

Social Bilingualism and FL Teaching: The Case of Catalan

**Amalia Llombart-Huesca
University of Redlands**

Abstract

Learning a foreign language entails acquiring competence on what is expected socially and culturally by users of the target language. However, in this paper I show how adoption of the sociolinguistics norms of certain languages conflicts with some principles of Foreign Language (FL) instruction and Communicative Language Teaching.

This paper focuses on a group of languages that share a particular sociolinguistic context: “languages without a country” or regional languages, such as Catalan, Basque or Irish, among others. I show how some phenomena typical in bilingual communities, such as diglossia, code-switching, language interference and language attitudes present a challenge in some areas of FL instruction, such as creation of task-based activities, syllabus design, dealing with language registers and dialects in the classroom, and integration of language and culture.

This study suggests the needs for further research in the area in which sociolinguistic issues of languages in their homeland interact with the teaching of those languages as FLs.

Introduction: Purpose of this Study

In the last 20 years, it has been increasingly recognized that linguistic competence, that is, effective and appropriate use of the language, goes beyond knowledge of the language, but rather includes understanding the sociolinguistic context of the language as well as pragmatic issues of the speech act. When learning a FL, students must acquire competence on what is expected socially and culturally

by users of the target language. This competence includes areas such as implicit norms in turn-taking norm and conversational boundaries (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). Steinmetz, Bush and Joseph-Goldfarb (1994) find especially relevant the teaching of culture in FL teaching, understanding “culture” as “people’s values, beliefs and attitudes and how they influence or are influenced by interactions among people” (12).

In this paper I show how for certain languages, their sociolinguistic context—that is, the implicit norms of their speakers as well as their values, beliefs and attitudes—presents a challenge for the teaching of those languages as FLs. I present cases in which adoption in the classroom of the sociolinguistic implicit norms of the FL taught, conflicts with some basic principles of FL teaching and, in particular, communicative language teaching (CLT).

The languages to which I center my attention have been referred to as “languages without a country,” “regional languages” or “minority languages.” It is important to clarify that I am not referring—necessarily—to languages spoken by a small number of people, but rather to what Sánchez-Carrión (1987) and Joan-Marí (1996) call “minorized” languages, languages that are not predominant in all the social domains of its territory. For example, Catalan is spoken by 10 million people but it is considered a minority or regional language because it is not predominant in all the social spheres of its territory; on the other hand, languages with a smaller number of speakers, like Finnish and Danish (around 4 million) have the status of “national languages,” that is, they are predominant in all the social domains of their respective territories, and do not fall under the scope of this paper. What defines the group of languages I am referring to in this paper is the fact that they are spoken on a territory which does not constitute a country, and the fact that they share their geographical and social domain with another language, which is considered superior. Although I will refer to Catalan, the findings can extend to other regional less commonly taught languages such as Basque, Irish, Gaelic and Breton, among others. Teachers of these languages face certain dilemmas when trying to apply sound FL teaching methodology principles in their classes while trying to conform to the im-

PLICIT socio-cultural norms of the homeland communities in which these languages are spoken.

Background: Historic and Sociolinguistic Context of Catalan

Let me first give a quick review of the history and today's legal situation of the Catalan language.

History

Catalan is a Romance language originated in the North of Catalonia (in today's east side of the border between Spain and France) around the same time as Spanish and Galician. The first big pitfall the language encountered was in the hands of Phillip the V, who, after winning the Succession War, in 1714, abolished the Catalan Parliament and laws and prohibited the use of Catalan in public domains such as government institutions and education. After regaining some of the rights lost in 1714, a second pitfall struck the use of the Catalan language when Franco took power in Spain after the Civil War in 1939.

In the present day, the Catalan linguistic area in Spain is divided into three autonomic regions (Comunitats Autònomes): Comunitat Autònoma de Catalunya (Catalonia), Comunitat Valenciana (Valencia) and Comunitat Autònoma de les Illes Balears (Balearic Islands). It is also spoken in a small area in the south of France (Roussillon), and in the city of Alguer, in the Italian island of Sardinia.

Current Status of Catalan

The current legal status of the Catalan language in Spain began after Franco's death in 1975 and the reconstruction of democracy in Spain. Today, the Spanish Constitution establishes that Spanish is the official language in all of the Spanish territory and requires all citizens to know it. It also guarantees the official status of other lan-

guages within their geographical territory in accordance with their Statutes of Autonomy. In Catalonia, Valencia and Balearic islands there are two official languages: Catalan and Spanish. According to the Catalan and Spanish legislation (Constitución Española 1978, Estatut d'Autonomia de Catalunya 1979, Llei del Català 1998) all residents must be able to express themselves in either of the two official languages; this entails that in Catalonia everyone needs to be able to understand both languages in order to guarantee this right.

In addition to this co-official status of Catalan, Catalonia's Statute of Autonomy (1979) describes Catalan as Catalonia's historical/indigenous language and several laws have been proposed with the goal to defend, promote and normalize the use of the Catalan language in all the social domains, in order to guarantee its special status.

Terminology and Definitions

The challenges in the teaching of Catalan as a FL that I present in this paper do not originate from the number of speakers but rather derive—or are worsened—by its condition of a minority or regional language. The sociolinguistic characteristics of those languages that offer a challenge to FL teachers are related to the situation of language contact between Spanish and Catalan. Specifically, four sociolinguistic phenomena are particularly relevant: *diglossia*, *code-switching*, *borrowing* and *language interference* and *language ideologies and social perceptions of the language*.

Diglossia/Functional Distribution

Ferguson (1959) introduced the term diglossia to refer to the language situation in speech communities where “two or more varieties of the same language are used by some speakers under different conditions” (325). Later, Fishman (1963, 1965 and 1971) extended Ferguson's original definition of diglossia to include those speech communities where two distinct languages—rather than two divergent varieties of the same language—are compartmentalized by function. Bilingualism entails choice, and that choice made by bilingual

speakers is not arbitrary, but responds to a set of sociolinguistics rules about who speaks what language, to whom, and when (Fishman 1965).

Code-Switching

While functional distribution refers to the language choice made in each speech act in accordance to its elements, code-switching refers to language choice in the same speech act. The notion of code-switching was proposed by Haugen in 1956 to distinguish this phenomenon from that of *language interference*. Code-switching can be defined as the alternation of two different systems in the discourse, in a sentence, or even a component of the sentence (Haugen, 1956; Gumperz, 1982; Gardner-Chloros, 1985). Code-switching can have the following functions:

1. Referential function. Lack of knowledge in one subject or lack of facility in that language on a certain topic can trigger switching to the other language.
2. Metalinguistic function. The switching takes place to comment directly or indirectly on the languages involved.
3. Quotes or reported speech.
4. Interjections.
5. Reiteration/repetition. The switching takes place to emphasize, amplify, or reiterate something that has already been expressed in the other language.
6. Qualification of the message. The switching takes place to emphasize a personal or affective interest towards the content of the communication.
7. Definition of identity. Through code-switching speakers define their space in a society with two or more cultures to which they do not entirely seem to belong. By crossing languages, speakers perform what Kramsch (1998) has referred to as “cultural acts of identity.”

Regarding what prompts the switch in the middle of a speech act there are three possible triggers. According to Sønnergaard

(1991), sometimes the speaker switches codes spontaneously in a situation where emotions are involved. The switching can also be a conscious act in which the speaker wants to use both languages as a form of communication (Søndergaard, 1991). A third trigger for the switching is lack of vocabulary, as a compensatory strategy or a way to “fill-in-the-gaps” (Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Vila, 1996).

Language Interference and Borrowing

Several criteria have been proposed for distinguishing between borrowing and code-switching. Variationist approaches (for example, Poplack, 1990) argue that borrowings are morphosyntactically integrated into the recipient language, while code-switching does not present this kind of integration; that is, code-switching entails full activation of L2 in a discursive sequence in L1; whereas borrowing integrates L2 in L1. In contrast, other approaches (e.g., Myers-Scotton, 1992; Vila, 1996) consider that it is the frequency of appearance that differentiates between the two phenomena: items that appear very frequently are regarded as borrowings, whereas those that appear only occasionally are classified as code-switching.

Language Ideologies and Social Perceptions of the Language

There is a strong relation between language and identity, which is expressed on certain attitudes of individuals towards a certain language and its users. For that reason, language-attitude studies have become a central part of sociolinguistics. Giles et al. (1979) concluded that in a situation of language contact one variety is considered to be better or more beautiful because it is spoken by the group with the most prestige or status. Edwards (1982:21) states that “evaluation of languages varieties . . . are expressions of social convention and preference which, in turn, reflect an awareness of the status and prestige accorded to the speakers of these varieties.”

It is widely known that speakers of minority languages exhibit a negative attitude towards their own language, even though they might maintain an affective attachment to it. Ninyoles (1963) writes that members of a subordinated linguistic community get to feel self-

hatred towards their own language, identifying themselves with the political interest of their governors, to the extreme that they reject or even deny their own identity.

In the next sections I will present some challenges that are faced by instructors teaching Catalan as a FL, challenges that derive from each of the four phenomena aforementioned: diglossia/functional distribution, code-switching, borrowing and certain attitudes towards the language.

Functional Distribution and Task-Based Activities

One challenge for the teaching of regional languages results from the interaction of one of the phenomena typical of language contact—diglossia—and the development of *task-based activities* in a communicative language teaching (CLT).

CLT has evolved over the past several decades as a response to a new view of communicative competence of speakers, new findings on language acquisition and the pragmatic evidence that previous methodologies, such as translation and audiolingualism were not preparing student learners for communicative use of the language. CLT requires the use of activities that foster interaction with a real purpose, such as exchanging information or solving problems, instead of simply “practicing the language.” Task-based activities play a central role in CLT. Breen (1987:23) defined task-based learning as “any structured language learning endeavor which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcome for those who undertake the task.” In other words, in task based activities students have a goal whose attainment requires the use of the target language. The role of task-based activities is to provide learners with opportunities to use the target language in its context, and to explore the target language through situational activities. In carrying out tasks, students use their available resources in the target language with a meaningful purpose, and because students use only their available resources in the target language, task-based activities generate a need for a *negotiation of meaning* among participants. Ac-

According to Long (1996:451–452) negotiation that triggers adjustments in the interaction facilitates acquisition.

Negotiation of meaning results in the use of communication strategies, such as clarification, confirmation, paraphrasing and lexical substitution that the learner produces in order to be understood by the interlocutor.

Task-based activities are based on the idea that language use occurs in a natural, communicative context in which speakers use the language to perform these or similar tasks. A problem arises when the natural context of the target language (in its homeland) involves other languages. In the case of Catalan, the monolingual context assumed in task-based activities is completely unrealistic. As was said above, social bilingualism entails an individual choice of language, and this choice is made in principled ways.

The functional distribution proposed by Fishman (1965) has been simplified when applied to the Catalan case in one decisive aspect—the first language of the speaker: speakers whose native language is Catalan are bilinguals, while speakers whose native language is Spanish, are not (Boix, 1998). The language choice is reserved for those that have Catalan as a first language, and this choice takes place every time he or she engages in a conversation. Font's (1994) study about bilingualism in Catalunya concludes that bilingual conversations (conversations in which one person speaks Spanish and the other one Catalan) create a tension and are not well accepted socially (also, see Boix 1993). In almost all situations in which a Catalan speaker encounters a Spanish speaker, the Catalan speaker changes to Spanish. This is also true when a Catalan speaker encounters a foreigner—a tourist or an exchange student—who is immediately assumed to speak Spanish, even when this foreigner does not speak Spanish, and even when this foreigner does speak Catalan. The “non-Catalan look” of the person or his/her non-Catalan accent will automatically make the Catalan speaker speak Spanish. American exchange students have, consequently, little chance to engage in a conversation in Catalan with a stranger.

Most FL instructors are committed to CLT to some degree or other.¹ Some instructors use tasks as adjunct activities, complementing a more traditional type of syllabus, while others use tasks as the

syllabus building blocks. But choosing task-based activities using Catalan exclusively is challenging work for the instructor. An instructor committed to a communicative approach at any degree, who wants to use task-based activities in the classroom, will wonder if there is a point in creating an activity that simulates a context in which the student will need to buy something at a grocery store, or ask directions from a stranger, when he will never be involved in such conversations in Catalan. Creating and carrying out such activities will lead to a paradoxical situation: a meaningless task-based activity, whose implementation has a similar flavor to that of drill activities—they are implemented just because they have to be.

There is, however, something the instructor can do to try to solve the conflict of creating useless task-based activities. First, the tasks to be carried out can be related to situations in which the student will have more chances to be responded to in Catalan, such as at the university—in tasks involving relating to Catalan classmates, professors and administrators—and Catalan cultural spaces, such as museums or libraries.

Second, the students can be encouraged to also negotiate the choice of language. This is a task that many non-native speakers of Catalan have to carry out in real life in Catalonia if they want to be responded to in Catalan by Catalan native speakers. Although Catalans tend to change languages and speak Spanish, they usually respond very well to this type of requests, feeling very appreciative that a foreigner wants to learn and speak their language (without having to). Since this is a task carried out by Catalans almost on a daily basis and because it has the rewarding effect of making the interlocutor use Catalan, it qualifies as a very useful communicative task to assign in class.

A third strategy might be showing the student the benefits of speaking Catalan and even engaging in a negotiation to be responded to in Catalan. These benefits include the appreciation that Catalans usually show when they see that struggle coming from a non-Catalan, especially a foreigner. This approval by Catalan speakers will allow these American students to access some spheres that they would not

otherwise experience, an issue that will be developed in depth in the section devoted to motivational strategies below.

Code-Switching, Task-based Activities and Interlanguage

A second challenge for instructors of Catalan as a FL also involves task-based activities, in this case because of its interaction with another language practice common among bilingual speakers: code-switching.

As mentioned above, task-based activities are more successful as they generate more negotiation of meaning situations, such as clarification, confirmation, paraphrasing and lexical substitution that the learner produces in order to be understood by the interlocutor. In a society with language contact, code-switching is in many cases used by bilingual speakers precisely as a *negotiating device* (Vila, 1996:126). For example, when a word, a sentence or the whole idea has not been well understood by the interlocutor, Spanish can be used to make clarifications. The use of code-switching is also common to repeat a phrase with an emphatic purpose. (See also Boix, 1993, and Woolard, 1992.)

Virtually all students of Catalan already know Spanish and thus are able to switch to Spanish during task-based activities.² Instructors of Catalan as a FL might wonder whether switching to Spanish with the purpose of negotiating meaning should be allowed in the classroom. Both alternatives will contradict one basic principle of CLT and task-based activities: if code-switching is not allowed, then the task-based activity will not represent authentic communicative situations; if it is, then the main motivation of doing task-based activities is invalidated, since students will not be using their available resources in the target language to negotiate and, consequently, develop their Catalan language skills.

Another challenge for teaching Catalan as a FL derived from the practice of code-switching concerns *language learning progression*. One of the basic assumptions of learning is that learners perform skills in a sequence that progresses from simple to complex. For a learning process to be successful, learners need to be aware of their skills in the target language in order to avoid attempting to develop

performance capabilities for which they do not have the sustaining skills. A problem arises when performing a task is easier when switching to another language—Spanish—which is shared by all participants of the task, and perceived as a foreign language. When there is another (foreign) language that can be used in the same social context, students attempt to develop performance capabilities for which they do not have sustaining skills in the target language (Catalan) but which they do have in the other language (Spanish). The switch to Spanish is then a strategy used to “fill the gaps” when there is a lack of vocabulary in Catalan, and it interrupts the progress from simple to complex.

Finally, code-switching practice interferes with another principle of CLT and task-based activities. Tasks that generate greater negotiation of meaning appear to be more beneficial for the development of *interlanguage*, an interim form of language that is a mixture of L1 and L2 because students “fill in” with L1 where they do not know the form in L2 (Selinker, 1972 and 1992). This interlanguage has a temporary nature and systematically amends over time favoring L2. However, because Catalan (as it is usually the case with LCTL’s) is a second FL for most students, students’ interlanguage includes not only L1 and L2 but also a third language, Spanish. In addition, the fact that code-switching is common among bilingual speakers in Catalonia (Vila, 1996) makes it more difficult to phase out an interlanguage created by students that incorporates a Spanish component. While the English component of that interlanguage will progressively disappear in favor of L2 as the student’s skills in L2 improve, the Spanish component will stay because switching to Spanish is a common practice of L2 speakers.

While one of the premises of modern FL teaching is that effective and appropriate use of the language includes competence in what is expected socially and culturally by users of the target language, this premise leads us to a paradoxical situation in the teaching of minority languages such as Catalan. That is, what is socially and culturally expected by Catalan native speakers is not an effective and appropriate use of the language, but rather the long-term mainte-

nance of a stage that is supposed to have an interim nature: interlanguage and code-switching practice.

Borrowing, Language Interference, and the Target Language

Another challenge of teaching Catalan as a FL which also derives from the bilingualism in its homeland, concerns the strong interference from Spanish that can be observed in the syntax, in lexical items (in the form of loanwords and calques), and in the phonetic system.

First, we find some internal discrepancy and inconsistencies in the normative language. Due to the long period in which Catalan was prohibited (after the year 1714) some grammatical forms that were genuinely Catalan were lost, yielding to Spanish forms. Linguists have generally adopted a purist approach to the normative language and many efforts have been devoted to identify traces of Spanish in the Catalan language in order to ban them and reveal the “authentic” or “genuine” Catalan. When in 1907 a linguist named Pompeu Fabra created a long-due first Catalan Grammar³ he had to find a balance between the Catalan used at the time by writers and journalists, the Catalan spoken by people in different areas of the Catalan language territory, and the language that he speculated would have developed from the Catalan used before the interference of the Spanish language had the language been given the chance to evolve without interference. Although this work can be considered impressive and meticulous, some problems could not be solved. Some forms were “prohibited” in the grammar system because they did not correspond to genuine Catalan, but the forms that were speculated to be the forms that would have derived through a “normal” evolution have never actually existed.

Second, also as a consequence of interference from Spanish, many grammatical forms proposed as normative Catalan have not been successfully adopted by Catalan speakers. Examples of this include:

1. The system of combination of direct and indirect object pronouns.
2. The distinction between the verbs *ser* and *estar*, two verbs that in many languages converge in one: to be.
3. Prepositional relative clauses.
4. Neutral article.
5. Distinction between the prepositions *per/per a* (for/to).
6. Avoidance of contact between a verbal preposition and relative/interrogative pronoun in a completive and interrogative subordinate sentence.

Spanish interference also affects lexical units that are not included in the normative dictionary, some of which do not even respect Catalan morphological rules. In Catalan classrooms a great amount of time and effort is devoted to banning these interferences, commonly called “barbarisms,” from common language.

On the other extreme from this purist tendency, we find the opposite tendency with respect to Spanish interference and normative Catalan. Some linguists defend the idea that there should not be a depuration of Catalan, and that we should accept Spanish interference as a natural result (or maybe, process) that all languages endure.⁴

This strong Spanish interference is a challenge to instructors of Catalan as a FL, who need to decide which Catalan to teach. On the one hand, strictly teaching normative Catalan conflicts with CLT. On the other hand, teaching Catalan with a strong Spanish interference can cause morale problems for the instructor, who has received high education and has learned the “correct” forms. Also, instructors of Catalan as a FL might have a personal political—and therefore linguistic—position towards this matter (see note 4). Also, it might not seem fair to teach a strongly “hispanicized” Catalan in a foreign country while linguists and teachers in Catalonia are struggling to recover and teach a more genuine Catalan.

Spanish interference in syntax seems to entail a more challenging situation than lexical interference, if only for its scope, because a whole session can be devoted to one grammar aspect. Explaining the “alternative” form, that is, the “incorrect” form that is

most commonly used, might take double the time and make the whole explanation of the “correct” Catalan form useless. Although lexical interference might seem easier to deal with, a study made by Vila (1996) shows that among the most commonly used lexical *transcodic markers* we find Spanish *discourse markers* as:

<i>bueno</i>	(good, well)
<i>pues / pos</i>	(then, so)
<i>vale</i>	(OK)

This is a problem in the Catalan FL classroom, because of the importance of discourse markers in FL learning. Discourse markers have been recognized to be essential in exchanges involving requests, refusals or compliments, which require special *delay strategies* and other devices to deflect their face-threatening nature (see Brown & Levinson, 1987; Levinson 1983). A delay marked by silence would be socially and linguistically awkward, so it is often filled in with a discourse marker. Discourse markers also have a transitional function because they are used to refer to and anticipate the utterance that follows (Schiffrin, 1987). They can also deflect other potentially face-threatening acts, such as topic shifts which could disrupt the flow of the discourse and can be used for situations in which interlocutors compete in *turn-taking* (see Schiffrin, 1987).

Because they are discourse markers and have such an important role in communication, the instructor needs to decide which ones to teach and use in the classroom. Using the Spanish discourse markers means teaching another language that is not Catalan, and most instructors might refuse to do so. On the other hand, using the “genuine” Catalan discourse markers *bé* (well), *doncs* (so) and *d’acord / entesos* (OK) instead of the Spanish ones (*bueno*, *pues* and *vale*, respectively) will break the basic rule of using the language with a communicative purpose because they are used on a much less common basis in the language homeland. In addition, instructors teaching the genuine Catalan discourse markers might face a problem when the students hear them use the Spanish discourse markers in a more relaxed conversation when not using *teacher talk*.

While it is true that dealing with the dichotomy between “real language” and “correct/normative language” is a challenge shared by

all FL instructors, this is a problem intrinsic of regional languages, while only anecdotic in the case of other languages. For example, most French people say “weekend” and “walkman” instead of the French forms accepted by the Académie Française, “*fin de semaine*” and “*balladeur*.” Although examples like these trouble French cultural institutions, including the Ministry of Education, they do not really interfere with normal instruction of French as FL, and can constitute just a little comment on cross-cultural issues.

As another example, I will mention the case of “Spanglish.” In some areas of strong contact between English and Spanish, Spanish presents a great deal of interference from English. Some examples include lexical items like *watchar* instead of *mirar* (to watch) or *troca* instead of *camión* (truck). There is also interference in syntactic forms, such as the use of the passive voice with indirect objects, which is possible in English but not in Spanish where the passive construction is only possible with direct objects.

**Yo fui dado un libro*

I was given a book

** Yo era supuesto ir*

I was supposed to go

However, these forms are not taught in a course of Spanish as a FL class—even in areas where they are very common, such as Southern California—because Spanglish is (at this point) considered a “wrong” way to speak Spanish or it is, simply, not Spanish. Contrary to what is the case in Catalan, “pure” Spanish, or Spanish without English interference can be found in other areas of the Spanish-speaking territory. Because there are countries where Spanish is the only language (or, better said, the only national language, since absolute monolingualism is rare) instructors create task-based activities based on what would happen in those countries, despite the fact that students in places like Southern California will probably interact with Spanish speakers in places and situations in which interference is common.⁵

Language Ideologies and Social Perceptions of the Language and Target Language

Another problem arising in the classroom of Catalan as a FL is also related to the definition of the language target, now with respect to ideologies and social perceptions of the language typical of speakers of regional languages. As happens with all languages, Catalan is spoken with different dialects in the different areas of its territory. Dialectal differentiation is something that applies to all languages and speakers usually accept this as normal—they know in which language they are speaking and they are aware of the fact that in other areas people speak the same language with other accents and with some particular words. However, as Castellanos (1993) points out, a national language is normally attributed a minor dialectal fragmentation, whereas regional languages or languages that are only spoken by bilingual speakers, are perceived as having a greater dialectal variety.

Catalan is an example of this, and speakers perceive their language as strongly fragmented. Catalan is called “Mallorquí,” in Majorca, “Menorquí,” in Menorca, etc. For many people—even educated ones—the concepts of language and dialect, when applied to Catalan, are very unclear. Although some relation between, say, “Mallorquí” and “Catalan” is usually recognized, some people see them as two different languages: Catalan is spoken in Catalunya and “Mallorquí” is “something” spoken in Mallorca.

Also, speakers from different areas of the territory perceive normative language as very different from their own variety and react against normative language as an imposition. This is the case, for example, of speakers from the Comunitat Valenciana (Valencian autonomous community). Even some cultural and political institutions have started to consider Valencian as a different language.⁶

Some Catalan instructors—and also Catalan textbooks—can be affected by dialectal variety, especially by this particular perception of dialectal variety. Some feel compelled to give an explanation of all possible variants of one form, out of respect for Catalan diversity.⁷ In many cases, instructors feel obliged to specify that they are teaching a certain dialectal variety and not “the language.” Although the content

itself might not be greatly affected, a problem that can result from the perceptions that Catalans have of their own language and its dialectal variation is that students can acquire this misperception as well. And for a student that might already be feeling that (s)he is learning a less important language that (s)he might not have much chance to use and that not even their own speakers know how to speak well, adding the feeling that they are learning only a dialectal variety of a very fragmented language can be devastating.

The social perceptions of the dichotomy between “real language” and normative language can also be related to social language registers. An example of this could be the use of simple past in French. While the *passé composé* (present perfect) is the tense used to express perfective past in oral speech and written press, the distinction between the *passé composé* and the *passé simple* (simple past) is reserved for higher forms of literature. Students of French as a FL will learn the *passé composé* in the first years of French in which communication is emphasized and learn the *simple past* later, when they need to read more elevated forms of literature. While national languages have systems to deal with social language variation, speakers of regional languages perceive their informal or colloquial forms and their relationship with normative language in a different manner. In Catalonia, normative forms are perceived as imposing over the real language, that is, Catalan colloquial forms. As happens with loanwords, incorrect and colloquial forms are going to be subject to discussion about whether or not they should be taught in the Catalan classroom.

Motivational Strategies in the Classroom

I have already mentioned some situations that can challenge the student’s motivation to learn and use Catalan, such as the possibility of code-switching as a negotiation device and the knowledge that because of the functional distribution of the language, he/she will have little chance to use the language in its homeland. The social environment of a regional language—or a language without a country—such as Catalan, presents other challenges in creating the right classroom atmosphere and developing motivational strategies.

First, it has been recognized that the overwhelming motivation for Americans to learn LCTL's is the intention to interact with the cultures of these languages. The problem is that students learn Catalan as a FL because they are traveling to a Catalan-speaking territory not to interact with the Catalan culture, but with the Spanish culture. Catalan language, instead of being perceived as the means to better interact with the culture, can even be perceived as an inconvenience, a barrier between them and the culture they want to get to know.

Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1994) identified the following as motivational orientations for FL students (students of English as a Second Language):

1. Make friends and travel
2. To know various peoples, cultures and world events
3. To advance academically or professionally
4. To understand English media

The study also concluded that students were not particularly interested in integrating into Anglophone cultures. Something that seems common in any FL learning is that the main motivational orientation, defined as the reason why a person has decided to learn a language (Oxford 1996), is an instrumental orientation. The fact that there is another language competing for usefulness is a challenge to the motivation to learn any LCTL. But even more, in the case of a regional language, it shares its geographical and social domain with another language such as Spanish, which is considered superior.

A second challenge in the establishment of the right classroom atmosphere concerns instructor's enthusiasm. Instructor's enthusiasm, even passion, for what (s)he is teaching can make a difference in the classroom (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Projecting enthusiasm is related to the more general process of *modeling*, a method of teaching by setting an example. According to Brophy and Kher (1986) the example set by the instructor can include effort expenditure, positive attitudes and interest in the subject. Takeuchi (1999) points out that culturally influenced teacher beliefs in a specific classroom influence learner beliefs and language strategy use. As mentioned above, speakers of regional languages exhibit a negative attitude towards their own language.

Even though they might maintain an affective attachment to it, their attitude displays a low self-confidence towards their language, its importance and the need for people from other cultures to learn it and use it. This can even lead to doubt about the need for their own speakers to use the language in certain situations. Instructors of Catalan might betray this attitude in their classrooms, not by openly speaking ill of the language or the country but by showing these perceptions typical of speakers of regional languages.

Another area in which the instructor's attitudes are very important relates to the expectations for what the students can achieve (see, for example, Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). Because of the low self-esteem of Catalan speakers towards their linguistic identity and their language, it is very possible that expectations may be lowered. Students might perceive the instructor's (and the university's) conception that this is a less important class than other FL courses that they have taken in the past.

Integrating Culture and Language

In this section I present one last challenge for the teaching of Catalan as a FL deriving from the sociolinguistic context of the language, in this case, concerning the role of culture in the language classroom. Current teaching theory recognizes the importance of culture in FL teaching (Savignon, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980; and Kramsch 1991, 1993; among others). There are two main aspects in which culture can help prepare the student for competent intercultural communication. First, to create cultural awareness and appropriateness, the student needs to recognize sets of culturally determined rules in communication, that is, those cultural assumptions that are not made explicit by native speakers but that need to be drawn explicitly to the attention of speakers from other cultures (Brown and Yule, 1983). Second, integration of language and culture in the FL classroom helps foster students' motivation by familiarizing students with interesting/relevant aspects of the language.

The integration of language and culture is strikingly vital when learning Catalan. While the need to learn and use a language

can be self-evident in cases of national languages because they are the only or most common language of communication in their country for both the inhabitants of the country and foreigners, the need to learn and use Catalan might not be so obvious. Many Catalonia residents never use Catalan in their lifetime, and a very limited knowledge sufficient to understand some street signs—which are usually Spanish cognates—might be enough to live in Catalonia. In Catalonia the idea is widely accepted that speaking Catalan in certain situations requires a special linguistic and national conscience. Just as an example, Font (1994:230) concludes in her study about bilingualism in Catalonia that Catalan speakers “do not have enough linguistic conscience” to keep speaking Catalan when the interlocutor speaks Spanish. Regardless of the fact that one might think that it is sad that one needs to have a special conscience to engage in such a spontaneous and ordinary act such as that of talking, it is a fact that speaking Catalan requires a special willingness to do so. And this willingness to speak Catalan, without being really indispensable, usually originates from an affective relation with the Catalan culture. Among residents in Catalonia there is a close relation between affective attitudes towards Catalan culture and linguistic conscience. Catalans with a stronger Catalan national identity, who know the history of Catalonia and the repression that the language has endured, who have an interest in Catalan literature, art, traditions, etc. are more likely to also have a stronger linguistic conscience and speak Catalan in those situations where using Catalan might create some tension, as in bilingual conversations. The same occurs among students of Catalan as a FL, and students visiting a Catalan university through an Education Abroad Program. Those who feel more attracted to the Catalan culture, who are more interested in some aspects of its history and who develop an interest in the pro-Catalan social movements are more likely to be more motivated to learn Catalan and also show a higher rate of success in learning the language.

In addition, many aspects of FL are affected by the interpretive principles and paradigms in learner’s natal culture, and students understand and reconstruct FL’s culture through their culturally defined worldviews, beliefs, assumptions and presuppositions (Moerman, 1988; de Bot, Ginsberg and Kramsch. 1991). This is of funda-

mental relevance in the teaching of regional languages and their culture to American students. While American culture might have some similarities with Catalan culture—especially if we compare it with non-occidental cultures—there is a striking difference that has great impact on language and language learning. For American students it is very difficult to understand the fact that there are languages only spoken by a few million people, and, what is even more difficult to comprehend, the fact that there are communities in the world that “insist” on speaking languages that are not “indispensable” for communication. For that reason, particular dedication to cross-cultural differences related to language use and the role of language in the creation of the community, history and national identity is necessary while teaching regional languages.

Therefore, more effort and time needs to be devoted to the integration of culture into the Catalan as a FL syllabus than it does in the case of national languages. This additional dedication to cultural awareness can be challenging to instructors, who will need to provide this additional effort. Also, additional dedication to culture will probably be made at the expense of other activities more focused on language skills development.

The integration of culture in the case of the teaching of Catalan faces a challenge, again derived from the sociolinguistic circumstances of the language. Authentic materials have been recognized to help expose students to the foreign reality as it really is and not as a make-believe classroom version. However, many Catalan authentic materials appear with spelling and grammar mistakes and interferences from Spanish, which takes us again to the issue presented before about what to do with this dichotomy between real language and normative language. A second problem resides with the fact that there are many materials about Catalan culture written in Spanish. Therefore, when the students search the web looking for a subway schedule, a restaurant menu, or information about Catalan monuments they will find many sites in Spanish that will offer that information with a lesser amount of effort required. In other words, Catalan is not a necessary means to get to know Catalan culture.

Conclusion and Needs for Future Research

Teaching of Catalan as a FL presents the same difficulties as teaching any other FL, such as the designing of useful and meaningful task-based activities, the creation of the right motivational atmosphere in the classroom, and defining the target language by dealing with the dichotomy between real language and normative language and with dialectal diversity. This of course must be done with the integration of culture and language in the classroom with interesting and relevant authentic materials. However, when teaching Catalan, as well as other regional languages, these questions prove to be particularly challenging. The particular sociolinguistic conditions of these languages have an impact in many aspects of the Catalan language, society, institutions, press, education, daily life, etc. and they even burden the teaching of the language as a FL. Some phenomena typical of social bilingualism of regional languages—such as functional distribution, code-switching, language interference and social perceptions of the language—conflict with basic principles of FL teaching and learning. Since no serious research has been devoted to the particular challenges faced by instructors of regional languages, the solution to some of these conflicts must now be resolved case by case according to the personal position of the instructor.

In the area of Catalan sociolinguistics much has been written about a wide variety of issues derived from bilingualism in the Catalan speaking territories. On the other hand, in the area of FL teaching methodology, research is conducted based on ideal conditions with the sociolinguistic issues considered being usually those associated with the learners. Finally, probably the main focus of interest in the field of research on LCTL's has been the identification of challenges faced by these languages and the development of strategies to overcome them. LCTL's face special problems such as the instability of their academic programs due to lack of economic support or resources and the difficulty in finding good teachers and teaching materials of LCTL. Much work dealing with LCTL's has been devoted to strategies designed to overcome these problems, the implementation of technology being an important example.

However, little attention has been paid to the interaction between the sociolinguistic context of a LCTL in its homeland and the teaching of that language as a FL. This paper has addressed the need to study the challenges faced by some LCTL's that go beyond practical issues—such as a lack of funds, teachers and infrastructure—but on challenges that involve FL teaching methodology issues. Further research on the topic should try to reconcile sound pedagogical principles with a variety of sociolinguistic issues.

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Endnotes

¹ In some languages, such as Chinese or Arabic, some instructors find CLT difficult to implement in the classroom. The reasons can be strictly linguistic—characteristics of the target language—pragmatic—such as the lack of resources or competence—and cultural—such as students or instructors not being used to interaction. (See Deniz Gokcora and Evrim Eveyik-Aydin, and references therein.)

² Most Catalan courses are restricted to students majoring or minoring in Spanish. Most students in those courses are planning to further develop their Spanish studies in a Catalan university.

³ Nebrija's Spanish Grammar was created in the 15th century and the first French Grammars date from the 16th century.

⁴ Usually, the positioning regarding normative Catalan corresponds to a political positioning regarding the degree of dependence/independence the Catalan-speaking areas should maintain with Spain. In addition, defenders of the “non-purist” approach encourage using a syntax and a vocabulary with a strong interference from Spanish, but they would not accept the (existent, although minor) Catalan interference in the Spanish spoken in Catalonia; and would not accept the Spanglish used in the United States as the Spanish to be taught at school.

⁵ Something similar can be said about code-switching practices and functional distribution of English and Spanish. Instructors design task-based activities in which code-switching and functional distribution of Spanish and English (or Spanish and Catalan, Spanish and American native languages) do not take place, although students might later probably interact with Spanish speakers in places and situations in which code-switching and functional distribution are common practices.

⁶ This perception of normative Catalan as only including the variety spoken in Catalonia and as being very different from other varieties does not correspond to the real situation. For example, Salvador (1995) analyzes a list of 104 Valencian words that were proposed by two Valencian cultural institutions to substitute Catalan words in a Valencian dictionary. Of these 104 supposedly Valencian alternative words, 25% were already included in the dictionary of the Catalan language and 67% were colloquial Catalan words (although not included in the dictionary). In most cases, the alternative Valencian word only differed from the Catalan word in orthographic aspects. On the other hand, when in 1914, Pompeu Fabra created the Catalan Grammar, the whole system of the orthography of Catalan vowels,

among other orthographic conventions, was based on the Valencian pronunciation.

⁷ The notion of respect towards any concept related to language use is overvalued in Catalonia, probably because of the linguistic persecution that Catalans have undergone through their history.

