



Turell, M<sup>a</sup> Teresa, ed. 2001: *Multilingualism in Spain: Sociolinguistic and Psycholinguistic Aspects of Linguistic Minority Groups*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd. xv + 389 pp. ISBN 1-85359-491-1 (hbk).

Marta M<sup>a</sup> Rodríguez Añón

*Universidad de Santiago de Compostela*

The celebration of the *VIII Conferencia Internacional das Linguas Minoritarias (VIII International Conference on Minority Languages)* which took place last November in Santiago de Compostela, seems appropriate to introduce the issue which will occupy the following pages, namely, multilingualism, and specifically the account of this complex phenomenon in Spanish territory. During this conference, which brought together a number of specialists (amongst whom the Spanish linguist Miquel Siguán is worthy of note), the sometimes forgotten question of linguistic plurality was raised and discussed. Amongst other issues, the most relevant were the claim for the acknowledgement of minority languages as *full* languages in their own right and the subsequent need for bilingual education (in both the official and the minority language), the presence of minority languages in the mass media and Internet, as well as the development of adequate linguistic policies supporting the improvement of their current status.

All this suggests the existence of a rich linguistic (and consequently cultural) diversity which is too often neglected and blurred, and even threatened (for external reasons) but which is still alive. Indeed, as Crystal (2000) points out, linguistic loss nowadays is a worldwide phenomenon we cannot obviate, since many languages are disappearing at an increasing rate and others are seriously endangered. If the appropriate steps are not taken, linguistic diversity will be progressively reduced to a small number of languages, mainly those spoken in developed countries. This future prospect is pessimistic although we still have time to pay linguistic plurality the attention it deserves and account for this heterogeneity, viewing it as a rich value to preserve, not as trouble to overcome.

In this context, many are the works in which plurilingual diversity has been analysed in recent years, though they are too often centred on the English-speaking world or on general views of this phenomenon (cf., for instance, Edwards 1994, who offers an overall, yet very valuable, vision of the kaleidoscopic panorama of the languages in the world, analysing also related issues such as bilingualism, nationalism, education, etc). In the Spanish literature, language diversity has not been a privileged issue of investigation. In fact, the only extensive account of

*ATLANTIS*  
Vol. XXIV Núm. 2 (Diciembre 2002): 283-287.  
ISSN 0210-6124

language plurality in this country until recently was that by Siguán (1992), who offers an analysis of the treatment of the official and co-official languages in Spain. Yet, other minority varieties existing in this territory (Asturian, Aranese, etc) are given only secondary treatment.

Thus, the publication of *Multilingualism in Spain*, edited by M. Teresa Turell, is innovative inasmuch as it covers the serious need for deep and extensive research in a linguistic field which deserves full development.

*Multilingualism in Spain* presents a thorough description of all the languages and communities which shape the current plurilingual make-up of this country. Some had never been described before and others had been undertheorised (as is the case with the deaf communities' sign language), since this volume pays attention not only to official, co-official and minority national languages, but also to the sign language of the deaf community, as well as the languages of the long-forgotten immigrant minorities settled in Spain, all of them, undoubtedly, part of this multilingual organism. In other words, not only does this book look into the *indigenous* linguistic diversity of this country, but also into other linguistic realities which have become part of our society, and contributed to its cultural and linguistic enrichment.

*Multilingualism in Spain* is divided into 17 different chapters which account for 16 of the languages and communities coexisting in this territory at present. Each section constitutes an individual paper on its own which develops and puts into practice the theoretical criteria established in the introductory section, hence favouring the uniform organisation and arrangement of the considerable amount of data provided in the volume chapter by chapter.

Chapter 1, written by the editor, M. Teresa Turell, is a preliminary section in which several issues are developed which help contextualise and provide a background for the following 16 chapters. General information about some of the communities described in the different sections is provided, and as mentioned above, the methodology used and the approaches taken through the volume are stated here from the very beginning. Hence, the socio and psycholinguistic characterisation of language communities offered by this book is conducted through an approach which cuts across three analytical patterns: language, migration and discrimination. These, in their turn, are related to a further six areas of analysis: (i) sociolinguistic situation, (ii) migration and settlement patterns, (iii) institutional support, (iv) role of education, (v) patterns of language use, and (vi) learning and communicative strategies. Sociolinguistic interviews, psycholinguistic questionnaires and class observation are also mentioned as research tools which reveal rigour in the procurement of real empirical data, so valuable in studies of this nature. The notions of *established* and *new migrant minority* are also introduced and explained, since these are going to be the main organising factors according to which the whole volume is constructed. Hence, *established minorities* include indigenous and long-established communities such as the Basque, the Galician, the Aranese or the Gitano communities. Under the label *new migrant minorities* are included, on the other

hand, some of the immigrant communities who have settled in Spain during the last decades (the Cape Verdean, Chinese, Maghrebi, Italian, UK communities, etc.), some of which represent the very first attempt at a formal description. After this necessary categorisation of minority groups, the different *language contact* (LC) phenomena are also introduced: codeswitching, borrowing, syntactic and semantic calques are all indicators of inter-ethnic inter-cultural contact and therefore deserve later and further development in the individual chapters. Also noteworthy is the subsection, dedicated in this introductory chapter, to the structure of the book, which is arranged and organised around the above-cited notions of *established* and *new migrant community*. After this preliminary chapter, which offers in 57 pages the information necessary to a full understanding of the book, this volume presents a four-part division, each one comprising different autonomous chapters written by different authors:

— Part 1 comprises the chapters corresponding to the larger established minority groups, namely, chapter 2 "The Catalan-speaking Communities" (written by Miquel Àngel Pradilla), 3 "The Basque-speaking Communities" (Jasone Cenoz and Josu Perales) and 4 "The Galician Speech Community" (Carme Hermida Gulías).

— In part 2, an account of the smaller established minorities is provided. Hence, chapters 5, 6 and 7 deal with "The Occitan Speech Community of the Aran Valley" (Jordi Suils and Àngel Huguet), "The Asturian Speech Community" (Roberto González-Quevedo) and "The Sign Language Communities" (Rosa Vallverdú), respectively.

— Part 3 is dedicated to the other established minorities which are not indigenous but which settled in Spain many centuries ago. That is, "The Gitano Communities" (Àngel Marzo and M. Teresa Turell), accounted for in chapter 8, and "The Jewish Communities" (Bárbara Vigil) described in chapter 9.

— Finally, part 4 comprises those sections dealing with the new migrant minorities established in the Spanish territory in relatively recent years. Chapters 10 to 17 offer individual descriptions of "The Brazilian" (M. Teresa Turell and Neiva Lavratti), "The Cape Verdean" (Lorenzo López Trigo), "The Chinese" (Joaquín Beltrán and Cresen García), "The Italian" (Rosa M. Torrens), "The Maghrebi" (Belén Garí), "The Portuguese" (Lorenzo López Trigo), "The UK" and "The US American" communities (both chapters written by M. Teresa Turell and Cristina Corcoll) in this same order.

Those sections contained in part 1 share evident similarities in the research patterns followed. Hence, all three provide a diachronic historical background of their respective languages and cultures, statistical information about the distribution and number of speakers, an overall description of the language and dialectal variants, as well as the strategies and level of linguistic proficiency exhibited by the speakers. Language contact phenomena are also analysed, together with the role of mass media and institutional support in each respective community. For reasons of space, any attempt at a thorough description of each single community described in

the book would be an impossible task. However, the opportunity to provide a brief overview of one of them must not be rejected. Due to my condition of Galician speaker, and to my belonging to the University of Santiago de Compostela, my everyday contact with Galician at both an extra-academic and a philological level makes me feel naturally inclined to choose this community for examination (though one might argue that these are not very objective criteria). The Galician community is then characterised in this volume on the basis of the above-mentioned guidelines (i.e. historical background, language description, linguistic proficiency, language in the media, etc). The chapter opens with a brief historical and cultural characterisation after which the geographical spread of this language is discussed. Hence, we can observe that the Galician language is not confined to the administrative limits of its territory, but actually spreads out to the communities of Castilla-León, Asturias and Zamora. Attention is also paid to internal linguistic variation, especially to the description of three main dialectal areas (*western*, *central* and *eastern*), and also to the characterisation of *transfrontier* varieties of Galician. An extensive (perhaps too much for the purposes and the scope of this volume) historical account of this language is then offered which takes in the following periods: the medieval period, the dark ages (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries), the Enlightenment and pre-Renaissance, the Renaissance period, the *Nós* period (1916-1936) and the second Renaissance (1936-present day). After this comes an analysis of the current situation of Galician studies, proficiency in this language and the linguistic skills used by Galician speakers (i.e. understanding, speaking, reading and writing). The results reveal that only 60,3% of the population have Galician as their first language. Yet, other sociolinguistic factors such as age, social class and place of residence are also taken into account, revealing that the highest levels of proficiency and use of Galician as a first language belong to speakers over 65 years old, usually belonging to the lower or middle class and to those who live in rural areas. As far as the speech context is concerned, the results reflect the existence of a diglossic situation in which the use of Galician is often restricted to private settings and the closest social relations. The situation of Galician in schools, in the church and in the mass media is also analysed, revealing the urgent need to promote and support the use of this language in all these areas. Language contact between Galician and Spanish is also considered and illustrated with real instances of language shift, codeswitching and interference at various levels of analysis (syntactic, lexical, etc.). Finally, a claim is made to urge the administration to set up an effective language normalisation campaign capable of fostering the use of Galician.

A similar scenario can be traced for all three communities (i.e. Galicia, Catalonia and the Basque Country), which seem to exhibit diglossic patterns often restricting the use of these languages to familiar and private settings. Yet, the situation seems to have improved relatively in recent years, as the prestige of Catalan, Galician and Basque is increasing, together with the increasing use of these languages in public contexts. Notwithstanding, much more work needs to be carried out by the media and the institutions to reach a balanced situation with respect to Spanish.

Occitan, Asturian and the Sign language, portrayed in part 2, basically follow the same research lines as those stated above for Catalan, Galician and Basque. Unfortunately, the situation is less optimistic, since these languages are not recognised as official. Sometimes, this contributes to the formation of not very positive attitudes towards these languages (e.g. lack of prestige or the underestimation of non official or co-official varieties), which, despite attempts made by different institutions and organisations to defend the language, hinder their evolution from a diglossic to a prestigious situation in which the language is used in all contexts. The innovative and praiseworthy decision of including a chapter on the often neglected Sign language community deserves special attention. Here, the struggle of the deaf community against the imposition of a single means of communication unnatural to them (i.e. oral language) is highlighted, together with their claim for their right to use sign language, which permits the full development of their capacities.

Again, part 3 develops the same research lines common to the previous chapters and the volume as a whole. A characterisation of the Gitano and the Jewish minorities is presented in which the former seems to be characterised by cultural resistance and self-defence translated into relative linguistic isolation and exclusion. Their language, *Caló*, is thus used as a distinguishing feature against Spanish. However, the interchange between both communities has been so fluid that the grammatical base of *Caló* is now Spanish. Furthermore, Gitanos do not reject the mixing of the two languages. The Jewish community, on the other hand, shows a pattern of language behaviour characterised by combination, multilingualism, language shift and complete abandonment of their original languages (*Yiddish* and *Jaketía*) in favour of the more homogeneous pattern of Spanish society.

Part 4 provides an extensive account of eight of the most important migrant minorities settled in Spain. Again, a complete revision of all their characteristics, as analysed in the volume, would be impossible here. Yet, it is interesting to compare their different degrees of cultural and linguistic adaptation to the host community. For instance, in the context of language contact between the Brazilian minority and Spanish, two mixed varieties emerge (*Portunhol* and *Españogués*), which suggest fluid contact with this host community. Cape Verdeans, who speak Portuguese and *Kriolu* (a Portuguese creole) show different degrees of adaptation, though not very high. The Chinese minority reflects a case of extreme self-isolation with no interest in the language and culture of the host community. This results in linguistic interference or borrowing and typically in the fossilisation of errors when speaking Spanish or any of the languages of the Spanish territory. The Italian, Portuguese, UK and the US communities display, in their turn, a much more positive attitude towards the host community which leads to fluid exchange and positive valuation of the culture and language of the community. The factors determining this positive attitude are probably cultural and linguistic proximity, in the case of the Italian and the Portuguese minorities, and, in the case of the UK and the US migrants, the self-awareness of being prestigious communities, regarded positively outside their home countries. The Maghrebi minority (one of the biggest immigration groups in Spain,

with an estimated number ranging between 60,000 and 100,000) does not display negative attitudes towards the host community. Yet, the urgency of learning the official language(s) in order to be able to find a job makes them leave their language training once they acquire a basic competence, and this also favours the fossilisation of errors.

*Multilingualism in Spain* is an extremely well documented work, supported by extensive accounts of very recent and up-dated statistical data, official documentation and bibliographical sources. Furthermore, this scientific rigour does not attenuate the philosophy behind the topic, that is, the necessity to account for other linguistic realities, the claim for intercultural integration and exchange and the stand against cultural absolutism, in a plurilingual world where all languages are respected and supported. No doubt this volume will be a landmark in the field of multilingual research and will bring the lay reader closer to the conception of a plurilingual entity, thus definitively abandoning the idea that only before linguists are all languages equal.

#### REFERENCES

- Crystal, David 2000: *Language Death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
Edwards, John 1994: *Multilingualism*. London: Routledge.  
Siguán, Miquel 1992: *España Plurilingüe*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.