

INTRODUCTION TO THE MONOGRAPH SECTION: LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

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Abstract

In keeping with its initial objective of contributing to reflection on the legal and social management of languages and its commitment to the Catalan language, the *Revista de Llengua i Dret, Journal of Language and Law* has decided to publish a monograph issue on languages and education that goes beyond mere circumstantial reflection and provides thought-provoking ideas and guidelines for action in a context of stress for the current linguistic conjunction model. This is the issue that we are now offering you and, while it is not exhaustive, it combines an entire series of hot topics that may be useful to both agents and researchers. It is an interdisciplinary monograph issue with broad participation of young authors, which explores some of the challenges of the linguistic conjunction model from different perspectives and with very different voices.

Keywords: linguistic conjunction models; multilingual education; language immersion; educational sociolinguistics; language education; Catalan language; Spanish language; language knowledge; Catalonia; Valencian Country; Basque Country.

INTRODUCCIÓ A LA SECCIÓ MONOGRÀFICA: LLENGUA I EDUCACIÓ

Resum

La Revista de Llengua i Dret, Journal of Language and Law, fidel al seu objectiu inicial de contribuir a la reflexió sobre l'ordenació jurídica i social de les llengües i al seu compromís amb la llengua catalana, ha decidit impulsar un monogràfic sobre llengües i escola que transcendeixi la mera reflexió circumstancial i proporcioni elements de reflexió i guies per a l'actuació en un context d'estrès per al model actual de conjunció lingüística. Aquest és el número que us proposem i que, sense ser exhaustiu, sí que reïx a combinar tot un seguit de temes candents que poden ser útils tant als gestors com als investigadors. Es tracta, doncs, d'un monogràfic interdisciplinari i amb una nodrida participació d'autors joves que explora alguns dels reptes del model lingüístic de conjunció des de perspectives i amb veus força diferents.

Paraules clau: models de conjunció lingüística; educació plurilingüe; immersió lingüística; sociolingüística educativa; educació lingüística; llengua catalana; llengua castellana; coneixement de llengua; Catalunya; País Valencià; País Basc.

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The school, one of the institutions with the greatest responsibility for preparing and disciplining individuals for social life, has since its universalisation, been deeply linked to language policies, both public and private, since education was universalised. First of all, the school not only provides reading and writing skills, but also establishes the ideological system of linguistic prestige and stigmatisation, thereby contributing powerfully to reproducing—and sometimes also to transforming—the social and sociolinguistic order (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970). Secondly, especially since the 18th century, the school has operated as the main driving force behind national construction. Many Jacobin states around the world have viewed the school institution as a privileged instrument for their policies of linguistic homogenisation. Conversely, many societies with minoritised languages have sought to exploit the potential of the school institution to resist the onslaughts of assimilationist states and normalise their languages. The school is also a privileged space to manage the *we-other* relations between native and immigrant populations, because it is very often the place—the only place—where the children of newcomers can learn the language that their peers learn within the family, where they can emotionally latch on to it (or not), while cultivating their own family languages (or not). Finally, looking beyond functional or *internal* aspects within a society, the school is also, increasingly, a privileged place for the acquisition of the *linguae francae* that enable people to go beyond their own horizons and project themselves, with more or less intensity, in supranational linguistic spaces.

All of these glottopolitical dynamics have been experienced first-hand in the education systems of Catalan-speaking territories for centuries. Suffice it to recall that in the second half of the 17th century, shortly after the annexation of the counties of Roussillon and Cerdagne, Louis XIV set up educational centres to teach French and teach in French and prohibited North Catalans from going to study in South Catalonia. These were (de)nationalising measures that paved the way for the prohibition of Catalan in 1700. Since then, countless language policy actions of very different types at various levels have been developed with greater or lesser success in the various Catalan-speaking territories in many senses, by both the central institutions of the respective states, autonomous government institutions and even civil society (Mayans, 2019). One simply needs to glance through the *Revista de Llengua i Dret, Journal of Language and Law* to see that educational language policy has been addressed by constitutions, statutes and laws of all levels, by orders and decrees, by judgments of the most varied courts, by multiple school curricula, manifestos, petitions, creation of public and private centres, and other forms of civil activism, which continue to take up the front pages of newspapers. Returning to the North Catalan framework, at the time of writing, France is experiencing an unprecedented political situation in which a parliamentary majority composed partly of members of the ruling party has passed a law to expand language rights in education, which has been rejected by the Minister of Education. The government's reaction has been to appeal to the highest courts in the country in an attempt to abort the initiative (Zabaleta, 2021).

The abundance of initiatives is largely inevitable: given the impossibility of a social institution without a language policy, or at least an implicit one, it is obvious that the educational institutions of societies as heavily defined by social multilingualism as those in the Catalan-speaking area cannot fail to put considerable activity into regulating the linguistic reality on which they work. However, we should not be deceived. The proliferation of legal norms and often contradictory actions is also the product of a series of national, social tensions, often influenced by supranational dynamics that give rise to a series of debates, rethinking and realignments of existing glottopolitical models, alternating periods of relative calm with moments in which tensions are heightened.

Catalonia's educational language policies have combined periods of relative calm with numerous episodes of tension and even conflict. In the 1980s and 1990s, Catalonia built a school language model, the “linguistic conjunction model” (Milian i Massana, 1984), which achieved very considerable social and political consensus not only in Catalonia but also in Spain as a whole. At that time, it was widely understood that in a society whose own language was severely minoritised, the school institution had to play a role in offsetting this if the entire population was to achieve real knowledge of the official languages, a role that necessarily involved its preeminent position. So much so that even the Spanish Constitutional Court, in its famous judgment of 1994, accepted that Catalan should be “the linguistic centre of gravity” in an education system that had to offset extra-curricular imbalances. In essence, it was a matter of ensuring that Catalan managed to regain a “breathing space” (Fishman, 1991, 59; Cenoz & Gorter, 2017, 909) or, better still, a set of reasonably exclusive “own functions” (Bastardas i Boada, 1996) without which dominant-language speakers could never manage to appropriate them.

If one takes the parliamentary composition as a guide, in Catalonia, consensus on the Catalan education model was relatively broad until well into the early 21st century. However, consensus should not be mistaken for unanimity. While the passing of time may blur certain memories, the truth is that even before any contemporary school language model was established, people have spoken out against educational Catalanisation policies. Without any desire to be exhaustive, one may recall the furore caused by the “Manifiesto por la Tolerancia” [Manifesto for Tolerance] in 1981, which was largely promoted by Spanish-speaking teachers who did not want to have to learn Catalan and who opposed any Catalanisation of the education system. There was also the powerful offensive against the school language model in 1993-1994, sparked by the historic front page of the *ABC* newspaper, which stated that the Catalan model was the same as Franco’s, simply in reverse. This argument has been weakened since the 1994 Constitutional Court judgement on the school language model (Voltas, 1996). This episode actually marked the definitive rupture of the Spanish right wing with the Catalan language model, a rupture that became a permanent hostility from all the tribunes and from all positions of power to which it had access, only *modulated* when it needed the parliamentary support of conservative Catalan nationalism. However, the episodes of tension did not end. For example, the controversy surrounding the *third hour* in Spanish, from 2007 to 2008, created fearmongering about schoolchildren who were allegedly monolingual in Catalan. And who can forget the bitter arguments in 2012 concerning the LOGSE (Spanish Education Act) and its stated desire to “make Catalan pupils Spanish” (*españolizar a los alumnos catalanes*) and force taxpayers to pay for private schools for those who wanted to learn in Spanish? Not to mention the guerrilla warfare against the model fought by certain sectors linked to radical unionism that have used their presence in Parliament for the last decade to highlight problems in the education administration based on parliamentary questions and initiatives, being aware that language confrontation was a vote-winner. Judging by the onslaught it has had to endure, the life of the Catalan conjunction model has certainly been no bed of roses.

In mid-2021, the Catalan language model, recently officially redefined as “a plurilingual and intercultural model” (Sub-directorate General for Language and Plurilingualism, 2018), is once again experiencing a period of heightened tensions. One relatively new aspect in the current situation is that, unlike before, when the struggle could easily be described as a clash between two conceptions of language management, (one of a Spanish Jacobin nature and the other Catalan, relatively federal), now the frontlines that cause tension are somewhat more diverse and the model is therefore subject to simultaneous crossfire. Let us briefly analyse them.

Right now, the first focus of tension in terms of school language management in Catalonia is what one might call the Spanish judicial and political front. For years, the main attacks on the school language model in Catalonia came from certain actors such as political parties, associations and private foundations. In recent times, however, in the context of the progressive judicialisation of Spanish politics, the judiciary has been taking on an unusual role. In the context of the de-officialisation of Catalan and a restrictive reading of the Constitution (Milian i Massana, 2000; 2019), several Catalan and Spanish high courts have issued increasingly interpretative judgements which, in practice, are redefining the Catalan language model by overriding the competences of the executive and legislative powers. Obviously, these judgments are not alien to the intellectual climate in the Spanish-speaking parts of Spain in recent years. Nowadays, in the rest of Spain and even in Catalonia, there are very large sectors that have internalised as *common sense* some ideas such as the belief that there is an alleged constitutional right to education in Spanish throughout Spain, that a significant proportion of Catalan pupils do not master Spanish well, and that Catalan schools, by the mere fact of using Catalan as the main language of learning, *indoctrinate* their pupils, a dangerous thought that borders on cultural racism by associating the use of a language with a specific ideological doctrine. In this state of affairs, in which the *offences* caused by the events of 2017 have a not inconsiderable weight, the restrictive judgments are being seen as essential medicine to (re)lead the separatist rebels towards the spiritual fold of the nation.

The second focus of tension for the school language model is not exclusive to Catalonia, but a consequence of a series of phenomena of continental and even global scope. Globalisation and the various economic dynamics that accompany it —the marketisation of education systems, ideologies that many authors describe as *neoliberalism* (Harvey, 2005) changes in the conception of the role of schools in the world— have had at least three tangible effects. Firstly, they have substantially increased certain demographic flows, which in Catalan-speaking territories have been much higher —especially in terms of their speed— than in most stateless nations (and even those with their own state) in our surrounding area. Designed for a different scenario, and lacking any real room for transformation, the Catalan language model is experiencing real

difficulties in taking on board a reality for which it is poorly prepared both financially and in terms of professional training. Secondly, the construction of a global market is also encouraging the emergence of certain more or less mobile groups such as the transnational middle classes, *digital nomads*, etc. and local sectors that aspire to join in, with different language priorities to those envisaged by schools in the 1980s and 1990s. These groups try to meet their needs, either through attending private schools outside of the public system, or by encouraging the transformation of publicly funded schools. The priorities of these groups, which normally seek the acquisition of linguistic capital with an international focus, may or may not coincide with those of a more rooted orientation and those of other, less mobile immigrant groups, creating a whole set of challenges for school language management. In addition to all these challenges, there are changes in the conception of schools and teaching and learning processes that have shaken the teachers' presuppositions and working methodologies. Suffice it to remember that linguistic immersion is a system of teaching in a language that pupils do not know (as well) as the teachers, so that the active participation of teachers is a pillar in a methodology where the main thing is to *provide* the language to the pupils. The shift to more horizontal and participative approaches, in which learners talk much more with one another than with the teacher, is a major challenge for the Catalan conjunction model.

Finally, the third front for Catalonia's school language model is perhaps the least unexpected, but still very active, and comes from within. Over the last few years, the model has come under increasing pressure from many sectors that had previously defended it and that are increasingly raising their voices to criticise its shortcomings. The reasons for complaints are diverse and increasing. To mention just a few: the lack of use of Catalan as the main language of learning and its (alleged) decline, especially in secondary schools; the low level of Catalan competence among significant segments of teachers; lack of training in integrated teaching of language and contents; shortcomings in Catalan learning among certain sectors of pupils and the fact that the automatic accreditation of knowledge upon completion of schooling makes Catalan qualifications not worth the paper they are printed on; the system's inability to overturn the rule of automatic subordination to Spanish; the inability to take advantage of the arrival of foreign language speakers to boost the use of Catalan; and the disconnection between schools and the system of Catalan cultural reference points. In short, the model supposedly designed by the linguistic Catalanism finds that not even its defenders see it with satisfaction but instead with resignation. It is within this context of stress for the conjunction model that, in keeping with its initial objective of contributing to reflection on the legal and social management of languages and its commitment to the Catalan language, the *Revista de Llengua i Dret, Journal of Language and Law* has decided to publish a monograph issue on languages and education that goes beyond mere circumstantial reflection and provides thought-provoking ideas and guidelines for action. This is the issue that we are now offering you and, while it is not exhaustive, it combines an entire series of hot topics that may be useful to both agents and researchers. It is an interdisciplinary monograph issue with heavy involvement by young authors, which explores some of the challenges of the linguistic conjunction model from different perspectives and with very different voices.

The monograph issue begins with three diachronic chapters, reflecting three different academic perspectives on the history of the Catalan conjunction model and its current situation. The first of the articles is written by Joan Ridao (University of Barcelona) and is titled "The linguistic regime of education system in Catalonia. A retrospective assessment with assets and liabilities". Based on the main legal milestones that have marked the regulation of school language policy in Catalonia, from the Constitution of 1978 to the judgement of the High Court of Justice of Catalonia (TSJC) of 16 December 2020, through the Statutes of Autonomy of 1979 and 2006 and the various laws and court judgments of greatest relevance, the author defines different periods, allowing one to follow the evolution of the school language model in Catalonia. The review pays particular attention to several controversial issues throughout the history of the model, such as the extent to which the existing constitutional framework allows us to consider there to be a right to education in Spanish, whether there is a right to choose the children's language of education, and the extent to which Spanish should be used as a main language in Catalan schools and how this should be done in practice. It concludes by noting that the model has not been unaffected by judicial activism.

The second of the articles in this edition, also retrospective in focus, is "The linguistic models of compulsory education in the Basque Autonomous Community and in Catalonia: a comparative view", written jointly by Avel·lí Flors-Mas (University of Barcelona) and Ibon Manterola (University of the Basque Country). The Basque Country's school language model has led to steady growth in knowledge of the Basque language, and it

is primarily responsible for the fact that a majority of Basque young people can now express themselves in that country's own language. However, in contrast to the nominally single model of Catalan schools, the Basque Government chose, from the very beginning, a school language model based on three language lines. Flors-Mas and Manterola take advantage of the fact that both models developed within the same historical period and under the same constitutional regulation to explore the evolution of both models in parallel. Ultimately, both models have ended up converging in some respects, such as the growing desire of the populations to move towards trilingual models, despite the fact that there are still variables and factors that differ and that invite reflection from both the Basque Country and from the Catalan-speaking territories.

The third of the articles in this edition, written by Sergi Morales (ICREA at the University of Pompeu Fabra) and Daniel Cetrà (University of Aberdeen), adopts a political philosophy perspective and is a historical compilation of the arguments used for and against the Catalan linguistic conjunction model. In "The controversy over the linguistic model of the Catalan education system: arguments, their normative bases and prospects for rapprochement", the authors draw on the concept of linguistic justice and the distinction between instrumental and identity arguments to review the panoply of arguments for and against public education policies. They conclude with a proposal, including several modest recommendations that would, in their view, bridge the gap between the positions taken by various sectors in disagreement.

In "Language management in multilingual educational environments: a Valencian perspective" Josep Maria Baldaquí Escandell (University of Alicante) and Vicent Pascual Granell (Institute of Catalan Studies) show us a perspective centred on the pedagogy of multilingual education. In this paper, the authors succinctly review the evolution of school language models in the Valencian Country, another territory that had historically opted for a system of differentiated language programmes. They argue that if one wishes to correct the sociolinguistically subordinate situation of Valencian and its speakers and make all speakers acquire multilingual and intercultural competence, it is necessary to move towards a multilingual, self-centred model in which Valencian is the main teaching language but that also incorporates English and Spanish. They then develop the model from the perspective of integrated treatment of languages and integrated treatment of language and content, focusing attention on the various elements that structure it (institutional framework, the school's language policy, teaching intervention, etc.).

The article by F. Xavier Vila (University of Barcelona), Llorenç Comajoan (University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia), Montse Sendra (University of Barcelona) and Cristina Illamola (University of Barcelona), "A comparative analysis of the command of oral Catalan and Spanish at the end of Compulsory Secondary Education in Catalonia", analyses one of the most recurring topics of debate in assessments of the Catalan school language model: students' levels of knowledge of Catalan and Spanish upon completion of compulsory education. Based on a sample of the 4th year of compulsory secondary education (ESO) students from two areas of Catalonia, the authors systematically explore differences in oral expression according to three indicators: communication competence, linguistic competence and rhetorical competence. The results show that the majority of students regularly enrolled in the conjunction model achieve a significant level in both languages, although the results for Catalan tend to be slightly lower and internally more diverse than the results for Spanish; and that students whose language of first socialisation is Spanish end up with lower levels of bilingual competence than those coming from bilingual homes and those whose language of first socialisation is Catalan.

The volume ends with two ethnographic analyses that focus on the impact of globalisation on the Catalan school language model. In the article entitled "Diversity, globalisation and inequality: an ethnographic perspective on two language-in-education policy responses in Catalonia" the authors Adriana Patiño Santos (University of Southampton) and Eva Codó (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) contrast the response given to diversity and multilingualism by two schools in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona drawing on Erikson's notion of success in education structured around the concepts of trust and legitimacy. In one of the two schools, the management of multilingualism is structured around reception classes designed as compensatory spaces that should allow pupils to learn Catalan if they do not have access to the language; in contrast, the other centre focuses its management of multilingualism in the programme of Grups d'Experimentació del Plurilingüisme [Multilingual Experimentation Groups] in an attempt to position itself as an active and attractive centre for social classes that aspire to upward social mobility. However, in both cases, the researchers found that there

are dysfunctions between the way the schools actually function and the expectations generated by their respective programmes.

The last study included in this volume is entitled “Now it’s “on demand”: the Catalan language in an elite international school”, by Andrea Sunyol. In this work, the researcher explores, from an ethnographic perspective, the transformation of a Catalan private school into an international school from the point of view of the discourses that circulate among teachers, parents and students. The article identifies a devaluation of Catalan, conceptualised as a language that is *authentic* and local but not international, which is maintained in symbolic terms but has less market value, alongside a resemiotisation of Spanish, seen as both local and international, as well as growth in the value of English. At the same time, observation and interviews reveal practices that do not always coincide with the institution’s own discourse.

These articles do not exhaust the perspectives of analysis of the language management model in Catalonia and, obviously, there are other voices of equal merit that could have been included here. However, overall, this monograph issue is so packed with information and reflections that we hope it will become a point of reference in the debates on school language policy in Catalonia. In any event, we leave it up to the reader to assess whether this goal has been achieved.

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