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THE PROCESS OF LINGUISTIC NORMALIZATION IN TEACHING IN CATALONIA*

The normalization of the Catalan language has constituted and still constitutes one of the priority objectives of the cultural and educational policies of the Generalitat of Catalonia since its re-establishment with provisional character in 1977, and fully with the approval of the Autonomous Statute in the year 1979.

The Spanish Constitution, in force since 29 December 1978, proclaims the will to "protect all Spaniards and peoples of Spain in the exercise of human rights, their cultures and traditions, languages and institutions" and "recognises and guarantees the right to the autonomy of the nationalities and regions forming it and solidarity among them all." The statute of the Autonomy grants full competence in matters of teaching to the Generalitat and establishes Catalan as the language of Catalonia since "the Catalan language is the official one of Catalonia, as is also Spanish, which is official throughout the State of Spain."

Until then, the Catalan language had been eliminated from the educational system and from all public life in Catalonia. With the General Education Law of 1970, the first sign of permission appeared, since it provided for the "revival of native languages." Later on, in 1975, a decree was passed that regulated the teaching, with optional character, of the native languages of the State of Spain.

Timidly and slowly, these measures were to permit the introduction of the teaching of the Catalan language in the schools of Catalonia. Several institutions set up at the end of the 1960s, such as the Rosa Sensat School of Teachers or the Delegation of the Teaching of Catalan of Cultural Omnium, took advantage of this legal opening to promote the teaching of Catalan.

Starting with the re-establishment of the Generalitat in 1977, the task of Catalanization was resumed as an institutionalized priority. A policy of linguistic normalization was launched with the transfer of teaching matters from the State Administration's jurisdiction in January 1981.

With the introduction of Catalan as a compulsory subject in all elementary schools, secondary schools and first level industrial schools by the Royal Decree in 1978 as well as the approval of the Law on Linguistic Normalization in April 1983, the legal framework has been evolved, increasing the presence of Catalan in the education system.

* Original: English

Currently, the milestone to reach is that all the children of Catalonia, whatever their home language before entering school, habitually and correctly use Catalan and Spanish by the end of their elementary-level studies.

The principal legal provisions approved in this period concern the following:

- The extension of the teaching of the Catalan language to courses for Senior School, second-level Industrial Schools and University Entrance, and a new regulation and increase in lessons of Catalan at different educational levels.

- The establishment of programmes in the Catalan language for different educational levels.

- The regulation of the use of Catalan as the vehicle-language in different subjects and different levels and courses. At first, the launching of the programmes of Catalan was voluntary; in 1982-83 a minimum was set for the use of Catalan in one subject of the 2nd phase of the elementary education; and with the law on Linguistic Normalization it was established that Catalan was the language used in teaching, and as such, was to be used progressively and universally at all levels and in all grades and course non-university instruction; at the same time, the right to use the habitual language in elementary education was regulated.

- The incorporation of specific tests of Catalan for the competitive examinations for prospective teachers of elementary, intermediate and industrial schools.

- The regulation of systems of mobility of teachers, taking into account the schools which teach in Catalan.

- The regulation of refresher courses in Catalan for teachers.

- The introduction of Catalan in university entrance examinations for Catalonia.

Parallel to the introduction of the norms and administrative measures, the policy of linguistic normalization in teaching and the activities of the Department of Education have taken four principal directions:

- the training of teachers;
- the material and human technical support in schools intended for teachers;
- campaigns of sensitization and Catalanization;
- the study of and experimentation with new teaching methods.

Teacher Training

One of the greatest difficulties that had to be faced at the beginning of the process of linguistic normalization in schools was the lack of the training of teachers.

Since the year 1978-79, courses in the Catalan language and culture have been carried out for teachers. These were called "Recycling in Catalan" and were organised by the Institutes of Educational Sciences and co-ordinated by the Department of Education. These courses aimed at providing the teacher with knowledge of the language and its teaching methodology as well as of the Catalan culture.

The importance of these courses can be shown by some data: in 1978-79, 387 courses were given in 47 places with the participation of 7,700 teachers; 1981-82 was the year of the largest attendance - 923 courses were given in 83 places with an attendance of 18,150 teachers. Starting from this year, attendance has been decreasing slightly; in 1984-85 there were 13,300 teachers enrolled. This is absolutely normal as Recycling in Catalan has the temporary function of covering deficits suffered by the teachers due to a personal and pedagogic lack of training in the language. Currently, the initial training of prospective teachers in teacher-training colleges pays attention to this aspect.

As a complement to the courses of Recycling in Catalan, some stronger recycling actions were carried out in some areas with a higher percentage of Spanish-speaking people, and where the teachers were in need of a more specific linguistic training.

Support Actions in School

To allow the accomplishment of the minimums established by the regulations in some cases, and in others to strengthen the projects for Catalanization that have been made on the initiative of the schools themselves - parents and teachers - a set of actions for material and human technical support have been carried out.

In some centres the linguistic composition of the teaching staff - with a majority of Catalan-speaking teachers - did not allow the fulfillment of even the minimum established by the law regarding the subject of Catalan. In these cases teachers specialised in Catalan were contracted to give lessons of the Catalan language. In the year 1978-79 there were 383 teachers implementing this task, while in 1984-85 there were 907. As school teachers were little by little trained, the function of Catalan specialists has taken on a more global task of Catalanizing the centre, above all strengthening the pre-school courses and the first years of the elementary school, from which most teaching processes in Catalan have been started.

As pedagogic support to teachers-educators, the specialists responsible for the Catalan language programmes are carrying out seminars for advising in teaching methodology with the objective of providing the teachers with the appropriate didactic instruments for their task. The number of these seminars is reflected in the results: in 1980-81, 609 sessions in 87 places were organised and in 1984-85 there were 1,896 sessions in 171 places.

For the schools that have begun Catalanization projects, co-ordination was established in order to bring them into contact, to facilitate exchange of experiences, to supply didactic support and supervise the quality of teaching. The co-ordination consists of periodical workshops; in 1981-82, 63 were arranged in 21 locations around Catalonia; in 1984-85 there were 69 sessions in 23 different places.

New Didactic Methods and Experimental Plans

The differences in the linguistic situations in the Catalan schools call for the use of different techniques in learning the Catalan language, especially for those pupils whose habitual language is Spanish.

Based on research and experimentation, several proposals for methods have been worked out, two of which we mention here: the linguistic immersion programme and the contextual discourse method.

The linguistic immersion programme is one of the methods which have been applied in a number of schools located in the industrial belt of Barcelona since 1983-84. The programme consists of having the Spanish-speaking pupil immersed in a Catalan-speaking environment right from the start of his schooling, which enables him to start the elementary school with a sound basis of the spoken language. In 1984-85 more than 180 schools started immersion programmes, encompassing a total of 617 classes and 20,000 pupils.

With the contextual discourse method the basic learning language is Spanish, while Catalan is introduced as a second language, based on a set of didactic units each of which creates a situation to be experienced by the children in the most active way possible. It concerns provoking in some way the need for Catalan based on stimulating activities for the child, so that Catalan naturally becomes the instrument of communication that the pupil adopts in an easy and pleasant way. 1,600 classes used this method (role-playing) during the year 1984-85.

Also, in the framework of the Law on Experimental Centres which governs the experimentation with new educational techniques and teaching methods in teaching centres in Catalonia, financial aid was given to assist the experimentation with new methods in specific socio-linguistic areas.

To have an idea of the impact of the introduction of Catalan in schools, and its evolution in regard to both its qualitative and quantitative aspects, and to evaluate the application of the different methods and processes and their results in different classroom situations, a set of surveys has been completed and research studies have been carried out, two of which should be mentioned here: one on the pupils of the 4th grade in 1981-82 and another on the pupils of the 1st Upper Secondary School and Industrial School at the beginning of the year 1982-83. The first of these studies was published under the title *Four Years of Catalan in Schools*. To summarize, these two works have proved

that all the pupils in Catalonia are capable of learning Catalan, but that this language, which is environmentally less favoured, is the one which requires more energetic support from the point of view of its use on the part of the school if satisfactory results are to be achieved in Catalan. And this does not necessarily mean a decline in the knowledge of Spanish, a result evident from the former of the two above-mentioned studies.

Catalanization Campaigns

Parallel to the actions described hitherto and mainly directed to the nuclei of population with a larger percentage of Spanish-speakers, campaigns of entertainment were carried out - cinema, theatre, cartoons, marionettes, etc., in the schools themselves, the aim being to motivate the pupils and Catalan teachers, to facilitate immersion in Catalan culture and, through entertainment, to provide collective experience and living contact with the Catalan language.

There is also a campaign called "the press in schools" consisting of sending newspapers in Catalan to schools - *AVUI* and *PUNT DIARI* for the area of Gerona - which periodically include sections on learning. The objective of this campaign is twofold: on the one hand, to collaborate in the normalization of the language, and on the other, to promote the knowledge and understanding of this medium in writing and reading.

The economic resources available for carrying out the activities described above have increased year by year. Leaving aside the maintenance of teachers specialized in Catalan, the budget for the Catalanization programme was 24,000,000 pesetas for 1982-83, which was increased to 87,000,000 pesetas for 1984-85. For the "recycling" (in-service training) of teachers and normalization of the use of Catalan in 1982-83, 1,470,500,000 pesetas were set aside and 1,803,800,000 pesetas in 1984-85.

The result of the application of this educational policy to the different socio-linguistic school situations has had the effect that in Catalonia it is now possible to establish a school typology regarding the use of the language. We can speak of four school types:

- Schools where all subjects are taught in Catalan (except Spanish). In the year 1984-85, 22.1% of the schools in Catalonia belonged to this group.
- Schools that have launched the progressive implementation of Catalan on all levels. In 1984-85 these schools represented 33.2% of the total.
- Schools in the areas of Catalan and Spanish; these totalled 34.3% in 1984-85.
- Schools that only use Catalan for the teaching of this language.

Teaching in Catalan = Catalonia

	1980-81	1981-82	1984-85
Total	4.57%	8.91%	22.1%
Progressive project	6.51%	11.44%	33.2%
Partially (subjects)		3.29%	34.3%

Linguistic Situation of Elementary School Pupils

1978-79			1981-82		
Catalan-speaking	Understand Catalan	Do not understand	Catalan-speaking	Understand Catalan	Do not understand Catalan
34%	24%	42%	59.5%	24.4%	15.6%

Linguistic Situation of Elementary-School Teachers

	1977-78			1981-82		
	Catalan-speaking	Understand Catalan	Do not understand Catalan	Catalan-speaking	Understand Catalan	Do not understand Catalan
Barcelona	46%	54%		62.9%	37.0%	9.0%
Gerona	84%	16%		90.5%	9.5%	0.8%
Lerida	74%	26%		90.5%	9.5%	0.8%
Tarragona	70%	30%		82.0%	17.9%	1.4%
Catalonia	52%	48%	(20%)	67.7%	32.3%	7.4%