

Change of values and the future of the Galician language

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Abstract

In response to the observation that the Galician language finds itself in a situation of potential danger, we will reflect on some parameters that may help to define the situation. Beginning with an analysis of issues such as the socio-structural transition that Galician has experienced over the past few decades and making use of sociolinguistic data provided by some recent investigations such as the *Mapa Sociolingüístico de Galicia* (Sociolinguistic Map of Galicia), we will endeavour to present some interpretive advice inspired by sociological theory of culture and values, and also based upon a contrast with data proceeding from a study recently conducted in Valencia. This analysis will help us to defend the idea that the latest data available concerning the strong decline in exclusive Galician-speakers must be viewed in the context that a change in culture and values is beginning. This possible change is destined to have a direct effect on the way in which the community of Galicia assumes and makes possible its own identity plan.

Key words: Galician language, culture, values, identity, distinction, globalisation.

Resumo

A partir da constatación de que a lingua galega se atopa nunha situación potencial de perigo, estableceremos unha reflexión sobre algúns dos parámetros que poden axudar a definir a súa situación. Partindo da análise de cuestións tales como a transición socio-estructural que Galicia experimentou durante as últimas décadas e recalando nos datos de carácter sociolingüístico achegados por algunhas investigacións recentes, tales como o *Mapa Sociolingüístico de Galicia*, procuraremos presentar algunhas suxestións interpretativas inspiradas na teoría sociolóxica da cultura e dos valores, así como mediante un contraste con datos procedentes dun estudio realizado recentemente no País Valenciano, que nos axuden a defender a idea de que os últimos datos dispoñibles relativos a un forte declive do número de galego-falantes exclusivos deben ser enmarcados no inicio dun proceso de cambio cultural e de valores. Este posible cambio está chamado a ter unha incidencia directa no modo como a comunidade de Galicia asuma e faga efectivo no futuro o seu proxecto identitario de país.

Palabras clave: lingua galega, cultura, valores, identidade, distinción, globalización.

1. Introduction

The objective of this article is to provide a reflection that, given the alarm that has been raised about the genuinely intense reduction in percentage of exclusive Galician-speakers (cf. Seminario de Sociolingüística da Real Academia Galega, 1995), will allow us to conduct an analysis that will contextually situate this phenomenon at the level of recent structural social changes in Galician society as well as with respect to other phenomena resulting from the changes in culture and values affecting western societies today in differing measures and intensities. In addition, the comparison with a sociolinguistic situation such as that of Valencia will enable us to provide greater credibility and solidity to the hypothesis we propose.

While the problems deriving from the desire to preserve the Galician language have always produced intense debates about the need to make visible the vast array of difficulties to which our ancient language has been subjected and to which it continues to be subjected, in recent years this controversy has centred around a novel aspect that until now appears to have been underemphasized. We refer to the voices of alarm that have been raised in response to the controversial reduction in number Galician-speakers, data that, at least in quantitative terms, may be read as a sign of new and imminent dangers to the survival of the language. These data in conjunction with the current unstoppable wave of economic and cultural globalisation, always in favour of the most extensive and consolidated languages, only seem to cast more shadow upon an already gloomy diagnosis. Some of those involved in the debate consider that the autonomous government of Galicia is not exerting a logistical effort in the arena of linguistic policy that is reasonable and adequate for the situation. Others consider this to be the time to call for an active reaction of identity recovery on the part of the society as a whole, to effect a change in stance and opinion regarding their own language.

All sorts of opinions and perspectives have been poured into this debate, but we would like to extract one that in particular interests us, an idea that has been repeated in various contexts¹. Two of these lines, at least, seem thought-provoking: first, the opinion that “in order to keep the Galician language alive (...) it will be necessary to convince the Galicians that the survival of the language is a requirement of collective dignity”, offered by Basilio Losada and to a large extent congruent with Fernández Rei’s opinion that it is within the society that the language must be preserved, and so it is therefore crucial that the society “knows to recognise and love the language more so that it is never lost”. Second, several sources have cited the fact that other Spanish communities, such as the Basque Country and Catalonia, are effecting a recovery of

¹ We have collected several opinions published in the following venues: article of Basilio Losada Castro, “Eu non son o enterrador do galego” (‘I’m not the grave-digger of the Galician language’), *La Voz de Galicia* 9-6-2001; “Fernández Rei asegura que la lengua no goza de buena salud” (‘Fernández Rei assures us that the language is not in good health’), news item in *La Voz de Galicia* (29-11-1999); release of the issue concerning the Galician language in the journal *A Trabe de Ouro* 47, 2001.

their respective languages as a corollary to an identity revival on the part of the society as a whole, which has revised some aspects of the code governing the sense of their relation with some of their identity reference values.

The opinions usually vacillate, at least, between two poles. In one sense, they point out that languages depend on the values possessed by a particular society, recognising that a change in values can favour a change in attitudes and linguistic practices. This viewpoint affirms that these favourable changes may already be in progress in other communities with indigenous languages, at the same time recognising that among Galicians the Galician language is able to recover social prestige. On the other hand, some opinions are polarised, sometimes in a contradictory manner, but with a sort of complementary balance. These concern the fact that if the language situation lacks the demands of political and social necessity, which can be interpreted as a government administration that decisively imposes or promotes the language or a situation that makes the language a necessary or convenient means of communication, language recovery would not be possible. According to these approaches, the recovery of the language would have to revolve around, at least, two factors: the increase in prestige value and the appearance of new demands of necessity translatable, for example, as new arenas of normal and preferential use of the Galician language.

The issues emerging from the controversy around endangered languages are not confined to the Galician situation. For several years this problem has been approached from a European perspective (Hagège, 1999), a global perspective (Crystal, 2000), and even from a point of view reflecting a concern that is at once ecological-conservationist and cultural (Maffi, 2001).

At a conference organised by linguists in Québec in 1992, a call was issued to UNESCO to accept what was presented as an urgent need to search for responses to this situation, organising a conference specifically around this theme in November 1993. David Crystal, in an earlier work concerning the globalisation of English (*English as a Global Language*), had sensitised us to the risk involved if the predominance of English continues to increase. In his opinion, the accentuation of this process would lead us to the greatest intellectual disaster the planet has ever known². In his opinion (cf. Crystal, 2000), it is already too late for hundreds of languages. For the rest, this could be the time to prevent their loss³. In accordance

2 It is fair to recognise here the existence of authors who defend the rights of some peoples to abandon their languages to enter into modernity with greater ease (Malik, 2000), a type of discourse not entirely absent among ourselves.

3 The sincerity of his call to attention is more recognisable when we consider that this reputable linguist, currently professor emeritus at the University of Reading, is reviving today in the far reaches of the Welsh coast, in the outlying village of Holyhead, an expansive project in favor of the Welsh language, a work which has culminated in the present day with his work promoting the *Foundation for Endangered Languages*.

with the findings contributed by this author (Crystal, 2000: 27), we know that at the current time 96% of the world's population speaks only 4% of the languages of the world. The data point to the fact that around four thousand languages are endangered, of which the immense majority are situated in the equatorial regions of the planet, this zone being the privileged dwelling of cultural and linguistic diversity. Many of the specific situations of these ethnic groups in grave danger and with hardly any means of containing the situation are addressed in the book edited in 2001 by Luisa Maffi, *On biocultural diversity*. Collected in this book are the situations of endangered languages located in Central America, South America, several zones of Africa, Eastern Indonesia, etc.

David Crystal considers Galician, because of its number of speakers, to count among the 300 languages that have a certain linguistic health, although close to those 800 that, having only between one thousand and one million speakers, find themselves on the threshold of clear “linguistic” risk of some importance, a position, as we have mentioned earlier, occupied by around four thousand languages around the world. Therefore, our situation may not be considered the worst possible, but in quantitative terms it calls for special attention upon finding ourselves near those languages defined by Crystal as “potentially” at risk.

The French author Claude Hagège (1999, 2002) has addressed this type of risk, first with reference to the case of Europe and then from a more general and theoretical perspective. In his latest work, Hagège calls attention to two extremes that in our opinion are relevant to what we will discuss later in this paper. First, he maintains that languages are systems, and, in a strict sense, cannot die. At worst, a language might be abandoned by its speakers, and we might add that even if a language is abandoned by the majority or even the totality of its speakers, the language, as a system, maintains the capacity to return to use by the same or by future speakers. Another of the arguments mounted recurrently by this author refers to the keys to the preservation of a language. In this aspect our author chooses to consider that the level of prestige that a language is able to achieve or maintain is much more important for the maintenance of an endangered language than the administrative intervention efforts liable to be made in support of its normalisation. Therefore, for Hagège, the complete set of valorative aspects referring to the concept of identity and to the greater or lesser social will to preserve the language are determining factors in its preservation.

2. Concerning the current sociolinguistic transition of Galician society

As must be expected in an arena as socially dense as sociolinguistics, the particular transitional era experienced today by Galician society must be defined from a comprehensive perspective. At the present time, we can observe the coexistence of phenomena and facts that, from an identity point of view, point to different forces and frequently contradictory impulses. The challenge will be to

advance hypotheses concerning which might be the forces that mark and orient the changes in values and attitudes of Galician citizens with respect to their language in future decades.

The complexity of the current situation indicates among other aspects the fact that Galician society is still strongly marked by conditioning derived from the social structure predominant until just a few years ago. We refer to the fact that the sociodemographic prevalence of the rural sector that defined the Galicia into which the generations of our elders were socialised, those born in the first few decades of the 20th century, was accompanied by lower social prestige. The lower prestige of this social and territorial sector had a stigmatising effect on identity signs, such as language, that revealed rural origins. This conditioning of origin influenced the process of social mobility in which workers from rural backgrounds attempted to enter the emerging urban societies, especially after the 1950s and 1960s. The majority of these rural workers ended up in subordinate positions in factories or in service sectors, emphasizing and extending the association between use of the language and low social prestige. Meanwhile, the old middle classes of the cities preserved their differential status, bolstered by their maintenance of a more fluent command of Spanish as the language of culture and administration, as well as the code, which tended to be more prevalent in the public sphere. All of this exercised a clear reinforcement of the social condition of these groups, which was easily apparent to the remaining marginalized social sectors that, in the pursuit of social promotion, found themselves compelled to achieve and demonstrate a competent command of this linguistic code. In other words, to achieve a reasonable prospect of social improvement and promotion, they found themselves forced by irrational demand to renounce a cultural and identity sign, the language of the elders, which without their cooperation and beyond their will lacked prestige in the urban public sphere.

These circumstances forged a clear perception that the language of social promotion was Spanish, and that any aspirations to improve social position necessarily involved the evidence of fluent mastery of this linguistic code. The combination of the discriminatory stigmatisation of their native language and the pragmatic confirmation that fluent access to the most prestigious linguistic code was essential caused and continues to cause Spanish to have connotations of the privileged language of power. It is important to note this effect especially in the eyes of those whose social origins are closest to the rural world and, as such, their command of Spanish as well as their more precarious social conditions requires them to develop social strategies marked by efficiency as well as prudence. At the same time, these realities helped Spanish to attain a certain image of neutrality compared to a language like Galician, which was intensely semanticised upon finding itself inexorably forced to vacillate between wilful use and stigmatisation. Speaking Spanish began to emerge in the public sphere as a neutral act and, as a consequence, as a much freer act than speaking Galician. Frequently the use of Galician in interactional

contexts appeared to assume conditions of double fragility, between stigmatisation and pretension, between necessity and the conversion of necessity into virtue. In this sense, for particular strategic speakers, those who expressed themselves exclusively in Galician seemed to evidence either a difficulty in expressing themselves in Spanish or a challenge issued to those who, locked into a tacit norm favouring Spanish, tended to ignore the reproach implicit in the attitude of the Galician-speaker. However, in a pure cost/benefit calculation, the use of Galician still seems, for a large portion of the Galician population, to create more problems than it solves.

One contextual factor that today shapes and determines the linguistic practices of the Galician people is one that indicates their identity health as a people, that is, the degree to which the Galicians themselves perceive as positive or negative the social prestige of their culture and identity traits. In this sense Galician society still evidences clear signs of fragility, even though we will see that in this respect there are many changes in progress. We are not unaware of the fact that identity fragility is neighbour to other issues with a clearly objectivable basis, such as economic limitations and even, to a considerable degree, those of a political nature. This is especially evident if we attend to the approach of the responsible elected groups to maximising the available resources, which manifests a clear lack of engagement and scepticism before the challenge. At the political level, the Galician society itself, doubtful of its origins, demonstrates a marked organisational apathy with a relatively low level of associative coordination (cf. Bouzada, 1994) and social development.

The Galicia into which the generation of our elders was born and in which they lived has been defined by high indices of ruralisation (reflected in the fact that until the 1960s the percentage of the population active in the primary Galician sector was still greater than 60%, only to decrease at a dizzying rate after the 1980s), which were carried implicitly in the generalised use of the Galician language. Along with this trait, the prevalence of the use of Galician has been accompanied since the beginning of the 20th century by very low levels of education, with illiteracy rates greater than 15% along with immeasurable levels of functional illiteracy. The prescriptions of the *Ley Moyano* (Moyano Law), passed by the Spanish State in the year 1857 to establish certain minimum schooling standards for every 500 inhabitants, did not manage to have any effect in Galicia even as late as the first decades of the 20th century.

While indeed the social situation in Galicia was to a large extent clearly marked by these traits until the beginning of the 1970s, the truth is that the year 1970 was to signal in many respects a clear shift, and for several reasons. First, the intense level of emigration both out of the country and into the principal urban centres of Galicia and the rest of Spain was to simultaneously provoke a phenomenon of deruralisation, with a consequential decline in the use of Galician, and a clear process of urbanisation, social mobility, and absorption of new norms and habits of consumption. With the passing of the *Plan Galicia de Educación* (Galician Plan of Education) in 1970, Galicia would enter into a new era defined by a strong interest

in general basic schooling, a schooling which would come to represent for the children their first contact with a hierarchical institution organised for the achievement of uniform objectives. In this respect, if the 70s was the decade of the promotion of general basic schooling, the 80s would be the decade of secondary education and the 90s would be the decade that brought on the generalisation of—and at the same time the feminisation of— university education.

These social changes were accompanied by profound transformations at various levels, at the economic level—with the increase of median incomes and the emergence of consumption— as well as at the social level, first with the generalised experience of the dynamics of social mobility and changes in the activities of the head of the family, and later with the incorporation of the feminine hand into the job market. Similar changes occurred at the cultural level, with high increases in the level of schooling, and even at the political level, with the change from a dictatorial system tuned to traditional values and patriarchy to a democratic model sensitive to the greater autonomy and development of the emerging citizens.

All of these profound social transformations could not avoid affecting the Galician system of cultural values. At the beginning of the century with the *Xeración Nós*, and even before the heat of the disruption of values rooted in Romanticism, in Galicia certain minorities had already begun to exercise the role of heralds, choosing to act against the risk of renouncing the memory of language and culture. With the advance of the second half of the 20th century, the cultural and political reaction in favour of the preservation and reinterpretation of the culture itself as it adapts to the century will initiate in our society an important expansion of new forms of identity sensitivity.

In this sense, we may delineate some social factors that have been able to facilitate the progress, at least for the moment, of a relative reorientation of the valorative perspectives of the Galician people with respect to their own culture and language. We can confirm, and there do exist visible signs of this, that the progressive disappearance of the ancient rural culture has for various reasons provoked its re-evaluation. The most educated and well-off urbanites are restoring old rural houses, and rural tourism has arisen out of a new passion of educated urbanites for the spaces and meanings of the ancient village, its uses, objects, pathways and places.

In the same sense, social upward mobility, as a general reality, has provided the children of the neo urbanites a greater liberty to read their culture from a dignified perspective that allows them the capacity to value their own culture as an attribute rather than a stigma to ward away or dissolve. The new members of the university community, freer and more culturally sensitive than their elders, are able to begin to see the same things in a different way. By situating their identity sense within a denser dimension, they can see beyond the normative and contextual constraints that had restricted their parents. At the same time, these sociolinguistic changes have favoured the emergence of socially prestigious arenas of culture and even politics,

where the Galician language has been achieving little by little the status of a preferred presence. All of this has been accompanied by, although to a much weaker degree than many of us would hope, a process of economic and social coordination of Galicia with the tendency, although slow, toward reducing its dependence and subsidisation.

Of course, the educational development of Galicia as well as the recent insertion of the Galician language into the school curriculum have, in their way, encouraged a change in valorative perception of the Galician language as well as the achievement of a median level of competence in the language which is rare and impossible to compare with earlier eras (Monteagudo, 2000).

Nevertheless, all of these confirmations must not alter our perspective concerning the fact that, despite everything, the social geographies of the Galician language are still today, in quantitative terms, precarious⁴. For this reason and despite the novel factors that are emerging we should remember that, while probably becoming less and less active over time, the social pressures acting against the social use of Galician continue to be present and fully active.

Perhaps one of the clearest claims that we can make is that, at the social level, the current situation is certainly provoking a high degree of expectation and concern in many Galicians, and this can be confirmed by data from the *Mapa Sociolingüístico de Galicia*, which we address in this paper. We are experiencing a time when the old diagnosis that prioritised the factor of stigmatisation is beginning to be replaced by a rational calculation that very probably for the majority of Galicians has not yet tipped the scales clearly and definitively in favour of the Galician language. In a brilliant study of the sociolinguistic situation in the Basque Country, professor Benjamín Tejerina (1992: 313) maintained that at the time of his study the dominant substitutive tendency of Spanish over the Basque language was being accompanied by an apparently paradoxical increase in Basque identity value. In our case, probably, the increasing number of people who achieve bilingualism to a degree confirms the hypothesis of this type of tendency. This is due to, among other factors, the fact that the traditional speakers, or speakers “by necessity”⁵, are exclusively Galician monolingual, while the neo Galician-speakers, normally more educated, urban, and usually employed in socially complex activities, speak Galician while also maintaining Spanish fluency even without renouncing the frequent use of Spanish. Likewise, we believe that the data we are working with allow us to confirm that the simple reduction in the number of speakers is not an

4 Among the conclusions of the work of Redondo Bellón (1999) are found the following: “The exclusive Galician-speaking segment is the largest, but it is getting smaller and smaller and usually consumes less; the bilingual group is increasing and has average consumption levels; the Spanish-speaker represents almost a fourth of the population, it doesn’t change size and almost always has the highest consumption levels” (translation from Spanish).

5 We have defined the concept in this way in Bouzada & Lorenzo (1997).

alarming indicator that should be isolated from other factors such as the increase in prestige of the language as a valorative change. While this may well be a *virtual* change, that does not make it any less crucial. Deriving from the theorem Thomas & Swaine (1928: 572), who noted that if men define situations as real, these situations are real in their consequences, and also based on the work of Schütz and Berger & Luckman, we recognise that future reality is in part written in the valorative changes happening today. In this sense, we are continually constructing reality or even, in a more concrete sense, and as Watzlawick claims without irony, inventing it. Viewed from another angle, this same idea is what Merton postulated with his classic proposal of “self fulfilling prophecies” and his alternative “self defeating prophecies”, that is, the recognition of our capacity to induce or dissuade the occurrence of certain events. Without a doubt it would not be, in my modest opinion, very brilliant or wise to reject today these changes in valorative tendencies on the grounds that they are apparently simple virtual phenomena. Surely methodological prudence must be applied, accepting the fact that the situation in which we live, in this as well as many other aspects, is perhaps the least suitable for the practice of prophecy. Socio-political as well as scientific and technological factors are constantly bestowing upon us an extraordinary quantity of unexpected and random factors. The society aware of the risk brings to light new virtualities making this society less and less predictable.

3. Some findings relative to the linguistic attitudes of the Galician people

The findings that we present in this paper have been excerpted from the third volume of the *Mapa Sociolingüístico de Galicia* (Seminario de Sociolingüística da Real Academia Galega, 1996) and we believe they can be interpreted using the main hypothesis underlying our proposal: that one of the central aspects of the Galician situation may be the important change underway in the prestige assigned by the Galicians to their own language. This variation in perspective may be the prior condition necessary for an identity evolution that will enable a progressive generalisation of active recuperative stances toward the risks that threaten the language. In addition, within this process of recovery we see the establishment of a certain vanguard comprised of groups of individuals less and less minoritised over time. These progressive groups, acting from a great cultural, social, and political sensitivity, are maintaining norms that little by little, in various and irregular ways, are gradually becoming more generalised.

One of the foremost findings that we gathered from the *Mapa Sociolingüístico* is the observation that today the Galician people widely assign a high value to their own language. Galicians were asked to assess the value of the language on a scale of 1 —most negative value— to 5 —most positive value. While the rural and semi rural zones achieved the highest score (3.68 and 3.67, respectively), and this is indeed

relevant, the urban zones (3.49), in general the most resistant to the use of Galician, did not fall behind excessively. Similarly, among those social sectors who assign the highest scores (3.79) we find the sectors linked to traditional activities, but also to emerging activities and professions such as students and educators. Among those who assigned the weakest ratings (3.32) we find business people, housewives, liberal professionals and members of the armed forces. Nevertheless, even among these sectors the assessment of the language was clearly positive.

A similarly relevant finding is that the attitude toward their own language improves as we descend the age scale (and we can assume also as the stigma carries less weight and linguistic competence in Galician increases, therefore allowing greater freedom of language selection) and also (p. 72) as facility in written Galician increases. In this sense, those above age 65 assigned the language a score of 3.44, and younger people from 16 to 25 years old assigned it a score of 3.75. The stances of women and men were also quite close, although men on the average assigned a slightly more favourable score: 3.53 and 3.68, respectively.

When we observe the attitudes of the Galician people as a whole in the arena of schooling, we can demonstrate that the majority of these (85%) consider the Galician language to be equally or more appropriate than Spanish for delivery of material such as mathematics or history, while 67% report that they agree with, or at least are not against the generalisation of the use of Galician to the rest of the subjects. This leaves a significant 32% who identify themselves as against this possible measure. As a general rule, it can be confirmed that those who are most favourable toward the presence of Galician in the school arena are those younger than 40 years and the popular sectors (around 3.5), while those sectors demonstrating less acceptance derive from that sector of activity linked to the old middle classes constituting the liberal professionals, with an acceptance rating of only 2.8. The education professionals, simultaneously professionals of culture and members of the emerging middle classes, constitute the cutting edge of this valorative and attitudinal change⁶. It is appropriate to add as well that another variable that seems to underlie these data is the marked impact that a greater or lesser familiarity with the language can have in the sense that those most familiar with the language, those younger than forty years of age, educators and the popular sectors, have a more receptive attitude toward the language.

Another significant finding concerning the manner in which Galicians value their language is that 68% of the population consider their language to be equally or more useful than Spanish. Here as well the difference in age seems to mark a

⁶ The fact should be noted here that this point constitutes one of the clearest strategic weaknesses for the reactivation of language use. As David Crystal reminds us in his recent article (cf. Crystal, 1999), it is crucial to involve and mobilise as well a sector as prestigious as that of the liberal professionals in the process of recovery of language use.

boundary, as positive evaluation is more frequent among the younger groups than among the Galicians of more advanced age. In this latter group the prejudices are more prevalent and more deeply rooted.

One of the most significant and surprising findings reflected in the linguistic attitudinal data in the *Mapa Sociolingüístico* is that while half of the population (58.1%) consider that Galicians should speak both languages, 40% defend that only Galician should be spoken, as compared with a scarce 1.8% who defend the exclusive use of Spanish. In any case, it is relevant that a higher level of education corresponds to a more favourable attitude among those who advocate speaking both languages. It is clear that a greater schooling competence, something that has spread during recent years, tends to coincide with a more favourable attitude in choosing the most open path, avoiding the requirement of having to choose exclusively between the two languages. When asked which language their children should be taught to speak, the great majority responded that they should be taught both. In the urban environment, which is more favourable towards Spanish, only 9.6% responded that Spanish should be taught exclusively, while 80% responded that both languages should be taught.

A surprising finding, and one that in our opinion reflects an important change in Galician society in the manner in which the people relate to their language, is reflected in the question included in the *Mapa* (p. 174) where the respondents were asked if they believe that the Galician language is now spoken more or less than it was forty, twenty-five, or ten years ago. The result of this question is that, contrary to all objective evidence, 61%, 66% and 75%, respectively, consider that more Galician is spoken today than years ago. The results of this question demonstrate that the respondents believe that Galician is spoken today, contrary to all objective evidence, more than 61%, 66% and 75% years ago, respectively. Obviously this mistaken perception clearly indicates a confusion of the practical and attitudinal planes derived from the intensity of the change in position and improvement of status of the Galician language in Galician society during the last few years.

With respect to opinions concerning the sociolinguistic future of Galicia, 55% of the respondents consider that Galician will be spoken more in the future than it is now, 28% believe that Galicia will be more bilingual, and only one out of every 10 people (11%) consider that Spanish will be spoken more then the years to come. Even more significant for us is that when asked what is the identity language of the Galician people, 58% selected Galician, 39.9% selected both languages, and only 1.8% selected Spanish, again demonstrating among the youngest respondents a higher percentage (70%) who consider that the Galician culture and identity will be lost if the language ceases to be spoken.

All of these findings seem to point toward a weakening, at least at certain levels of consciousness, of those coarser aspects of prejudice and sociolinguistic stigmatisation that have been working against the language for years.

Taken as a whole, these findings also seem to illustrate the positive effect, despite some superficial appearances, that the process of normalisation and the presence of the Galician language in the school curriculum is having, to the extent that the capacity to read and speak the language is acting as a determining factor directing a greater appreciation and higher esteem of the language as a symbol and as a code of usage. All of these changes must not obscure the fact that the identification of upward social mobility with Spanish continues to be, in our opinion, dominant, in that the sensibilities of the business world, in general removed from the expressive caprices of the cultural world and routinely well-ensconced within a favourable instrumental concept of Spanish, provides limited leeway for the possible dissolution of these prejudices.

In any case, we should note the fact that the business world is moving as well and that, as reflected in a previous investigation (Bouzada & Lorenzo, 1990), we are beginning to see the existence of businesses and service institutions that have slowly been changing their position on the use of the Galician language by their employees, moving from an attitude of distance and even suspicion to more temperate stances, although without going so far as to assume an active attitude with respect to the language.

Relative to the business world, a few years ago we provided some findings (Bouzada & Lorenzo, 1997) suggesting that among some members a certain sensitivity toward a normalising effort might be emerging. Regarding this topic we collected data using a survey administered to a sample of businesses, revealing that 50% of them had conducted some activity in Galician, 58% declared themselves available to conduct publicity in Galician, while 20% of those who already had some type of experience in this field reported to be satisfied with the initiative taken. Similarly, over 90% accepted the possibility that a business, aside from functioning well and turning a profit, should encourage the use of the Galician language. Among the businesses interviewed, 52% expressed interest in receiving linguistic support and consulting. At the other extreme, only a very small 1.6% reported that initiatives such as publicity in the Galician language did not seem interesting to them.

4. A closer look at the social processes of culture and valorative change: Imitation and distinction

We believe that among the several existing typologies of neo speakers of the Galician language, one of the most recognisable is that composed of a social segment with high identitary motivation which usually coincides with individuals characterised by an elevated cultural level and also frequently characterised by high social capital, which can be seen in a dense insertion in social networks. These neo speakers have been leading for decades the process of recovery of the use of the language, thanks to a continuous effort directed at promoting the social valorisation of the Galician

language, culture, and identity. In this way, thanks to a virtuous loop, they have earned prestige without intending to, and at the same time have managed to gain prestige for their culture and identity. We believe that today it is indisputable that in some areas, as for example in literature and the arts, at least, these spokespersons have undertaken an indisputable project of cultural and linguistic recovery. In our opinion, since the *Rexurdimento* in the 19th century and the *Xeración Nós* at the beginning of the 20th century, or later with the various pro-Galician and nationalist currents, we have seen examples of recuperative linguistic practices that had as one of their principal supports the social and cultural prestige of their leaders of opinion and spokespersons.

The changes of value at the level of the communities are, in the end, no more than the product of the aggregative effect of many value changes assumed by many different people in circumstances and for reasons also frequently heterogeneous, that are in turn recurrently mediated by external and collective coercions and determining factors.

The process that makes possible the existence of a link connecting these spokespersons, who are equipped with a certain prestige, with their audiences, especially in democratic contexts, depends largely on two facilitating axes: imitation and the desire for distinction by means of imitating those social and cultural practices valued as prestigious or desirable from a valorative, ethic, as well as political perspective.

Gabriel de Tarde, with his ‘laws of imitation’, was the first to delve into a reflection on the potential of this type of strategic initiatives, while Thorstein Veblen in his ‘theory of the leisure class’ was the first to link imitation and desire for distinction. Years later, establishing some variations in perspective with respect to Veblen, it would be Pierre Bourdieu who, in his rigorous work about distinction, would establish the existence of a regular stable flow of imitative symbolic exchanges between the most prestigious social sectors and those most socially and culturally precarious, thus forming a continuous movement favouring a circulation of cultural styles and practices that often zigzag between the sectors.

This said, we consider it relevant to return to the variations currently in process in the social structuring of the linguistic practices of Galician that, with the arrival of spokespersons equipped with significant cultural prestige and in parallel with the decline of the stigmatisation of the association ‘rural language = inferior language’ provoked by the sociodemographic change in Galicia, can begin to facilitate the emergence of a new sociolinguistic framework increasingly defined by freedom of decision, cultural competence, and identity pride. In these circumstances, the processes of imitation and distinction that until a few years ago, by virtue of the burden of stigma, had been favouring the shift of speakers toward Spanish, may begin to demonstrate a change in orientation facilitating recuperative dynamics that will manifest in such a way as to assume and resolve today the linguistic dilemma of the Galician speaker.

5. Globalisation, language and identity

The obstacles the Galician language will have to confront in the years to come will be determined by a context of identity challenges derived from the demands of the process of growing globalisation. These challenges, which may initially appear insurmountable, require that we place upon the table some considerations that may be illuminating. First, it is crucial that we consider carefully the double face of the process, or rather, the real capacity of a process that threatens globalisation and homogenisation to also provide, paradoxically, all sorts of local cultural and identity reactions. Evidently, this process presents a level of complexity that rejects any temptation to drift into simplicity. In this sense, the compromise solutions employed by local cultures to resolve their role in history, vacillate between pure essentialist and fundamentalist withdrawal and the laborious construction of models of society by which they attempt to separate the wheat from the straw, in the manner of appropriation of the practices and content of the global culture as well as the preservation of local memory and traditions. The tendency in the next few years will doubtless be toward a greater transparency of these strategies that today are still immersed in a nebula of apparent chaotic conflict.

We will not enter deeply here into a topic that requires much greater attention, we simply want to make note of the fact, endorsed at various levels (Meyer, 2000; Bassand, Kaufmann & Joyé, 2001), that the excessive instrumental pressure of globalisation (which is mainly at the market level) generates first all sorts of local repositioning and also, already today, stances that provide opportunities for new ways of thinking about this globalisation. This operates in the sense that economic primacy will have to give way to the social and cultural aspects of globalisation, as evidenced by the growing weight of dynamics and events like the *Foro de Porto Alegre* (Forum of Porto Alegre). In this sense, this same process, set off in recent years by the movement toward criticising globalisation, underscores that this criticism in no way refers a simplistic confrontation between the global and the local.

We should also clarify here that the identities of the future are called upon to take on a different form, richer and more fragmented, where local loyalties will have to be open to other loyalties and sensibilities of a more global nature. In the linguistic sense, this will very probably entail understanding the new speakers of local languages as strategic adherents who, faced with the social challenges before them, respond with a complex solution to a problem itself complex.

Referring to the concrete case of the European construction, to which Claude Hagège (cf. Hagège, 1999) dedicated his penultimate book, Hagège contributes a diagnosis overall parallel to what we propose; in his opinion, the pragmatic solution to the problem of keeping local languages in force must begin with the requirement that the greatest possible number of Europeans learn the greatest possible number of languages. The Europe of tomorrow will have to be able to construct a language

education system whose consequence will be the multiplication of the number of effective multilinguals. And it is in this sense that Hagège considers that the European Union does not necessarily have to bury minority cultures. A cultural problem requires cultural and political solutions: a confederate system will permit the reconciliation of the response to minority aspirations with a certain state equilibrium based on the will of the majority. It is also true, and we must not obscure this, that these kinds of alternatives may be more harmful to those least culturally-armed social groups, those who, attempting to conserve limited assets, tend to opt for the solution that apparently seems to best maximise limited cultural and linguistic resources. Here we must take up once again the valorative hypothesis underlying this work, in the sense that in the Europe of today the disappearance of ancient national symbols like the currency, accepted in a reflexive and conscious manner, may pave the way for the recovery of other symbolic and cultural referents close to the people and the communities.

In accordance with what has been said earlier, we can conclude that the resurgence of identity and relegated languages in late-modern societies seems to reflect an 'emergent' or 'resultant effect' (cf. Boudon, 1981; Lamo de Espinosa, 1991: 53) in the sense that this resurgence may be the specific sequel to the intensification of the process of individuation which, upon arising and having relinquished the markings of political and linguistic links with modern states, moves on to find a new arena of reference in the local identities that the first wave of modernity had disenfranchised. In this sense we know from the research of Inglehart (1991, 1998) that also, in a parallel manner, it can be verified that the resolution of instrumental and material challenges or rather —using Maslow's (1968) terms— having resolved primary necessities, late-modern societies and their individuals tend to experience a growing development of the superior or post-material necessities. Whatever the case, this second emergence takes on a reflexive nature in the assumption of identity referents that move away from primordialist or fundamentalist identity positions, those usually signified by archaic or rather, in Durkheim's terms, mechanical social referents.

If modern society, in undervaluing the ancient rural cultures, accepted the sacrifice for the sake of realising certain instrumental achievements, late-modern societies, in returning their gaze to the ancient abandoned cultures, do so expressively but also consciously born of an act of freedom of choice in a valorative and symbolic dimension that permits the selection of objects of desire, among which are those languages considered to be in danger.

It may be useful to establish several phases or states with respect to these identity processes, distinguishing the phases of negative identity, the appearance of identities of resistance, and the possibility of the emergence of phases of intentional identities with socially constructive effects. We can consider that the generalisation of recuperative attitudes at the linguistic level usually accompanies those identity states of this last type, although they would certainly already have begun to appear in the

previous resistant phase. In any case, this last phase, and in the bosom of our late-modern societies⁷, usually gives rise to logical strategies in a free, common and elective manner that usually defines the ways of behaviour of individuals in complex societies. The complex response (for example, multilingualism) to problems themselves complex (diversification and hierarchicalisation of identity referents) is one of the responses that best characterise the sociolinguistic tendencies of the current time.

Likewise, it is relevant to focus on the idea that the most global movements usually are —barring exceptions of fundamentalist and traditionalist encapsulation, that also exist in developed zones and very probably with an *ethos* of specific transition— also the most local, and in this sense the case of Catalonia and Québec studied by R. Inglehart are revealing and symptomatic. In this sense the history of the pro-Galician movement is also revealing (Fernández, 2000). The peripheral nationalisms of the Spanish nation arose declaring themselves in opposition to a purist and parochial Spanish jingoism. Their reaffirmation of local identities issued a harbinger of cultural liberalisation as a paradoxical reaction to a veneer of Spanish nationalism. Evidently the Spanish case is quite far removed from the French case, where centralism, French patriotism, and Republican ideals went hand in hand, relegating any peripheral reaction to a reactionary condition.

If there is any experience among the identity cultural reactions arising from the bosom of the Spanish nation that maintains any similarity with the Galician case it is in the situation of the Valencian Autonomous Community. In a recent investigation of professors Manuel García Ferrando & Antonio Ariño (2001: 274) into the Valencian value system, these authors concluded that Valencia is producing a reinforcement of a sense of local belonging without diminishing the more global and generic senses of belonging to the Valencian Community or to Spain. Almost half of those surveyed reported that they identified with an inclusive vision of identity, while those who only or fundamentally identify themselves as Valencians or as Spaniards are increasingly in the minority. Preferential Spanish sentiment has diminished in terms of the moderate slant toward feeling more Spanish as well as the exclusive version of feeling only Spanish. In the same way, the sentiment of feeling more Valencian than Spanish or only Valencian also experienced a slight ebb, which appears to support the hypothesis that we may be observing the rise of a dual identity stemming from the decline in Spanish nationalist sentiment.

7 In this respect, Inglehart (1998: 299) distinguished between two kinds of nationalism, one of a more xenophobic and fundamentalist nature, that has arisen under extreme conditions of resistance and insecurity, and another which arises in more developed zones (for example, Catalonia and Québec), that have a motivation deeply rooted in the autonomous culture as well as a clear interest in recovering links of belonging to communities more culturally homogenous than the nations to which they belong. It is also important to highlight that in these cases studied by Inglehart the supporters of such autonomy are bearers (with greater frequency than half of the population) of a postmodern orientation, and are increasingly favourable to open relations with the outside world.

In this sense, the new bilinguals⁸, concentrated around forms of open identity, are frequently individuals who usually have high level of education and social position, and at the same time reside in the metropolitan areas of Alicante and Valencia and have a post material orientation. Observing the sociolinguistic situation of Valencia at the level of usage (García Ferrando & Ariño, 2001: 264), we can demonstrate that in Valencia the findings concerning language practice can be alarming upon noting that, the same as in Galician, at the practical level those who have high education and positions are predominantly Spanish-speakers, with the Valencian language maintaining even today a basically rural space of usage. Also similar to the Galician case, current results indicate (García Ferrando & Ariño, 2001: 265), as would very probably result here as well if we conducted the same investigation, that among those who report post material values we find a slightly higher percentage of Spanish-speakers (67%) than among those who privileged material and pragmatic values (63%). Further, there as well as here we find a political-identitary polarisation correlating with linguistic practices. In this respect, these authors (García Ferrando & Ariño, 2001: 271) report that 87% of those who voted for the *Bloc* —the Valencian party with a nationalistic orientation— speak Valencian at home, while only half of those who voted for *Unió Valencià* —the pro-Valencian moderate regionalist party— speak Valencian at home.

In our earlier work concerning the future of the Galician language (Bouzada & Lorenzo, 1997: 28-30), we pointed out that there might exist a relevant relationship between the advance of bilingualism and the redefinition of the identitary strategies of the new generations of Galicians. In this sense we confirm the importance of delving into the profound sentiment that may underlie the emergence of a class of strategies that, while a superficial reading might interpret as an effect of withdrawal, also provide plenty of reasons to evaluate them as less simple forms of reaffirmation of the culture, the language, and the identitary referents. In this sense, we must focus on the reality that one may feel more Galician than Spanish, without this implying the renunciation of bilingualism or the unawareness of belonging to Spanish culture.

In the Galicia of today, where half of all Galician households still have monthly incomes that do not exceed two thousand euros, according to the *Survey on family life conditions* —conducted by the IGE (Galician Institute of Statistics) in 2001—, the act of speaking Galician is still today in many public arenas either a sign reflecting proletarian origins and conditions, or a reactive and questioning act likely to be perceived by some as a double challenge in that upon using the language, the

⁸ To some degree simultaneities may be established and even, when analysed to any depth, a certain correspondence with processes such as those alluded to by Hernandez i Dobon (2002: 491) in the Valencian case: “The defence of the Valencian school, the recovery of the language, are presented, in this manner, as an expression of a linguistic sub-policy that can be registered in the social coordinates of the second modernity” (translation from Catalan).

user may also be subtly questioning the omission and passivity of the speaker who opts not to refrain from expressing himself in Spanish. These circumstances reveal that this type of symbolic and situational blockage should be dissolved, to allow for greater fluidity and frequency of practices that today may reveal the happy existence of a growing and spreading linguistic competence. In the moment when the act of speaking in Galician stops being a very semanticised act with provocative implications and becomes an act of distinction and positive identity pride, the path toward normalisation will doubtless be facilitated (Viladot, 1993:115).

6. By way of conclusion

All that has been said to this point does not need to be read as an invitation to wait passively until things resolve themselves on their own. To the contrary: we intend to contribute arguments, meaning, and amplitude to the work and effort of cultural and linguistic recovery. We endorse all that has been said concerning the need to encourage all types of initiatives and experiments of sociolinguistic promotion, which, we add, can rely upon a relevant tradition in our recent history and involve in different forms and to different degrees active volunteers and militants for the language, a myriad of associations and institutions that act as cutting-edge inspiration, and thematic associations such as the *Asociación de Funcionarios pola Normalización Lingüística* (Association of State Employees for Linguistic Normalisation), the *Mesa pola Normalización Lingüística* (Board of Linguistic Normalisation) and so many others whose imagination and efforts continue to be indispensable. By virtue of this, the objective of this article is basically to call attention to the fact that the data have social realities behind their symbolic and valorative nature about which it is crucial to pause to reflect. In this sense, the simple numerical decline in the percentage of speakers takes on deeper meaning if we relate this data with the tendencies of value changes underlying our society. For all that, and in the short run, we must continue to defend the idea that, in the end, it is only the community as a whole that has the capacity to keep its language alive. If the community declines involvement, trusting exclusively in the responsibility of the institutions or even in the solitary labour of some of its most active members, no matter how meritorious these efforts may be, the language will languish. In this respect, it is essential that we attend to the changes of opinion, values, and attitudes of the population as a whole and not only to the most sensitive and active groups, by virtue of the recognisable fact that language preservation strategies will have to be able to inspire and necessarily involve the community as a whole.

If we take into account that the majority of Galicians have confidence in their autonomous government for the recovery of their language (Bouzada & Lorenzo, 1997: 144), at the same time as some members of the government have declared that

it is the Galicians themselves who must take a position, we find ourselves facing an apparently picturesque situation in which each looks to the side of the other without anyone wanting to completely take it personally. With respect to the Valencian situation, García Ferrando & Ariño (2001: 269) have called attention to the fact that possibly the lukewarm resolution and constant indecisions of the successive governments of the Valencian *Generalitat* in the arena of linguistic policy may have constituted a deactivating factor in use of the Valencian language, as well as the growing weight of Spanish in the face of the 21st century as the universal second language of communication after English. Possibly, in this respect as well, the Galician and Valencian cases present similar profiles.

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