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Albert Bastardas-Boada,

Emili Boix-Fuster,

Rosa Maria Torrens-Guerrini (eds)

# Family Multilingualism in Medium-Sized Language Communities

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## Mixed-Language Families in Catalonia: Competences, Uses and Evolving Self-Organisation

### 1. Introduction: ‘Family Language Policy’ or ‘Self-Organisation’?

In recent years the term ‘family language policy’ has begun to circulate in the international sociolinguistics literature (cf. Spolsky 2004, 2007, 2012, King et al. 2008; Caldas 2012; Schwartz & Verschik 2013)<sup>1</sup>. From a conceptual standpoint, however, the creation and/or use of this syntagma, applied directly to the language decisions taken by family members to speak to one another, can raise questions about whether one should apply what appears rather to be a framework that pertains to actions arising out of institutionalisation, public debate, and formal decisions to a phenomenon produced ‘spontaneously’. ‘Language policy’, which is also commonly associated with the term ‘planning’, has traditionally evoked the study of actions taken by public authorities at the level of the institutional and social use of languages and of their process of decision-making, implementation and any effects on social language behaviours that may ensue. The expansion of this concept to the level of interpersonal uses in families, which corresponds to another sphere involving elements that are distinct from those of the political level or of a formally constituted organisation, can be misleading and conceal phenomena specific to this level of social reality. Applying too

1 Piller (2002:246) also speaks of ‘private language planning’ in reference to parents when they make a conscious decision to raise their children bilingual. While not denying that such conscious decisions may be taken in certain cases, the aim here is to explore whether this is always so or whether there are also cases and situations in which the behaviour is more ‘natural’ and unconscious.

mimetically that which belongs to our understanding of what we have called ‘institutionalised communications’ (Corbeil 1983) to the level of ‘individualised’ behaviours (cf. Bastardas 1999a and b) can lead to an inadequate understanding of the mechanisms involved in the decisions on language that emerge within families.

At the same time, however, there is certainly a need to account for what occurs in family units at the level of language behaviours because it is the area in which the fundamental processes of language maintenance or shift take place. If there is intergenerational transmission of the parents’ language forms, these forms constitute the basis of the language or languages of infants. And if not, those forms that are not transmitted within the family will not persist, unless individuals can acquire them elsewhere. One possible approach that may assist in our thinking about the sociolinguistic dynamics in families is to use some of the concepts developed in recent decades in the context of cybernetics and systems theory and more recently gathered under the umbrella of ‘complexity’ or ‘complexical’ perspectives (cf. Bastardas 2013, 2014, 2017, and Massip & Bastardas 2013). ‘Self-organisation’ and ‘emergence’ (Ashby 1962, Holland 1998), for instance, may be well-suited to the task of accounting for what occurs linguistically within social units as a result of interaction unregulated by the authorities. These two concepts help to express phenomena that exhibit order and organisation and that have not been *directly* ‘programmed’ by a hierarchically higher level of control, but rather are produced ‘naturally’ and not necessarily ‘planned’ by the individuals involved. This enables us to conceive of such phenomena as ‘bottom-up’ rather than as ‘top-down’<sup>2</sup>. As we shall soon see, however, given the inextricably interadaptative and

2 By using the perspective of self-organising or autopoietic systems (cf. Maturana & Varela 1973, Morin 1977, Smith & Stevens 1994), we can more clearly give an account of the procedures by which a given structure of language uses is established in a given social environment. From this view, interpersonal language behaviours are dynamically emergent and sustained by processes of mutual feedback, taking advantage of the human propensity toward social coordination. Once a given language use has been established between two people, the ‘natural’ tendency will be to fix and maintain it unconsciously as a routine. Therefore, the important point in time to maintain or change sociocommunicative behaviours is, in many cases, their initial stage. If our aim is to intervene, the most important modifications need to be primarily intergenerational (cf. Bastardas 2012). Within

interwoven—in short, complex—nature of many of the phenomena of reality, this self-organisation is often neither ‘pure’ nor contextless, but is a mixture blending dynamics relating to the various influences that can affect a process (cf. Kasper 2014). Certainly, language behaviours do not happen in a social vacuum nor in an ahistorical or apolitical moment, and they can be clearly influenced by the institutional contexts in which they take place. At the same time, their actors can nevertheless have a not inconsiderable degree of autonomy to affect the final result of what occurs linguistically in the home.

## 2. Methodology and Subjects

The data in this study come from 20 semi-structured interviews largely carried out in the last quarter of 2014 with parents who have children in the municipal nursery schools of Barcelona, particularly those located in the *Eixample* neighbourhood<sup>3</sup>. The interview guide contained sections on the interviewees’ language biography, their relationship process with their partner, their children’s linguistic socialisation, their expectations of language use in the future and any other information that may be relevant.<sup>4</sup> Qualitative methodologies are essential to gain a deeper understanding of language behaviours. From a (socio)complex perspective, in which the mind, meanings and emotions are central to an approximation of human interactive phenomena, qualitative work

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the same generation, any adaptive evolution will tend to be in relations with new individuals in new environments.

3 I am grateful to Anna Currubí for her important contribution in conducting and transcribing the interviews. I would equally like to express my gratitude to Tamara Sánchez for the data collection and to Júlia Florit for her preparatory work. My thanks also go to Elisabet Vila Borrellas for her help in processing the data and in the preparation of this text. I am indebted as well to the mothers and fathers who gave of their time to take part in the interviews, as well as to the heads of the municipal schools who lent their assistance.

4 More detailed information about the interviewees is found in Annex 1.



on mixed-language couples must be viewed as essential<sup>5</sup> (cf. Heller & Lévy 1992, 1994, Galindo & Payà 2000, Lanza 2007, Boix 2009, Boix & Torrens 2011, Aguiló 2014).

### 3. The Organisational Dynamics of the Family Language Space: A) the Language (or Languages) of the Couple

#### *3.1 How the Couple's Relationship Develops: Intervening Factors and Circumstances*

When studying families formed by two partners who have a different L1<sup>6</sup>, it is necessary to distinguish between the different types of communication that may arise. For example, the factors that can influence the language practices of the two partners with one another are different from the factors that can determine the language or languages in which they speak to any children they may have.

In the first case—the language used between a couple—a variety of elements can come into play. One relates to their respective language competences at the time they meet. Their available competences will play a crucial role in the selection of the language that they initially use to communicate with one another. If one has *X* as the initial language and also knows *Y* sufficiently as an L2, his or her relationship with a monolingual individual whose L1 is *Y* will tend to develop in this language. If neither of the pair knows their partner's L1, but have an L2 in

5 Obviously this is not to deny the great value and complementarity offered by quantitative methodologies (see, for example, Vila 1993 or Melià & Villaverde 2008). Qualitative methodologies can be more suitable when the aim is to put oneself in the skin of social actors, while quantitative methodologies are useful to explore the extent of phenomena. From the complex perspective, thought is not either/or, but and/both.

6 L1 = first language understood and spoken, or initial language. We use 'L2' to refer to languages not acquired as L1 within the family.

common, then this language is more likely to be used in the relationship by both interlocutors. The phenomenon of interpersonal linguistic adaptation was theorised by Hamers & Blanc (1983), who explained it fundamentally as the optimal sum of the competences of two interlocutors. In general, the winner is the language most closely shared at that moment.

In cases where there are asymmetries or differences in the competences of the interlocutors, the language which the couple has used to get to know one another and thereafter adopt as a habit is very likely to be one of the major or international languages, not one of the medium-sized or small languages. This is because major or international languages are more often acquired by other language groups, which may use them as a *lingua franca* and view them as valuable cultural capital. Thus, for example, among the cases in our study in which one of the partners has Catalan as their initial language—this is the most common case—only one of the couples uses Catalan with one another<sup>7</sup>. In more than half of the cases, Spanish is used<sup>8</sup>, while the others employ languages such as English, French and Italian. Indeed, this phenomenon is not exclusive to Catalonia, but can be observed in other medium-sized language communities, such as Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, etc. in relation to English. In general, it seems likely that medium-sized and small languages will tend to have less prevalent use in mixed-language couples, given the fact that they are less extensive as an L2 outside of their customary territories. Nevertheless, this can be different if it involves the speakers of major languages who have been born or spent time residing in the society of a medium-sized language. These speakers, if sufficiently bilingualised, can also be ordinary users of the local code.

7 This would appear to confirm the statement that the partners in a mixed-language couple only relate to one another in Catalan if the partner whose first language is not Catalan has already become Catalanised before the formation of the couple (Boix & Torrens 2011).

8 This fact also concurs with the findings of Boix-Fuster (2009), who observed that a couple of mixed Catalan-speaking and Spanish-speaking partners almost always form their relationship in Spanish. In Boix & Torrens 2011, this behaviour is also predominant in couples of other origins. On the concept of 'medium-sized language' see Vila 2013.

In cases where there is a large-scale coexistence of two distinct groups of L1 in the same territory and one of the groups is familiar with the language of the other group, one of the crucial factors can then be the prevalent habits of use in the customary social settings of the couple. Arrangements such as this—for instance in Catalonia—can give rise to cases in which both interlocutors have sufficient competence in the same languages and, as a result, the social expectations of appropriate language use in varying circumstances can have a quite automatic influence on the choice of initial language for their interaction. In many of these encounters, the mostly commonly chosen language will not be a matter of available competences, but rather of the language perceived as most expected or appropriate to the situation or the participants.

The most common tendency for couples by far will be toward ‘speech convergence’, in other words, toward the use of a single language (cf. Giles et al. 1991). There is practically no case in which, at the start of the relationship, one of the individuals routinely speaks one language while the other speaks in another language. The more general propensity is, where possible, to speak to one another in a single language.

### *3.2 The Maintenance of Language Habits in a Couple*

Generally, language use between partners tends to maintain the language of their first encounters as the basis of their relationship. The habit established at the beginning appears to have an enormous power in many cases, even in those in which a later change occurs in the language competences of the individuals. This phenomenon is quite widespread in Catalonia and it certainly works in favour of a greater use of Spanish, because Spanish, as noted earlier, is the language that tends to be used more frequently at the start of a relationship between an L1 Catalan-speaker and a non-Catalan-speaker who has little or no colloquial skills in Catalan (O’Donnell 1991, Boix 2009). As a result, the strength of the person-language association and of unconscious routinisation will tend to maintain this use even if the competences of the second individual, the one whose initial language is not Catalan, have

changed and he or she is now in a position to speak Catalan with greater fluency (cf. Bastardas 1990, 1994).

This continuation of the language habit established at the outset of a relationship is what accounts in large part for why, despite clearly increasing competences in Catalan, there continues to be a high degree of use of Spanish by people who are, in many cases, quite bilingualised. Thus, they may use Catalan with new acquaintances, but often maintain their daily use of Spanish with L1 Catalan speakers whom they have already become accustomed to addressing in Spanish<sup>9</sup>:

- Interview 1<sup>10</sup>
- Interviewer: and in what language did you first start speaking to one another/
- C.H.-E.: in Spanish/ yes\_
- Interviewer: okay. I suppose it was spontaneous. right/ in other words:
- C. H.: yes, it was. it was the natural thing to speak Spanish.
- Interviewer: of course. if you didn't know Catalan. And what language do you use now/ do you use Catalan or Spanish now/
- C.H.: on the cell phone only Catalan. when we speak, we try to speak in Catalan. but like I said. **in minutes we are speaking Spanish.**

9 It may even be the case that partners speak publicly in one language—the one they consider most suitable in a particular social setting—and yet tend to revert, in private, to the initial language in which they established their relationship.

10 See the transcription conventions at the end of the chapter, after the references. In footnotes, original words in Catalan (or in Spanish). In bold we emphasize the most meaningful fragments:

- Entrevistadora: de tot. i en quina llengua vau començar a parlar entre vosaltres/
- C.H.- E: en castellà/ sí\_
- Entrevistadora: bè. suposo que va ser espontani. no/ o sigui:
- C.H.: sí. sí. era la cosa natural parlar en castellà.
- Entrevistadora: clar. si no sabies català. i quina llengua fas servir ara/ quina llengua feu servir ara el català o el castellà/
- CH.: per mòbil només el català. quan parlem tractem de parlar en català. però com t'he dit. **als minuts ja estem parlant en castellà.**
- E.: **és un estira i encoje en castellà.** no/ que tots dos tractem de parlar en català. però és massa difícil. el castellà mos torna molt fàcilment.



the establishment of a functional structure that adequately serves the needs of human beings—in this case, their communicative needs—the structure tends to maintain itself automatically and unconsciously as a *habitus* (cf. Bourdieu 1980, Bastardas 1994, 1995, Boix & Vila 1998, Kasper 2014).

Even so, changes can occur, particularly if, in the case of couples, the two members explicitly review their behaviour and quite consciously find it desirable to change. If they agree and can successfully make the new behaviour automatic in a social context that supports it, they can change their initial behaviour and speak to one another in the new code. There are also cases in which the change is partial, such as the frequent introduction of words and expressions from the other language, particularly when it is present in the context, and even clear code-mixing, especially when there are children. These can lead to changes in the frequency of the languages used in the home.

- Interview 9<sup>13</sup>
  - D.C.: well. basically my Italian at that time was quite dismal and she spoke Spanish. **we started to speak in Spanish**\
  - Interviewer: and what language do you speak in now/ in Spanish still or not/
  - D.C.: I don't know\
  - Interviewer: what do you mean you don't know/
  - D.C.: now:: **I would say that at home.. I would say that maybe 60% of the time we speak in Italian and then the other twenty and twenty in Catalan and Spanish\_**

- 13 -D.C.: bueno. bàsicament el meu italià en aquella època era bastant lamentable i ella parlava en castellà. **vem començar a parlar en castellà**\
- Entrevistadora: i ara en quina llengua parleu/ en castellà també o no/
- D.C.: no se sap\
- Entrevistadora: com que no se sap/
- D.C.: ara:: **diria que a casa.. diria que potser un 60% del temps parlem en italià i després l'altre vint i vint doncs en català o castellà\_**

- Interview 8<sup>14</sup>
  - Interviewer: okay. um: what language did you both start speaking in/
  - R.C: French\_
  - Interviewer: and have you always spoken in the same language/
  - R.C: no. because **we first started speaking in French. But later on she learnt:: Catalan. and now we speak in Catalan and in French.**
  - (...)
  - Interviewer: later on.. you said *we*. you and your partner always spoke in French and now/
  - R.C: sometimes we switch to Catalan\_
  - Interviewer: and you do that because the children were born xxx \
  - R.C: well. I had always thought that ... **I believe that it was largely when we came to live in Barcelona. also because I spoke to my friends and parents in Catalan.** actually. she quickly saw that.. that.. that Catalan would be more useful to her than Spanish. I mean ... and:: gradually. I kept inserting Catalan too. She learnt Spanish in Venezuela. we lived there some years ago. and she learnt Catalan later and now she speaks it very well. and I don't know\_
  
- 14 -Entrevistadora: val. em: en quina llengua vau començar a parlar/
  - R. C.: en francès\_
  - Entrevistadora: i sempre heu parlat en la mateixa llengua/
  - R. C.: no. perquè **vam començar parlant en francès. però després ella va aprendre el:: català. i ara parlem en català i en francès\_**
  - (...)
  - Entrevistadora: va passar un període.. has dit vosaltres. tu i la teva parella parlàveu sempre en francès i ara/
  - R. C.: a vegades passem al català\_
  - Entrevistadora: i feu això perquè han nascut els fills xxx \
  - R. C.: bueno. jo sempre havia pensat que ... **jo crec que va ser en gran mesura quan vam venir a viure a Barcelona. també perquè amb els amics i amb els meus pares parlo en català.** de fet. ella va veure de seguida que.. que.. que li era més útil el català que el castellà. vull dir que ... i:: de mica en mica. també el vaig anar introduint. ella va aprendre el castellà a Venezuela. vam viure uns anys allà. i el català el va aprendre després i ara el parla molt bé. i no ho sé\_

The arrival of children, which represents the daily introduction of Catalan into the home when one of the parents speaks Catalan to the children, is perhaps one of the factors that has the greatest impact on the increasing use of the language in family uses as a whole and in changing the habit of use between a couple, though the change may only be partial:

- Interview 5<sup>15</sup>
  - Interviewer: um .... what language do you use with your partner/
  - E.S.H: Spanish\_
  - Interviewer: has there been any change or have you always spoken the same language/
  - E.S.H.: **since I had children and we speak Catalan with the children, we do have some conversations in Catalan. yes, yes, before it was always Spanish and now some conversations we do have in Catalan\_**
- Interview 11<sup>16</sup>
  - E.: no. when I talk with him now. with Nico. with my partner. **before we always spoke in Italian and now we do mix a lot. often with him. I speak half-Catalan. half-Italian.** now that there are the children, I speak to them in Catalan. so it gets mixed a little\

- 15 -Entrevistadora: em .... quina llengua fas servir amb la teva parella/  
 -E.S.H.: castellà\_  
 -Entrevistadora: hi ha hagut algun canvi o sempre heu parlat la mateixa llengua/  
 -E.S.H.: **des de que tinc els nens com que parlem en català amb els nens doncs pos alguna conversació tenim en català. sí. sí. abans sempre era castellà i ara pos alguna conversació en català sí que la tenim\_**
- 16 -E.: no. quan parlo ara amb ell. amb el Nico. amb el meu company. sí que **abans parlàvem sempre en italià i ara sí que barregem molt. molts cops amb ell. parlo mig català. mig italià.** com que hi ha els nens i amb els nens els hi parlo en català. doncs es barreja una mica\



- Interview 4<sup>17</sup>
  - Interviewer: what language did you and your partner first start speaking/
  - N.S.: Spanish\_
  - Interviewer: **Spanish\_ and you haven't switched/**
  - N.S.: **yes. yes. now we speak in Catalan\_**
  - Interviewer: you do/ and .. was it spontaneous or did you decide to do that/
  - N.S.: no. it was the decision to have a baby and we want Catalan at home. so\_

#### 4. The Organisational Dynamics of the Family Language Space: B) Languages with Children

##### 4.1 *How You Speak to Your Children: Is It a Spontaneous and 'Natural' Personal Action or Mutually Planned and Decided?*

An interesting question is whether the language or languages selected by a mixed-language couple to speak with their children are the result of thoughtful consideration or automatic and subconscious. Is it closer to a spontaneous and unconscious action or to a planned and designed behaviour? In other words, is it a case of sociolinguistic self-organisation or an explicit 'language policy' that is debated and implemented by parents? In the cases we have studied, the approaches are wide-ranging. Most parents say that it was quite spontaneous and 'natural', while others clearly made a conscious and explicit decision. Thus, it would

- 17 -Entrevistadora: en quina llengua vau començar a parlar la teva parella i tu/  
 -N.S.: en castellà\_  
 -Entrevistadora: **en castellà\_ i no l'heu canviada/**  
 -N.S.: **sí. sí. ara parlem català\_**  
 -Entrevistadora: sí/ i .. va ser espontani o ho vau decidir/  
 -N.S.: no. va ser la decisió de tenir una criatura i volem el català a casa. o sigui\_

appear to be rather inappropriate to extend the conceptualisation of ‘language policy’ generally and automatically to the communicative practices between parents and children. At least in Catalonia, many cases appear to show no calculation or forethought in relation to the effects of parents’ actions on their children, except their intention that their behaviour—in this case, the behaviour of the Catalan-speaking parent—should be ‘natural’ and true to the parent.

In general, therefore, this seems to be quite a personal decision which will, nevertheless, affect the language uses in the home and is sometimes raised and discussed by the couple and sometimes less so. There appear to be cases in which the behaviour is ‘announced’ more than debated, because the individuals themselves are very clear about what they need to do.

- Interview 13<sup>18</sup>
    - E.: well, each to his own language. me with mine. Catalan. and Rubén in Spanish. though Rubén does sometimes use a phrase in Catalan. go to bed. time to sleep. in Catalan but: if he gets angry. or if he has to explain something to the child. he expresses himself better in Spanish\
    - Interviewer: okay. did you decide that beforehand or did it emerge spontaneously\
    - E.: **it emerged spontaneously\**
  - Interview 19<sup>19</sup>
    - S: no. **it emerged spontaneously. but it was quite clear to both of us. that we would each speak to the child the way we wanted to.** we are quite anarchic in this house in general\
- 18 -E.: doncs cadascú amb la seva llengua. jo amb la meva. català. i el Rubén en castellà. tot i que el Rubén de vegades fa alguna frase. al llit. a dormir. en català però: si s’enfada. o si li ha d’explicar una cosa. ell s’expressa millor en castellà\
- Entrevistadora: val. això ho veu decidir prèviament o va sorgir així espontàniament\
- E.: **va sorgir espontàniament\**
- 19 -S.: no. **va sorgir espontàniament. però cada u ho tenia molt clar. que li parlaria com volgués.** som bastant anarcos en aquesta casa en general\

In other cases, the subject is not explicitly discussed not because they are unaware of it, but because the couple has a shared view of the logic of the situation and accepts matter-of-factly that each person will speak a different language with their children:

- Interview 2<sup>20</sup>
  - Interviewer: ah: did you somehow decide that you would speak in Catalan [to the child] and she would speak in Spanish or was it::
  - I.M.: no. it is simply that I mean that **the roles were already assigned**\_ that is. the Catalan teacher speaks to him in Catalan and she because she doesn't speak Catalan speaks to him in Spanish. so ...

In other couples, the subject is more explicitly and thoughtfully discussed and they decide before their child is born how they will address the child. If we accept the analogy to public institutions, this case is the one that most closely resembles a 'family language policy':

- Interview 9<sup>21</sup>
  - Interviewer: did you two decide that or did it emerge spontaneously /
  - D.C: **we decided it**\_
  - Interviewer: how did you decide it/

20 -Entrevistadora: eh: vau decidir d'alguna manera que tu li parlaries en català i ella en castellà o va ser::

-I.M.: no. és només allò de dir que o sigui que més aviat **els papers ja estaven assignats**\_ o sigui. el mestre de català li parla en català i ella que no parla català li parla en castellà. doncs ...

21 -Entrevistadora: això ho veu decidir o va sorgir espontàniament/

-D.C.: **ho vem decidir**\_

-Entrevistadora: com ho veu decidir/

-D.C.: **vem decidir que bueno. lo que t'explicava abans. com que la llengua dèbil en el nostre cas és l'italià. si no som nosaltres els que li ensenyem italià. la nena mai serà capaç de dominar-lo i vem entendre que el català i el castellà. ja l'aprendria a l'escola.** encara que ara la portarem a l'escola italiana. vull dir que no sé com funcionarà la cosa. ah:: doncs que almenys l'idioma de casa fos l'italià. la meva dona va volguer això i jo no m'hi vaig oposar/

- **D.C: we decided that okay. what I told you before. since the weak language in our home is Italian. if we aren't the ones to teach her Italian. the little girl will never be able to master it and we understood that Catalan and Spanish. that she would learn them at school.** even though we take her to an Italian school now. I mean, I don't know how it will work. uh:: so at least the language at home would be Italian. my wife wanted that and I didn't oppose it/
  - Interview 16<sup>22</sup>
  - Interviewer: so. in the beginning. you both decided. you would speak Catalan to the child and she would speak Chinese/
  - **J. S.: yes. we decided it\**
  - Interview 4<sup>23</sup>
  - N.S.: in fact. **it was also one of the things that we thought.** right\ Spanish here is a guaranteed thing for the child\_ So we are going to guarantee Catalan\_
  - Interview 8<sup>24</sup>
  - Interviewer: and you both said. we are going to speak this language. or it emerged/
  - **R. C: I don't remember now but we did decide:: that:: we would each speak our own language** and that it was important for them to know both of them and the more the better. right/ and Spanish and German and whatever else. and what we would try
- 22 -Entrevistadora: llavors. al principi. que tu li parlessis en català i que ella li parlés en xinès. ho vau decidir/  
-J. S.: **sí. ho vam decidir\**
- 23 -N.S.: De fet. **també va ser de les coses que vam pensar.** no\ el castellà aquí el té garantit segur\_llavors. anem a garantir-li el català\_
- 24 -Entrevistadora: i veu dir. parlarem aquesta llengua. o va sorgir/  
-R.C.: **ara no me'n recordo però sí que vem decidir que:: que:: cadascú parlaria la seva llengua** i que era important que sapiguessin les dues i quantes més millor. no/ i el castellà i l'alemany i el que sigui. i que el que intentaríem era que un cop que comencés a escriure intentaríem reforçar el francès escrit\

to do was that once they started to write we would try to reinforce written French\

These last cases illustrate a more conscious and thoughtful conduct, probably encouraged by the fact that one of the languages involved is not present in the social context. In given situations, however, the respondents are doubtful whether they discussed the matter much or not, or whether they saw it as ‘natural’. On the other hand, even in cases where the couple is not very conscious about language before the birth of a child, fluctuations and changes can occur before they reach a stable organisation. At first, the couple engages in their customary behaviour with the child, but later this can change when they become more aware of the possible future impact of the behaviour:

- Interview 5<sup>25</sup>
  - E.S.H.: the truth is that we spoke it quite a lot ... and when he was very ... when Iker was very, when he had just been born we said things to him in Spanish\_
  - Interviewer: okay\_
  - E.S.H.: then gradually we spoke to him in Catalan. we went on speaking to him in Catalan and now we always speak to him in Catalan\_
  - Interviewer: **did you both agree to do that or not?**
  - E.S.H.: **well. hmm. we didn't speak about it exactly. did we say what language will we use/** of course we speak in Spanish but, but sure, we want him to know Catalan, don't we/

In some special situations, it is even possible for one of the parents to change language because they do not obtain the desired response of

- 25 -E.S.H.: la veritat és que ho vem parlar bastant ... i quan era molt ... quan l'Iker era molt.. era acabat de néixer les coses li dèiem en castellà\_  
 -Entrevistadora: sí\_  
 -E.S.H.: doncs mira poc a poc li vem parlar en català. li vem anar parlant en català i ara pos li parlem en català sempre\_  
 -Entrevistadora: **us veu posar d'acord en això o no/**  
 -E.S.H.: **bueno. sí. no en vem acabar de parlar diguéssim. vem dir amb què parlarem/** clar nosaltres parlem en castellà però.. però clar.. també volem que sàpiga català no/

convergence from a child. This can occur when the child feels ‘socially’ awkward about speaking a different language with a parent and the child decides not to speak the language in which the parent addresses him or her. In these cases, the parent may have to choose between carrying on in the code chosen to address the child or adapting to the code in which the child chooses to speak.

- Interview 16<sup>26</sup>
  - Interviewer: so then. in the beginning. you both decided. you would speak Catalan to the child and she would speak Chinese /
  - J. S.: yes. we decided it\
  - Interviewer: then you talked it over and you reversed course\
  - J. S.: we reversed course because:. because of the child’s emotional bond. to not give up her emotional bond with him. we saw that the child was turning to me much more than to her\
  - Interviewer: okay/ so that’s why the language /
  - J. S.: the language has helped out with this. and her. she had to communicate with the child somehow. but she was on her own. I couldn’t help her. if I had been able to speak Chinese, I would have collaborated with her. but my Chinese is a few words and that’s it. it is not a Chinese for:: it isn’t good enough to. communicate

- 26 -Entrevistadora: llavors. al principi. que tu li parlessis en català i que ella li parlés en xinès. ho vas decidir/  
 -J. S.: sí. ho vam decidir\  
 -Entrevistadora: llavors ho veu parlar i veu tornar enrere\  
 -J. S.: vem tornar enrere perquè:. per l’afectivitat del crió. per no sacrificar l’afectivitat d’ella amb ell. vam veure que el nen tirava molt més amb mi que amb ella\  
 -Entrevistadora: si/ per això de la llengua/  
 -J. S.: la llengua hi ha ajudat. i allavors ella. tenia que comunicar-se amb el nen d’alguna manera. però estava sola. jo no la podia ajudar. si jo hagués sapigut xinès hagués col·laborat. que el meu xinès és per dir quatre paraules i ja està. no és un xinès de:: no serveix per. comunicar sentiments. serveix per fer acudits. però no per sen: i llavors clar. per no sacrificar l’afectivitat\  
 -Entrevistadora: llavors diguem que hi havia com que hi havia com problemes de comunicació amb el nen\  
 -J. S.: sí. perquè clar. **ella parlava en xinès. però ell la veia com una cosa rara. perquè dius. tota l’altra gent li parlava en català. llavors ell no podia. és a dir. no hi havia manera\**

emotions. it's good enough to tell jokes. but not for emo:.. so that's why. to not lose the emotional bond\

- Interviewer: then let's say that there were like there were communication problems with the child\
- J. S.: yes. because of course. **she was speaking in Chinese. but he saw her as something odd. that is. everybody else was speaking to him in Catalan. that is. he couldn't. I mean. there was no way\**

#### 4.2 *Why did you take this action?*

It cannot simply be assumed that a member of a couple that has met and spoken in a dominant language, one that is spoken by a majority or can be used to communicate over a vast geographical expanse, will wish to speak to their child in a local language that is medium-sized or smaller. Such behaviour cannot even be assumed when the smaller language is the language of the territory where the family lives. As we know, there are many cases in the Catalan-speaking lands where this does not occur in the majority of instances (cf. Boix & Torrens 2011).

As a result, it is important to understand better why this behaviour occurs in those cases where it does take place. In all likelihood, a variety of factors intervene in these actions depending on personal, socioeconomic and political circumstances. I will strive to group them, but not necessarily separate them, into three fundamental categories: personal linguistic affectivity, group identity, and perceived future utility. Obviously, these factors can, to varying degrees, be interrelated to one another. Behind the Catalan-speaking parent's choice to speak Catalan to a child—unlike the choice of language to speak with his or her partner—it must also be borne in mind that there is highly likely to be a political and socioeconomic context, sufficient to maintain positive representations of Catalan. If this were not the case, the behaviour would be different (cf. Melià & Villaverde 2008, Forner 2009). It is perfectly possible that the majority of these parents believe that Catalan will be socially useful for their children, at least in Catalonia, where they currently live (cf. Boix-Fuster 2009).

#### 4.2.1 Personal Linguistic Affectivity

Based on the interviews, most cases clearly seem to reflect a parental decision on the language to use with the child that is both highly personal and taken confidently, because no other approach was conceivable. The decision—whether conscious or unconscious—is viewed as ‘natural’ and logical, even if the parent speaks with his or her partner in another language. There is a clear distinction between what is suitable for speaking with the other parent and what is suitable to use with their child. In the studied cases, there is no conflict perceived in this.

- Interview 11<sup>27</sup>
    - Interviewer: you both decided it. it was a deliberate decision\
    - E.: yes\_
    - Interviewer: or spontaneous\_
    - E.: well. we talked about it. but for me. Either way. **it doesn’t work for me. not speaking to the child in Catalan. I couldn’t speak to the child in another language\_**
  - Interview 17<sup>28</sup>
    - Interviewer: did you both decide it or did it emerge spontaneously/
    - E: well. I couldn’t decide it **because it was the natural thing to do. I suppose that if we had actually decided it. this is what we would have decided. but the thing is there was never any doubt.** and:: my husband uh:: at some point he switched more and said no. that he was comfortable speaking to the children
- 27 -Entrevistadora: ho va decidir. va ser una decisió premeditada\  
 -E.: sí\_  
 -Entrevistadora: o espontània\_  
 -E.: bueno. ho vem parlar. però a mi. igualment. **no em surt. al nen de no parlar-li en català. jo no li podria parlar una altra llengua\_**
- 28 -Entrevistadora: això ho veu decidir o va sorgir espontàniament/  
 -E.: bueno. jo no ho podia decidir **perquè és lo natural. fins i tot suposo que si ho hagués hagut de decidir. és el que hagués decidit. però és que no ha estat mai en dubte.** i:: el meu marit e:: en algun moment barrejava més i va dir no. que jo em trobo còmode parlant-los en castellà. i sí que ara els hi parla sempre en castellà. però crec que és bastant com a natural\



in Spanish. and now he always speaks to them in Spanish. but I think it's quite natural\

- Interview 18<sup>29</sup>
  - Interviewer: so did you both decide it or did it emerge spontaneously. that each of you spoke to the child in your own language. how did it happen/
  - R: well. **in my case it was clear. it was clearly my language. and. she was really clear about it too.** we talked about it. but both of us were very clear. or it would be lost. there would be no problem with Catalan. I wouldn't have chosen any other language. but it is present in the environment. as for Dutch. since it isn't present in the environment. the child had to learn to communicate with the cousins. so it emerged spontaneously and at the same time it was a decision\
  - Interviewer: okay. but let's see. you sat down first and said. I will speak to the child in this language. you in that one.\
  - R: no. I think it just happened that way. it was simple logic. I don't know. **it just wouldn't work for me to speak to [the child] in another language. and the same goes for my wife. later we talked about it. not to decide it. but to put it out there\**

Many of the interviewees state that this language behaviour is “what works for them” and that they could not conceive of speaking to their child any other way. The Catalan-speaking respondents show that, at least for this

- 29 -Entrevistadora: llavors això ho veu decidir o va sorgir espontàniament. que cadascú li va parlar amb la seva llengua. com va anar/  
 -R.: bueno. **jo en el meu cas ho tenia clar. era la meua llengua clara. i ella en el fons també ho tenia clar. ho vam parlar.** però tots dos ho teníem molt clar. sinó es perdria. amb el català no hi hauria problema. jo no hagués decidit cap altra llengua. però en l'entorn està present. en qüestió del neerlandès. com no hi és present en l'entorn. l'havia d'aprendre per comunicar-se amb els seus cosins. aleshores va sorgir espontàniament i al mateix temps va ser una decisió presa\  
 -Entrevistadora: o sigui. però a veure. abans us havíeu assegut i havíeu dit. li parlaré amb aquesta llengua. tu amb aquesta altra \  
 -R.: no. jo crec que va sorgir així. per lògica bàsica. no sé. **a mi no em sortiria parlar-li amb una altra llengua. i la meua dona el mateix. després a part ho vam parlar. però no per decidir-ho. sinó per exposar-ho\**

purpose, their perception is not that of a marginalised minority group that is harmed if they transmit their L1 to their children. The current sociolinguistic situation in Catalonia appears to allow L1 Catalan-speakers to feel fully legitimated in using their language with their children, even in cases in which they do not use Catalan with their partner.

#### 4.2.2 Group Identity

Another factor that can affect the language selected by parents is their explicit awareness of identity and membership in a given group. In the field of linguistics, this factor is also known as ‘language loyalty’ (Weinreich 1963). Indeed, we do not know the point at which this factor can be distinguished from the previous one. However, some interviewees did clearly express their group identification as a motivation to use the language. The domain of group identity may account for why, even when a person accepts that the language may contribute comparatively little as an economic enabler, he or she quite often values the cultural elements of the group and makes a commitment to maintain these with their children:

- Interview 4<sup>30</sup>
    - Interviewer: okay. um: do you think there was some reason/ for their future or::
    - N.S.: well. no/ first. because I feel more comfortable in Catalan and because. well. **because we decided that it interested us as an identity.** but no .. it’s not because it would open many doors\_
  - Interview 16<sup>31</sup>
    - J.S.: Catalan is very small. I don’t think Catalan should be lost. not from a patriotic viewpoint. but out of interest. **there has to be a lyrical part. a part of the heart that you can’t kill\_**
- 30 -Entrevistadora: val. mh: creus que per alguna raó/ pel seu futur o::  
 -N.S.: bueno. no/ primer. perquè jo em sento més còmoda en català i perquè. bueno. **perquè vam decidir que ens interessava com a identitat.** però no .. no és perquè obri gaires portes\_
- 31 -J.S.: el català és molt petit. jo crec que el català no es pot deixar perdre. ja no des d’un punt de vista patriòtic. sinó interès. **hi ha d’haver una part lírica. una part del cor que no la pots matar\_**

- Interview 20<sup>32</sup>
- C.: no. no. it was me. I spoke to them in Spanish. no problem. I made myself understood with them in Spanish. they made an effort to speak in Spanish. but it was me that no. I decided that I wanted to speak in Catalan. because I feel {(F)very} Catalan. and I didn't have that feeling of being very Catalan. if I didn't speak Catalan\  
[...]
- Interviewer: we're almost finished. just one more question that it's closely related to what you just said. by speaking in Catalan, you feel more Catalan\  
[...]
- C: by speaking in Catalan. I feel more Catalan, no. **I feel {(F)very} Catalan. and because I feel Catalan I want to speak Catalan. it's not the other way round\  
[...]**

#### 4.2.3 Perceived Future Utility of Languages

In a globalised, highly mobile society, many couples can appreciate the usefulness of giving multilingual skills to their children. They view such skills as cultural capital that may be useful to their children in their future working life. An appreciation of polyglotism is common among the parents interviewed and this view leads some of them, as we have seen, to be conscious and explicit about the subject of language and to adopt family practices that will help their children to develop multiple skills, taking advantage of parents' language diversity. Our interviews appear to corroborate the fact that the explicit decision to educate infants bilingually is spreading among classes that do not see themselves as the elite (Barron-Hauwaert 2004), whereas this behaviour used to be observed at an international level only among the upper

- 32 -C.: no. no. vaig ser jo. jo parlava amb ells en castellà. cap problema. m'entenia amb ells en castellà. ells feien l'esforç de parlar en castellà. però vaig ser jo que no. que vaig decidir que jo volia parlar en català. perquè em sento {(F)molt} català. i no entenia que sentint-me molt català. no parlés català\  
[...]
- Entrevistadora: ara ja acabem. només una pregunta. que és molt relacionada amb això que has dit. per parlar en català et sents més català\  
-C.: per parlar en català. em sento més català. no. **jo em sento {(F)molt} català. i per sentir-me català vull parlar en català. no és a l'inrevés\  
[...]**

classes. The pursuit of a bilingual strategy in the family appears poised to grow, and even more so amid a process of globalisation. It is a phenomenon of adaptation to new contexts.

- Interview 6<sup>33</sup>
    - Interviewer: okay. did you both decide/ what language you would speak to your children in/ or did it emerge spontaneously/
    - M.G.D.: it emerged spontaneously\_
    - Interviewer: or did you talk about it/
    - M.G.D.: it emerged spontaneously. but we also decided it. I mean. me. for example. it was clear to me that I. being here. I would speak to them in Catalan. and **it was also very clear to us. that we wanted Ervin to speak to them in Flemish. we didn't want to lose any opportunity.** right/ to learn. even if just to understand. and now we can see that they do. they understand all of it. in: in Flemish\_
  
  - Interview 9<sup>34</sup>
    - D.C.: it's random. but in general we speak Italian more than anything else at home. because:: given that it is not the language..
- 33 -Entrevistadora: val. ho vau decidir/ en quina llengua parlaríeu als fills/ o va sortir espontàniament/  
 -M.G.D.: va sortir espontàniament\_  
 -Entrevistadora: o ho vau parlar/  
 -M.G.D.: va sortir espontani. però també ho vem decidir. és a dir. jo. per exemple. tenia clar que jo. estant aquí. els hi parlaria català. **i això ho teníem molt clar també. que volíem que l'Ervin els hi parlés en flamenc. no volíem que perdéssim cap oportunitat.** no/ d'aprendre. encara que fos entendre. i ara veiem que sí. que ho entenen tot. el: el flamenc\_
- 34 -D.C.: és aleatori. però en general parlem més que res italià a casa. perquè:: donat que no és la llengua .. a vera. al final. la meva filla viurà en un ambient. rodejada de català i castellà\_  
 -Entrevistadora: sí\_  
 -D.C.: però en canvi. no de italià. amb lo qual. lo que estem intentant. **el que estem intentant és que l'idioma de casa sigui l'idioma feble. l'italià. perquè el pugui aprendre. perquè els altres ja els aprendrà.** jo. per exemple. vaig aprendre el castellà mirant la televisió i amb els companys de l'escola. és una cosa.. com que és una llengua tan viva. d'alguna manera s'aprèn\_

look. in the end. my daughter will live in a setting. surrounded by Catalan and Spanish\_

– Interviewer: yes\_

– D.C.: but by contrast. not by Italian. that is why. what we are trying. **what we are trying to do is that the language at home is the weak language. Italian. so that she can learn it. because she will already learn the others.** me. for example. I learnt Spanish by watching television and with my classmates. that's one thing.. since it's such a living tongue. she'll learn it somehow\_

• Interview 8<sup>35</sup>

– Interviewer: and you said. we're going to speak this language. or did it emerge/

– R. C: I don't remember now but we did decide.. that:: we would each speak our own language and **that it was important for them to know both of them and the more the better.** right/ and Spanish and German and whatever else. and what we would try to do was that once they started to write we would try to reinforce written French\

• Interview 20<sup>36</sup>

– R.C.: yes\_ right now yes. the child's relationship with the mother is much closer. the child spends much more time with her. she doesn't work. and. as a result. the child understands French much better. even though because of where we are and growing up. we understand that the child will wind up speaking. because of

35 -Entrevistadora: i veu dir. parlarem aquesta llengua. o va sorgir/

-R.C.: ara no me'n recordo però sí que vem decidir que... que:: cadascú parlaria la seva llengua i **que era important que sapiguessin les dues i quantes més millor.** no/ i el castellà i l'alemany i el que sigui. i que el que intenteríem era que un cop que comencés a escriure intenteríem reforçar el francès escrit\

36 -R.C.: sí\_ ara mateix sí. la relació amb la mare és molt més propera. està molt més temps. la mare no treballa. i. per tant. entén molt millor el francès. tot i que per qüestions d'on estem i el creixement. entenem que acabarà parlant. per qüestions d'escola. acabarà parlant català. i per qüestions d'on viu. i de relació que pugui tenir al carrer. parlarà castellà també. **la intenció és que acabi parlant els tres idiomes. i si pot ser un quart. que sigui l'anglès\**

school. the child will wind up speaking Catalan. and because of where the child lives. and in relation to what can happen in the street. the child will wind up speaking Spanish too. **the intention is for the child to speak three languages. and if there is a fourth. English too\**

When asked about the utility of languages, many couples have a clear idea that English plays a role as the language of international communication and they express their interest in their children being about to master it, alongside other major languages such as Spanish and Chinese. An awareness of globalisation is clearly present:

- Interview 15<sup>37</sup>
  - Interviewer: okay. what language do you think is most useful\
  - J.: most useful/ English\, I don't know. Catalan and English\
  - C.: it depends on where the child is and for what. if the child is here. obviously Catalan is a big help. but English too. but. depending on who you work with it's absolutely necessary. and as things are going now it is also an attitude toward life. we can't close ourselves off here\
  - Interviewer: yes. yes. yes.\_
  - [...]
    - C.: like I told you before. because it depends on where. but useful in life. they are all useful. but okay what I think is going to be

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37 -Entrevistadora: vale. i quina llengua creus que és més útil\  
 -J.: més útil/ l'anglès\ jo que sé. el català i l'anglès\  
 -C.: depende de dónde está y para qué. si está aquí. obviamente catalán ayuda mucho. pero también inglés. pero. según con quien trabajas es absolutamente necesario. y tal cómo van las cosas ahora también es una actitud hacia la vida. no podemos encerrarnos aquí\  
 -Entrevistadora: sí. sí. sí\_  
 [...]  
 -C.: si ya lo he dicho antes. porque depende de dónde. pero útil en la vida. son todos útiles. pero bueno lo que creo que le va a servir más. si decide que quiere.. inglés. claramente. aunque esté trabajando aquí. pero después es que **sin inglés no te va a coger nadie**. ningún multinacional. es que el mundo se está abriendo. **esto catalán. encerrado. no puede. no tiene suficiente fuerza. creo. no es suficientemente internacional\**

more useful. if the child decides and wants to.. English. clearly. even if the child is working here. but later the thing is **without English nobody is going to hire you**. no multinational. because the world is opening up. **this Catalan. closed off. it can't. it doesn't have enough strength. I believe. it's not international enough**

- Interview 16<sup>38</sup>
- J.S.: But. we Catalans have to be prepared to be open. because we are small. and then it happens that English. **it isn't the people who speak English. it's the language of the whole world**. and I think that if you have it that the world's establishment is English. the world's proletariat. that is, in the sense of the people of the southern hemisphere. Spanish is another one. there are 400 million speakers. in the United States there is a lot of Spanish. and I think that the legacy of Spanish. of the Spanish language. and enriched by South America. and also. it is a very important cultural legacy. and Chinese is a language that a lot of people speak\_

## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1 *About the Data*

The linguistic organisation of mixed-language families is a dynamic phenomenon that can exhibit aspects of self-organisation that may be rather 'spontaneous' and relatively unreflective or more consciously decided and planned by family members. Once they have been

- 38 -J.S.: però. els catalans hem d'estar preparats a estar oberts. perquè som petits. i després passa que l'anglès. **no és la gent que parla anglès. és la llengua de tot el món**. i jo crec que si tens que l'establishment del món és l'anglès. el proletariat del món. és a dir en el sentit de la gent de l'hemisferi sud. el castellà té una. són 400 milions. a Estats Units hi ha molt castellà. i jo crec que el legat del castellà. de la llengua castellana. i enriquida per Sud Amèrica. a més. és un llegat cultural molt important. i el xinès és una llengua que la parla molta gent\_

established, interpersonal behaviours have a tendency toward continuation, but they can also undergo change because of the increase in language competences among members of a couple and/or because of the ongoing relation with the family or the social network of the Catalan-speaking partner.

In certain cases, the fact that each parent speaks a different language to their children has arisen automatically as ‘natural’ and ‘expected’. In other cases, by contrast, the subject has been discussed by the couple and they have taken a joint decision on the family’s linguistic organisation. This is particularly so in those cases in which there is a language that is not strongly present in the social environment.

From the complexity perspective, which frequently adopts the concept of self-organisation to account for certain phenomena involving a multiplicity of actors that organise themselves and behave based on simple instructions, it is interesting to note that we are dealing, at the level of human beings, with intelligent agents capable of determining for themselves the principles that will guide their own behaviours. People can follow certain actions as a matter of routine—such as the selection of which language to speak with someone—but they can also consider the matter consciously together and then adopt a specific pattern of behaviour.

In other words, the so-called linguistic ‘norms of use’ are not necessarily set in stone, eternal, and impervious to change. Rather, it is possible to change them through dialogue—social and internal—and through conscious effort. Of course, this will require undoing the automatic rules in place, and it can necessitate joint effort. However, it is not always impossible. These rules do not inevitably have a ‘life of their own’, a claim often made by sociology. Like all life, they depend on their ecosystem, which in this case is sociocultural, and they will adapt or not, depending on the evolution of this ecosystem and the interests and representations of social agents.

The data presented in this chapter show the mechanisms by which interpersonal language habits are formed in families, the strength of their persistence once established, but also the possibility of their evolution. As a result, any language policy—in the genuine sense of the concept—that seeks to act upon a given situation must take into account



both aspects in order to intervene most effectively in the transformation of reality. It must reckon with behaviours that will tend to persist, but it must also address the opportunities to change these behaviours within the family, one example of which is the presence of children. Mixed-language families need to be encouraged to practice polyglotism while, in the case of Catalan society, the social use of Catalan is also fostered. Equally important, therefore, are the most traditional governmental policies and the imaginative micro-interventions occurring in social areas that fall outside the official realm.

### *5.2 About Family Language Uses and the Continuation of Medium-Sized Languages*

For medium-sized language communities, this challenge is crucial for their continuation. In a 'glocal' world, interpersonal relations with individuals of other communities will become ever greater in number. In general, as we have also seen, the tendency will be to use major languages in these interactions, because they are the ones acquired by members of smaller groups and not the other way around. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the non-use of a medium-sized language like Catalan with one's partner is not determinant in causing the code not to be transmitted to the next generation, at least according to the OPOL (one parent, one language) formula.

In the case of medium-sized languages and very clearly in cases such as Catalan, the political organisation of language uses takes on exceptional importance, because it will have an extraordinary influence on facilitating the competences of individuals. As already noted, this is a decisive factor in the establishment of language behaviours in first encounters, which subsequently tend to remain quite stable. The institutional processes of socialisation must ensure the smooth and agile development of communicative abilities in the language. Equally, the change and/or establishment of social habits in the use of codes, tending in the direction of formulas to better safeguard communicative practice in one's own medium-sized language, are of enormous importance, especially in childhood and adolescence.

Given the apparently quite widespread custom of adopting Spanish and not Catalan at the start of an interaction in which one is uncertain whether or not the other person is a Catalan-speaker, there is a strong possibility that Spanish will then be the language adopted for subsequent relations between the individuals. Expanding knowledge of Catalan must be accompanied by effective strategies to promote the code as the initial language of interaction in order to increase its customary social use. Primary schools and, especially, secondary schools bear a major responsibility in this regard (cf. Bastardas 2012).

### *5.3 About 'Self-Organisation' and 'Family Language Policy' as Theoretical Approaches*

This chapter began by asking whether it was more useful to view the formation process of family language behaviours as 'bottom-up' phenomena of self-organisation and emergence or as 'top-down' phenomena. The 'top-down' approach gives priority to the pressures and influences that may be exerted by the explicitly hierarchical organisation of society, with the State at the forefront. Certainly, our attention is much more frequently focused on this level and we do analyse the policies and legislation of countries as major determining factors in people's language behaviours. However, a more realistic view that nevertheless does not deny the importance of decisions taken by the public authorities and others on the subject of language must also take into consideration the relative autonomy of human beings in the actions they take. As we know, there are cases in which speakers, in spite of the guidelines of official policies, do as they wish, ignoring, if they can, the pressures of institutional power. And this is, for instance, what leads, in varying degrees and despite the pressures of public institutions, to the maintenance of dialectal varieties that are remote from the standard ones, as well as 'doomed' lexical or grammatical forms, and languages under dictatorships.

As a result, understanding the dynamic evolution of sociolinguistic processes requires being attentive not only to institutional and official levels but also to microsocal phenomena. A view of the whole, which entails an integrated view of dynamic interactions both bottom-up *and*

top-down, must be the best perspective to ensure not only that we understand phenomena but also that the objectives of public policies meet with success, though such success is never guaranteed.

From the standpoint of the conceptual discussion, the terminology ‘family language policy’, as we have said, can conceal the most spontaneous and least considered processes that take place within families. The term, as it is used internationally, tends always to presuppose a significant degree of thoughtful reflection on the part of parents when they are deciding their language behaviour with respect to their children, for example, in situations of minorisation or immigration. As we have seen in our data, however, there are quite a few cases, at least in Catalonia, in which these behaviours with children are rather ‘performed’ or ‘executed’ as a product of the *habitus* and in complete harmony with the probably unconscious representations of the individuals involved. Thus, the bilingualism of children can be the result more of interactions determined by the cognitive-emotional impulses of their parents than of calculation and planning relating to the children’s future competences.

However, even in cases in which the choice of language is more deliberate and thoughtful—as when there is a ‘foreign’ language involved—the process does not cease to be self-organising. We can speak of an attempt at ‘planned self-organisation’ in that there is an agreement to have certain behaviours, which later may be maintained or not. The interlocutors themselves will have to carry out practices that will have impacts on the socialisation of human beings, who will also have to carry on certain language behaviours with their parents. As the children grow up and come into contact with other external socialising agents, their family language behaviours may be confirmed or altered. Over the course of this process of socialisation, the family as whole can also undergo changes, as we have seen, in the extent to which languages are used and in relation to disequilibriums in the OPOL model. The ‘family’ phenomenon, from a linguistic standpoint, is dynamic and evolving, and it depends on internal sociocultural equilibriums and on the context.

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## Transcription Conventions

1. Prosodic aspects
  - *Terminal intonation of sequence*  
 / Rising  
 \ Falling  
 — Level
  - *Intensity*  
 High intensity: Forte  
 {(F) affected text}

Low intensity: Piano  
{(P) affected text}

- *Lengthening*  
Brief lengthening  
:  
Medium lengthening  
::  
Long lengthening  
:::

2. Vocal aspects

- *Simultaneous laughter with speech*  
{(@) affected speech}
- *Non-simultaneous laughter*  
@

3. Pauses and overlaps (subjective criterion)

- *Pauses*

Short

.

Medium

..

Long

...

- *Overlaps*  
[affected text]

4. Conflicting fragments

- Unintelligible fragments  
x / xx / xxx

5. Text cut to shorten transcription

[...]



## ANNEX 1. Interviewees Data

	Sex	Place of birth	First language	Partner's place of birth	Partner's first language	Place where couple met	Language of communication used with partner	Language of communication between parents and children
<b>Interview 1</b>	Male	Costa Rica	Spanish	Madrid (moved to Premià de Mar when 2 years old)	Catalan	Internet	Spanish	Respondent: Catalan and Spanish Partner: Catalan
<b>Interview 2</b>	Male	Santa Coloma	Spanish, but Catalan is language of daily use	Santa Coloma	Spanish	Santa Coloma	Spanish	Respondent: Catalan Partner: Spanish
<b>Interview 3</b>	Female	Barcelona	Spanish	France	French	Catalonia	Spanish	Respondent: Catalan Partner: French
<b>Interview 4</b>	Female	Barcelona	Catalan / Spanish	-	-	Catalonia	Initially, Spanish. Now, Catalan	Respondent: Catalan Partner: Catalan
<b>Interview 5</b>	Female	Berga	Catalan	Berga	Spanish	Berga	Spanish	Respondent: Catalan Partner: Spanish
<b>Interview 6</b>	Female	Barcelona	Catalan	Belgium	Flemish	Barcelona	English	Respondent: Catalan Partner: Flemish

	Sex	Place of birth	First language	Partner's place of birth	Partner's first language	Place where couple met	Language of communication used with partner	Language of communication between parents and children
<b>Interview 8</b>	Male	Barcelona	Catalan	France	French	France	Initially, French. Now, French and Catalan	Respondent: Catalan Partner: French
<b>Interview 9</b>	Male	Barcelona	Catalan	Italy	Italian	Barcelona	Initially, Spanish. Now, Spanish, Italian and Catalan	Respondent: Catalan and Italian Partner: Italian
<b>Interview 11</b>	Female	Barcelona	Catalan	Italy	Italian	Bologna (Italy)	Initially, Italian. Now, Italian and Catalan	Respondent: Catalan Partner: Italian
<b>Interview 13</b>	Female	Barcelona	Catalan	Basque Country	Spanish	Argentina	Initially, Spanish. Now, Spanish and, to a lesser extent, Catalan	Respondent: Catalan Partner: Spanish
<b>Interview 15</b>	Male	Barcelona	Catalan	London	English	Barcelona	English	Respondent: Catalan Partner: English
<b>Interview 16</b>	Male	Barcelona	Catalan	Taiwan	Chinese	Berkeley, California (USA)	English	Respondent: Catalan Partner: Chinese and now Catalan

	Sex	Place of birth	First language	Partner's place of birth	Partner's first language	Place where couple met	Language of communication used with partner	Language of communication between parents and children
<b>Interview 17</b>	Female	Barcelona	Catalan	Madrid	Spanish	Barcelona	Spanish	Respondent: Catalan Partner: Spanish
<b>Interview 19</b>	Male	Gavà	Catalan	Buenos Aires	Spanish	Barcelona	Spanish	Respondent: Catalan Partner: Spanish
<b>Interview 20</b>	Male	Barcelona	Spanish	France	French	Barcelona	Spanish	Respondent: Catalan Partner: French