

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY IN PUBLIC PRACTICE: CIVIC MOVEMENTS IN CATALONIA

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1. Introduction

At least since Gal (1978), research on language ideologies in multilingual contexts has situated language ideologies and practices in the context of relations of power and larger socioeconomic, sociohistoric and sociopolitical processes (Blommaert, 1999; Irvine, 1989; Woolard, 1989, among others). The present investigation adds to this research through an analysis of recent events in the linguistic politics of Catalonia, Spain. More specifically, the present investigation compares the language ideologies of two Catalan civic movements, *La Crida* (1981-1993) and *Organització pel Multilingüisme* (1998-), following the classification of linguistic ideologies given in Woolard & Schieffelin (1994). Though each movement is analyzed as a unique nationalistic response to the sociopolitical circumstances of its time, our analysis demonstrates that both movements publicly practice language ideologies in the same arenas.

As Woolard & Schieffelin (1994: 56) state in the introduction to their article, “inequality among groups of speakers, and colonial encounters par excellence, throw language ideology into high relief”. As we will see below, *La Crida* and *Organització pel Multilingüisme* were both created as civic responses to situations of perceived linguistic inequality in Catalonia, and these responses varied as functions of different sociopolitical contexts. Though the sociopolitical contexts that gave rise to the movements were different in each case, the practice of language ideologies in both civic movements can be located in similar arenas. In the context of “strategies for maintaining social power”, Woolard & Schieffelin (1994: 58) identify several arenas of language ideology including literacy studies, public discourse on language, the politics of

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multilingualism, and linguistic structure. Below I examine each of these arenas as potential loci of language ideological practices in the Catalan civic movements under investigation.

2. Literacy studies

One arena that Woolard & Schieffelin (1994: 66) discuss in their review of language ideologies concerns what they call literacy studies: “Textual exegesis depends fundamentally on ideologies of language, or ideas about the ways texts are created and are to be understood”. The interpretation of texts is key to the formation and function of both of the civic movements in Catalonia under investigation.

The *Crida* movement was formed in 1981 as an explicit result of textual exegesis. More specifically, this movement was born of Catalan nationalists’ interpretation of the publication of a linguistic manifesto in a Madrid newspaper ideologically opposing the normal and official use of Catalan in Catalonia. This initial manifesto, written in Spanish and known as the *Manifiesto de los 2.300* ‘Manifesto of the 2300’, was supposedly endorsed by 2300 Castilian-speaking Spanish intellectuals and professionals who lived and worked in Catalonia. The *Manifiesto de los 2.300* opposed linguistic affirmative action strategies for Catalan in Catalonia, citing cases of anti-Spanish discrimination. It claimed that “democracy and peace are threatened...by proposed laws like the ‘normalization of Catalan’ bill that do not take into account the linguistic and social realities of Catalonia.” (quoted in Monné and Selga, 1991:22, my translation). The *Manifiesto de los 2.300* came upon the heels of an attempted military coup against the nascent democratic government of a postFrancoist Spain. Catalan nationalists of the time felt that the text of the *Manifiesto de los 2.300* and its timing supported the idea that the notion itself of Catalan home rule was destabilizing to democracy in Spain (Monné & Selga, 1991: 25-30). The *Manifiesto de los 2.300* was read by the founding fathers of *La Crida* as politically fascist and imperialist, linguistically hegemonic, and culturally demagogic and suffocating (Monné & Selga, 1991: 25-30). Their interpretation of this text was key to the formation of the entire *Crida* movement.

The response that would become known as the *Crida a la solidaritat en defensa de la llengua, la cultura, i la nació catalana* ‘Call to solidarity in defense of the Catalan

language, culture and nation,' was a document with over 250,000 signatories (DiGiacomo, 1999: 111). The *Crida* manifesto was a clarification of positions that relied heavily on textual exegesis of the *Manifesto de los 2.300*. It reads, in part, that the *Manifesto de los 2.300* "makes a malicious distortion of reality, presenting as oppressors those that in reality are the victims of linguistic discrimination" (text reproduced in Monné & Selga, 1991: 31, my translations). The *Crida* manifesto goes on to claim that the distorting operation behind the *Manifesto de los 2.300* was put into motion to oppress the Catalan nation "especially in that which is one of the essential bases of our national continuity: linguistic recovery and normalization" (ibid). If textual exegesis depends on language ideologies, as Woolard & Schieffelin (1994) claim, then the textual interpretations put forth in the *Crida* manifesto reflect the language ideologies behind the entire *Crida* movement. In this way, the *Crida* manifesto practices these language ideologies squarely in the arena of literacy studies².

Whereas the sociopolitical context that gave rise to *La Crida* was that of Spain's transition to democracy during what has been described as a period of intense political and ideological debate both in Spain and within Catalonia itself (DiGiacomo, 1999: 109-113), *Organització pel Multilingüisme* (OM) was born of very different circumstances. By the late 1990s, democracy and regional autonomy in Spain were securely established and no longer debated. Rather, linguistically ideological debate in Catalonia centered more on the visibility of Catalan in public life.

Much progress has been made in the normalization of Catalan in public life in the last two decades, increasing the visibility of bilingualism in Catalonia. This is primarily the result of heavy subsidies from the Catalan Autonomous Government, which has worked to normalize Catalan by legislating its official use in schools, administration, and public affairs (Vann, 1999). Street signs are now in Catalan and more than 5000 books now appear in Catalan every year. There are two public television channels (TV3 and Canal33) and many subsidized radio stations that broadcast in Catalan.

² Other texts explicitly cited and interpreted in the *Crida* manifesto are the United Nations International Declarations and Agreements regarding Human Rights and the Spanish Constitution of 1978. Based on interpretations of the ways these additional texts were meant to be understood, the *Crida* manifesto lays out an eight point plan to defend Catalan linguistic and political interests.

Catalan has also been normalized in schools and administration, increasing the visibility of bilingualism in Catalonia. According to Catalan government (*Avui es commemora la incorporació oficial de la llengua catalana al sistema educatiu*), in the academic year 1978-79, the year of Spain's constitution, less than 2% of primary schools in Catalonia used Catalan as the language of instruction, but by 1995-1996, Catalan was the language of instruction for four of every five elementary school students in the autonomy. Since 1998, state-level civil servants have had to pass oral and written exams in Catalan, and just recently, Catalan has gained visibility in the administration of justice.

It is within this social and political context of ever-increasing use and visibility of Catalan in Catalonia that OM was born. Despite legal and practical gains in the normalization of Catalan, OM feels that neither the text nor the spirit of the Spanish Constitution of 1978 has been upheld (Joan Moles, executive spokesperson for OM, personal communication). The following quotation is from OM's website on plural documentation:

Article 3 of the Spanish Constitution states that Castilian is the official language of the Spanish State; proclaims that the other Spanish languages will also be official in their respective Autonomous Communities [i.e., regions] in accordance with the regions' statutes of autonomy; and declares that Spain's linguistic diversity shall be the object of special respect and protection. Despite this constitutional injunction of respect and protection for the State's plurilingual character, the languages of Spain other than Castilian, which are spoken in a territory inhabited by more than 40 percent of the Spanish population, have been absent for 20 years from a number of domains of great symbolic and practical importance. Among these domains are the citizens' personal papers (national identity card, passport and the driving license) and the papers of foreign residents. (Puigdevall i Serralvo, 2001)

OM's agenda owes to an ideological interpretation of Spain's constitutional "mandate" of respect and protection of Spanish linguistic diversity. OM's interpretation of Article 3 of the Spanish constitution, which, incidentally, was itself published by the state in all the official languages of Spain, has enabled a large grass roots campaign called *Documents plurals* 'Plural documents', with the objective of achieving tetralingual labelling (in Castilian, Catalan, Galician, and Basque) throughout the whole of Spain on all official documents. Such labeling would allow citizens who speak different languages to recognize themselves in their papers; likewise it would allow all citizens and foreign residents of Spain, regardless of their home language, to see the society's linguistic pluralism. In the context of strategies for acquiring and maintaining

social power, OM's campaign for plural documents constitutes a practice of language ideologies that falls squarely in the arena of literacy studies.

3. Public discourse on language

Public discourse on language is another arena discussed in Woolard & Schieffelin (1994) as a locus of language ideologies. One way language ideologies come into play here is in the selection of language(s) to use in colonial administration: "Which language(s) to use in colonial administration was not always obvious, and each choice had its own ideological motivations and practical consequences" (p. 67). Often times, according to Woolard & Schieffelin (1994: 67), "languages became the object of civil concern as new notions of public discourse and forms of participation (and exclusion) were formulated by new participants in the public sphere". While some histories may not view Spanish linguistic rule of Catalonia as colonial, certainly, many Catalans do, as is evident in their own statute of autonomy. Article 3 of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy, ratified in 1979, states that "Catalan is the official language of Catalonia, as is Castilian, the official language of the whole of the Spanish state" (quoted in DiGiacomo, 1999: 107). Both civic movements have been outspoken in their support of using Catalan as the language of administration in Catalonia, practicing their language ideologies in the arena of public discourse on language.

La Crida made their language ideologies crystal clear in a series of declarations, manifestos, and slogans between 1981 and 1983, condemning "antidemocratic threats to the Spanish Constitution and the Autonomy of Catalonia":

We manifest our will to advance in the normalization of the use of the Catalan language in all sectors of community life, without ambiguity or weakness, and further demand that the media of social communication, in our area, adopt Catalan subject matter, use the Catalan language, and give priority to the issues that affect our national rights... We are a nation and we cannot accept a new revival of centralism questioning what we have already recovered... Catalonia finds its strength as a nation in its culture, its language, and its institutions.

(*El manifest prohibit*, as quoted in Monné & Selga, 1991: 50, my translations)

The *Som una nació* 'We are a nation' campaign in June of 1981 was the first significant act of the *Crida* movement, according to Monné & Selga (1991: 48), because it catalyzed the unity of the Catalan people across internal political divides. Shortly thereafter, in the September 11th (Catalan independence day) manifesto, *La Crida* wrote,

“We say NO to the law of LOAPA that annuls all legislative autonomy and essential aspects of administrative autonomy... and NO to any law that aims to restrict the use of our language or otherwise limit our autonomic power” (quoted in Monné and Selga, 1991:51, my translations). *La Crida*’s call for linguistic self-determination led to a demonstration of over 100,000 people shouting *Som una nació*.

La Crida entered into public discourse on language to fight language ideological battles of this sort in the early days of the Spanish democracy when it was not clear how the Constitution of 1978 would be interpreted or enforced. On one hand, the Spanish Constitution of 1978 promised special respect and protection for the other languages of Spain. On the other, it explicitly declared Spanish the only official language of all Spain, stating that all Spaniards have the duty to know it and the right to use it throughout the whole of Spain (Etxebarria Arostegui, 1995). At this time in the history of Spain it was necessary to fight for even the right to use Catalan in the public administration of Catalonia. *La Crida* aimed higher, hoping to institutionalize Catalan as the language of administration in Catalonia. *La Crida*’s declarations, manifestos, and slogans like *Som una nació* supported this goal as practices of language ideology in the arena of public discourse on language.

Despite two decades of such discourse by individuals and groups like *La Crida*, the cited clauses of the Spanish Constitution continued to make Catalan “invisible” at times in administrative settings in Catalonia towards the close of the 20th century. Vila (1997) reasoned that the constitution provides a legal loophole for Spanish to be used all the time to the exclusion of Catalan. By the late 1990s, the use of Catalan as a language of administration in Catalonia was still enough of an issue for OM to publicly enter into a discourse on the matter with its campaign for a linguistically pluralistic Spanish Euro.

Per un euro plural ‘For a plural euro’, an ongoing campaign for linguistic pluralism in the administration of the Spanish treasury (1998-), lobbies for the Spanish label “España” to be replaced by “España, Espanya, España, Espainia” on Spanish-coined euros (*Campanya “Per un euro plural”, 1999*). That is, OM has called for all the official languages of Spain to be administered in acts of the Spanish treasury. The visibility of the Catalan language would likely increase if people were to see Catalan inscriptions on the money they actually have in their wallets (the money that changes hands in Catalonia). OM’s public discourse on the language(s) of the Spanish euro is a

clear expression of the movement's linguistic ideologies concerning the selection of language(s) to use in fiscal administration.

In 1999, OM expanded its interests to include stamps. *Segells plurals* 'Plural postage' is another ongoing campaign for linguistic pluralism in Spanish administration:

We wish to make public our request that our languages be included on Spanish stamps in a way which does justice to their demographic, historical and cultural importance, at the same time showing that the constitutional obligation to respect and protect Spanish linguistic diversity is being carried out instead of mere token gestures being made. (Plural Stamps-Multilingual Stamps, 2001)

We want the stamps which make use of these languages to have all the wording in these languages, and in particular the words "España" (= Spain) and "Correos" (= Post). In the case of bilingual stamps (Castilian and another language) we want the two languages to be treated equally and their respective positioning should be alternated so that there is no implication of any linguistic hierarchy. (Plural Stamps-Multilingual Stamps, 2001)

The language ideologies of OM are made explicit in their web pages for this campaign. Clearly a locus and expression of language ideologies, OM's web site is home to universally accessible and multilingual (hence very public) discourse on language.

4. The politics of multilingualism

Another arena that Woolard & Schieffelin (1994) discuss in their review of language ideologies involves the politics of multilingualism: "the nationalist ideology of language structures state politics, challenges multilingual states, and underpins ethnic struggles... Ironically, movements to save minority languages are often structured around the same notions of language that have led to their oppression" (p. 60). These notions include doctrines of linguistic correctness, standardization, and purism, which are tied to writing and its associated hegemonic institutions. Language ideologies are revealed by the association of such doctrines with the qualities valued within the culture.

Examination of *La Crida* and *Organització pel Multilingüisme* reveals similar practices of language ideology in this arena. One of the projects of *La Crida* was the creation and circulation of Catalan identification cards to market explicit Catalan nationalist ideologies. Catalan nationalists felt that Spanish-language, government issued cards were linguistically hegemonic. Officially, the Catalan cards never had

much status. Unofficially, they literally gave us card-carrying Catalans. There have been other incarnations of the *carnet d'identitat catalana* 'Catalan identification card', but two things that set the *Crida* era cards apart from other Catalan *carnets* are their unique identification numbers and the *Decàleg del nacionalista català* 'Decalogue of the Catalan nationalist' included on the back.

The Decalogue of the Catalan nationalist situates language ideologies in the politics of multilingualism by associating linguistic doctrines with qualities valued within Catalan culture. Entry #3 reads as follows: *Llengua, història, comarques, ecologia, folklore, institucions i festes nacionals són el teu patrimoni: guarda'l gelosament i enriqueix-lo*. 'Language, history, regions, ecology, folklore, institutions, and national holidays are your patrimony: preserve and enrich them zealously'. Other entries of the *Decàleg* appeal to the fundamental rights of liberty (entry #7), equality (entry #6), and fraternity (entry #8) while espousing truth (entry #4), justice (entry #9) and the Catalan way (entry #10). The inclusion of such notions in the *Decàleg* idealizes Catalan nationalism. In terms of the politics of multilingualism, the association of linguistic doctrine with virtuous Catalan qualities in the Decalogue of the Catalan Nationalist reveals practices of linguistic ideology in the *Crida* movement³.

Turning to *Organització pel Multilingüisme*, we again see practices of linguistic ideology in the politics of multilingualism. This movement has structured itself around linguistic standardization, especially in its written forms. The recent projects of OM concerning currency and postage grew out of one of the guiding principles of the movement, namely that all Spanish documents should be produced in all the official languages of the country. The case of the euro and that of postage stamps provide good examples of the intended marketing or engineering of perceptions regarding language. Two qualities stereotypically valued within Catalan culture are wealth and commerce⁴. OM's language ideologies are revealed by the movement's association of the linguistic doctrine of standardized pluralism with the real and symbolic economic power traditionally valued within Catalan culture. OM's call for linguistically plural passports, national identification cards, driver's licenses, and resident alien cards (*Documents*

³ For more on this topic, see Vann (2002).

⁴ Even the venerable (if now extinct) peseta is of Catalan etymology.

Plurals, 2001) recalls the nationalistic agenda of *La Crida*, again associating linguistic doctrine with culturally valued qualities (patriotism, freedom, and equality).

The efforts of both *La Crida* and OM to achieve authorized documentation in Catalan are consonant. Both seek recognition, and the language ideologies behind the civic projects of each movement link the Catalan language to desirable social ideals. Even today, a quarter century into the normalization of Catalan and 23 years after *La Crida* was founded, this agenda is actively promoted in public practice in Catalonia. As Woolard & Schieffelin (1994: 61) point out, “language varieties that are regularly associated with (and thus index) particular speakers are often revalorized –or misrecognized– not just as symbols of identity, but as emblems of political allegiance or of *social, intellectual, or moral worth*” (emphasis mine).

5. Linguistic structure

A final arena in which Woolard & Schieffelin (1994: 70) locate language ideologies concerns linguistic structure: “Structure conditions ideology, which then reinforces and expands the original structure, distorting language in the name of making it more like itself”. That is, due to hypercorrections, the application of the ideologies of prescriptivism and purism can actually have pernicious effects on speech forms. Curiously, neither of the two movements examined in this investigation has located their language ideologies in linguistic structure. Regarding the linguistic normalization of Catalan, both movements have been more concerned with status planning than corpus planning.

6. Discussion

As Woolard & Schieffelin (1994: 72) conclude, “a wealth of public problems hinge on language ideology”. For this reason, language ideology has been a topic of interest in recent research in linguistics and anthropology in Catalonia. In order to understand the language ideologies of civic movements in Catalonia as responses to contemporary sociopolitical circumstances, we have had to consider those circumstances. Yet our analysis of two Catalan movements reveals that, despite the advance of time and changes in social and political conditions, the arenas in which both

civic movements practiced their language ideologies remained the same. Links are forged in daily practice between diversely constructed cultural categories such as language, nation, authenticity, power, and tradition. Woolard & Schieffelin (1994: 72) conclude that “our professional attention has only begun to turn to understanding when and how those links are forged... and what their consequences might be for linguistic and social life”. The present analysis of language ideologies in public practice in *La Crida* and *Organització pel Multilingüisme* adds to our knowledge of how such links have been formed (and reformed) in recent civic movements in Catalonia.

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