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**Language and Identity Choice in Catalonia:  
The Interplay of Contrasting Ideologies  
of Linguistic Authority<sup>1</sup>**

**1. Ideologies of linguistic authority**

In analyzing discourses about linguistic policies in multilingual settings, one crucial question is what makes languages authoritative in community members' eyes and ears. By authoritative, I mean that, by virtue of the language they use, speakers can command and convince an audience, whether that language has institutionally-recognized legitimacy or not. One definition given by the Random House dictionary of English conveniently emphasizes the linguistic dimension of the sense of authority that I intend to capture: "the right to respect or acceptance of one's word" (Flexner/Hauck 1987: 139).

When we synthesize case studies of linguistic ideologies, we find that such authority in modern western societies is often underpinned by one of two distinct ideological complexes. I will refer to these as *authenticity* and *anonymity*, to capture specific characteristics that arise in discussions of the value of language (Gal/Woolard 2001). These are reflexes of the familiar contrast between the universalist ideology that Dirk Geeraerts refers to in this volume as the Rationalist, and the particularist ideology that he refers to as the Romantic, and which Christopher Hutton discusses as an aspect of Protestant semiotics. Each of these ideological complexes naturalizes a relation be-

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tween linguistic form and a state of society, but the relations that they naturalize are quite different. The distinction between them can be useful in analyzing current efforts to frame Spanish as a global language as well as efforts to reposition Catalan in relation to Spanish. The two processes are not unrelated.

### *1.1 Authenticity*

The ideology of *Authenticity* locates the value of a language in its relationship to a particular community. That which is authentic is viewed as the genuine expression of such a community, or of an essential Self. Within the logic of authenticity, a speech variety must be perceived as deeply rooted in social and geographic territory in order to have value. For many European languages, these roots are in the mountain redoubts of peasant folk purity. For varieties such as African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) in the U.S., the roots are often located in the soulful streets of the urban ghetto or *barrio*, where the real folks are said to be busy “keepin’ it real”. To be considered authentic, a speech variety must be very much “from somewhere” in speakers’ consciousness, and thus its meaning is profoundly local. If such social and territorial roots are not discernable, a linguistic variety lacks value in this system. For example, the Corsican sociolinguist Ghjacumu Thiers (1993: 260) reports that a disconcerted Corsican informant rejected a superordinate standard for his language precisely because it wasn’t identifiably grounded in a specific region. “It’s a nowhere Corsican”, he complained.

When authenticity is the legitimating ideology of a language, the linguistically marked form is celebrated, and accent matters. To invoke a semiotic schema, the pragmatic function of social indexicality, rather than semantic reference, is paramount within the ideology of authenticity. In some bilingual circumstances, in fact, use of a minority language is taken by some interlocutors to be *exclusively* about its social indexicality, not its referential value (Trosset 1986). (Such non-referential value is often then trivialized and dismissed from the dominant perspective.) The significance of the authentic voice is taken to be what it signals about who you are, more than what you say. In fact, speech is often taken as not just an indexical sign associated with a particular group or type of person, but even as an iconic representa-

tion, a natural image of the essence of that person, as Rosaleen Howard shows elsewhere in this volume (see also Gal/Irvine 2000). To profit, one must *sound* like that kind of person who is valued as natural and authentic, must capture the tones and the nuances. Indeed, this iconic relationship between language and person is itself the essence of authenticity. It is within this logic that the acquisition of a second language can seem to necessitate the loss of a first. A speaker can't risk that the traces of a first language will spoil the claim to a new and valued identity, and so eschews that language.

The label used for the minoritized languages in Spain, *lengua propia* ('proper language, own language'), as discussed by Kirsten Süselbeck in this volume, conveys this view of the worth of the language as private and particular, rather than public and generic. It is well known, as Geeraerts reminds us, that authenticity arose as an ideological tool in late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Romantic notions of language, people, and nation. The cachet of authenticity was widely appreciated in that formation, but, as the limited use of the term *lengua propia* suggests, it is now very characteristically reserved for minorities and minority languages. The very survival of subordinated languages and nonstandard varieties often depends on their perceived authenticity. It sustains such varieties as valued resources in local social networks, where a claim to authentic membership sometimes can be the currency of a life built precariously on social and economic reciprocity.

### *1.2 Anonymity: The view from nowhere*

In contrast to minoritized languages, hegemonic languages in modern society often rest their authority on a conception of anonymity. Anonymity is an ideological foundation of the political authority of the Habermasian bourgeois public sphere (Habermas 1989). This modern "public" supposedly includes everyone, but it abstracts away from each person's private and interested individual characteristics to distill a common or general voice (Gal/Woolard 2001: 6). The social roots of the public in any specific speaking position are ideologically represented as transcended, if not entirely absent. The disembodied, disinterested public, freed through rational discourse from the constraints of a socially specific perspective, supposedly achieves a superior

“aperspectival objectivity” that has been called “a view from nowhere” (Nagel 1986). From this viewpoint, the tenets of dominant ideologies in the modern public sphere appear not to belong to any identifiable individuals but rather seem to be socially neutral, universally available, natural and objective truths. In a sense then, they are anonymous.

Anonymity is attributed not just to publics but also to public languages. We have seen that a minority language like Corsican gets no authority from sounding like it is from “nowhere”. But dominant languages do. Ideally, the citizen participating in public discourse as a speaker of disinterested truths speaks in a what we could call a “voice from nowhere”. The citizen-speaker is not only supposed to be an Everyman, he (or with more difficulty, she) is supposed to *sound* like an Everyman, using a common, unmarked standard public language. In that public standard, we are not supposed to hear the interests and experiences of a historically specific social group. Rather, the language is idealized as a transparent window on a disinterested rational mind and thus on truth itself (Silverstein 1996; Woolard 1989b). By this reasoning, public languages can represent and be used equally by everyone precisely because they belong to no-one-in-particular. They are positioned as universally open and available to all in a society, if only, as Michael Silverstein (1996) reminds us, we are good enough and smart enough to avail ourselves of them. Whereas social indexicality is the function prized for minority languages, in contrast the referential function is ideologically all-important in the anonymous public sphere. (Please remember that I speak of ideologies rather than objective realities throughout this discussion.)

Sociolinguistic case studies have shown how an ideology of anonymity allows institutionally or demographically dominant languages to consolidate their position into one of hegemony. By hegemony, I mean that they achieve what the cultural theorist Raymond Williams (Williams 1973) called the saturation of consciousness, which allows their superordinate position to be naturalized, taken for granted, and placed beyond question.

For example, Joshua Fishman argued that the traditional assimilative power of English in American society owed to the fact that it was ideologized as “nonethnic” in character, at least through the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. “American nationalism was primarily non-ethnic or

supra-ethnic [...] it did not obviously clash with or demand the betrayal of immigrant *ethnic* values” Fishman wrote (1965: 149). “Just as there is hardly any ethnic foundation to American nationalism, so there is no special language awareness in the use of English” he further asserted (Fishman 1966: 30). Fishman argued that this non-particularistic American ideology of language successfully promoted the acceptance of English as a seemingly neutral language of upward mobility.

In some cases of linguistic engineering, such as Basque (*euskera batua*), Indonesian (*bahasa Indonesia*), or the Neo-Melanesian of Papua New Guinea, language planners have chosen leveled forms, koines, or auxiliary languages as the basis for standardization. In this way they attempt to construct an actual linguistic form not identified with any localized group of speakers (see, e.g. Errington 1998). But the project of creating linguistic anonymity often involves ideological more than linguistic engineering. For example, this was true for the development of Hungarian-speaking unity from a linguistically heterogeneous polity in 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungary, as described by the anthropologist Susan Gal (Gal 2001). Many of the linguists and activists involved in creating modern Hungarian were not themselves native speakers of the language. They forged a standard language that they claimed was linked to no particular group or social class. Instead, they asserted that it derived only from the language’s inherent laws, a striking example of a professional linguistic ideology in operation (Gal 2001: 33). This Hungarian was a language that would be “everyone’s” because it purported to be “no one’s-in-particular” (p. 43).

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu criticized the ideological project of universality and anonymity that undergirds the hegemony of French, and he extended this critique to dominant languages in general. Bourdieu called the popular apprehension of the authority of anonymity *misrecognition* (*méconnaissance*) (Bourdieu 1982; 1991). Under misrecognition, listeners recognize the authority of a dominant language, but fail to recognize the historical developments and the material power difference between social groups that underpin that authority. This ideological erasure (Gal/Irvine 2000) is what allows dominance to become hegemony.

For Bourdieu, such misrecognition is the result of the deracination of language, carried out in institutions such as schools. They purge a

language such as French of its origins in the speech of particular social groups and purvey it as a natural attribute of authority. We might think of it as a kind of language-laundering analogous to money-laundering. The actual source of capital (linguistic capital in this case) is obscured by transferring it through legitimate institutions. Under the persuasive power of schools and media, people come to endorse a language's power as genuinely inhering in the language itself. Having lost its social roots, it becomes a language "from nowhere".

In Bourdieu's account, accent can be as important in the production of the anonymous standard language as it is within the framework of authenticity. Just as a Muslim schoolgirl's veil is now interpreted by some as a particularistic trait that disqualifies the wearer from participation in the French civic sphere, so Bourdieu suggests that a non-standard accent (whether class-based, regional or foreign) in one's French might be perceived as a particularistic trait that disqualifies the speaker in public deliberations. Accent can trouble the citizen's identity in the most universalistic as well as the most local of contexts (Blommaert/Verscheuren 1998).

The concept of misrecognition tells us that the standard isn't *really* everybody's language, and that it really does belong to specific "someones" more than to others. Those who have the view from the margins, rather than the center, are most likely to see it this way. For example, young black Americans overwhelmingly shun the supposedly unmarked, anonymous, universally accessible standard English of the school, rejecting it as "Too White". If anything, the laundering of the standard language through the school achieves an ethnic cleansing and realignment of linguistic differences that only confirms the tie of Standard English to White America. The privileged, exclusive nature of access to the public sphere itself is all too apparent from the perspective of marginal positions.

## **2. Linguistic Authority in Spain and Catalonia**

Let me now use the concepts of anonymity and authenticity to discuss the situation of Catalan and Spanish in Iberia. Not all demographically or politically dominant languages succeed in becoming anonymous and hegemonic in the way that English and French have. When a language's roots in the cultural capital of one group in a society are too

transparent, this helps sustain other groups' resistance to it. Américo Castro's observation, as brought to our attention by Emili Boix, reminds us of exactly this failure in the Spanish case, "del dolor [...] de que la lengua más importante de la nación no haya podido convertirse, como el francés, en el común denominador, amado y respetado de todas las culturas españolas" (see Boix in this volume).<sup>2</sup>

We might argue that the Spanish language failed to win this position in Catalonia because, far from being an anonymous "voice from nowhere", Spanish was heard there – and in the Franco period more than ever – as being very much from somewhere specific. We might further argue that Catalan in turn has not been able to dislodge Spanish from its dominant position during the autonomous period because Catalan itself is still heard not as an anonymous public vehicle of aperspectival objectivity but rather, as Süselbeck's and Sinner and Wieland's chapters show, as a *lengua propia*, a local and private voice belonging to a particular kind of person. I will return to this last issue in later sections of this article.

### 2.1 Anonymity and the Spanish language

An ideological program to promote the anonymity of the Spanish language can be seen in recent efforts to frame Spanish as what has variously been called a "post-national language", 'the common language' (*la lengua común*, a phrase used insistently by J. R. Lodes and which Emili Boix pointed out in our colloquium is a loaded term from the hispanist tradition), a *lengua intercultural* (see discussion by Utta v. Gleich in this volume) and as a *lengua de encuentro* ('language of encounter') in controversial remarks by King Juan Carlos in 2001. Furthermore, efforts to legitimate Spanish as an anonymous voice from nowhere have also naturalized it as a vehicle of aperspectival objectivity, with a privileged purchase on the kinds of truths essential to modernity and democracy.

A particularly inspired example of the argument for anonymity can be found in Angel López García's award-winning book on the historical origins of Spanish (López García 1985). That elegant essay

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2 "The painful fact that the most important language of the nation has not been able to convert itself, like French, into the common denominator, loved and respected by all the cultures of Spain."

proposed that Spanish had originally been a vasco-romance koine that was only later taken over by Castile and “disfrazado” (‘disguised’) as *castellano* (‘Castilian’), distorting its essential nature (pp. 58-59) as “la lengua de los otros” (‘the language of others’) (p. 54). The koine, he wrote, “tiene su origen en todas partes y en ninguna” (p. 72).<sup>3</sup> That is, López García proposed quite literally that Spanish was originally a “voice from nowhere”. Since this koine is the language of everyone because no one in particular, for López García it makes no sense to speak of its “native speaker” (*hablante nativo*) (p. 54). There are not some users who own this linguistic capital more than others. It is not a *lingua propria* but rather an anonymous and therefore universal resource.

I do not want to enter into discussion of the merits of this historical account (see the exchange between Trask/Wright 1988 and López García 1988). What interests me is the frame within which this account was put forward and warmly received in the mid 1980s. It functioned as the kind of myth of origins that the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (Malinowski 1961) called a charter myth: a vision of history that offers a foundation for a particular vision of contemporary society. In this case, it was a historical charter for a modern and multilingual Spain, united through a socially rootless language of wider communication – precisely “el rumor de los desarraigados” (‘the rumor of the uprooted’), the title of the book. As López García put it quite poetically, “como lengua de relación, la koiné no representa un ser, significa un estar” (1985: 120).<sup>4</sup> This “not-being” (*no-ser*) is what I mean by anonymity. In this account, the Spanish language, and the public sphere that it articulates, were indeed “everyone’s because no one’s-in-particular”. Spanish was the language of “los desheredados que no conocían otra nación que la que ellos mismos [...] pudiesen edificar sin restricciones de raza, sexo, clase social o lugar de nacimiento” (López García 1985: 54).<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, this language from nowhere is endowed with an inherent ability to express an aperspectival, universally available view: “La koiné lleva implícita [...] justa-

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3 “has its origins everywhere and nowhere”.

4 Roughly glossed, “as a language of wider relations, a koine represents not an essential being, but a temporal state”.

5 “the disinherited who know no other nation than that which they themselves [...] were able to build without regard to race, sex, social class or place of birth”.

mente la ideología antiparticularista y antihegemónica de **lo común**” (López García 1988: 143).<sup>6</sup>

López García proposed that the authority of the Spanish language was transformed during the Renaissance from its original basis in anonymity to one of local authenticity. Once Spanish was localized as “Castilian”, he argues, prescriptivism gained power, and perfect control of the linguistic form became crucial. That is, the indexical function of the language triumphed over the referential function:

Como koiné no importaba demasiado que el español centropeninsular fuese la lengua materna de unos y sólo la segunda lengua de otros; para comerciar, para dialogar, para emprender proyectos en común, bastaba con que unos y otros se pudiesen entender. Mas ¡ay de los otros! cuando el español se convirtió en castellano: quien no lo dominara a la perfección, por tratarse de su lengua materna urbana o porque una educación esmerada –y, naturalmente, selectiva– le había preparado para ello, quedaba automáticamente excluido o en inferioridad de condiciones para la vida pública (López García 1988: 108).<sup>7</sup>

Thus López García acknowledges that the basis of the authority of Spanish in the modern period has been particular and select, not anonymous. But in the last decade, various spokesmen for the post-national vision of Spanish have echoed the claim that it is deracinated and thus especially suited to modern universality and democracy. For example, Gregorio Salvador holds that

el español [...] no es seña de identidad ni emblema ni bandera [...] la vieja lengua de mil años y miles de caminos no es vernácula ya en ninguna parte [...ha] devenido en pura esencia lingüística, es decir, en un valiosísimo instrumento de comunicación entre pueblos y gentes, en un idioma plurinacional i multiétnico (del Valle 2005: 407).<sup>8</sup>

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6 “The koine implicitly carries ... exactly the antiparticularistic and anti-hegemonic ideology of the common interest.”

7 “As a koine, it did not matter much that centropeninsular Spanish was the mother tongue of some and only a second language for others; to trade, to converse, to undertake projects together, it was enough that the one and the other could understand each other. But woe to the others when Spanish became Castilian! Whoever did not have perfect mastery of it, whether because it was an urbanite’s mother tongue or because a careful – and naturally, selective – upbringing had prepared him for it, was automatically excluded from or relegated to inferior conditions in public life.”

8 “Spanish ... is not a sign of identity nor an emblem nor a flag ... the old language of a thousand years and thousands of roads is now not vernacular anywhere ... it

The ideology of the depersonalized, anonymous public with its universalistic discourse was originally pitted against the personification of authority in king and aristocracy under the *ancien régime*, as Dirk Geeraerts discusses in his contribution to this volume. But it has since been used to challenge languages whose authority lies primarily in the claim to authenticity, as we see in some of the rhetorical turns of global “post-national” Hispanism. As José del Valle has observed, “se presenta el español como [...] instrumento al servicio de una post-nación...que deja reducidas al atavismo y al particularismo reaccionario al catalán, gallego y euskera” (2005: 411).<sup>9</sup> If one asks, as did Benjamin Tejerina in our conference discussion, what is legitimated through the economic promotion of a post-national Spanish language taking its rightful place in a globalized world, one answer is precisely this kind of attack on minority languages and nationalisms within Spain.

One can open the trilogy of books on language and nationalism in Spain by the late Juan Ramón Lodares to almost any page and see this phenomenon, but particularly in the first book (2000). For example, on the question of who would teach the minority languages of Spain, Lodares (2000: 17-18) wrote:

los maestros serían todos de la provincia, estarían facultados para enseñar por las autoridades locales [...] y probablemente dispuestos a hacer de las escuelas un foco de culto a los valores regionales [...] y un vivero de apoyos futuros para la capilla tradicionalista (Lodares 2000: 17-18).<sup>10</sup>

Lodares associated the preservation of minority languages with overall Spanish backwardness: “en la historia de España la conservación de lenguas particulares está ligada a la conservación de analfabetos generales en todo el dominio nacional” (Lodares 2000: 21).<sup>11</sup> This is a difficult bit of sleight of hand, given the position of Catalonia in the

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has become pure linguistic essence, that is, an invaluable instrument of communication between peoples and nations, a plurinational and multiethnic language.”

9 “Spanish is presented ... as a tool in service to a post-nation...that reduces Catalan, Galician, and Basque to atavistic and reactionary particularisms.”

10 “the teachers would all be from the province, and they would be authorized to teach by local authorities ... and probably disposed to turn the schools into the center of a cult of regional values ... and a breeding ground for future supporters of the traditionalist persuasion”.

11 “in the history of Spain the preservation of distinct languages is linked to the preservation of illiteracy throughout the national territory”.

modernizing lead of Spanish economy and society. In criticizing the defense of minoritized languages in Spain, Lodaes explicitly invokes modernity and democracy, and implicitly the adequacy of the Spanish language for this form of society:

la España lingüística que se nos presenta ahora como el colmo de la modernidad, con sus cinco lenguas oficiales [...] es, en esencia, una España antiquísima [...] Una España cuyas lenguas minoritarias se conservan no por una voluntad colectiva, secular, democrática [...] sino más bien porque [...] no hubo ninguna organización de peso que rompiera la tradicional foralidad de los reinos [...] La gente que no circulaba se conservaba pura (Lodaes 2000: 29).<sup>12</sup>

Further, he wrote,

treinta años después del renacimiento lingüístico, creo que queda claro que los propósitos del nacionalismo en cuestión de lenguas chocan reiteradamente con las necesidades, derechos y usos típicos de una sociedad moderna (Lodaes 2000:251).<sup>13</sup>

Should there be any doubt about the virulence of the particularism with which Lodaes associates the minority linguistic nationalisms, he asserted:

La angustia llega hasta el extremo de no hallarse diferencias radicales entre las teorías que Hitler expresaba en *Mi lucha* [...] y aquellas que se expresan en ciertos círculos del nacionalismo catalán o vasco (2002: 184).<sup>14</sup>

The current campaign for the expansion of a globalized Spanish is explicitly built on an ideology of anonymity, universalism, economism and pragmatism. Among many instances where this can be seen is the cover story of *El País Semanal* of November 21, 2004, bearing the caption “La fuerza del español; los retos de un idioma en expansión

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12 “The linguistic Spain that is presented to us now as the height of modernity, with its five official languages ... is, in essence, a very old Spain...A Spain whose minority languages are maintained not by a secular, democratic collective will,...but rather because there was no significant organization that could break the traditional local privileges of the kingdoms ... People who were not mobile remained pure.”

13 “thirty years after the linguistic renaissance, I believe that it is clear that nationalist proposals concerning the language question clash repeatedly with the necessities, rights, and typical customs of a modern society”.

14 “the anguish reaches such an extreme that there are no radical differences between the ideas that Hitler expressed in *Mein Kampf* ... and those that are expressed in certain circles of Catalan or Basque nationalism.”

por el mundo” (Ruiz Mantilla 2004).<sup>15</sup> *El País* tells us that people all over the world, and especially in the U.S., want to learn Spanish because “es práctico” (‘it’s practical’), quoting Antonio Muñoz Molina, director of the Instituto Cervantes in New York.

However, much of that practical (read economic) value actually rests on the language’s value as the coin of authenticity in the U.S. Hispanic community. U.S. Latinos maintain their allegiance to Spanish through several generations and generally rely on it as a sign of identity. Because this minority group is of almost unprecedented and still growing demographic weight, American businesses make unprecedented use of Spanish as a second language in their marketing, giving rise to the practical value of the language in the U.S. The *El País* article happily, even gloatingly, makes clear that in the United States, “el orgullo [del español] se ha implantado” (‘pride [in Spanish] has been implanted’). The threat that the political scientist Samuel Huntington believes Latino culture presents for “los valores anglosajones wasp” is going to become a reality, the article asserts, in keeping with the imperialistic tone of its title. Despite the initial invocation of rationality, economics and practicality, Spanish in this description is far from the deracinated public voice of universal values, the “pure linguistic essence” that Gregorio Salvador described. In this defense of global Spanish the practical is, at base, the symbolic.

José del Valle and Luis Gabriel-Stheeman (del Valle/Gabriel-Stheeman 2004: 262) have already summarized this relationship of covert dependency very well:

el valor económico del español como seña de identidad hispánica, como patrimonio cultural, se traduce en valor económico en la medida en que al asegurarse la lealtad de los hispanos a esta comunidad, se consolida un mercado (2004: 262).<sup>16</sup>

They quote Óscar Berdugo, Director of the Asociación para el Progreso de Español como Recurso Económico, as saying

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15 “The force of Spanish; the challenges of a language expanding throughout the world.” The initial phrase plays on the meanings of fuerza as both strength and military forces.

16 “the economic value of Spanish as a sign of Hispanic identity, and as cultural patrimony, translates into economic value in the degree to which a market is consolidated by insuring the loyalty of Hispanics to this community”.

Si España se consigue colocar como referente de identidad o como proveedor de señas de identidad culturales con respecto a la comunidad hispanohablante de Estados Unidos, estaremos en una inmejorable situación para mejorar nuestras posiciones en aquel país (del Valle/Gabriel-Stheeman 2004: 260).<sup>17</sup>

In these examples of post-national Hispanism and the global commodification of Spanish, we can see that the ideologies of anonymity and authenticity are covertly imbricated. The value of a global and therefore allegedly universal Spanish language rests in large part on the foundation of the role of Spanish in identity politics in the United States.

### 3. The Paradox of Authenticity and Anonymity in Catalonia

Turning now to the Catalan case, we can expect a resurgent minority language to become caught in a tension between authenticity and anonymity. As a rare threatened minority language that makes a bid not just for survival but to become a principal public language, Catalan is indeed in a paradoxical position. Ethnic authenticity and identity value contributed to its survival under conditions of subordination. But now this value is in conflict with the universalistic ideology of anonymity that typically characterizes hegemonic public languages. Vulnerability to rhetorical attacks such as those by Lodaes are only one part of the problem. Authenticity and the link to identity that it sustains can also actually constrain the acquisition and use of Catalan as a second language by a larger population.

Again we can turn to the work of Angel López García for a representative perspective on this question. In his latest book, López García (2004) refers to the minority languages of Spain as “obscene”, in the etymological sense of “excessively obvious”. That is, they do not have the anonymous invisibility of ‘just talk’, pure reference, that is supposed to be the function of a public language. López García asserts that it is now “almost impossible” to carry out all the activities of everyday life in a language like Catalan “naturally” (López García 2004: 40-41). This may be less true than he imagines for first-language

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17 “If Spain succeeds in establishing itself as a reference point for identity or as a provider of cultural signs of identity for the Spanish-speaking community of the United States, we will be in an unbeatable situation to improve our position in that country.”

speakers, especially in areas of Girona and Barcelona outside the capital city, but it has some truth. As Sinner and Wieland point out in their contribution, the paradox of linguistic normalization campaign is that they are marked efforts to make a language the unmarked choice.

In studies based on research early in the transition to autonomy, I argued that the indexical value of the Catalan language as a self-conscious badge for identifying “authentic Catalans” – “Catalan Catalans”, as is often said – hampered its acquisition as a second language for many young people. Those who could not make good on such an identity claim, or who refused it as a betrayal of another identity, were reluctant to use Catalan. I argued that Catalan would have to loosen its tie to an ascriptive ethnic identity if it was to become a successful public language (Woolard 1989a; 1991).

The problems created by the close tie between the Catalan language and identity were on display in one high school class I visited in a Castilian-dominant, working class school in Barcelona in the late 1980s (Woolard/Gahng 1990). In a discussion of diglossia and normalization with university-bound (C.O.U.) students, the teacher asserted that bilingualism was abnormal and that the decision to speak Catalan reflected whether one feels oneself to be Catalan or Spanish. This is the ideology of language as an expression of the authentic self. The students, however, rejected this construction of language choice as a matter of identity, claiming that it created problems for them. One student said she did not want to be forced to choose one identity or the other, but rather wanted to be able to maintain both. Her teacher’s position denied her that possibility, she argued. For these students, speaking Catalan should not be considered to be about *who* you were ethnically, but rather *where* you were admitted in society. “We don’t speak Catalan because we are socially marginalized” (*marginats*), they asserted matter of factly. These students planned to use Catalan when they got to the university, because there they would be in what they perceived as a Catalan-medium public environment.

For these students, and I suspect more so for young people now than then, institutional policies and increased public uses of Catalan had weakened the equation of the Catalan language with an authentic and autochthonous population. Diminishing anxieties around authenticity made the language more available to them, at least in theory, although this was threatened by the views of an older generation, such

as that of their teacher. Use of Catalan had become a more achievable, publicly-accessible goal for some Castilianspeakers, to the degree that they moved into a wider public sphere where they considered Catalan to be the normal public form of discourse rather than a private ethnic marker.

But who could do this? In my now admittedly outdated ethnographic research in the late 1980s and early 1990s, those who actually used the new Catalan public voice were all children of the middle classes or higher. They were the ones who felt most at home in the public domains that have become Catalan-speaking through official policies. Working class children did not. Young working class speakers often feel themselves to be marginal to public institutions like the school, at the same time as they are all the more attached to the popular cultural domains where Castilian still dominates (Woolard 2003). To the degree that Catalan became a necessity for success in formal institutions such as the school, it also became a social resource acquired and used by middle class children of Castilian-speaking origins. The interests of this class are often more identified with such institutions. The connotations of social class that Catalan had before autonomy were further consolidated through the mechanism of institutional acquisition. In Barcelona as in the U.S., the public voice of formal institutions was not heard by socially marginal young people as a voice from nowhere, but as one that was *not* their own. Catalan was in this way in danger of being a victim of its own institutional success.

In part this was because the social roots of institutional power were not obscured by the invisible hand of the commercial marketplace. The work of researchers such as Joan Pujolar (Pujolar 2001) suggests that institutional use in the case of Catalan may not have deracinated it so much as it obscured the human voice of the language, particularly for many who come to it only through the school. Playful and transgressive registers and resonances of lightness and humor that are repressed in formal school use were not replenished for Catalan through mass-mediated popular public culture.

In a certain sense, then, it is true that as a minority language Catalan remained “excessively obvious” in some spheres of public activity, in part because it was markedly absent in others. But if minority languages are excessively obvious, then hegemonic languages are in turn excessively invisible. In counterpoint to the efforts to universalize

Spanish and provincialize Catalan that I have just sketched, there have been attempts to denaturalize the anonymity and the unmarked status of the Castilian language in the Spanish state. This is the point of the remark by Alexandre Cirici Pellicer that Emili Boix quotes in his article in this volume: “Que no se hable de bilingüismo en Cataluña, si no se habla de bilingüismo en todas partes.”<sup>18</sup> More recently the Organization for Multilingualism has mounted systematic challenges to monolingualism in drivers’ licenses, national identity cards, postage stamps, the national lottery and even the names of the members of the royal family. These at first may seem to be trivial and quixotic campaigns. But their effect is not simply to change the specific linguistic practices in question so much as to disrupt invisibility, anonymity and misrecognition. Their goal is to recognize and question the underpinnings of the still taken-for-granted linguistic authority of the state language in what is now supposed to be a structurally multilingual society. These campaigns attempt to move Spanish from its transparent position as *doxa*, to make it at least “obvious”, if not “excessively obvious”, and to make its invisibility “obscene”.

#### 4. Beyond Authenticity and Anonymity?

The Catalan authors Enric Larreula (Larreula 2002) and Albert Branchadell (Branchadell 1996) both have noted with some alarm a diminished interest in language politics and in the defense of the minorized languages such as Catalan. Of particular concern to them is the fact that most young people don’t seem to care very much now whether Catalan or Castilian is spoken; they are indifferent to language choice. Drawing on the metaphor of “*dolor de llengua*” (‘pain in the tongue’), a theme that echoes the quote from Américo Castro given earlier, Larreula poignantly writes that “*patir de llengua catalana està cada cop més mal vist i mal comprès*” (‘suffering for the Catalan language is increasingly viewed in a bad light and poorly understood’) (Larreula 2002: 17). Branchadell (1996) takes such indifference to language choice and the loss of a sense of linguistic conflict as signs that Catalan will die because young speakers simply do not care enough to defend it .

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<sup>18</sup> “We should not speak of bilingualism in Catalonia without also speaking of bilingualism in all areas.”

Within an ideology of authenticity, it is true that such indifference would signal atrophy. But, if the cases of hegemonic languages that I discussed earlier are taken as precedents, then a breakdown of the anxieties of authenticity is necessary if there is to be a significant expansion of the Catalan-speaking public. Could it be that we are witnessing not simply a loss but rather a change in the ideological base of linguistic authority for Catalan?

Postmodernism has challenged the two dominant bases of linguistic authority of the modern period, the twin monoliths of ideological anonymity in the liberal public sphere on the one hand, and the authenticity of ethnic and nationalist movements on the other. In response, defenders of languages in some settings have begun to search for new discursive ground (see, e.g. Heller 1999).

Among the hallmarks of postmodernity are models of multiple, hybrid and fluid identities and languages. In these, linguistic difference is often associated less with conflict and suffering than with play and irony. A well-known form of such play is the British sociolinguist Ben Rampton's idea of linguistic "crossing," the use by young people of a language variety that is not generally considered to belong to the speaker, but to another group (Rampton 1995). Crossing transgresses ethnic boundaries in the act of observing them, and in Rampton's view creates opportunities for new and possibly more liberating formulations of identity.

In the new Catalanization campaign introduced by the Generalitat in January 2005, "Dóna corda al català" ('Wind up Catalan'), we may have a first glimpse of a developing shift in the rhetorical grounding of the defense of Catalan. The move is away from both authenticity and anonymity, and toward playfulness and irony, the master trope of postmodernity. (Could this be the key to the happy Hegelian synthesis of the Rationalist and Romantic ideologies that Geeraerts suggests has long been sought?) The absurd mascot of the campaign is *la Queta* (short for *la Boqueta*, the little mouth) a windup set of chattering plastic teeth. Thousands of such plastic toys were distributed with the launching of the campaign. *La Queta* sings the campaign theme song – "Speak without shame, speak with freedom, and for a start, speak Catalan" – over and over in childish and notably non-native Catalan.

Authenticity, purity, tradition, seriousness and certainly suffering are all repudiated quite manifestly in this choice of mascots; what

could be less authentic than a set of plastic dentures? The website (Generalitat de Catalunya 2005) shows that la Queta enjoys donning the occasional ludicrous costume. She cheerfully asserts that she speaks without shame, despite the mistakes she makes. What a change from the mascot of the first catalanization campaign (1983), Norma, a slightly priggish young girl who admonished people about their linguistic habits and whose very name oriented speakers to normativity (see Woolard 1986 for discussion).

One of the first speech acts that la Queta comically models on the campaign's website is how to insult people in Catalan. The ridiculous toy evokes language choice as expressive and playful rather than painful. The presentation of the campaign reported on the website in fact characterizes it as attempt to make the language seem appealing (*engrescadora*), particularly to those who are not fluent by reassuring them that it doesn't matter (*no passa res*) if they make mistakes. Its explicit goal is to make Catalan a "natural, everyday", "modern" language, associated with leisure. Not a language that is imposed but rather one that "makes things easy" (*facilita les coses*). The campaign is targeted particularly at adolescents, and encourages them to perceive Catalan as a "transgressive language", one that erases labels (*esbora etiquetes*) – a recipe that appears to be derived directly from Rampton's analysis of crossing.

The initial reception of this campaign was poor, although it seems that la Queta has not disappeared. The controversial reaction among the linguistically faithful suggests how risky such deliberate change in discursive strategies can be. And just as there are inherent contradictions in taking marked action to make a language natural and unmarked, so there are contradictions in deliberate institutional planning to make a language playful and transgressive. But this is probably no riskier a strategy than the persistence of an ideological base in a pained authenticity that no longer has the convincing resonance it had in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nor is it riskier than an unsustainable pretense of public anonymity and deracination. I suspect that this campaign, well-received or not, may be a harbinger of deeper discursive and ideological changes to come in Catalonia. I will watch with interest to see if they allow an escape from the tension between the constraining logics of authenticity and anonymity.

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