the measures of the *normalització* had managed to stop the earlier, negative trend of Catalan compared to Castilian (Commission Européenne 1996). As a consequence, they concluded that Catalan was no longer to be considered an endangered language and that, in fact, Catalan was a shining example of the possibility of revitalizing a minority language in the global era. This report, however, dated from before the new, globalized immigration that has profoundly transformed the demography of Europe in recent years. In the next section we address the ways in which this new phenomenon might challenge the former optimistic conclusions. We argue that what is at stake today is no longer the maintenance of a balanced bilingualism, but rather the management of multilingual diversity of unprecedented dimensions in which the survival of a minority language in the transnational European as well as the global context faces very different problems than before.

Global immigration and language survival

If the 1950s and 1960s saw a massive influx of Spanish migrants to Catalonia, the last ten years have been marked by immigration of a very different kind. The number of foreign residents in Catalonia grew from a negligible 1.7% in 1991 to 7% of legally registered residents in 2002 (Vila 2005).⁸ These figures are even higher in Barcelona: in 2003, 20% of the new-born babies in that city had a foreign mother, and in 2004, 13% of the city’s inhabitants were legally registered foreign nationals (Vila 2005). In these past ten years, then, migrants have come to Catalonia from all four corners of the world, from places such as Morocco, the Maghreb and other African regions, Asian countries such as China, Pakistan, and the Philippines, and from all over Eastern Europe as well as South America.

Of great interest are the linguistic consequences of this novel form of immigration in Catalonia. It appears to be likely, for example, that the continued success of Catalan language revitalization will heavily depend on whether these

immigrants prefer to learn Catalan or Castilian. It is well known that linguistic choices in a multilingual environment are heavily influenced by the feelings speakers develop with each of their languages (Wölck 2005). In the following, we present some findings regarding linguistic attitudes that we obtained through a qualitative pilot study conducted in Barcelona from May to August 2007. We interviewed five “new” immigrants (two adult females, a waiter from the Dominican Republic and a university student from Germany; and three adult males, a shop owner from Pakistan, a university student from Senegal, and one leader of a cultural organization representing Muslims, from Syria). We also conducted interviews with native Catalans, in order to explore their feelings with respect to the rapid changes unfolding around them. Participants in this group included, on the one hand, two members of the *Voluntaris per la Llengua* program (females ages 34 and 65), and, on the other hand, five other interlocutors (three females and two males, ages 14, 31, 31, 39 and 52) who showed no external signs of any specific involvement in linguistic matters in their daily lives.

Learning Spanish

In this section we discuss the reasons new immigrants in Catalonia gave us to justify their decision to learn Spanish. It helps to understand that the cultural, social, economic and political context into which these migrants are placed is strongly influenced by processes of globalization, in which immigration is far less controlled by the state as compared to earlier instances of migration in Europe. Immigration in France from 1950 to 1980, for instance, was heavily influenced by post-colonial contexts where most immigrants came from former colonies such as sub-Saharan Africa and Indochina, but mostly from France’s former colonies in North Africa, from Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. Likewise, immigration to Germany during the same period was heavily controlled by the state, as Germany sought to augment its blue-collar work force with cheap labor from supplying countries in southern Europe and, most importantly, Turkey. In these previous migration patterns, each receiving state tightly monitored, controlled and administered immigration. Spain as a whole was, at that time, supplying cheap labor to northern European countries. The situation in Spain has only recently been reversed, especially with its joining the European Union in 1986, which resulted in gradually turning the country from a supplier of cheap labor into a country receiving immigrants. The specific migration patterns developing in this context are radically different from those experienced in northern European countries two or three decades earlier. Instead of maintaining a tight control over who comes, for what purpose and under what conditions, the Spanish state today resigns itself to merely managing the most important aspects of migration among those who come from very diverse backgrounds. Such “wild”

migration truly bears the mark of globalization, where states find it increasingly difficult to control their borders and, hence, patterns of immigration.

As a consequence, Barcelona has transformed itself over the past two decades from a major Spanish city into a true metropolis aspiring to be recognized at the same level as other global hubs such as Paris, Berlin or New York. One result of this transformation has been the breaking open of once clearly delimited and defined issues of language policy in Catalonia as a dichotomy between the dominant Castilian center in Madrid and the Catalan periphery. After years of focusing on the first generations of Castilian-speaking immigrants, the government is quickly realizing that today it is far more important for Catalan language policies to target international immigrants if Catalan is to remain a viable language. There is a lot at stake, then, in the languages chosen by these new immigrants for everyday usage.

In our interviews, most immigrants who are native speakers of neither Catalan nor Castilian say that pragmatic considerations compel them to start learning the latter. They give a number of different reasons. First, they are aware that Spanish is today rapidly emerging as one of the world's *strong* languages (Mar-Molinero & Stewart 2006). Migrants in Catalonia who are faced with the choice of learning (or maintaining) either Castilian or Catalan thus claim that they have powerful reasons to learn Castilian instead of Catalan, since they are often connected to diasporic communities in other parts of the Spanish-speaking world. Especially given that many migrants often move, or plan to move, from Catalonia to other places, learning Castilian has the obvious benefit that they might not have to learn another language if they move on to another place where Spanish is also present. In addition, there is a large number of immigrants from Central and South America, who speak Spanish natively and feel that they do not need (or want) to make an additional linguistic effort to successfully manage their lives in Catalonia (Marshall 2006). This population helps to promote the image of the prototypical Spanish-speaking immigrant, which in turn gets extended to include immigrants of other origins, thus constructing it as a socially accepted and plausible model for newcomers. From the perspective of new immigrants, in sum, learning Spanish keeps them connected to the wider world, and is an alternative socially accepted by the Catalans themselves.

This relates to what has been an ongoing challenge in the normalization of Catalan, which originates in the attitude of Catalan speakers in interpersonal exchanges. For the most part, they show a tendency to switch to Castilian whenever their interlocutor has a clear preference for this language, regardless of the interlocutor's competence in Catalan, and even when the Catalan speaker is in a relationship of power with respect to the Castilian speaker (Bastardas 1990, Simmons 2003, Climent 2003). Since systematic language shift is well known to lead to the extinction of the minority language (Fishman 1991, Skutnabb-Kangas 2000), many policy efforts have been made in order to change this behavior. Numerous

publicity campaigns, full of brochures, TV and radio ads, and school booklets, have been launched to promote bilingual conversations and encourage Catalan speakers to avoid language shift. Slogans like *El català, cosa de tots* (Catalan is everybody's business), *Tu ets mestre* (You are the teacher), and *Dóna corda al català* (Give Catalan a kick) have been launched since the mid-1980's. Unfortunately, the success of these campaigns is not great, probably because it feels artificial to bilingual speakers not to fully accommodate their interlocutors in conversation (especially since alternation between languages might be the most natural kind of language use for multilinguals: see, for example, Torras & Gafaranga 2002). In fact, two of our respondents (perhaps predictably, the students) complained that Catalans kept switching to Castilian whenever they talked to them, regardless of the language initiating the conversation. They felt this prevented them from practicing the Catalan they were faithfully learning as a sign of their willingness to integrate into Catalan society (cf. Marshall 2006). In this context, further research on the particular reasons for Catalan speakers to switch to Castilian is urgently needed.

The perceived advantage of Castilian over Catalan at the broader globalized level also determines the situation on the ground in Catalonia itself. Migrants, especially in the larger urban areas, tend to concentrate in specific neighborhoods, and often work in contexts where they are exclusively surrounded by other immigrants. This is so for the large group that works in the construction industry, which for three generations now has been dominated by the Spanish immigrants of the 1960s, and it also holds for agrarian workers. In these contexts, proficiency in Castilian in everyday situations offers practical advantages compared to Catalan, since it immediately allows communication with the more established co-workers. Another group of established immigrants are small shop owners in the streets of Barcelona or other big cities, catering to the local population, to tourists, and to fellow immigrants. In these contexts, speaking only Catalan would restrict immigrants to exclusive interaction with Catalans, while Castilian, as an inclusive and more international language, allows for contact with tourists as well as the whole of the local population. Finally, Castilian is necessary for immigrants in dealing with state agencies outside Catalonia itself (Garí 2001:337). While Catalan might be useful in dealing with local authorities, as soon as immigrants need to deal with the Spanish state, they would be at a loss if they only spoke Catalan. This is especially important since the legal aspects of immigration are still regulated by the Spanish state and not by the Catalan government. It is thus vital for immigrants to quickly gain at least a working knowledge of Castilian to have agency in matters of their own legal status as immigrants.

These various issues explain why most immigrants coming to Catalonia today quickly feel that Castilian is far more *useful* than Catalan, at least in the short term. Moreover, the situation of Castilian and Catalan is soon related to personal

experiences of many migrants, especially those coming from Africa and Asia. In many of these post-colonial contexts it has become second nature to the population to use one language in public and another in private. A Senegalese immigrant to Barcelona explained this issue quite clearly to us. He told us that he was well aware of the differences between Castilian and Catalan. For him, Castilian was the language of the street — the lingua franca that everyone spoke in public — and Catalan was one of the many different languages that people could speak at home, in private and among their families. He said that this (diglossic) situation was very familiar to him from his experience growing up in Senegal where French had been the lingua franca while everyone spoke their own West-African language in the family. Now, he had simply substituted one lingua franca with another: he had switched from speaking French in public to speaking Castilian. Catalan was, for him, a language that some natives spoke at home or among themselves, while, when encountering people with different ethnic backgrounds, it was just “a matter of politeness” to immediately switch to Castilian. After learning Spanish, and wanting to go on to the United States, he was now busy studying English (thus skipping the acquisition of Catalan altogether).⁹

In sum, global immigrants arriving to confront the complex linguistic situation in Catalonia have compelling reasons to start learning Castilian instead of Catalan. This is indeed what we found in our interviews. Those who already knew Spanish (natively, as in the case of the South and Central Americans, or as a second language, as many from Europe) did not seem interested in furthering their linguistic competencies by learning Catalan. Concerning those without competency in either language, and especially amongst the numerous group with African and Asian origins, a pattern emerges: men typically learn enough Spanish to get by at work, while switching to their native language outside work. Women, who in many cases arrive in the country at a young age having been married off, start learning Spanish at the numerous civic centers (*casals*) typically located in migrant-rich quarters, but by the time they could start learning Catalan (which, for the practical reasons explained above, often comes second), they become mothers and their new busy family lives do not allow them to attend the center any more. Perceived pragmatic considerations, as well as the environment in which most immigrants find themselves, clearly do not favor the acquisition of Catalan. At the same time, however, and as immigrants become more rooted in Catalonia, the advantages of learning Catalan might become more apparent.

Learning Catalan

Today, knowledge of Catalan is indeed indispensable for upward social mobility in Catalan society. The Catalan government makes great efforts to ensure that

Catalan is highly beneficial, if not a prerequisite, in obtaining white-collar jobs. Identifying the degree to which this claim is true in reality is important, since economic studies assessing the relative value of language competency have been for some time used to justify the language policies enforced by governments. From an economic perspective (Becker 1993), where language is considered part of the individual's human capital (Grin & Vaillancourt 1997), many studies have been carried out in order to evaluate the hypothesis that language competencies are of professional advantage in terms of providing easier access to the labor market, and having a positive effect of wages and on professional careers. While most empirical studies model monolingual societies (McManus 1985, Chiswick & Milller 2003, etc.), there are some that are based on multilingual situations, and, most interestingly for us, there are a few studies in which one of the languages included in the study is a minority one (Grenier 1997, Henley & Jones 2005, Klein 2007). Klein's study, for example, models the situation in Luxemburg, by calculating the relative economic value of knowing Luxemburgish, English, French and German in the job market. He finds that only English offers a clear benefit — which is not surprising, given the dominant role English plays in Europe and the world (see, for example, Phillipson 2003, Ives 2006). Crucially, the local language, Luxemburgish, has, at the very best, no impact on the economic parameters evaluated by the study, and arguably a negative effect.¹⁰ Klein concludes that while high multilingual competences have a positive impact on the probability of being active in the labor market, as well as on salaries, the particular languages in the mix matter. He thus proposes modification of the existing recommendation by the European Council (European Commission 2002, Nelde 2007) that the citizens of the European Union should command at least their mother tongue, plus two other languages (MT+2), the latter presumably either a historically motivated language (like Spanish/Catalan in Catalonia), or one from a Eurocentric list of *strong* languages (French, German, English, Spanish and the like). According to Klein, only the modified formula MT+English+1 makes economic sense in the Europe of today. Were this formula to be adopted, in the case of Catalonia this would for example mean X+English+{Spanish, French, German}, where X is Catalan still only in a relative minority of cases (while in others it may be Tamazight, Hindi or Spanish). Given the aforementioned assessment of the economic role of the minority language, there is a real danger that the elected formula would most likely end up yielding {Spanish, Arab, etc.}+English+{Catalan, French or German}. This is a rather pessimistic result for minority languages, since their relegation to a mere third language, in competition with *strong* European languages for the majority of the local population, is sure to keep them in a state of endangerment.

We wonder, however, whether English is indeed likely to occupy such a central position in the near future. As Rendon (2003) shows, for instance, the case of

Catalan might be different from Luxemburgish. Using census data from 1991 and 1996, he concludes that the probability of being employed in Catalonia increases between 3 and 5 percentage points if individuals know how to write and speak Catalan (a premium higher for women than men, and decreasing in schooling and in age). This would suggest that in reality, and despite subjective perceptions, knowledge of Catalan is indeed economically more important than knowing English at the local level. It should be noted, though, that Rendon's study relies on data obtained before the impact of global migrations in Catalonia could possibly be noticed. Yet, his study brings hope for Catalan, if his results turn out to still hold today, which in great measure would depend on the strengthening of the *Generalitat's* linguistic policies.

Therefore, it appears that, while the social contexts and work situations of the new immigrants — lower social status and blue-collar work or low-paying jobs in the tertiary sector — do not require any knowledge of Catalan, their own life trajectories as immigrants might require them to change strategy in the long run. As they increasingly aspire to obtain higher positions in the Catalan business and social worlds, they will most likely need to learn Catalan in order to “qualify” for these higher aspirations.

As in virtually all migratory contexts, this is also a generational issue. Language competency among first-generation immigrants is usually a question of immediate functionality. Adult first-generation immigrants need to quickly learn the most useful language upon their arrival and, as we have seen, in Catalonia this language is still perceived to be Castilian. In this context, the situation of second generation immigrants is, however, entirely different. Those who are born to immigrant parents or who have migrated at a relatively young age often have very different linguistic needs compared to their parents. This is most certainly true for the realm of schooling but also in everyday public interaction. The older Spanish immigrants to Catalonia were obviously always able to speak their language in most public situations and their use of Castilian was reinforced by also speaking it at home. The new immigrants, however, will most likely not learn Castilian at home but will instead continue to speak their parents' own mother tongue. Since Catalan is today the only language of instruction in Catalan public schools, the children of immigrants will therefore have a very early exposure to Catalan, something that their parents will not have encountered. Given the presence of Castilian in school and in the streets, and given that their parents would have their reasons to promote this language for their children, this second generation will thus most likely become exposed to both Castilian and Catalan and grow up with a significant bilingual competency in both, possibly in addition to a third family language. First-generation immigrants wanting to become integrated with the local population (which will include their own children) will find that learning Catalan gives

them the perfect opportunity to do so. As the first generation of bilingual children of non-Catalan ancestry comes of age, Catalans themselves will then be more encouraged not to engage in language shift in the presence of perceived newcomers. According to this somehow idealized and certainly optimistic plan, for Catalans in government, administration and elsewhere, the emergence of this second generation among the new immigrants thus clearly provides a sign of hope in the face of Castilian dominance.

Maintaining Catalan

It is often noted in any context of language shift that the linguistic behavior of individual native speakers (especially the young) is, beyond official policies, an obviously crucial component.¹¹ We have already noted that Catalans have a tendency to shift to Castilian whenever their interlocutor has a perceived preference for this language. This tendency is in part inherited from the sociolinguistic situations in their past, as the historical echoes of being “impolite” to speak Catalan in front of Castilian speakers still linger in the collective memory. It does not suffice, however, to blame history alone. Perhaps more worrisome is that youngsters, who mostly know the language, do not feel especially compelled to use it. Having been schooled in Catalan, they tend to think that Catalan is already normalized and does not need any special protection, and many consider that the policies of the *Generalitat* are unnecessarily assertive (Branchadell 2000, Pujolar 2000, Comajoan 2004). When reminded of the historical oppression that Catalan underwent, one of our respondents replied that she was not interested in going from “being forbidden to speak Catalan to being forced to do so,” thereby challenging the legitimacy of the main argument used to reverse language shift. True bilinguals (if not trilinguals, many of them having learned English as well), they want to feel free to alternate between the languages they command and want to avoid attaching any cultural or political value to their choices. For many, the linguistic campaigns launched by the *Generalitat*, while theoretically designed to support them in maintaining their linguistic rights and avoiding language shift, are often suspected of being mere political struggles. In this respect, it certainly does not help that the central government in Madrid promotes this politicization of language (Strubell 2001). In sum, many Catalan speakers resent what they feel as an attempt by the government to politicize their most intimate interactions; and, perhaps as a paradoxical resurgence of the underlying passive resistance that ensured the survival of Catalan in the past, they resist this pressure, in many cases by shifting to Castilian in what is constructed as an act of balancing.

In addition, in the era of globalization, Catalans do not want to be perceived as closed-minded and parochial. For many young Catalans, stubbornly clinging

to a minority language when the world is shifting to global languages like English would mean precisely this. As many others, they aim to acquire proficiency in English to ensure not being left behind in the global game (Muñoz 2005). Now, given their history, many Catalans are familiar with a bilingual existence. All too conscious of the complications that bilingualism entails, however, they are not sure how to successfully incorporate a third language into the mix (Pérez-Vidal 2008). They might then choose to stick with the safe, known option of bilingualism, and only modify it slightly to include English. For all the factors explained above, in Catalonia this likely means bilingualism in Castilian and English and the subsequent abandonment of Catalan as a side effect of this bilingual choice.¹²

In sum, pressed by the need to join a modern, globalized society, and considering the policies of the *Generalitat* “myopic”, many Catalan speakers effectively decide to shift to Castilian. In the majority of cases, there is no ideology attached to the shift; they are in fact quite alienated from the linguistic question altogether, since they feel that it is anachronistic and does not correspond to global realities in the twenty-first century. Clearly, it is of utmost importance that these feelings be taken seriously, and the linguistic needs of the new generations be examined through realistic assessments. If the reasons for alienation of Catalan speakers are not examined, the efforts of the *Generalitat* are in danger of becoming, at best, ignored by those who might otherwise be its crucial allies in maintaining Catalan.

The faithful

Not all Catalans feel alienated from the linguistic question, though. A growing number of young as well as retired and unemployed people sign up as *Voluntaris per la llengua*. This group of social volunteers, often of leftist ideology, has adopted a social integrationist agenda dedicated to helping the local government provide for the needs of immigrants. Proud Catalan speakers, they see the new immigration as a welcome development in the context of the contested linguistic ground of Catalonia, for several reasons. First, the increase of immigrants whose first language is not Spanish breaks with the traditional dichotomy between Castilian and Catalan populations, and this fragmentation, with the inter-mixing that might result, is perceived as a golden opportunity for supporting those who are in power in pushing a common agenda in a more assertive way. In an ironic turn of destiny, it is as if Catalans were hoping for the same dilution strategy of Franco’s times, but now in order to control the “Castilian problem”.

Second, many Catalans realize that, since a large number of immigrants come from postcolonial (or ex-communist) countries where their own local culture has been equally oppressed, there is some potential for unexpected but empowering alliances if the immigrants could only be convinced of the similarities between their

experience and the historical situation of Catalonia (Junyent 1998, 2005; Comajoan 2004). Finally, for many Catalans it is “cool” to make friends with foreigners. In our interviews, most participants manifested a positively curious attitude toward other cultures, especially if the connection could be made without the mediation of Spain in any form. In the minds of Catalans, a foreigner speaking Catalan instead of Spanish provides a radical contrast with the past that most people find amusing; for some people, the experience brings a feeling of empowerment. For these Catalans, the new situation allows them the opportunity, for the first time, to introduce themselves internationally entirely as Catalans, and not Spaniards. They do so assigning their linguistic choice a high charge of symbolism.

In sum, it is well known that minority languages are associated with subjective-emotive values (Wölck 2005). For the group of Catalans whom we have termed the *faithful*, their linguistic choice satisfies both the desire to symbolically transcend Castilian in the international community and the need for a more rooted, particularized identity that some people feel as a response to globalizing forces (Williams 2008). The challenge that the *Generalitat* faces with this valuable civic movement is to adequately support their efforts. At the same time, of course, it needs to ensure that the interest in Catalan increases among the new population of immigrants so that the *Voluntaris* do not run out of interlocutors.

Conclusion

The processes of globalization abruptly affecting Catalonia today will result in substantial changes in the linguistic situation in both the immediate future and the long term. While it might be too soon to assess whether their impact will be favorable for the survival of Catalan, it is safe to state that the continued success of language revitalization will depend, at least in part, on the relationship that Catalan citizens, as well as administrators, politicians and proponents of cultural and linguistic independence in Catalonia, establish with the new immigrants. Language policy making in Catalonia thus needs to accomplish two somewhat contradictory tasks. On the one hand, Catalan still needs to be protected in order to consolidate its significant success as a revitalized minority language in Europe. While local functionality is crucial, elevating the social and political status of Catalan within the European Union would certainly help the local government to achieve this goal (Nic Craith 2006). On the other hand, the specific linguistic needs and desires of the new immigrants must also be addressed in order to prevent these immigrants from exclusively identifying with Castilian/Spanish as an emerging global language. Language policies must also be implemented with extreme caution regarding the sensitive issue of maintaining immigrant cultural and linguistic

heritage. If these measures simply target immigrants by asking them to abandon the transmission of their traditional ways of life and to assimilate completely into Catalan society, their reaction will likely be negative and will drive them right into the arms of Castilian, which would locally appear to them as the more open-minded and flexible alternative of the two.

In order to give the new immigrants economic, social and cultural incentives to learn it, still more needs to be done to strengthen the presence of Catalan in public, everyday situations, especially in the more cosmopolitan areas of Catalonia. This means more publications in Catalan, more Catalan visibility in the media in general, and the enforcement of coercive measures to make Catalan the principal language of administration and private businesses.

Perhaps most importantly, however, the reasons for language shift on the part of native Catalans need to be addressed with care. As long as Catalans shift to Castilian if they assume that their interlocutor prefers it, there are few reasons for the new immigrants to perceive Catalan other than as an in-group language exclusively spoken among the locals. In this sense, the fate of Catalan will most likely be decided in everyday interactions on the streets of Barcelona. If more Catalans assert their linguistic autonomy and elect to speak their language in these contexts, the language will continue to recover; if Catalans continue to be shy about using their language when faced with “foreigners” (immigrants, tourists, exchange students, and so on), the fate of Catalan will indeed be negative. However, simply burdening the native population with the responsibility of preserving their language is insensitive to their needs, which are again derived from the complex demands imposed by the globalizing processes of the twenty-first century. Continued careful assessments of the present realistic needs among the native population are also necessary to empower the behaviors that lead to language preservation, as well as to counteract the otherwise healthy feeling of alienation from any imposed measure. We believe that much could be done to capitalize on the positive emotional values that speakers assign to their minority languages, in order to encourage Catalans to keep using their language and to keep presenting it as a particularized cultural richness that can be shared both with the newcomers and with the wider diversity-loving world of today.

Notes

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1. But see Boix & Vila 1998, Junyent 1998, Strubell 2001.
2. *Les Llengües a Catalunya. Quantes Llengües s'hi parlen?* Exhibition by the Universitat de Barcelona, 14 April — 15 May 2005.
3. By *normalization*, the Catalan sociolinguistic tradition does not mean *standardization*, but extension of Catalan to all *normal* sociolinguistic spaces, public and private. Catalan was standardized at the beginning of the 20th century through the work of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* (IEC), including most notably Pompeu Fabra. A new dictionary was published in 1997 by the IEC, and a new grammar in 2002 (Solà and others, 2002).
4. While the 1983 *Llei de Normalització Lingüística* (Law of linguistic normalization) made Catalan the language of instruction, “how this becomes the exclusive language is a complicated matter, and in reality [today] when parents want so they can ask for their children to be instructed in Spanish” (Ll. Comajoan, personal communication).
5. It could not be otherwise, since the 1978 Constitution establishes that “Castilian is the official Spanish language of the State. All Spaniards have the duty to know it and the right to use it.”
6. In addition, 1.4% spoke other languages at home, and only 0.8% were bilingual in Catalan and a language other than Castilian (Vila 2005). These last data clearly reflect a pre-globalization situation, which was going to change in the following years.
7. See also a similar study with similar results in de Rosselló i Peralta 2003.
8. Since much migration at the global level is illegal, these figures need to be read with caution.
9. It has been noticed that a similar situation exists for the cases of Quechua in Ecuador and Tamazight in Morocco (Comajoan 2004:90, Garí 2001:335).
10. Klein admits that the negative effect of knowing Luxemburgish might be explained by the particular labor situation in Luxemburg, where, because of its role as Europe’s political center, most higher paid administrative jobs are performed by foreigners (mainly from other parts of Europe).
11. In fact, despite the emphasis on the role of the migrant population (which this article is arguably one more sample of), the behavior of present native Catalans might end up being more important in determining the survival of the language. For example, the study of Valencia by Casesnoves Ferrer & Sankoff (2004) showed that primarily the acquisition of Catalan in educational programs and only secondarily the flow of immigrants and their linguistic integration are determinant. Of course, this holds if competency in the language results in actual use, which is a necessary condition in the long term (Wölck 2004).
12. One anonymous reviewer expresses skepticism about these predictions. S/he points out: “Why the strong apprehension about the disappearance of Catalan as a side effect of a self-imposed Spanish-English bilingualism, seemingly around the corner? People are learning English all over the place, but (...) the imminence of such a bilingualism is a wild exaggeration.” We surely hope with her/him that s/he is right, although we also think that the situation is such that all possible outcomes are worth considering, if we are to design appropriate policies.

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Zusammenfassung

Der Einfluss der Globalisation auf die gleichwertige Zweisprachigkeit in Katalonien

Aufgrund der gelungenen Herstellung und dem Erhalt einer gleichwertigen Zweisprachigkeit von Katalanisch/Kastilianisch im Verlauf der letzten dreißig Jahre wird Katalonien als ein erfolgreiches Beispiel für die Wiederbelebung einer Sprache betrachtet. In den vergangenen Jahren hat sich die Situation in Katalonien aufgrund starker Immigration jedoch deutlich gewandelt. Die autonome Regierung Kataloniens verfolgt heute eine Sprachpolitik, die Katalanisch allein als die Nationalsprache versteht und hinter der alle anderen Sprachen zurücktreten sollen; Kastilianisch wird nurmehr als eine von mehr als dreihundert Sprachen die in Katalonien heute gesprochen werden betrachtet. Im vorliegenden Text untersuchen wir, wie sich diese Politik auf die alltägliche Sprachnutzung verschiedener Gruppen auswirkt. Wir zeigen, unter anderem, dass Katalanischsprechende in zwei Gruppen unterteilt sind von denen die eine sich durch die Sprachpolitik von spanischer Unterdrückung befreit sieht während die andere fürchtet, nun einem neuen Ethnonationalismus des Katalanischen unterworfen zu werden. Spanischsprechende, wiederum, fühlen sich in ihrer linguistischen Identität bedroht. Die

neuen Immigranten, schliesslich, die aus aller Welt heute nach Katalonien kommen, fühlen sich im traditionellen Zwiespalt zwischen Katalanisch- und Kastilischsprechenden Gruppen gefangen; ein Zwiespalt, der ein sprachpolitisches Klima erzeugt, mit dem die neuen Immigranten nichts anfangen können und das ihre eigenen Wünsche und Bedürfnisse in keinsten Weise widerspiegelt. Wir folgern, dass die Sprachpolitik in Katalonien im Lichte der neuen Immigration grundlegend überdacht werden muss; dazu machen wir in unserer Zusammenfassung einige Vorschläge.

Resumo

Rekonsideri ekvilibran dulingvismon: La efiko de tutmondiĝo je Katalunio

Tradicie oni konsideras Katalunio ekzemplo de sukcesa lingvorevivigo, per atingo kaj daŭrigo de iom stabila kastilia/kataluna dulingvismo tra la pasinta trideko da jaroj. Tamen, lastatempe Katalunio spertas signifan enmigradon en la kunteksto de tutmondiĝo. La aŭtonoma registaro nun subtenas tagordon en kiu oni konstruas nur la katalunan kiel nacian lingvon, lingvon de konverĝo, esperoplenan interlingvon en la kataluna teritorio — dum la kastilia, spite sian solidan historian ĉeeston en la regiono, estas prezentata kiel unu el tricent lingvoj parolataj tie hodiaŭ. Ni esploras kiel tiu ĉi politiko interagis kun ĉiutagaj lingvaj realaĵoj kaj kun konservista tagordo. Parolantoj de la kataluna dividiĝas inter tiuj kiuj sentas sin liberigitaj de la altrudo de hispana identeco kaj kulturo, kaj tiuj kiuj timas reaktion, ekskluzivisman naciismon, kiun ili konsideras anakronismo en la tutmondiĝita ter globo hodiaŭ. Hispanparolantoj, siavice, sentas sin minacataj kaj alcelataj. Novaj enmigrintoj, venante el ĉiuj anguloj de la mondo, kaptiĝas en etoso en kiu oficialaj lingvaj politikoj apenaŭ respondas al iliaj bezonoj. Oni devas ree trapensi lingvaj politikojn por prizorgi la bezonojn de enmigrintoj samtempe certigante la transvivon de la kataluna lingvo.

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