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## ***The Ins and Outs of Conversation in Catalonia*** **Luci Nussbaum and Amparo Tuson Valls**

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# THE INS AND OUTS OF CONVERSATION IN CATALONIA

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The true locus of culture is in the  
interactions of specific individuals and  
[...] in the world of meanings which  
each one of these individuals may  
unconsciously abstract for himself  
from his participation in these  
interactions.

(Sapir, 1932: 515)

In this article we propose to show how interactionally based conversation analysis can contribute to understanding the sociolinguistic realities of the Catalan situation. Building on existing studies, and in the light of questions which we formulated some years ago, we will consider the current validity and variation of norms of language use, and other phenomena arising from interaction in Catalan-Castilian contact situations. To conclude we will present a framework within which different types of conversation occurring in contemporary Catalonia can be situated, according to language choice and the language behaviour of speakers.

## SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Since the early 20th century, studies normally grouped under the heading "Language, Culture and Society" (which constitute one of the sources from which sociolinguistics has developed) have pointed out the importance of conversation, understood as a social event in which individuals construct their socio-cultural identities, and in which the social uses of languages, their varieties, and functions are manifested (Boas, 1911; Sapir, 1932).

In later years, these pioneering studies form the basis for lines of thinking in anthropology and sociology. Here, the study of verbal interactions occupies a central position, oriented towards the description and analysis of the role that languages and language uses have in social life, and in the cultural constructions of human groups.

We are referring now to areas of research which have been labelled *Ethnography of communication*, *ethnomethodology*, *ethnolinguistics*, or *symbolic interactionism*.<sup>1</sup> At first sight, what stands out is the multidimensionality of the object of study, which demands an interdisciplinary approach in order to do justice to its complexity; but one can also appreciate what all these areas of study have in common: they propose that the social and cultural reality of each human group—which itself is varied, diverse and complex—is constructed—or recreated—by means of daily interactions which the members of such groups maintain throughout their activities. As a consequence, one of the means of reaching an understanding of a culture, and the cultural representations of its members, is precisely the observation and study of its interaction patterns.

\* \* \*

In the case of Catalonia, conversational analysis can help in understanding how speakers make use of the languages, and the verbal repertoire they have at their disposal, in carrying out their daily activities and in constructing and negotiating their psycho-social identities.

At this point it seems advisable to consider exactly what is meant by *conversation analysis*, and by the term *conversation* itself. The term "Conversation Analysis" is used in two different senses in the area we are concerned with (Tuson 1995). On one hand, in a very restricted sense, it refers to a specific approach characteristic of ethnomethodology, focussing on the study of interaction, specifically of an ordinary, day-to-day verbal nature. On the other hand in a broader sense, "conversation analysis" refers to the activity of those who study conversation or verbal interaction in general. In this article, the term will be used in the general sense.

We take conversation to be a basic human activity, "an interactive, organised (or structured) spoken form of activity, consisting of spoken turns" (Cots et al. 1989). And, in this broader sense, conversation constitutes the object of the study which Gumperz suggests we can refer to as *interactional sociolinguistics*. This field of sociolinguistics is characterised by a micro-level orientation, by its use of a qualitative

<sup>1</sup> By way of example we recall that in 1972 a volume entitled *Directions in Sociolinguistics*, edited by J.J. Gumperz and D.H. Hymes was published, in which appeared contributions by the ethnolinguist C.O. Frake, the folklorist A. Dundes, the cognitively oriented social psychologist S. Ervin-Tripp, the ethnomethodologists H. Garfinkel, H. Sacks, E.A. Schegloff, the sociolinguists J.A. Fishman, B. Berstein, and W. Labov, as well as the editors themselves, among others.



methodology, and by its concern to link the detailed analysis of situated speech with social processes at macro-level. As far as its conceptual framework is concerned, it has the advantage of integrating the insights of the approaches already mentioned –ethnography of communication, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism– and other fields which have undergone important development during recent decades, such as pragmatics (Speech Act Theory, Cooperative Principle, Relevance, Politeness) cognitive science, artificial intelligence, and the sociological theories of Bourdieu or the philosophy of Foucault.

The way in which the term "conversation" is used is thus a little complex, and deserves to be considered closely. Sometimes it is used generically, covering any type of spoken verbal interaction, while on other occasions its use is restricted, being synonymous with spontaneous, unplanned conversation. In this case it is contrasted with other forms of spoken interaction such as interviews, debates, and so on. Those who adopt the first, generic usage, as we do, align themselves with a position such as Levinson's (1983) who observes that "Conversation is clearly the prototypical kind of language use," and that other types of communicative exchange must be seen as derived from this primary type, common to all the human race. This allows one to make distinctions between informal or ordinary conversations (of the spontaneous, unplanned kind) and formal conversations (interviews, debates, meetings in the workplace, and so on).

Within our adopted perspective, research has focussed on a number of different aspects. Nevertheless, the common aim is to show how the meaning attributed to a conversation is constructed in a locally determined, situated manner, by means of the resources that interlocutors have at their disposal. Among these, the exploitation of their verbal repertoires occupies a privileged position. The interest lies in describing and analysing the complex rituals through which communicative interaction is organised: how and in which position participants see themselves when they start interacting, how they display and negotiate their own images in relation to other participants and their own goals during the exchange, how the exchange itself begins, how the topic and the key of the conversation is cooperatively decided, how changing or maintaining the topic or key is negotiated, how aims are coordinated or agreements broken, in what way the exchange is completed, and so on.

It appears that participants produce and interpret a rich collection of signals, markers or clues, which serve to indicate all of above aspects, and which as a result allow the step by step definition of a set of contextual parameters, on most occasions implicitly. These markers

can be lexical or grammatical, but are frequently prosodic rather than verbal in nature, and require a certain conventionality in order to be interpreted. This allows drawing the appropriate inferences at the moment when such markers appear in the course of interaction. Each section of the conversation makes sense if we take into account what has gone before and what comes after; in this way the study of conversational turns, and the locally determined contextualised manner in which these are structured, has shown itself to be highly productive as a means of understanding verbal interaction, as an essential part of human activity.

\* \* \*

Since the beginning of the eighties, research work has continued in Catalonia, aimed at studying and examining the behaviour of speakers in verbal exchange situations (eg.: Calsamiglia & Tusón, 1980; Tusón, 1985, 1990; Woolard, 1989, 1990; Boix, 1990, 1993; Nussbaum, 1990, 1992; Pujolar, 1993).<sup>2</sup>

Without questioning either earlier or current macrosocial contributions, these studies provide fresh information on and a partial explanation of the development of the Catalan/Castilian Spanish language conflict in Catalonia, considering both political and social changes.

Below we have provided what we consider to be some of the most relevant insights of qualitative studies on the current situation:

a) The official status of the two languages has led to significant qualitative changes in the prestige afforded to the Catalan language as well as creating new tensions in the linguistic marketplace.<sup>3</sup> The distribution of language use depends on the way power relations are actualized in each individual communicative situation. In this respect, the concept of diglossia is shown to be inoperative in Catalonia.

b) In formal situations, the social status of the participants and the

<sup>2</sup> We would like to mention the participation of different Catalan researchers in the "Network on Code-Switching and Language Contact" who, sponsored by the European Science Foundation, published their work from 1989 to 1992.

For more bibliographic references on Catalan contributions to this field, see the article by Boix and Payrató, in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> We use the term "linguistic marketplace" following Bourdieu (1982) to refer to the social forces and tensions which influence language use when different languages or varieties co-exist. They are assigned different values and so, their use carries certain benefits or, on the contrary, loss of prestige and marginalisation.



power relations in the exchange seems to determine the choice of the *base* language of the exchange.<sup>4</sup>

c) In informal situations, the convergent accommodation norm adopted by native Catalan speakers towards the language of their native Castilian speaking interlocutors seems to be the dominant norm. This means, amongst other things, that the use of Castilian Spanish is felt, in many situations, as the adequate, that is, unmarked use.

d) Nevertheless, researchers point out the emergence of a divergent accommodation norm, called by Woolard (1989) the "bilingual norm," by which each individual uses, in a given encounter, their preferred language, that is, the language which underscores their sociolinguistic identity. This latter type of interaction was until recently infrequent in Catalonia. However it seems to be currently spreading and may reflect the social impact of language *normalization* laws, political changes which have occurred in the country, and in addition, models of language use offered by Catalan radio and television broadcasting.

e) Language switching in a verbal exchange is not an infrequent phenomenon. Switching may occur both in monolingual exchange between native Catalan speakers or native Castilian speakers and in conversations among bilinguals, whatever the base language of the exchange may be. Nonetheless, as could be expected, bilingual individuals are those that make the most sophisticated use of switching. Switching in Catalonia is not an aleatory phenomenon nor does it arise from the incompetence of the speakers. It signals the shared knowledge of the speakers and accomplishes various pragmatic functions addressed at contextualizing and constructing discourse.

f) In verbal productions in Catalan and Castilian Spanish interference is observed, loans and borrowings which demonstrate language contact.

Despite the significance of these and the other conclusions drawn by the aforementioned studies, it must be remembered that the groups studied represent a very small part of the population. It should also be pointed out that the exchanges studied correspond mainly to exchanges that took place in educational or para-educational situations, even though they do contain both formal and informal encounters.

As we have signalled before, all that has been said so far shows the

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<sup>4</sup> We understand base language not only from a quantitative but also, and more importantly, qualitative point of view. The base language is the language through which the essential aims of the conversation are achieved.

importance and the interest of studying the actual communicative behaviour of speakers in Catalonia using a qualitative approach. In this respect, focussing conversation from an interactional sociolinguistic perspective offers us a theoretical and methodological framework, that allows contrastable studies to be carried out. When speaking of conversational analysis, we refer to an approach that considers:

a) The **sociocultural setting** (historical, political, economic and ideological) providing the points of reference required to understand the way in which language market forces work in the communication exchanges analyzed.

b) The analysis of **natural data** recorded in relevant communicative encounters, taking into account all of the elements affecting the situations while placing a special emphasis on the way social relations and conflict are manifested in the use of the languages.

c) The **integration** of the sociocultural, cognitive and linguistic elements that come into play in all acts of verbal communication.

d) The use of a methodological framework that will allow results to be **contrasted** i) with the analysis of other pieces of data, ii) with the analysis of other researchers.

#### CARRYING OUT CONVERSATION IN CATALONIA: SOME EXAMPLES

Some years ago, we asked ourselves some questions about how the sociolinguistic context in Catalonia might affect speakers' day-to-day communicative behaviour. (Tuson and Nussbaum 1991):

a) Is there a legitimate language in Catalonia or does the legitimacy of a language depend on the coincidence of a series of specific parameters?

b) Are these parameters of an institutional and macro-social nature or are they situational and, consequently, dependent on the forces brought into existence by the verbal exchange itself?

c) On what does the selection of one or the other of the languages as the base language of exchange depend? What are the negotiation strategies used to establish the base language? Are social, cognitive or interactional factors priorities in the language choice?

d) What variables make Catalan-Castilian language switching possible? Does it depend, i.e., on factors such as face, identity, participants' relationships, politeness strategies, etc.?

e) What impact does switching have on monolingual conversation?

f) What types of code-switching occur in Catalonia? What pragmatic functions are accomplished through code-switching?

g) What is the relationship between the institutional changes which make reference to the use of language and the actual use of the languages available to people?

h) What is the relationship between language use, norms and *normalization* of Catalan?

i) What relationships can be established between the habits of language behaviour and the acquisition of the second and foreign languages?

In this article, we offer some answers, even if only partial, to some of these questions. In the examples of conversation which we present below we would like to reconsider convergent and divergent (or bilingual) norms to see how they affect conversation. In this task the starting point will be those studies which affirm, as for example Aracil (1979), that these norms arise from interaction and can vary from one period to another. In fact, we have seen how the convergent accommodation norm now coexists alongside the divergent norm although we may not have sufficient data to assert that the latter is clearly gaining ground. The approach adopted by Auer (1991) can also contribute to our field of research, since, following Gumperz, it takes a sequential view of code-switching with the aim of examining how the specific resources available to bilingual speakers enter into the constitution of social activities, and how language choice is negotiated and bilingual competence displayed in conversation, that is, considering code-switching *in* social action and *as* social action. As individuals we make selections from our linguistic repertoires in order to carry out our day-to-day activities, and these choices are at the same time social actions, in the sense that they reconstruct reality from diverse perspectives.<sup>5</sup> We will now consider a number of examples which can be regarded as interactions in contexts which are public to different degrees.

(1)<sup>6</sup>

1. U- escolta'm | per anar a Paris | quines opcions hi ha amb el tren

2. I- *depende* |cuántos vais?

3. U- jo

4. I- *tú sola* |cómo quieres viajar |que te salga barato

<sup>5</sup> To facilitate reading, simple conventions have been used in the following transcriptions. The colon (:) indicates syllable lengthening, [ ] indicates overlap between consecutive turns; |, ||, |||, represent pauses of different duration and (xxx) indicates unintelligible utterances or contain commentaries on the transcription; ? indicates a question. Utterances in Castilian are written in italics.



5. U- lo més econòmic que surti
  6. I- *lo más económico*
  7. III (pausa de consulta)
  8. U- escolta'm et dic els dies perquè em penso que no sé si hi ha:
  9. I- *no | esto no te afecta | quieres viajar durante todo el día o durante la noche?*
  10. U- si pot ser durant la nit millor | és que em van comentar que hi havien | si els que dormies al tren i els altres que sorties al migdia i arribaves allà a l'endemà al matí | el preu preu canviava bastant
  11. I- *no | lo que cambia es si coges el directo de la noche | ese es de camas | ese sí | ah | pero la otra posibilidad es salir por la tarde para viajar toda la noche que ese es más barato*
  12. U- la tarda i la nit eh | i arribes al dematí | ah | i ja no hi ha cap altra opció
  13. I- *pues por la mañana | viajar todo el día*
- 
1. U- excuse me | for travelling to Paris | what are the different possibilities by train
  2. I- *it depends | how many of you are going?*
  3. U- me
  4. I- *just you | how do you want to travel | cheaply?*
  5. U- as economically as possible
  6. I- *as economically as possible*
  7. III (pause while he checks information)
  8. U- listen I'll tell you what days because I'm just thinking I don't know if there's:
  9. I- *no | that doesn't matter | do you want to travel through the whole day or at night?*
  10. U- if the night's possible then that's better | they told me that there were | when you sleep in the train and others when you leave at midday and you arrive there the following morning | the price price was quite a bit different
  11. I- *no | makes a difference is if you take the direct night train | that's the one with beds | yes | ah | but the other possibility is to leave in afternoon so you travel all night and that's cheaper*
  12. U- the afternoon and the night eh | and you arrive the next morning | ah | and there isn't any other way
  13. I- *well in the morning | travelling all day*

In this fragment of conversation, recorded at the information desk in a large railway station in the city of Barcelona, both speakers (U, traveller and I, employee) maintain their own preferred languages without this threatening their mutual comprehension. Both

<sup>6</sup> This conversation was recorded and transcribed by Cristina Ballesteros, doctoral student in the Departament de Didàctica de la Llengua i la Literatura of the University of Barcelona (1994-95).

individuals are young and make use of the *tu* form, disregarding any of the negative politeness rituals (cf. *infra*) which would serve to maintain social distance (salutations, apologies, hedges), which one would normally expect in transactional exchanges between strangers. The conversation proceeds efficiently and felicitously, showing that the speakers share a set of basic norms of interpretation.

The adoption of Castilian by I and the maintenance of Catalan by U constitute contextualisation cues for both speakers, regarding their preferences and linguistic identities, and at the same time are behaviours which tacitly reflect a certain degree of linguistic conflict, a conflict which in similar cases is occasionally manifested in a violent manner when public service employees (transport, telephones, and post office) say they cannot understand Catalan. Although he doesn't adopt Catalan, I dissociates himself from this kind of behaviour by means of certain verbal actions, some of which, as will be seen below, are clear examples of positive politeness strategies.

a) He shows that he has understood the question and intends to give a precise answer (turn 2); for this reason he asks for more information.

b) He takes up U's reply and translates it (turn 4) –which he does again in turn 6– to show he is integrating this information into his communicative goal.

c) He responds to the question which he himself has formulated, supposing that the girl, who is travelling alone, will want a cheap ticket.

d) He interprets U's intended meaning (turn 9) without her needing to finish her utterance from the preceding turn.

The sequence of actions deployed by I allows U to ask new questions so as to obtain the desired service in a satisfactory manner. Both speakers show a certain bilingual competence and a set of individual linguistic options.

\* \* \*

In earlier studies (Boix, 1993, Nussbaum, 1992) it was shown that the adherence to a bilingual norm is not always realised as smoothly as in the previous case, probably because the transgression to the more extended norm of convergent accommodation towards Castilian is perceived as aggressive behaviour. In fact, it seems that adherence to such a norm clashes, at least for a large number of speakers, with a certain preconception that conversations have to be unilingual. (Woolard 1989, Pujolar, 1993).

Thus in many cases the tension between convergence and divergence

gives rise to a certain fluctuation on the part of the Catalan speaker, one moment maintaining Catalan, another moment incorporating a sequence in Castilian, thus initiating processes of negotiation and renegotiation of the conversational language. But this fluctuation can also affect the verbal behaviour of the Castilian speaker, and this is a new phenomenon which we will focus on in the next fragment.

(2)<sup>7</sup>

- 1 RN - s'ha de ser optimista | perquè no don massa feina | jo us ho dic perquè | veus si haguessim de fer nosaltres les fitxes: | sí | però per exemple vosaltres que les podeu tenir: ja jo | mateix que els he tingut: | val la pena fer aquesta:
  - 2 C - aquesta fitxes les teniu allà al: *centro de recursos* ?
  - 3 RN - sí allavors tu només vas allà | te donen la fotocòpia i [tu mateix te fotocop
  - 4 C - [sí la X m: *me ha dado algunas [fi*
  - 5 RN - *ah: lo ves y entonces allí puedes hacer [ las e:*
  - 6 C - [*he estao varias veces allí con ella*
  - 7 RN - *yo laquest any | fins i tot | fixa't lo que m'ha fet la X per què portés aquesta experiència | me les ha fet ella/ | m'ha fet seixanta fitxes*
- 
- 1 RN - you should be happy | because it doesn't make too much work | I'm telling you because | look if we had to do these cards ourselves: | yes | but for example you can get them: I already | I had some myself: | that's why it's worthwhile:
  - 2 C - they've got these card down there in the: *resource centre* ?
  - 3 RN - yes | so you just go down there | they give you the photocopy and [you photocop
  - 4 C - [yes X *gave me some [car*
  - 5 RN - *ah: that's it so there you can do [ the:*
  - 6 C - [*I've been there several times with her*
  - 7 RN - I [this year | any way | that's what X did for me so you can try the same experiment | she did them for me | she did sixty cards for me

This fragment is the transcription of part of a teachers' meeting on the subject of a teaching method. RN is explaining an experiment and C, who is used to speaking Castilian, takes the floor asking a question in Catalan and, at the end of her turn, she shifts to Castilian, an action which is, to our mind, an attempt at renegotiating the base language of the exchange, at least as far as her participation in the exchange is concerned. RN continues her explanation to the rest of the group with the aim of encouraging them to imitate her own experiment, all the while using impersonal and inclusive "tu" which designates C, other participants, and the speaker herself. C opens, and interrupts RN with a sequence

<sup>7</sup> Fragments (2), (3), (5), and (6) are from the Nussbaum corpus.



which corroborates everything RN has said. RN then continues the dialogue with her, taking up the Castilian lead which C has initiated, but returning to Catalan, the base language of the exchange, in turn 7.

The fact that we are dealing with a verbal exchange in which more than two people take part, and that this exchange takes place in a semi-institutional context, are factors which condition C's attitude, who wants to present herself as bilingual, on equal terms with the other Catalan speakers. This is despite her own preference for using Castilian. The adoption of Catalan, although momentary, functions like an invitation since the rest of the interlocutors continue in Catalan. In our view, it is also a gesture equivalent to the line often repeated in Catalonia: "*ya podéis hablar catalán, que yo ya os entiendo*" (you can speak Catalan, I understand you), although much more effective since it does not interrupt the flow of conversation. In this sense it can be seen as a strategy similar to the one I uses in the previous example, when he repeats U's utterances, although it has more force. Let us now see a further example:

(3)

1. P - ja ho veu veure no? lel sevillano aquell i tot aquell panorama
  2. Veus - (...)
  3. P - no no | (a Ce) *no lo digo por el L no lo digo*
  4. Veu- (...)
  5. Ce- vui dir lque allà no fan *los seminarios que nosotros/*
  6. *y por ejemplo Castilla León que est - que es donde está*
  7. *este amiguete mio*
- 
1. P - you've already seen it haven't you? | that Sevillano and all that scene
  2. Voices - (...)
  3. P - no no | (to Ce) *I'm not saying it because of L I'm not sayin*
  4. Voice- (...)
  5. Ce- I mean that ldown there they don't have *seminars like us |*
  6. *and for example Castilla León which is- which is where*
  7. *that friend of mine is*

This fragment is also taken from a discussion between teachers in which the base language is Catalan. However we see that P, in responding to an utterance (unintelligible in the recording) probably by Ce -with whom she normally speaks in Castilian- switches language. At the beginning of her turn, Ce attempts to converge on the base language, thus suggesting to the interlocutor that following the bilingual norm is an available and acceptable option, even if in our present extracts the interlocutors do not exploit it. Ce does not feel comfortable speaking Catalan and quickly adopts Castilian, which shows her linguistic preference.

From an individual point of view, these turns which begin by converging towards Catalan, on the part of normally Castilian speakers, (see also 4, line 4) suggest a need to show not only a passive knowledge of the language but also a certain degree of productive competence, which is frustrated at the point where insecurity at not speaking fluently arises. This is a factor which evidently affects *face* and *place* in the conversation, and we would like to consider these two concepts a little more closely.

For Goffman, face to face interactions are subject to both systemic and social constraints. The former are linguistic in nature, while the latter are psycho-social and are governed by the need to preserve the face (set of self-attributed positive social values) and the territory (area of personal space which an individual considers his/her own) of the speakers. These concepts are redefined by Brown and Levinson (1987) as positive face and negative face, and constitute the essential parameters of the principles of politeness. Any move represents a potential threat for participants' faces, a fact which explains interactional rituals. The mentioned authors describe how a face is acted upon or affected by certain processes, that is, procedures intended to protect a self-face or to minimise aggressions and invasions from alien territory. Brown and Levinson distinguish three types of politeness strategy: *positive politeness*, which consists of the expression of solidarity and sympathy, *negative politeness*, or the expression of self-control and respect towards others, and *off-record politeness*, which is indirect, and is expressed through the violation of the maxims of the principle of cooperation. Thus we can consider that those individuals who, while preferring to use Castilian, accommodate towards Catalan, are acting on their own faces in a way rather like a double-edged sword. While presenting themselves as actively bilingual, there is always the danger of exposing an inadequate linguistic competence (interferences, mistakes, etc) which would imply loss of face to others, and endanger their place in the exchange.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1988,1992) proposes that during an interactional exchange participants can take up different positions relative to a vertical axis which structures their interpersonal relationship. She points out that *place* depends on both external and internal factors. The first set regard place as the socio-institutional context conferred on each speaker, as a function of reference points such as social status, age, prestige, profession, and so on. The second set of factors are elements which from the inside of the conversation can confirm, dissolve or construct power relations which have been established a priori by the social context. She refers to these factors as



*taxemes*, that is, the relevant semiotic facts which can be taken as both indicating and staking out the place which each individual occupies throughout the conversation.

Amongst the various types of *taxemes* which she describes, Kerbrat-Orecchioni distinguishes language. According to her, the fact of imposing his/her own language on an interlocutor situates a speaker in a high position, while conversely, using a language which is insufficiently mastered places a speaker in a low position. This is because the lack of language ability opens up the possibility of committing errors, or at least creates the need to control oral expression very closely. The effect is an increase in stuttering, false starts, repetitions and other disfluencies, which could cause amusement, or elicit corrections from the interlocutor.

As we see, face and place are two parameters which need to be taken into consideration when studying language choice and switches in conversation, because they can determine the choices speakers make, as in the case of To in the fragment to be analysed now.

\* \* \*

In the following fragment, an extract from a television programme on the Catalan channel TV3, the presenter, P, always speaks in Catalan while one of the participants, To, always speaks in Castilian. The sequences in which this individual talks correspond to the model of bilingual conversation exemplified in fragment (1) without fluctuation or renegotiation of the code, which as we commented earlier is usual for the autonomous Catalan mass media. The bilingual norm, in this case firmly established by the institution which provides the framework within which this exchange occurs, is overridden here by a factor we have not yet considered: the attribution of incompetence to a non-Catalan speaker.

(4)<sup>8</sup>

1. P - i per què anaves a san cosme?||
2. To - e: *iba a comprar*||
3. P - peròl per què a san cosme?|
4. To - perquè- *porque: aparte de que: san cosme| um sale más a cuentall ¿no?*  
*porque:| és más barata| y: mejor calidad*||
5. P - quan et van apallissar|| e:: | et va socòrrer alguna policia o algú?|
6. To - *m perdón no le había:—*|

<sup>8</sup> Corpus of the Cercle d'Anàlisi del Discurs, Autonomous University of Barcelona.



7. P - *síl cuando te apalizaron|| alguien te socorrió?||*
8. To - *pue:s había allí un coche de patrulla de la policía nacional|| y otro: de la policía municipal|| y: vieron cómo se me echaba la gente encima no?|| y no actuaron|| o seall una chica que venía conmigo|| gracias a ella|| no? pues! se fue para: la guardia urbana y les rogó o sea les suplicó por favor|| que intervinieran que me estaban matando no? o seall entonces! pues! la guardia urbana: intervino y: y bueno gracias a ellos pues! me sacaron la gente que tenía encima y: me pudieron llevar a bellvitge no?|| [al autobús]*
9. P - [tu creus] *quel que la policía i la guardia urbanall sapl qui és qui ven drogall*
1. P - *and why where you going to San Cosme?||*
2. To - *er: I was going to buy||*
3. P - *but! why in San Cosme?||*
4. To - *because- because: apart from that: san cosme um is better value|| isn't it? because: it's cheaper | and: better quality||*
5. P - *when they beat you up|| er:: | did someone help you?||*
6. To - *mm sorry I didn't quite:—|*
7. P - *yes! when they beat you up || did someone help you?||*
8. To - *we:ll there was a patrol car from the national police there | and another: from the local police || and: they saw how the people were attacking me right?|| and they didn't do anything|| or anyway || a girl who was with me|| thanks to her || right? she went to the local guard and asked them or rather begged them please || that they should do something because they were killing me yeah | so | then || the local guard: stepped in and: | and well thanks to them they pulled all the people off me and: | they took me off to Bellvitge right?|| [on the bus]*
9. P - [you think] *taht | that the police and the local guard || know | who are the ones who sell drugs |*

The individual To has, at no time in the approximately two hours duration of the programme, shown any sign of problems in understanding what the other nine participants are saying, which he demonstrates by responding when asked, interrupting, and continuing explanations initiated by other participants. Nevertheless, when in turn 6 of the fragment he indicates that he has not understood what was said, and indirectly asks for a repetition of the utterance, P switches language<sup>9</sup> instead of repeating the utterance more slowly or reformulating it, or resorting to a synonym or paraphrase. All of these options are what one would expect in a communication whose context is the Catalan mass-media. All the same, the programme participants, and viewers, know that the switch is momentary, and that P will switch back to Catalan with To, which is what we see by turn 9.

<sup>9</sup> Even if in this case the utterance which is produced is a lexical interference –*apalizaron*: –adding Castilian verb morphemes to a Catalan lexeme.

P's behaviour is not atypical, however. In many day-to-day interactions between strangers, a sign of incomprehension, or a request for repetition is in fact often met with a language-switch, especially in those cases where Catalan is the chosen base language.

\* \* \*

Recourse to another language as means of resolving misunderstandings occurs frequently, especially in conversations between speakers who habitually use Catalan, and without this implying any modification in base language,<sup>10</sup> as can be seen in the next examples:

(5a)

A - és el text refós.

B - el què?

A - el text refós | *refundido*

B - ah: | és que no t'havia entès

A - it's the revised text

B - the what?

A - the revised text | *revised*

B - ah: | I didn't understand

(5b)

A - tu creus que pujaran els sous?

B - què?

A - que si ens augmentaran el sou | *el sueldo*

B - ah! | diuen

A - do you think they'll raise the salaries?

B - what?

A - that they'll raise our salaries | *the salary*

B - ah! | they say so

Code-switching also appears in conversation as a means of compensating for unavailable lexical items, as in the next fragment. D does not remember how to say "pica" (*sink*) in Castilian, and most probably supposing that H, the machine repair specialist, knows the

<sup>10</sup> When the base language does not vary, the normal term is code-switching. In code-switching, contrary to what occurs with language choice and language change, the social aspects of the distribution of languages are not called into play because speakers are not attempting to impose or negotiate the language of the exchange. The ability to codeswitch reveals a capacity to exploit elements from two codes according to needs arising from the construction of discourse.

professional terminology in Catalan, resorts to the word which H then translates showing his understanding.

(6)

H – *pero qué le pasa al lavaplatos?*

D – *pues que se conecta el desagüe de la máquina con el de: con el de: con cómo se dice | con la pica*

H – *sí con la fregadera | pero cómo*

D – *pues que sale agua por el agujero de la fregadera*

H – *but what's the matter with the dishwasher?*

D – *well it's connected to the drain for the thing to the one for: to the one for: to how do you say | with the kitchen sink*

H – *yes with the kitchen sink | but how*

D – *because the water comes out through the hole in the kitchen sink*

#### VERBAL REPERTOIRES AND CONVERSATION TYPOLOGY

The conversational data which we have presented, and the analyses we have carried out, obviously do not allow us to make generalisations. Nevertheless, given that these types of conversation exist and are recognised as possible, if not usual, by members of our community, we can attempt to draw up some considerations points which will allow us to advance in our study.

1. *The speaker's preference* is a factor which motivates both the choice of and switch in language. The preference can be determined: (a) by a certain lack of competence in the language which has not been chosen, or (b) for reasons of ideological nature. This second type of reason is always attributed to the individual's militating in favour of the public use and generalisation of Catalan, because, despite being bilingual by definition, if he/she does not use Castilian this is precisely because he/she is following a stipulation that prescribes the practice of the bilingual norm.

The individual who never chooses Catalan, nor switches into it when addressed in this language, is normally considered to be lacking the necessary competence, at least as far as production skills are concerned. This conception of the interlocutor's abilities is precisely what has given rise to the two norms mentioned above. The accommodation norm ensures a "smooth functioning" of the exchange or a "good manners" as some people comment (Pujolar 1993); the bilingual norm ensures the continuation of Catalan and brings about,



at least potentially, a teaching-learning opportunity for the non-Catalan speaker.<sup>11</sup>

Over and above all these considerations of the relations between languages and users, we have to superimpose another, perhaps more agonizing, which recalls the ideas of Bourdieu (1982) about linguistic markets. This would attribute a conception of Catalan as a language which only serves "among ourselves" –not a legitimate language– to those who converge towards Castilian. In the sense implied by Bourdieu, Castilian would then be the common code for those who inhabit Spanish territory where it is the common co-official language. Conversely Catalan would be a legitimate language for those who never adopt Castilian. This kind of behaviour would mean supposing that those who never speak Catalan are to some extent militating for the public use of Castilian.

It is interesting to point out that in some recent published studies on speakers' attitudes and declared behaviour, (Woolard, 1989; Boix 1993; Pujolar 1993) informants maintain that a lack of competence on the part of the interlocutor is the main factor explaining the convergent accommodation norm, while the need to promote the use of Catalan is the main reason for the existence of a divergent norm. These assertions are in total agreement with the verbal behaviours which are deployed in the conversations previously analysed. It will be important to see to what extent these stereotypes are fixed or will vary, especially bearing in mind the cessation of the massive influx of Castilian speaking immigrants of approximately twenty five years ago, the Catalan schooling of a large part of the population, and the effects of Catalan audio-visual communications.

2. In conversations where the base language does not vary *it is frequent* –although not habitual– (Woolard 1989) *to find code-switching*, serving different pragmatic functions<sup>12</sup> among which we can isolate citation, that is, the incorporation of other voices in one's own discourse (Woolard, 1990; Pujolar, 1995).

Code-switching as an aid to comprehension –fragments (5a) and (5b)– or to facilitate encoding –fragment (6)– presupposes that at a given moment the conversation can focus on the code itself as opposed to the communicative aims from which the exchange arises. Now,

<sup>11</sup> In effect defensors, of the bilingual norm maintain that the systematic use of Catalan should allow non-speakers to get used to it, as in immersion programmes, by finding themselves in authentic communication situations, and little by little, using it actively.

<sup>12</sup> See the inventory in Nussbaum (1992).

switches of this type have no connection with interferences, or with the relatively stable borrowings existing within Castilian and Catalan repertoires in Catalonia, which are linguistic items employed unconsciously. The kind of switches we refer to arise in an *ad hoc* manner during the conversation, and are possible because speakers are bilingually competent.

In the first three fragments presented, this focus on code does not appear. Renegotiation and language switching are thus due to factors other than incomprehension. In contrast, in the other fragments communication is halted, and a side sequence opens in order to focus on the code, without this implying any renegotiation of the base language.

\* \* \*

At this point we would like to propose a framework based on the notion of verbal repertoire, which can help to locate all the phenomena under consideration, and which may accommodate other phenomena which it would be interesting to study. This framework is provided in large part by European research which has investigated the interaction between native populations and immigrants faced with the task of learning the language of the host country (Alber and Py, 1986; Lüdi, 1989; Matthey and Py, 1995).

Within this perspective, bilingualism is understood as the regulated use of a repertoire which contains, in addition to certain specific forms of communication, two codes which can be activated according to the context, the relational network within which individuals operate, their communicative needs, and the interactive strategies which are selected in order to establish, maintain and regulate relationships. For *context* we understand primarily the setting, in Hymes' sense, or the frame, in Goffman's, in other words, a space where speakers have a certain status and carry out certain communicative roles which are intended to achieve the aims which they assign to the interaction, by means of a communication "contract" (Charaudeau, 1989).

The language choices which speakers make in order to construct their roles and achieve their communicative goals depend, as we have seen in our conversational fragments, on their competence and preferences. In the case of communities whose repertoires include two codes, such choices can be represented as falling into different zones defined by two main axes, which allow us to situate any verbal interaction:

1) The unilingual-bilingual axis, on which speakers' choice of code is situated, and where the base language or languages of the conversation are specified.

2) The endolingual-exolingual axis,<sup>13</sup> on which we situate interactions containing sequences where speakers perform some activity which involves focussing on code, arising from the lack of competence of one of the speakers.

On the first axis, language pluralism can be admitted as a resource:

a) The language of the exchange is established, but shifting to another language, or code-switching, is possible in order to produce rhetorical effects, to repair misunderstandings or to cover momentary unavailability of linguistic items, such as we have seen in examples (5a), (5b) and (6).

b) There can be two languages, either throughout the entire exchange or momentarily, serving to allow speakers to express their competence, their preferences, or their ideology, as appears in examples (1), (2), (3), and (4).

On the second axis, those conversations which present problems of mutual comprehension due to unequal competences, are situated. This is the case of interactions between teachers and students in second language classes,<sup>14</sup> or between native speakers and foreigners, examples which we have not dealt with in this paper. In this case, instances of code negotiation can appear, but we will see predominantly instances of focus on the code itself.

By way of illustration, in fragment (4), an example of bilingual interaction, To's action in turn 6 is interpreted by P as a displacement towards the exolingual pole, which leads him to deploy the heterofacilitation strategy of switching language, in order to clarify the meaning of a word which P supposes to be problematic for To.

<sup>13</sup> Porquier (1984) sets up three types of interaction depending on speaker's repertoires: *endolingual*, *bilingual* and *exolingual*. The first type are exchanges where there is no significant divergence between the codes exploited by speakers. The second type, typical of plurilingual communities, allows the consecutive use of two or more codes known by the speakers. The third, in contrast, is characterized by a divergence between the codes employed. These will be *asymmetric* or *unequal* exchanges, given that one of the interlocutors masters the code while the other is using a language of which he or she has limited knowledge.

<sup>14</sup> See Tuson, 1985.



It is important to remember that these two axes do not define clear boundaries, but rather tendencies and areas where identities, competences, individual styles and communication habits are reflected, as tensions within linguistic markets. How these forms are concretely realised is a further task of interaction analysis.

### FINAL REMARKS

From the interactional sociolinguistic perspective that we have proposed here, language use is a reflection of the social marketplace, and is at the same time marked by social values, intentions, and socio-institutional context all of which leave their own identifiable traces. Interactional sociolinguistics defines an intermediate space in which links between the social and linguistic dimensions of verbal events find an explanation. The study of this space is a promising avenue to explore in understanding language contact phenomena in Catalonia.

As we have seen, the external and internal analysis of commonly occurring interactions allows us to define the types of situation, roles and status of speakers. It also permits an explanation of the use of the two languages and to some extent allows us to redefine the concept of bilingualism, which in contemporary Catalonia is still often viewed from two isolated perspectives: either as macro-social phenomenon or an individual event.

We find ourselves in agreement with Auer (1988) who states that bilingualism should be seen primarily as a set of complex linguistic activities which speakers use in their daily lives, and only in a secondary sense as a cognitive activity.

Our proposal takes a tripartite approach to language contact phenomena in Catalonia: individual, interactive, and social. This approach encompasses the whole set of elements which determine the actual behaviour of individuals in specific situations with specific interlocutors.

First, the **significant fields** of use should be studied: health, justice, education, media, public administration, companies, business, church, leisure situations, etc.. Second, the use of the languages between diverse **sociocultural groups**: men-women, adults-young people, social classes, etc. should be examined. Third, the different **types of exchange according to the linguistic identity of the participants** should also be studied: Catalan-Castilian Spanish, new immigrants and autochthons, monolingual native Castilian Spanish speakers and bilingual native Catalan speakers, etc. We hope that in the next few

years the analysis of conversation will develop sufficient impetus to make a valuable contribution to Catalan sociolinguistics.

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