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Immigration in Catalonia: The Politics of Sociolinguistic Research

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IMMIGRATION IN CATALONIA: THE POLITICS OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION: THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF IMMIGRATION RESEARCH

The better way to summarise Catalan research on immigration is perhaps in the form of a story, or rather, a *history*. This is because any single contribution can only be understood in the context of the political and social developments that were taking place at the time in which it was written. We often imagine that scientific disciplines and research fields advance very much through a logic of their own by accumulating discoveries, or by formulating successive theories that add to our knowledge of a particular subject. Even Kuhn's (1962) account on the changes in scientific paradigms allows us to keep a notion of scientific fields as having some degree of independence from day-to-day political or economic developments. However, if Catalan research on immigration is an example of something, it would be very much of the contrary, i.e. of the intimate and inevitable bond between social science and the political relations and interests of given social groups at each particular historical moment.

This does not necessarily make Catalan work on immigration exceptional, less objective or less honest, in relation to work done in other areas or by other people. If there is anything exceptional in it, it is that the politisation in this area of social research is simply more *visible* in Catalonia than elsewhere, particularly because researchers working in well-established nation-states do not usually need to justify their assumptions as to what makes some people "immigrants" and others "nationals." In this sense, I believe that the Catalan debate on immigration may constitute a telling example which may help us to understand this link between social research and political ideologies.

The story can be made to begin with the demographers of the early 20th Century when, as Nadal (1965) has described, the Catalan bourgeoisie abandoned their aspirations to get a share of political power in Spain and established the Catalan territoire as their main point of reference. Catalonia's industry had been expanding considerably in the last half of the 19th century, and this had attracted immigration from the rest of Spain. It is at this time that studies began to appear which pointed at the "problem" of the low birth rate of the

Catalan population. Most politicians and intellectuals portrayed immigration as a threat to public order, health, national integrity, and so on. In this context, demographers voiced concerns that the Catalan nation might eventually be engulfed by immigrants and, as a result, Catalonia might lose its national character in the future¹ (see Vandellós, 1935a, 1935b).

This view of immigration as a threat was also shared by many left-wing leaders, because they saw immigrants as responsible for the raise in unemployment and for the reductions in wages (see Calvo & Vega, 1978). Only the voice of the socialist Campalans (1923) expressed more positive views about the immigrants who "suffer our sorrows and enjoy our satisfactions, and give us children, because our women do not bear enough of them" (1923, quoted in Nadal, 1965: 33). However, in the post-war period, this positive attitude towards immigration became gradually predominant. The reknown historian Vicenç Vives defined the Catalans as "culturally and biologically *mestissos*" (mixed) (1954: 25). Global trends in the social sciences against racism and towards greater tolerance may have had a influence on Catalan intellectuals, as they have always been in close touch with wider cultural movements. But maybe one of the key developments at the local level was the position manifested and defended by Jordi Pujol.

Pujol was a conservative nationalist of a solid Catholic upbringing, who already in 1958 wrote the famous line "Catalan is everyone who lives and works in Catalonia...who makes of Catalonia his home" (1976: 69-70). Pujol's position might not have been of greater importance than that of other commentators if he had not later become the undisputed leader of Catalan nationalists during the seventies, which granted him an unexpected victory at the 1980 election to the newly reestablished parliament. He has been the president of Catalonia ever since and his ideas on the matter have become official common sense.

Additionally, the role of the trade unions and of the socialist (PSC) and communist (PSUC) parties should not be understated. They received the bulk of their support from predominantly immigrant quarters, and they ensured the support of many of their members to the claims for political autonomy at the critical moment of political transition from dictatorship to democracy in the late 1970s. Nowadays, it cannot be denied that a sizeable sector of the immigrant population actively supported the reestablishment of a Catalan autonomous government.

¹ Cabré (1991) has shown that pre-war authors were overstretching the significance of the figures they were analysing, probably because they were voicing popular concerns about immigration.

The post-war debates of the 1950s and 1960s on immigration were taking place in a very unusual political context, that is, under the rule of General Franco, who was running a military dictatorship based on a combination of fascism, Catholic fundamentalism and a rhetoric of a victorious Spanish empire. Any manifestation of support to Catalan autonomy was considered as seditious, and those involved as liable for prosecution, detention and torture. All these intellectual debates were largely taking place within the networks created by illegal oppositional groups. Some books were being published in secret, some in France, some under the scrutiny of the censorship. The use of the Catalan language itself was restricted to the private domains: no newspapers, no radios, no televisions, no teaching at schools, the language being absolutely forbidden in public occasions or for official uses. Publications in Catalan began to be increasingly tolerated only during the 1960s.

It was precisely during these years that the last big intake of immigrants took place. Since the 19th century, migrations have typically involved an unskilled labour force made up of Spanish speakers coming from agrarian and economically depressed areas of Spain. Two immigration "waves" are commonly identified, the 1888 and 1929 migrations (both associated with Barcelona's Universal Exhibitions) before the massive immigration flows of the 1950s and 1960s. An estimated 1.4 million people settled in Catalonia between 1950 and 1975 (Woolard, 1989: 30). Most of them settled in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, in newly developed neighbourhoods with poor living conditions and a lack of basic social services (Miró *et al.*, 1974: 101-4). According to Strubell's analysis of the 1975 census, in towns of over 50,000 inhabitants, the rate of immigrants amongst the adult population (+25 years old) ranged from 34.1 to 78.7% (1981: 75). The highest rates were found in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, an area which makes nowadays half of Catalonia's total population of 6 million.

Catalan researchers on immigration were facing (and are still facing) a significantly different situation to that of their colleagues who study the migration movements of established nationstates. First of all, the Catalan immigrants were actually Spanish citizens and therefore enjoyed the same rights than the native population. Additionally, the immigrants' language was the official language and not that of the Catalans. Nowadays, both languages are official, but Spanish still predominates in the media, in the courts, in services depending of the central government, in the entertainment and tourist industry and in many other areas. In addition to this, the numbers of migrants were so high that, combined with their higher fertility rates, it is very possible

that the population of migrant origin has already outnumbered the native population, a situation which is therefore not comparable to other Western countries.²

In this context, it is not surprising that Catalan politicians adopted a positive attitude towards immigration. A segregative or even xenophobic political arrangement within a democratic regime would have been, I believe, practically unworkable in these conditions. Nowadays, there is an impressive public consensus on the matter, whereby practically all political parties, official institutions and mass media treat everybody as a Catalan to the point that, as I will explain later, immigration is even ceasing to be an issue in the traditional sense, i.e. as referring to Spanish speakers.

However, this consensus, as Woolard (1989) has pointed out, rests on a number of ambivalences that allow for some social or ethnic distinctions to be maintained *off the record*. In actual everyday life, to be a "Catalan" or a "Castilian" or an "immigrant" is still important for many people and it has an important bearing on social relations. The key criterion for categorising somebody is whether or not a person uses predominantly the Catalan language with friends and relatives. "Castilians" or "immigrants" (that is, speakers of Spanish) are expected to "integrate" into Catalan society, to become fully Catalan. And this is to be achieved by learning and adopting the language in their everyday lives. This feeling, hope or expectation that immigrants are to integrate and speak Catalan in the future is shared by most intellectuals and researchers, though not by their Spanish colleagues, as it is reflected in this quote from a Spanish anthropologist who is unhappy with the idea of the assimilation of immigrants:

"Catalan intellectuals accord great importance to the linguistic integration of Spanish-speaking immigrants. They consider not only that the future of the Catalan language and culture depends on it, but even of Catalonia as a national community. As a general rule, possible alternatives are not taken into account other than the full assimilation of immigrants to the autochthonous language and culture, either in a short or long term. Bilingualism is regarded very negatively amongst Catalan men [sic] of letters, and amongst nationalist activists as well. The possibility that the present bilingual situation becomes firmly established in Catalonia, with two separate ethnolinguistic communities within the same territory, is either wilfully ignored or not considered as a working hypothesis, however it may be secretly feared." (Barrera, 1985: 336)

² Esteve (1973: 152) provides some official data on birthrates. In 1970 in Barcelona, where the majority of the population was still Catalan born, only 23.37% of children born alive came from Catalan couples, while 45.40% came from immigrant couples, a proportion of 1 to 1.8.

Hence the very special role accorded to Catalan sociolinguists in this context. Their object of study is the political "hot potato" by excellence, and their research questions and methods are invariably linked to the concerns about national survival that are shared by many Catalans. The point is whether immigrant people and/or their children actually learn and use the language in their everyday lives. The job of sociolinguists is to assess how these processes work in a way which allows for issues and problems to be identified and tackled by politicians, school teachers or language activists.

In this article, I will give a short overview of the debate on immigration by referring to a few key studies on the subject. Two main areas of research can be identified: a) immigration research proper, and b) studies on language use which often do not use the term "immigration" but which have a strong link with issues of linguistic integration. Both quantitative and qualitative studies can be found in both areas of research.

RESEARCHING IMMIGRANTS

The earliest studies on immigration were geared to find out exactly the numbers of people who were native speakers or everyday users of Catalan after more than twenty years of tough repression against the language. This happened in the mid sixties when the restrictions towards the Catalan language and culture slightly relaxed.³ Antoni M^a Badia (1969) undertook an extensive mail survey. He sent off 21,772 questionnaires, from which he got 3,485 responses. The bilingual questionnaire included 35 questions on matters of linguistic competence and opinion. There were many weak points in the procedure and the analysis of this survey, not the least of which was the fact that only "heads of families" were enquired, which excluded most women and young people. But in any case it has to be considered as an invaluable contribution and a pioneering initiative, particularly given the very difficult political and social circumstances in which it was made, i.e. as a private initiative of a philologist trained as a historical grammarian, with the voluntary help of relatives, students, and local firms.

Badia was aware that the responses he had obtained did not make a representative sample, so that he complemented it with a smaller one of 223 questionnaires which were filled out through personal interviews. From the mail questionnaire, he got a 78.9% of Catalan

³ In spite of this, Badia (1969) keeps part of his funding sources secret (p.17).

Speakers and 21.1% of Spanish speakers, whereas the smaller sample gave a proportion of 63.2% and 36.8% respectively (1969: 89). In spite of the limitations, Badia had a critical eye to make the most of his data by exploring issues such as the distribution of speakers according to the district of residence or place of birth. He pointed out that the two linguistic communities did not appear to be as segregated as some had thought, and also that the percentages of Catalan and Spanish speakers coincided almost exactly (and in both samples) with the percentages of people born in Catalan and Spanish-speaking areas respectively. These findings supported the assumption that most Catalan-born people were still speaking the language. However, he also noticed that 8.8% of Catalan speakers were born outside Catalan-speaking areas, whereas 29.7% of Spanish speakers were born in Catalonia (1969: 246-9). Additionally, the highest percentages of the former were in working-class districts, whereas the latter belonged predominantly to the "educated world" of Barcelona.

These results confirmed that there was a sizable sector of Spanish speakers amongst the native upper classes (a long established belief), but also that in working-class areas there was a significant proportion of immigrant families who had adopted Catalan. Unfortunately, Badia's analysis of the tendencies towards integration were to be published in a second volume of his study which was never printed. His findings and reflections on this issue can only be extracted from hints given in the first volume or from articles in which he gives a general overview on the matter. For instance, he suggested that many immigrants were willing to adopt the Catalan language as a way of improving their socioeconomic status, or as a form of access to (predominantly Catalan) middle class sectors (1969: 250-1). He pointed out that the greatest "threat" to the language came from the Spanish-speaking upper classes, who might set an example of a Spanish-speaking educated and economically well-off sector (1969: 233-4). Badia's writings support a common belief that the attitudes of immigrants towards Catalan are very different from those of big industrialists, military people and civil servants who have traditionally opposed pro-Catalan policies. According to Badia, immigrants present a varied range of typologies as to their attitudes, knowledge of the language and degree of contact with Catalan-speaking people. He saw these typologies as different stages in the process of integration (1976: 239).

In the early 1970s the general feeling amongst intellectuals was that immigrants would integrate into Catalan society sooner or later. Badia himself declared once that the integration of immigrants was inevitable (1980). This was also the view of the anthropologist Esteva

(1973, 1974). His study was based on personal observations and enquiries in immigrant neighbourhoods and on the analysis of data gathered through 743 questionnaire interviews (1973: 137). He made a very interesting reflection on the processes of adaptation of immigrants to an urban culture, and how these processes became intimately interwoven with issues of ethnic relations by virtue of the fact that native Catalans controlled most businesses and occupied the most prestigious jobs:

"In this cris-crossing between the two systems, the urban and the ethnic, the development of the immigrant's personality takes place along two main lines: 1) in the acquisition of a properly urban orientation; and 2) in the progressive integration or assimilation of the Catalan character as a complement of the strictly universal character of urbanisation ... [because] ... The urban-industrial way of life in Barcelona is ethnically Catalan..." (1973: 187-8)

However, Esteva recognised that these processes could take place in many forms and that, under certain conditions (depending on the degree and quality of contact with the Catalan population, political attitudes and so on), cultural integration or assimilation might not take place; but he insisted that each successive generation must forcibly adopt more and more Catalan cultural elements.

Other anthropological approaches are worth mentioning, such as the studies of Solé (1982) and Botey (1986). Solé provided a general overview of the immigrants' varied attitudes towards social and linguistic integration based on 46 in-depth interviews and 1180 responses to a survey questionnaire (1982: 63). She concluded that most immigrants sympathised with the Catalan language and other national symbols, and that they welcomed the prospect of an increase in the use of Catalan in schools. She pointed out that these attitudes were linked to the need of immigrants to improve their professional prospects or those of their children.

Botey's (1986) work was the outcome of a consciousness raising initiative amongst community leaders in immigrant areas. It was meant to give readers a sense of the experience of immigration from the perspective of the immigrants themselves. But the published book provides merely the extracts from 54 interviews and some group discussions. These interviews make interesting and enjoyable reading, but it is unfortunate that the opportunity was not seized to undertake a more explicit form of analysis.

The "optimistic" views on the prospects for linguistic integration were challenged by Strubell (1981). Strubell reviewed most surveys and immigration studies available in the mid seventies, to which he

added his own analysis of the official censuses and a study on mixed couples in Barcelona. He made a very good job of interpreting various sources which were often difficult to put together due to the diversity of sampling methods, target populations, phrasing of questions and so on.

Strubell calculated that, in 1975, 47.87% of people resident in Catalonia had Catalan as a family language, and that 58.76% were able to speak the language (p.91-2). He then argued that it was not realistic to expect that immigrants, and particularly the children of immigrants, would integrate. He showed that most of them lived in areas where the proportion of Catalan speakers was very low, and that it was unreasonable to expect or to hope that they would adopt Catalan as their everyday language in these conditions (1981: 80). Strubell was worried at the prospect of a community divided along linguistic lines, with the possibility that the Catalan-speaking population might be reduced to a minority in the future due to its lower birth rate. Consequently, he not only doubted that immigrants would integrate. He also feared that the use of the language might be doomed in the long term.

This is why Strubell also explored the influence of mixed marriages on language use. During the sixties and early eighties, marriage rates in Barcelona reached a proportion of practically "three thirds" (1/3 all Catalan-born, 1/3 non-Catalan-born and 1/3 mixed; see Badia, 1969: 450-4 and Strubell, 1981: 151). Strubell argued that the language predominantly used in mixed families would probably decide the tendency towards either recovery or loss in the use of Catalan. In 1977 he carried out a survey amongst 2,311 school students in Barcelona, of which 539 came from mixed marriages. He found that Spanish was the predominant language in 53% of these families, Catalan in 21% and both languages in 26% of them. With the support of results from similar studies, he concluded that the Catalan-speaking population was gradually decreasing (1981: 153-4, 158), which also explained why various surveys had found very low rates of Catalan-speaking students in primary schools in Barcelona⁴ (from 34.7% to 36.34%).

The publication of these results caused natural concern in pro-Catalan quarters. There seemed to be more speakers of Catalan amongst the adult population than amongst the younger sector. However, the evidence that this was due to tendencies in mixed marriages was inconclusive, mainly because the category "mixed" was ascribed according to the parents place of birth and not according to their family language. Although it was obvious that the Catalan-

⁴ See MEC (1976), quoted in Strubell (p.74), and Arnau et al (1971).

speaking population was losing weight, it was not clear whether there had been significant linguistic *defections*, as many sociolinguists put it. Additionally, in Strubell and Romaní's (1986: 23) analysis of a survey commissioned by the Catalan Language Planning Office in 1983 on 1005 people from the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, they found that 36.9% of respondents declared that they spoke Catalan with their father, 36.1% with their mother, and 40.6% with their children, which suggested a certain tendency for the use of Catalan to increase across generations.

A significant contribution to clarify this issue was a very thorough survey carried out by the Institut d'Estudis Metropolitans (Subirats, 1991), which appeared to support the thesis that Catalan was not losing speakers. The results were based on a sample of 3,346 families with children resident in the Barcelona metropolitan area. In terms of individuals' first language, the survey found that 60.8% were Spanish speakers, 34.2% were Catalan speakers, 2.5% declared that they were bilingual and 2.5% were speakers of other languages (1991: 7).

In order to analyse the rate of linguistic reproduction, the study analysed each family as if it had one child only, and found that the numbers of Catalan-speaking parents coincided almost exactly with the numbers of Catalan-speaking children. The offspring of linguistically-mixed marriages was 44.6% Catalan-speaking, 32.5% Spanish-speaking and 22.4% bilingual (1991:12). The proportion of Catalan-speaking children equated the number of Catalan-speaking parents (47% of fathers and 41.7% of mothers in mixed marriages) while the number of sons/daughters who declared to be bilingual more than quintuplicated the numbers of self-declared bilingual parents. However, if we calculate the real numbers of children living in all (mixed and unmixed) households, there was a slight decrease of 1.1% of Catalan speakers and of 2.8% of Castilian speakers in favour of the group of bilinguals. This difference was due to the fact that less sons and daughters lived in Catalan-speaking households (1991: 33). Another interesting datum came from the analysis of the rate of linguistic reproduction according to the age of the head of the households, which I reproduce below:

FIGURE 1

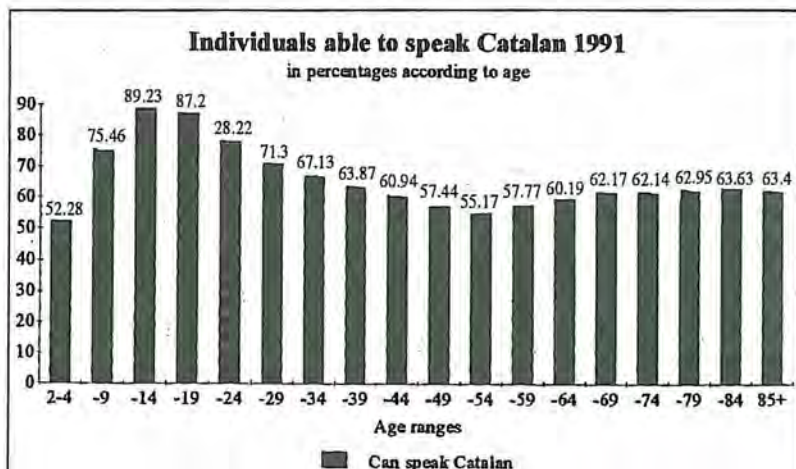
Rate of reproduction for each linguistic group from one generation to the next according to age of the head of the family (in percentages)

	Head of family 20/25 years-old	Head of family 36/55 years-old	Head of family + than 55 years-old
Catalan	+ 9.1	- 5.9	+ 3.1
Bilingual	+ 471.4	+ 481.2	+ 262.6
Spanish	- 45.7	- 37.9	- 22.5

SOURCE: Subirats (1991: 36)

The evidence was, therefore, that a certain loss of speakers of Catalan had occurred amongst middle-aged couples whose children had been born mostly during the Franco years or immediately after, but that the situation had later recovered. This recovery in the use of Catalan amongst the younger generations is parallel to the results of successive censuses with regard to linguistic competence:

FIGURE 2



SOURCE: Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya (1993: 42)

These figures show the impact of the political movements for linguistic normalisation and of the new language policies which were implemented during the 1980s. Catalan was introduced in schools both as a subject and as a medium of instruction, which means that Spanish-speaking people began to learn it from early school. Many Catalan radio stations and newspapers were created and, most important of all, a television station which attracted wide audiences. It also became the language of everyday use in the Catalan administration, which now runs public schools and the health service. In this context, Catalan has become a requirement for access to many jobs.

However, the work of Bastardas (1985, 1986) confirmed the testimony of teachers and the general impression of many who believed that Spanish was the language of everyday use for a very substantial proportion of young people. The two studies by Bastardas were aimed at assessing the linguistic competence and patterns of language use amongst "second-generation" immigrants. His earlier study was based on a questionnaire answered by students from secondary schools in Vilafranca del Penedès, a town of 25,000 inhabitants outside the Barcelona Metropolitan area. His sample of 905 students made 54% of the total teenage population. He focussed on children of mixed families (14%) and of immigrant families (22%). He found that 92.1% of children from mixed families could speak Catalan perfectly well, 60% actually spoke Catalan with both parents, and 79.5% spoke mostly Catalan with friends of their own age. Children of immigrant parents used much less Catalan with peers (only 26.7 %) and only 61% declared that they could speak good Catalan (1985: 54-76). Bastardas' results suggested that there was a sizeable contingent of second-generation Spanish-speaking migrants, but that the use of Catalan was gaining significant ground as well.

These findings were later qualified by a subsequent study out of a smaller sample where he eliminated all the students who were not resident in Vilafranca itself, as the secondary schools gathered many residents from the more Catalan-speaking country-side (Bastardas, 1986: 25-6). This time, he found that 82.67% of students of immigrant families used mainly Spanish with their friends and 40% used Spanish exclusively in spoken interaction. He pointed out that a third of these Spanish speakers lived in neighbourhoods where Catalan was practically absent, that most of them attended state schools where the majority of students spoke Spanish (due to the fact that many native Catalans send their children to private schools), and that consequently most students tended to make friends within their own linguistic group. Besides, Catalan speakers would customarily speak Spanish to these second-generation immigrants, so that they would get very little

opportunities to learn and practice Catalan orally. Bastardas pointed out that, in his sample, the proportion of Spanish speakers (40%) was maintained across generations, whereas that of Catalan speakers decreased from 60 to 55%, the remaining 5% corresponding to those who declared themselves bilingual (1985: 81-6, 183).

Bastardas' contributions are valuable in that he sought to explore the social conditions surrounding the acquisition of competence in Catalan and confirmed that there were several elements that made integration difficult. The contrast between the relatively positive results in his first study and the more pessimistic ones in the second is also interesting, as the second study addressed a type of population whose conditions were probably similar to the large contingents of second-generation immigrants living in large towns. Hence his interest in eliminating the "distorting" factor created by residents in rural areas which tilted the previous study towards more optimistic findings. The patterns found in his second study might be similar to conditions obtained in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area.

Additionally, Bastardas addressed the issue of the patterns of language use and the norms of language choice in face-to-face interaction. He suggested that the Catalan tradition of addressing Spanish speakers in Spanish diminished their possibilities of exposure to and practice of the Catalan language. Another similar study carried out in secondary schools in Sabadell found that only 6% of the students reportedly maintained Catalan with people who spoke to them in Spanish (Erill et al, 1992: 80).

The results from censuses and surveys suggest that there have not been significant *defections* amongst the Catalan-speaking population, and that Catalan is likely to maintain its relative weight within the population as a whole. However, there are no prospects that the immigrant population will integrate in the short or medium terms. In this sense, Strubell's prediction was accurate in that the children of immigrants living in urban areas would generally not adopt Catalan as their everyday language. In this context, Spanish may become the predominant language in many urban areas, a fact which can have a serious impact on the everyday use of Catalan by Catalan speakers resident in these areas. This brings us to the issue of language choice in face to face interaction, which was addressed by Bastardas and Erill et al, but which has been more specifically addressed in ethnographic studies. I will explain very briefly the issues addressed in this area of research.⁵

⁵ A more complete review of research carried out on norms of language choice is to be found in Pujolar (In press).

LANGUAGE USE IN FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION

The connection between issues of migration and norms of language choice was brought out by Aracil in one of his seminal essays:

Imagine the case of a group which, at a given period of time, has the norm of not using its "vernacular" in the presence of strangers-immigrants, for instance...In so far as the vernacular will remain hidden from strangers in a systematic way, these will not have access to it and will not have the material possibility of learning it...And the immigrants will be able to claim, and quite rightly so, that despite their efforts and good will, the "exclusivist" attitude of the natives themselves is preventing them from assimilating linguistically. And one has to add that, if this immigration is of considerable numbers and, moreover, linguistically homogenous, the language of the immigrants will quickly become public and general...In the meantime, the language of the natives will recede correlatively: it will be used only in those especial occasions (Aracil, 1979: 167)

The idea was that the current norms of language choice would gradually trigger a process of language shift. There was the need to induce changes in the traditional conventions of spoken language to avert this process and to ensure a sustained increase in the use of Catalan in face-to-face encounters. In the early eighties, the government and other voluntary organisations launched a public campaign to practice "passive bilingualism," whereby each speaker could use his or her own language in spoken interaction.⁶ In this way, the use of Catalan could be promoted without implying any immediate demands on the Spanish speakers, and thereby giving them a chance to learn and use some Catalan as well.

It was generally believed that a change in the linguistic practices of most middle-age and older people was not a realistic prospect. Therefore, many researchers concentrated on investigating the emerging patterns of language choice of the younger generations. Calsamiglia and Tusón (1980, 1984) investigated the patterns of language use amongst teenagers, Tusón (1985, 1990) observed small children at school and university students, Boix (1989, 1993) studied language use amongst a group of trainees for youth clubs, Vila (1996) researched the impact of immersion schools on students and Pujolar (1991, 1993, 1995, 1996) studied the norms of language choice amongst university students and the relation between language use and youth cultures amongst working-class groups in Barcelona.

⁶ "Passive bilingualism" is often referred to as "the bilingual norm" as well (Woollard, 1989; Pujolar, 1991).

Such studies generally confirm the existence of a *predominant trend to speak Spanish in the so-called inter-group exchanges*. Catalan and Spanish speakers will generally use their own language with people of their own linguistic group, whereas the former are more likely to *accommodate*, as Woolard (1989) put it, to the latter in other situations. People usually justify their choices on the grounds that Spanish speakers are normally not fluent in Catalan, although they can generally understand it.

On the other hand, these studies have also identified an increasing proportion of Spanish speakers who will use Catalan in "mixed" conversations, and this seems to be related to the increasing numbers of people who are able to speak the language either because they have learned it at school or through exposure to the Catalan media.

However, linguistic competence by no means explains everything, as the matter is much more complex. Situational (for instance, power relations), socio-psychological and ideological aspects have a significant bearing on people's linguistic choices. The notion of *identity* has emerged as a major theoretical and methodological concern here. The earlier studies by Esteva (1973, 1974) and the combined anthropological and social-psychological approach of Kathryn Woolard (1989) have had an important influence in framing the question in terms of ethnicity, which has turned the term *ethnolinguistic identity* into the categorical starting point of social-psychological (Viladot, 1988, 1989; Boix 1989) and ethnographic analysis (Tusón, 1985; Boix, 1989; Pujolar, 1991, 1993). The notion of ethnolinguistic identity is supported by evidence that people classify others (usually as "Catalan" or "Castilian") according to their linguistic behaviour.

These studies have found an increasing complexity in the patterns of language use in the field. The increasing proficiency of Spanish speakers makes code-switching a very common practice and language choice more and more unpredictable, to the point that some people may be taken as "Catalan" by some of their acquaintances and as "Castilian" by others due to their bilingual capacities and undetermined preferences (see Pujolar, 1991). Boix (1989, 1993) has also argued that ethnolinguistic identity (whether one is a "Catalan" or a "Castilian") is ceasing to be an issue amongst young people, as most seek to maintain friendships and relationships with everybody regardless of their ethnolinguistic background.

Although these results may be optimistic from the perspective of multiculturalism and social integration, they have added to the worries of sociolinguists, language planners and activists for two main reasons. Firstly because Spanish continues to predominate in inter-group

arenas amongst young people, and particularly in urban contexts, sometimes even when the numbers of speakers of either language is balanced (see, for example, Pujolar, 1995). Secondly because of the political consequences of this *blurring* of ethnolinguistic boundaries. It may be difficult to rally the support of Catalan speakers for a greater linguistic loyalty if Catalan identity is ceasing to be important and if it is not even clear who the Catalan speakers actually are.

DISCUSSION AND CRITIQUE

All in all, it is clear that the use of Catalan has increased considerably in the last few years, but it is still feared that Spanish may become the predominant language in urban centres, and that this might trigger a process of language shift from the centre to the periphery in the future. This means that sociolinguistic research is likely to be much needed in years to come in order to inform policy decisions. However, the experience of this last thirty years raises serious doubts about whether researchers and language planners will be able to identify the contexts where interventions are needed and the types of policy initiatives that are likely to yield results.

With respect to our experience of quantitative studies so far, evidence is inconclusive. These studies actually make a good example of how double-bladed figures can be. Data from the various censuses and surveys often lead us to contradictory conclusions which are difficult to reconcile (see for instance Strubell, 1981: 91-4). These may be attributable to differences in sampling procedures, geographical scope, target populations, the phrasing of questions, or even to actual changes in historical tendencies, such as the different rates of linguistic reproduction found in couples of different ages. The lack of coordination amongst the institutions or interest groups that do research makes it almost impossible to identify diachronical trends or causal links.

Additionally, important factors are not taken into account, such as a) population movements in Barcelona city, which appear to be very considerable, and b) sociolinguistic trends outside the Barcelona Metropolitan Area. Most Catalan sociolinguists treat Barcelona as if it were the only thing that mattered. Currently it is precisely outside this area where most Catalan speakers live and where they are numerically predominant.⁷ If we cannot assess the influence of metropolitan trends

⁷ And all these considerations exclude the sociolinguistic situation in other sizable Catalan-speaking areas such as the Valencian Country and the Balearic Islands.

on the rest of the country or vice-versa, then we have a very partial picture of the situation. Bastardas' (1985) earlier study yielded quite optimistic results because he included students living in rural areas. To believe that the whole country is to follow metropolitan trends may be a good working hypothesis, but it cannot be left as an unchecked premise, moreover when the recent spread of communications has brought urban and rural areas much closer than they ever were.

Finally, quantitative researchers are usually critical enough about the problems with their own samples or the ambivalences in the phrasing of questions, but they seem to be less aware of the intrinsically social character of the questionnaire interview situation. Given the high political sensitivity of linguistic issues in Catalonia, many respondents may react to the political significance of the research itself rather than to the descriptive dimension of the concepts found in the questionnaires. The appendices in Badia (1969) provide valuable examples of the contradictory political interpretations people made of his survey. The study on immigration in Torelló (1984) has a telling example of a couple who rejected to fill in their questionnaires because they considered themselves as "Catalan," not "immigrants."

This case is indicative of a fundamental problem which is often overlooked, i.e. the social processes whereby individuals actually integrate in particular social groups at a local level and their consequences with regard to language use and identity. The forms of classification in surveys and censuses place too much emphasis on browsing for simple correlations. In this way, we can locate significant numbers of speakers of Catalan who have been born outside Catalonia or whose parents were non-Catalan, or Spanish speakers whose parents were Catalan-born or "mixed." But there is no way of finding out what social processes are involved in these movements across linguistic boundaries.

The most serious consequence of this is that this type of research fails to provide useful results and ideas that inform language policies. Research results appear in the form of general statements from which there is no hint of how, when and where one could intervene to promote the use of Catalan.

The investigation of locally relevant social processes is often considered to be the job of social anthropologists and ethnographers of communication due to the greater contextual sensitivity of these methods. But, as it seems, research in this area has not found a way of working which can help to inform language policies either. In my view, there may be various reasons for this. It is not a secret that governmental bodies love statistics and the deceptive simplicity of indexes and figures, and in this sense I believe that most Catalan

language planners have not understood what qualitative research could bring into their decision and implementation processes. However, as Williams' (1992) critique has shown, the *Ethnography of Communication* has important methodological and theoretical problems of its own, namely a narrow systemic conception of social meaning and culture based on structural-functionalism. The result of this is a certain tendency to do synchronic analyses of particular groups or contexts and to provide extensive descriptions of patterns of language use according to the pre-established categories of Catalan-speaker, Castilian-speaker, in-group interaction, inter-group events, etc... The connections between language use and locally relevant (i.e. *emic*) cultural forms are often obscured as the researcher's categories invade the conceptual field (see also Pujolar, 1995).

The "problem" of this gulf between research and policy was the theme of one monographic conference organised by the Institut de Sociolingüística Catalana in 1991. In my view, the failure of sociolinguistic research to make itself relevant to language planning mirrors the failure of language planning to integrate research in its basic procedures. There is the need for a more intimate and continued commitment of researchers into planning activities and vice-versa to ensure that each part understands and benefits from the work of the other. In addition to this, there is the need to improve the provision of training for sociolinguists in higher education, which is at the moment in an appalling state,⁸ and to ensure that this training is made with an interdisciplinary orientation, as the assessment of language policies requires integrated approaches capable of addressing a multiplicity of aspects: linguistic, social, educational, psychological, economic, etc...

CONCLUSION

After the intake of migrants in significant numbers from Spain's rural areas had ceased in the early eighties, the early nineties have witnessed the arrival of the new immigrants from third-world countries. According to Vinyoles (1995), these made 60% of the 600,000 foreigners resident in Spain in 1994, to which she adds an estimate of half a million who remained unregistered. Apparently, Catalonia is one of the preferred destination points for these immigrants, most of

⁸ There is not a single doctorate programme in sociolinguistics and many postgraduate students have had to go abroad. This obviously deprives the country of the necessary spaces for discussion and dialogue, and, in this situation, it is not hard to understand why it has not been possible to develop locally relevant approaches and methods.

which are Moroccan. If we accept that the same rate between registered and unregistered migrants holds for the African population in Barcelona, these would make 0.9% of the total population (see Canals et al, 1994), and their numbers have been increasing ever since. They are also typically young and raise big families, which means that many of their children are now entering the Catalan school system.

Third-world immigrants have arrived at a time when the Catalan language is widely used in the media and the administration, and their children are learning the language at school. On the other hand, the cultural, religious and linguistic distance is greater than it was with the previous immigrants. The question will be whether social and educational policies cater to the needs of these new immigrants, and whether Catalan researchers will be able to play a significant role in assessing these policies.

One important effect of these new migrations has been a shift in the focus of public interest away from the old Catalan-Castilian dichotomy. Nowadays the term "immigrant" is rarely associated with Spanish speakers anymore. Particularly in the media, it is basically used to refer to North or West Africans. This gradual shift may also be caused by the fact that all Spanish citizens residing in Catalonia are legally Catalan, and therefore the distinction is not relevant to most official procedures of the administration.

This gradual loss of interest in immigration in the old sense has also taken hold of researchers. Since the beginning of the 1990s, there have been no conferences on the matter and very few research projects which addressed this issue specifically. This may be due to the fact that sociolinguists are more interested in the younger generations who have already been born in Catalonia, and particularly anthropologists may be sensitive to the fact that these usually see themselves as Catalan.

Whatever the reason may be, it is significant that the *blurring* of ethnic boundaries in Catalan society, as it has been detected by some researchers, coincides with this crisis of immigration research as a field of study in the traditional sense. This brings us back to the historical and ideological character of research, which makes it very sensitive to historical turns of events. In this sense, the redefinition of the meaning of Catalan nationhood which seems to be taking place in nationalist quarters may cause immigration research to become obsolete as it will be deprived of its object of study. No firm conclusions can be drawn, however, without a longer historical perspective, but some considerations can be made with regard to the present prospects.

Most sociolinguistic researchers and linguistic activists will honour the ideals of multiculturalism and cultural diversity, and

therefore acknowledge that Spanish-speaking immigrants have the right to preserve their identities or at least aspects of them. It is not very clear, however, what this means with regard to language use. It is quite obvious that we may have to review our traditional notion of "integration" and its associated expectations. However, the new notion of "integration" would surely not involve accepting that many Spanish speakers stayed functionally monolingual, as the two communities must live together and communicate in reasonable terms.

The blurring or gradual disappearance of ethnolinguistic boundaries amongst young people should be welcome as a sign of increasing tolerance and comradeship between formerly separate communities. However, it seems obvious that the normalisation of Catalan would require some instances of language loyalty on the part of native Catalans and that a significant sector of the Spanish-speaking population should adopt Catalan in a significant way in their everyday lives. After all, if the atmosphere of tolerance would paradoxically lead to the disappearance of the Catalan language, this would not constitute any worthy contribution to linguistic and cultural diversity either.

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