

Language Shift and Linguistic Markets in Barcelona

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1. Background

This research concerns language maintenance and shift by adult speakers of Catalan and Spanish in Barcelona. Data has been collected through personal interviews and questionnaires with the aim of understanding individual sociolinguistic situations and language choices. In this paper language shift behavior by individual speakers is viewed as linguistic mobility. The paper discusses the concept of shift, what kinds of behaviors constitute shift and indications of shift in the present data. Shift behavior is reported by both L1 Catalan speakers and L1 Spanish speakers. The findings are also considered in relationship to the concept of linguistic markets (Bourdieu, 1977, 1982, 1991).

2. Theoretical considerations

Language contact is a dynamic problem involving many factors, and many theoretical perspectives are useful in studying various aspects of the problem. However, it is difficult to approach researching the overall concerns of language contact, bilingualism, shift and language loss by using just one theoretical viewpoint. A theoretical framework based in the concept of linguistic markets, but with elaboration from other theories, is being developed for the purposes of this study (Simmons, 2000).

The concept of linguistic markets (Bourdieu, 1977, 1982, 1991) provides a background where a number of other theories can be encompassed or interrelated. Individuals understand the value of their linguistic variety as well as the value of other languages present in their environments, and based on this awareness, individuals make decisions as to which languages to know and which languages to use in various situations. Within the overall market there are smaller sociolinguistic markets, or networks (Gal, 1979; Milroy, 1980), to which individuals belong and which influence individual's more directly. A speaker may wish to change networks either permanently or temporarily in relationship to one's social identity (Tajfel, 1974), and this maybe associated with changes in linguistic behaviors as well. Achieving linguistic mobility within the market involves the speaker's desired identity and linguistic choices (see Bourhis and Giles, 1977; Giles et al., 1977; Giles and Smith, 1979; Giles and Johnson, 1987), access to the desired group and also recognition by others to confirm that the individual can be accepted as a legitimate speaker in that situation (Bourdieu, 1977, 1982, 1991; Austin, 1962).

We would expect individuals to adopt profitable behaviors that enhance their well being (Homans, 1958) and that contribute positively to their social identity (Tajfel, 1974). Not everyone applies the same value to the involved languages and not everyone follows the trends. Linguistic market conditions also change as a result of large scale factors as well as due to the influence of individual's behaviors. In the case of Catalonia on the large scale Catalan and Spanish are co-official languages. However, there is a great variation in individual bilingualism and in the amount of each of the two languages in an individual's sociolinguistic network. Catalan and Spanish can each be viewed as having both dominant and minority characteristics (Simmons 2000), so language shift could be expected in either direction, or maintenance with little shift behavior could also be expected.

3. Language Shift

If monolingualism is considered as the base for full language maintenance, any use of L2 constitutes a kind of shift even if only temporarily. Individuals who are able to use more than one language, even with varying degrees of skill, have options to maintain L1 or shift from L1 by choosing L2. Choosing L2 probably involves some confidence as well as ability in L2, and indicates that the individual has linguistic mobility.

A comprehensive view of language maintenance and shift also realizes that a prerequisite to actual use of an L2 is ability. A number of studies address knowledge of the Catalan language on the part of adults (see Báez de Aguilar González, 1997; Reixach et al., 1997; Simmons, 1998). Although knowledge and ability in a language create the potential for use, it is actual use that allows an individual to participate in linguistic markets.

For monolinguals use of L1 is 100%, but multilinguals living in a multilingual social environment have to allocate some of their linguistic time and space to other languages. So, for multilingual individuals it is important to know how much linguistic territory is allocated to each language in the individual's daily life.

Change in the amounts of use of each language over time may indicate changes in the speakers' sociolinguistic environment or changes in the speakers' expression of their desired social identity. It may also indicate changes in access to learning and using a particular language. For example, in Catalunya, political changes restricted access to the Catalan language from the mid 1930's to the mid 1970's, and then from the late 1970's until the present, access to Catalan has been increased through political, social and cultural activity.

Where two individuals of the same L1 who are also speakers of the same L2 communicate with each other in the L2 rather than their L1, there is a clear case of shift (Jaspaert and Kroon, 1991). When a bilingual and a monolingual are conversing, it is necessary for the bilingual interlocutor to speak the language of the monolingual. However, where L2 is used among bilingual L1 in-group members, it favors L2 over L1. In Catalunya, prior to the late 1970s, Catalan was restricted and the sociopolitical environment favored the use of Spanish by all speakers including among L1 speakers of Catalan in some situations. Additionally, related to the earlier sociopolitical environment, most L1 Spanish speakers remained monolinguals and most L1 Catalan speakers became bilinguals; however, more recently, many L1 Spanish speakers have become bilinguals with varying degrees of skill and use of Catalan.

Another kind of shift is a change in the main language of an individual's daily life from L1 to another language. This type of shift is in effect a self reclassification. The reasons may include changes in the individual's sociolinguistic environment, such as the language used in the work place or language of the spouse and friends, or maybe related to the individual's preferences regarding language. In view of Martín's (1998) finding that a history of shift favors shift, it is also of interest to know whether or not others in the individual's environment have changed their main language, such as the speaker's parents, spouse or children. The present data also shows the presence of other speakers with linguistic mobility in the networks of speakers who report having changed the language of their daily life.

Another more subtle indication of linguistic mobility is change in the features of pronunciation of the L1. Báez de Aguilar González (1997) discusses modifications in the speech of L1 speakers of the Andalusian variety of Spanish living in the area of Barcelona. Although modifications in pronunciation did not necessarily adopt features of Catalan, some Andalusian characteristics were decreased or eliminated.

4. Findings related to shift

4.1 Method and samples

The data was collected in Barcelona in 1991 and in 2000, using a questionnaire. The questionnaire used in 2000 was significantly expanded from the 1991 questionnaire. Participants were 20 years or older and residents of Barcelona city or the nearby area. In both time periods, data was collected in three ways: 1) personal interview guided by the questionnaire, 2) distribution of the questionnaire allowing participants to fill it out at the distribution site or 3) at their leisure and returning it later to the researcher. In some cases participants requested extra copies of the

questionnaire to distribute to a family member or friend, and these were also returned to the researcher.

Interviews were done at various locations in Barcelona by the present author. Questionnaires were distributed at multiple sites but all were associated with language education where classes of Catalan, English or other languages were available for adults, so the majority of participants were attending some type of language class. For the purposes of this paper, all responses in each time period have been combined, and the details of data collection method for any particular participant will not be mentioned.

The 1991 sample includes 85 participants who stated Spanish as their L1, 85 participants who stated Catalan as their L1, and 12 participants who stated their L1 as other languages, and 2 participants who insisted on both CS (Spanish) and CT (Catalan) as their first languages. The 2000 sample includes 17 participants who stated their L1 as CS, 13 who stated their L1 as CT and 2 participants who stated their L1 as both CS and CT.

The questionnaire was lengthy and the problem of incomplete responses was frequent. For any particular item, the number of received responses is often small and is indicated in parenthesis the tables. Only the results from L1 CS and L1 CT speakers are presented here. CS indicates any variety of Spanish in Spain or elsewhere. CT includes any variety of Catalan from the region of Catalonia, but does not include Mallorquin, Menorquin, Valencian, etc.

4.2 Amount of Catalan used

Participants were asked to estimate the amount of Catalan they use in daily life compared to the amount of Spanish used. The percents shown in Table 1 are the average amounts of Catalan used by the sample of L1 CT speakers and the sample of L1 CS speakers considering hearing, speaking, reading and writing for both time periods. The use of CT and CS combined is considered to be 100%, so, as an example, a result of 74% for speaking Catalan also implies that the other 26% of speaking is done in Spanish.

Amount of CATALAN used				
	1991		2000	
	L1 CT	L1 CS	L1 CT	L1 CS
Hear	65% (n = 55)	47% (n = 53)	64% (n = 13)	42% (n = 16)
Speak	74% (n = 61)	33% (n = 56)	71% (n = 13)	31% (n = 15)
Read	50% (n = 60)	26% (n = 53)	47% (n = 13)	21% (n = 14)
Write	59% (n = 61)	17% (n = 53)	58% (n = 13)	17% (n = 15)

Table 1

As expected, L1 Catalan speakers report more use of Catalan than of Spanish, and L1 Spanish speakers indicate more use of Spanish than of Catalan. However, there is significant use of the L2 in both groups. For example, in the 1991 L1 CS group, the average use of Catalan is 33% or 1/3 of overall speech, and 26% of reading is done in Catalan. There is not much difference in the percentages reported in 1991 and those in 2000.

Participants were also asked whether or not they thought the amounts of Catalan and Spanish used at the time of data collection, in 1991, were more or less than the amounts they had used at some previous time. The 2000 questionnaire contained the same question but more specifically in regard to the period between 1990 and 2000. The period over which change occurred is different for each participant. The results in Table 2 are the average percent for the group of participants responding to the item and can only indicate a general trend in the direction of change in the amounts of use of each language. An increase in the amount of Catalan used also implies a decrease in the amount of Spanish used, and a decrease in the amount of Catalan implies an increase in the amount of Spanish used.

Change in the amount of CATALAN used.				
	1991		2000	
	L1 CT	L1 CS	L1 CT	L1 CS
Hear	16% (n = 24)	21% (n = 28)	8% (n = 12)	4% (n = 15)
Speak	19% (n = 25)	24% (n = 31)	6% (n = 12)	6% (n = 14)
Read	16% (n = 24)	18% (n = 27)	7% (n = 12)	-- 6% (n = 14)
Write	29% (n = 23)	9% (n = 29)	11% (n = 12)	-- 7% (n = 15)

Table 2

The 1991 sample shows an increase in the use of Catalan in 1991 compared with use in periods prior to 1991 in all four areas of use. While the 2000 sample indicates increases in the amount of Catalan being heard in the environments of the speakers and also in speaking, there is a decrease reported in the use of written Catalan. One factor to be considered is the difference in educational experience of speakers in 2000 compared to those of the 1991 sample. Speakers in the 2000 may have had more of their education in Catalan and some decrease in use may be due to having completed school and a decrease in required use of Catalan. Also, in terms of efforts for the normalization of Catalan, the degree of changes between the late seventies and 1991 may have been greater than those between 1990 and 2000.

The amount of Catalan in the environment, or reported hearing and speaking, have increased in both time periods as reported by participants of both L1 groups, perhaps indicating a market trend in the positive value of Catalan as well as effects of normalization efforts to increase the amount of Catalan in media and daily life. The profiles of individuals who report using large amounts of L2 or who have increased the amount of use of L2 are important for understanding other factors related to linguistic mobility. An overview of the 1991 L1 CS speakers and their utilization ratios of Catalan and Spanish in relationship to other factors in their sociolinguistic networks can be found in Simmons (2002).

4.3 Shift, maintenance or spread

Participants were asked if they sometimes speak Spanish to L1 Catalan interlocutors and if they sometimes speak Catalan to L1 Spanish interlocutors. If L2 is used with members of the same L1, there is shift; if L1 is used with bilinguals of the other L1, the other interlocutor accommodates to the first speaker's L1 resulting in a kind of spread of the first speaker's L1. The results of 1991 and 2000 are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Shift, maintenance or spread on the part of bilinguals of both L1 groups in 1991 sample					
L1 Catalan speakers (n = 50)		Do you speak CS to L1 CT?	Do you speak CT to L1 CS?	L1 Spanish speakers (n = 40)	
Maintenance	10	NO	NO	8	Maintenance
Shift	0	YES	NO	12	Spread of CS
Spread of CT	26	NO	YES	5	Shift
Flexible	14	YES	YES	15	Flexible

Table 3

Shift, maintenance or spread on the part of bilinguals of both L1 groups in 2000 sample					
Bilingual L1 Catalan (n = 13)		Do you speak CS to L1 CT?	Do you speak CT to L1 CS?	Bilingual L1 Spanish (n = 17)	
Maintenance	1	NO	NO	1	Maintenance
Shift	2	YES	NO	13	Spread of CS
Spread of CT	9	NO	YES	1	Shift
Flexible	1	YES	YES	2	Flexible

Table 4

In both samples, and in both L1 groups a large number of speakers indicate that they use their own L1 with members of their own group and members of the other group. And, in terms of each sample, the ratio of speakers who report spread of their own L1 is higher in the 2000 sample than in the 1991 sample. The ratio of speakers reporting flexible use of the languages is lower in the 2000 group.

In 1991, no L1 CT speakers reported the second combination of speaking Spanish with other L1 CT speakers but not speaking Catalan to L1 CS individuals; however, in the 2000 sample this behavior is reported. The flexible combination also indicates shift because of use of L2 with L1 group members, but this may be countered to some extent by also using L1 with members of the other language group. Exploring the personal characteristics and situations of those who report using L2 with members of their own L1 group is not within the scope of this paper, but is an important aspect of the research.

4.4 Change in the main language of everyday life

The 2000 data collection was done with a revised questionnaire which asked participants to clarify the language they first learned early in life as compared with that which they presently consider to be the main language of their daily life. In most cases, the same language was stated for both categories. However, a few participants in both L1 groups indicated a change. Details of those participants indicating the main language of their daily life, shown by the symbol LM, as different from their L1 are displayed in Tables 5a and 5b.

Participants who state their present LM (main language) as different from their L1 (2000 sample)													
code	L1	LM	pob	age	sex	hm %	wk %	soc %	spk %	rd %	wrt %	cs to L1ct	ct to Lcs
1	cs	2	bcn	23	f	5	80	70	60	50	80	yes	yes
2	cs	ct	bcn	39	m	98	70	40	60	5	1	no	no
3	cs	2	bcn	22	f	0	100	50	50	50	50	no	yes
4	cs	ct	bcn	58	f	0	95	50	x	x	0	yes	no
5	ct	2	cata	24	m	100	95	75	75	10	10	no	yes
6	ct	2	bcn	30	m	25	50	50	50	50	50	yes	no

Table 5a

code	participant		father		mother		spouse		children		bilg	prefer
	L1	LM	L1	LM	L1	LM	L1	LM	L1	LM		
1	cs	2	gal	cs	gal	cs	x	x	x	x	yes	cs
2	cs	ct	cs	cs	cs	cs	ct	ct	ct	ct	yes	cs
3	cs	2	cs	cs	cs	cs	x	x	x	x	yes	same
4	cs	ct	cs	x	2	x	cs	x	cs	cs	yes	same
5	ct	2	ct	cs	2	ct	2	2	x	x	yes	same
6	ct	2	ct	ct	cs	2	eng	2/eng	2/eng	2/eng	yes	same

Table 5b

Six of the 32 speakers in the 2000 sample reported their present main language to be different than their L1. In Table 5a, the amount of Catalan used at home varies, but all speakers in both L1 groups report 50% or more Catalan in the work place. All speakers report at least 50% Catalan for their overall use of spoken language. In Table 5b shows the L1 and LM for other members of the participants sociolinguistic network. Participants 1 and 5 reported that both their father and the mother had also changed the main language of their daily life. Participant 6 reported that his mother and wife had changed the main language of their daily lives. Though this is a small sample, these findings seem to offer support for Martin's (1998) findings that a previous shift facilitates shift.

Participants 2, 5 and 6 report the L1 of their spouse as different than their own L1. Participants 2 and 5 report the language of their children as being different than their own L1 and the same as the L1 of their spouses. It is possible that marriage to a spouse of a different L1 changed the participant's sociolinguistic environment and network, giving the participant access to the other language group and also recognition as a legitimate speaker of that group's language (see Simmons, 2002).

All participants consider themselves to be bilingual in Catalan and Spanish. No one of these six individuals stated a preference for Catalan. Two of the L1 CS group stated a preference for Spanish while the other four speakers stated they have no preference for either language over the other.

5. Discussion

The findings show that the same individual may report more than one type of shift. In the data samples of this study there seems to be a move towards more use of Catalan overall, as indicated by the average percents for each L1 group's reported use of Catalan and Spanish. This is expected in that Catalan has been recently re-officialized after having been restricted, whereas there was no change in the official status of Castilian, except of course, that it would share official status with Catalan in Catalunya.

The sociolinguistic markets of 1991 and 2000 are not the same. It seems reasonable that moves by adult speakers towards Catalan would have been greater between the political change in the late 1970's and 1991 than they would have been between 1990 and 2000, and the rate, or curve, of change would slow somewhat over time.

The 2000 sample indicates some linguistic mobility towards Spanish on the part of L1 Catalan speakers, whereas this was not noted in the 1991 sample. However, the sample also indicates movement towards Catalan by several L1 Spanish speakers as well.

In terms of method, it is important to document multiple indications of shift, or of maintenance, by the same individual to confirm self reported behaviors. It is also important to request information about the individual's sociolinguistic situation and about the linguistic behaviors of others in the

individual's social network.

The present study has many limitations and is in effect work in progress; however, in pursuing various aspects of the problem of language shift in terms of both theoretical views and data collection, some useful reference points have been found for improving questionnaires and theoretical perspectives regarding linguistic mobility of individuals in linguistic markets. Every language contact situation consists of different factors, but it may be possible to design a questionnaire that can be widely applicable. The situation of Catalan and Spanish in contact is very dynamic in terms of official language policy and planning as well as in interpersonal interactions. Thus there is a high degree of language awareness, and also many possibilities for linguistic mobility as well as for maintenance of both languages. Further research needs to continue to observe the large scale sociolinguistic factors as well as to further research the profiles of individuals concerning their linguistic mobility.

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