



PREFACE

Though this book concerns general, enduring questions about bilingual life, it concentrates on a particular period in the recent history of Catalonia. The year that my fieldwork was done, 1979–80, marked a turning point in the political development of the community. In a referendum of October 1979, voters approved a Statute of Autonomy, giving Catalonia a degree of home rule as an “autonomous community.” In the spring, people went to the polls again, to elect a Catalan government for the first time in some forty years.

Catalonia has changed since I did my fieldwork. Though it has developed fitfully, the autonomous institutional structure that was mandated in 1979 is now nearly fully in place, and the Catalan government for several years has been setting and implementing policy in important areas such as education. A law of “linguistic normalization” was passed in 1983, a Catalan television channel was established the same year, and language policy, especially in schooling, has evolved. New Catalan street signs and new street names bear witness to these changes.

The same nationalist party that was elected in 1980 has grown in strength and retains the Catalan presidency, but the political framework surrounding it in the Spanish state has changed considerably.

Whereas in 1979 conservatives with links to Franco still headed the Spanish government, the Socialists have governed since 1982. Political parties that were important players on the regional or state scene of 1980, such as the Communist party and its Catalan affiliate, have since withered, split, and in some cases been reincarnated.

This book makes no pretense of presenting an up-to-the-minute journalistic account of the situation of Barcelona, Catalonia, or Spain. Rather, I intend the ethnographic portrait I draw to be specific to the eventful year that I witnessed, and I have introduced a minimal amount of data from later than 1980. It is my belief—certainly my hope—that the inevitable flow of history does not mean that my research and my findings are no longer of interest. If anything, the continued existence and evolution of democratic Spain and autonomous Catalonia should render this work even more relevant.

What follows is an analysis of the meanings and uses of language and ethnicity in Catalonia at a political turning point. For those who know and care about Spain or Catalonia (or both), such a portrait should provide insight into the developments of the time and some that have occurred since. For sociolinguists, anthropologists, political scientists, and sociologists approaching this case study from a theoretical interest in bilingualism or ethnicity, the precise dates of my fieldwork are of course of less concern. The analysis suggests principles of language values, linguistic attitudes, and bilingual behavior that, although situated historically, are intended to have more general validity.

Some terminological and stylistic points need to be clarified. "Nation" is a word mired in political assumptions in Western usage, and it can be a fighting word in Spain. Generally in this book, the words "nation" and "nationalism" will refer not to Spain but to the sentimental community of Catalonia and Catalanism. Though Catalonia is the "nation" in question, "state" will refer (except where noted in Chap. 3) to the central Spanish state, which occasionally also appears as "Madrid" or "Castile." Although most Catalans reject the term "region" in reference to Catalonia, I will use it on occasion when I want to stress the structural position of Catalonia within a larger political unit. But my use of the term implies no comment on the validity of Catalonia's claim to nationhood. The word "immigrants" in reference to Spaniards who have come to Catalonia sometimes puzzles those readers who prefer "migration" for movement within a polit-

ical state. But "immigration" is the term used in Catalonia and thus in this book, and it emphasizes the political and social importance of national as well as state boundaries in the movement of human groups. Since the Spanish language is generally known as "Castilian" in Iberia, that term is used in this work.

All the personal names given in this work are pseudonyms, even when only first names are used. In some cases I have changed incidental details of individuals' biographies in order to protect them from recognition by other Catalan readers of this book.

Although I often refer to Catalonia and Catalans, the sociolinguistic commentary here should be thought of as applying only to the Barcelona metropolitan area; linguistic attitudes and behavior may differ considerably in the provinces and in rural areas in particular. Even more important, I find I have often been unable to resist the ethnographic present tense when writing about general norms of ethnic identification or language use. But that should be looked upon as no more than a stylistic convention, for the generalizations proposed are meant to be true only of 1979–80, and language etiquette and perhaps even principles of identification may well have changed since then. Finally, I will introduce native terms in Catalan unless Castilian is more relevant to the point. Catalan lexical items will be given in boldface type (e.g. **ànima**); Catalan and Castilian personal names, place names, and proper nouns will be given in roman type (e.g. Partit); and Castilian lexical items will be *italicized*. No distinction between Catalan and Castilian is made in book or other conventionally italicized titles.

A few comments should be made about how this study was done. The research environment and the scope of my questions necessitated methodological eclecticism. Most urban ethnographies have focused on small, well-defined subcommunities or marginal groups within the city—"urban villagers" (Gans 1962)—rather than on the complexity of relations between different sectors of a city's population. Successful urban ethnographies often depend on the very marginality of the group studied, since informants not participating fully in the institutions of the larger society can grant a trusted ethnographer greater access to more domains of their lives. Another tactic of urban ethnographers has been to focus on only one domain of social activity, such as family life or school. In spite of advances in the adaptation of traditional field techniques to new settings, we have not yet

achieved the same kind of holistic description of urban life as is expected in ethnographies of simpler societies.

Anthropologists have often focused on stable and unconscious social processes. As we move into the study of conflict in modern complex society, we must come to terms with the highly politicized character of our research problems. The political nature of research itself becomes clearer than ever, with both positive and negative consequences for the study. On the one hand, there is no difficulty in getting people to talk about the topics of language and ethnicity in Barcelona. But on the other hand, there is a heavy layer of conscious, received political ideology—expressions of what *ought* to be the case—coating more quotidian attitudes and behaviors.

For all these reasons, I found it useful to piece together a variety of evidence culled from a spectrum of informants through a number of techniques. Five basic kinds of data provide the foundation for my analysis: (1) observation of formally organized political events; (2) printed materials gathered daily from periodicals; (3) observation of everyday language and interactional behavior, backed by limited recording of natural discourse; (4) interviews and organized discussions about language and ethnic identity, usually tape-recorded, as well as numerous unrecorded spontaneous discussions; and (5) a quasi-experimental measure of language attitudes.

Rather than a single stable sample, I worked with a variety of informants who might be arranged in concentric circles by degree of acquaintance. I developed perhaps half a dozen key, close relationships, and regular relations with another thirty or so people. Most, though not all, of the people in these two inner circles were between the ages of twenty-five and forty; it is probably quite significant to my analysis that they were often people whom I felt to be “like me” in important ways. Their spontaneous discussions contributed substantially to my understanding. My key relationships leaned toward a single political persuasion, the “progressives” of the Catalan Communist Party (Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya). Though this may have biased my view of the situation in some respects, none of my informants would claim or should be burdened with responsibility for my views.

Beyond these two groups of informants lay another circle of about 50 people I met with more than once but on an irregular basis; this

circle was diverse in political, linguistic, and class background, as well as in age. I used both the Catalan and the Castilian language in my formal and informal interviews and discussions, depending largely on my interlocutor's choice (although, early in my work, my inadequate control of Catalan forced the choice at times). In most cases my first introduction was as a friend of a friend; it was only to the students who participated in my formal experimental measure that I was presented primarily as a researcher.

Those approximately 250 experimental respondents form the next circle of contact; with about 50 of these I developed a more extensive relationship, returning for informal discussions and interviews, and in some cases maintaining further personal contact. Finally, beyond this group are the hundreds of residents of Barcelona with whom I shared a socially defined space or interacted perhaps once, some intensively in friendly circumstances, some in fleeting business transactions, but all of whom provided me with insights into the linguistic and social norms of life in Barcelona.

In addition to these invaluable informants who through custom and good sense must remain anonymous, many people are to be thanked for many different kinds of assistance. The Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies granted the fellowship that made this fieldwork possible. All the conclusions and opinions expressed are my own and not necessarily those of the Councils. The Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Research Foundation of the University of Pennsylvania provided additional financial support for this project.

For assistance in the field, my thanks to Helena Calsamiglia, Santiago Costa, Valeria Salcioli, Luís Paniello, Helena Rotés, Lluís Riera, Claudi Esteve Fabregat, and Lluís V. Aracil, and especially to Amparo Tuson. Thanks, also, for indispensable assistance with the statistical analysis, to Jim Boster. I am grateful to John Gumperz, Eugene Hammel, and Susan Ervin-Tripp for guiding this work as a dissertation, and to others who read and advised at various stages: Burton Benedict, Elizabeth Colson, fellow students in the dissertation seminar at Berkeley, 1981, Susan DiGiacomo, Gary McDonogh, Jim Amelang, Maite Turell, Miquel Strubell, and especially Susan Gal and Juan Linz. For assistance in preparing versions of the manu-

script, I thank Susanna Fosch, Yoko Koike Johanning, Chérie Francis, and Dory Lightfoot. For all kinds of help along the way, thanks to Mike Agar, Lisa Warantz, Susan Niles, Bambi Schieffelin, Buck Schieffelin, Helena Ramos, and Joel Sobel.

I am grateful to the Patronat Municipal de Turisme de Barcelona for providing me with the city photographs, nos. 1 and 11, in the section following page 72; and to Montserrat Manet for allowing me to use her photograph of Gaudí's Casa Milà, no. 12.

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