



Universitat de Lleida

Document downloaded from

<http://hdl.handle.net/10459.1/71068>

The final publication is available at

<https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2018-0069>

Copyright

(c) De Gruyter, 2019

Language attitudes of young Romanians in Catalonia (Spain): the role of heritage language maintenance programs

Maria Adelina Ianos*, Ester Caballé, Cristina Petreñas, and Àngel Huguet

Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, University of Lleida, Lleida, Spain

Department of Pedagogy and Psychology

Faculty of Education, Psychology and Social Work

Av. Estudi General, 4, Lleida, 25001, Spain

aianos@pip.udl.cat

Acknowledgments:

This work was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (reference number: EDU2014-54093-R & EDU2017-82479-R & IJCI-2016-28250) and the Agency for Management of University and Research Grants – AGAUR of the Government of Catalonia (reference number: 2014 SGR 208).

Abstract

This article presents a mixed method analysis of the language attitudes held by secondary education students of Romanian origin, which are members of the second largest immigrant population living currently in Catalonia. The relevance of this data is based on the cardinal role played by attitudes in the success of any educational or linguistic policy (Lewis, 1981) – a topic of special relevance in contexts with considerable migratory influxes, such as Catalonia, which aims to achieve social cohesiveness in a framework of interculturalism and multilingualism. The various initiatives implemented for this purpose include the heritage language maintenance programs, such as the “Romanian Language, Culture, and Civilization” (RLCC) program. The results showed that the young Romanians had the most favourable attitudes towards Spanish, followed closely by Romanian, and lastly Catalan, which was the least valued language. Furthermore, these attitudinal patterns were not determined by RLCC attendance. The insights provided by the in-depth interviews indicated various components and meanings associated with the attitudes towards the three languages. Namely, attitudes towards Spanish were primed by its international status and ease of learning, while attitudes towards Catalan were build on its integrative value and social status. Although esteemed for its emotional and symbolic bonds, Romanian seemed to be on a path towards invisibilization. Finally, the educational and social implications of these findings are discussed, emphasising the importance of involving and working with both the autochthonous and the Romanian immigrant population.

Keywords: language attitudes, immigrants, multilingualism, bilingual education

1 Introduction

Catalonia, the north-eastern Spanish Autonomous Community, has been widely praised for its success in revitalizing its minority language – Catalan, which now has co-official status

alongside Spanish (Fishman 1991, 2001; Hoffmann 2000). Using Lewis (1981) guidelines as a framework of analysis, and, thus, considering that:

“no policy will succeed which does not do one of three things: conform to the expressed attitudes of those involved; persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy; or seek to remove the causes of the disagreement. In any case, knowledge about attitudes is fundamental to the formulation of a policy as well as to success in its implementation” (p. 262).

It can be seen how the initial success of the Catalan immersion education has been driven by the alignment of the policies with people’s favourable attitudes towards Catalan language and education (Huguet, Lasagabaster & Vila 2008). It follows then that understanding the attitudes of the migrant communities is essential to ensure the attainment of objectives such as strengthening the position of the Catalan language, promoting bilingualism, providing equal opportunities, and fostering a cohesive and inclusive society.

Accordingly, starting from the premise of migrant population’s heterogeneity, the attitudes of different immigrant collectives have been studied (e.g, Alarcón & Garzón 2013; Fukuda 2016; Huguet, Janés, & Chireac 2008; Newman, Patiño-Santos, & Trenchs-Parera 2012; Trenchs-Parera, Larrea Mendizabal, & Newman 2014). However, there is little to no information about the attitudes of the Romanian collective – the second most numerous one. Therefore, this study provides a mixed analysis of the language attitudes held by Romanian students living in Catalonia. Following, we briefly review the findings concerning language attitudes in Catalonia and the characteristics of the Romanian community.

2 Literature review

2.1 Languages in the Catalan education system: a brief contextualization

The recovery of Catalan has been promoted by the legal framework – including among others the Linguistic Normalization Law ratified in 1983 and the Linguistic Policy Law of 1998 – created to promote Catalan in public administration, media, the economic world, and education. Nonetheless, the success of these policies can be traced back to the favourable attitudes of the population, both Catalan and Spanish-speaking (Huguet, Lasagabaster & Vila 2008; Hoffmann 2000; Huguet 2007). In this regard, Edwards (2016) underlines the social

consensus that propelled the implementation of a Catalan-medium education system.

Specifically, the total immersion programs in Catalan, adopted in 1993, aimed to educate all students in conditions of equality, regardless of their origin or mother tongue, ensuring that they finish compulsory education with a mastery of Catalan and Spanish (Lasagabaster 2017). Their results have often been qualified as impressive with respect to the Catalan and Spanish-speaking populations (Vila 1995; Serra 1990; Bel, Serra & Vila 1991).

Thus, a social, political, and educational framework centred on the role of Catalan as the region's language of communication and instrument of social cohesion was clearly defined by the beginning of the twenty-first century when an influx of international migration considerably changed the demographic landscape. In this regard, the immigrant population residing in Catalonia increased from 2.9% in 2000 to 13.8% in 2017 (Idescat 2018). People from over 170 countries moved to Catalonia, enriching its cultural and linguistic resources. According to the Grup d'Estudi de Llengües Amençades (2016), there are 300 languages spoken in the territory. However, the most numerous groups are from Morocco (19.9% of the immigrant population), Romania (8.6%), China (5.5%).

The policies and measures designed to facilitate the integration of newcomers in Catalan society and education system continued to strengthen the Catalan language and to promote equal rights. Thus, considering that “it is necessary to raise awareness, promote and consolidate Catalan as the mainstay of a multilingual and intercultural education policy in order to achieve greater social cohesion” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2004, p.4), the Plan for Language and Social Cohesion was adopted in 2004, the Plan to Update the Immersion Methodology in the Current Sociolinguistic Context in 2007, and the Citizenship and Migration Plans were approved in 2011 and 2017. Accordingly, reception classrooms are organised for newcomer students – a resource of intensive learning of Catalan until they achieve basic communicative competences equivalent to the A2 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Their school hours are initially divided between attending mainstream and reception classrooms, the latter being limited to a maximum of 50% of their schedule and gradually diminished as their language knowledge increases (Generalitat de Catalunya 2018). After analysing the language knowledge and school adaptation of a sample of over 5000 students of immigrant origin, Vila et al. (2009) concluded that reception classrooms are an efficient tool in promoting knowledge of Catalan.

Furthermore, one of the cardinal ideas of these policies is the premise that “knowledge and awareness of one’s own cultural identity are indispensable keys to opening up to other cultures and recognizing what makes them unique” (Llei d’educació 12/2009, p. 6). Hence, the maintenance of the language and culture of origin is promoted by the Spanish and Catalan educational authorities (Generalitat de Catalunya 2009; Generalitat de Catalunya 2017), as they acknowledge the importance of the L1 in language learning processes (Cummins 2000), as well as for psychological adjustment and social integration in the new culture (Lapresta et al. 2009, Petreñas, Lapresta & Huguet 2018).

Consequently, schools are encouraged to develop linguistic projects that incorporate the heritage languages of students of immigrant origin, which can be offered as curricular optative courses, when there is sufficient demand and trained personnel, or as extracurricular courses (Generalitat de Catalunya 2018). There are several programs heritage languages maintenance in Catalan schools – chronologically by year of initiation: Arabic, Chinese, Berber, Dutch, Romanian, Ukrainian, Portuguese, Bengali, Urdu, and Quechua (Generalitat de Catalunya 2015).

The program “Romanian language, culture, and civilization” (RLCC) was initiated in 2007 as a collaboration between the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth and the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science (Romanian Government Decision 857/2007). The program offers courses of Romanian language and culture, which are designed and taught by Romanian teachers. The main objectives of this initiative are to cultivate the Romanian language in its standard form, maintain the heritage cultural identity of Romanian youth living abroad, promote the principles of multilingualism, and foster intercultural openness – thus facilitating the integration in the host country (Hotarare de Guvern 454/2008, Ordin 3823/2013).

The RLCC course is directed towards students between 3 and 18 years of age, enrolled at all compulsory educational levels, and is organized as an optional and extracurricular course taking place two hours a week (Ordin 3823/2013, Ordin 4277/2008). Overall, the course has attracted an increasing number of students since its introduction. Specifically, during the academic year 2016-2017, three teachers were imparting the Romanian language and culture course to 242 children and teenagers (Institutul Limbii Romane, 2017).

2.2 Language attitudes and immigration in Catalonia

Previous studies conducted in Catalonia seem to have reached a consensus regarding the different attitudinal patterns of autochthonous and immigrant students – immigrant children and teenagers have more positive attitudes towards Spanish and less favourable attitudes towards Catalan compared with their autochthonous peers (Bernaus, Moore & Cordeiro Azevedo 2007; Ianos, Huguet & Lapresta 2017; Madariaga, Huguet & Janés 2016; Madariaga, Huguet & Lapresta 2013).

Differences were further found between the various immigrant groups. Students coming from Latin America were often identified as the ones with the least favourable attitudes towards Catalan (Huguet, Janés & Chireac 2008; Lapresta et al. 2009; Newman, Trenchs-Parera & Ng 2008; Newman, Patiño-Santos & Trenchs-Parera 2012). Similar attitudes were manifested by the Japanese people living in Catalonia interviewed by Fukuda (2016), who prioritized learning Spanish – deemed necessary – over Catalan, which was generally seen as expendable. On the other hand, immigrants from Morocco (Alarcón & Garzón 2013), China (Trenchs-Parera 2013; Trenchs-Parera, Larrea Mendizabal & Newman 2014), and Pakistan (Estors Sastre 2014) had favourable attitudes towards Catalan, fostered by a pragmatic acknowledgement of the instrumental value of both official languages and, in some cases, by a symbolic identification with Catalan.

This variation in language attitudes is most likely determined by the characteristics of each group, the specific experiences in the host society, their expectations, and social prejudices they might face (Siqués, Vila & Perera 2009; Lapresta, Huguet & Janés 2018; Alarcón, Parella & Yiu 2013; Alarcón & Garzón 2013). In this regard, the Japanese respondents were mainly temporary residents with plans to return to Japan or move to another country (Fukuda, 2016), while many of the other migrant groups had long-term plans to establish themselves in Catalonia (Alarcón, Parella & Yiu 2013). The latter are probably more inclined to understand and respond to Catalan's instrumental and integrative value. Trenchs-Parera and Newman (2009) interviewed young people of Latin American origin and found that they had an increasing appreciation for Catalan as a means for social progress. Along the same lines, Newman (2011) observed that length of residence, language proficiency, and school support contributed to more positive attitudes towards Catalan. The perception of social and school integration was also reported to be a critical factor in the construction of favourable attitudes by Lapresta, Huguet, and Janés (2010). Furthermore, changes in attitudes towards Catalan, fostered by an awareness of its role for social integration and professional opportunities, were

confirmed in a longitudinal study conducted over a 2-year period by Ianos et al. (2017). On a similar note, Pujolar and his colleagues (2013; 2015) identified a series of changes in people's linguistic repertoire, as Catalan language use increased significantly after important life changes, such as beginning a new educational stage, entering the labour market, or creating a family. In addition, young people seem to have been developing a linguistic cosmopolitanism ideology, characterised by a support for multilingualism and respect for other groups' language preferences (Newman, Trenchs-Parera & Ng 2008; Trenchs-Parera & Newman 2009; Woolard & Frekko 2012).

Despite the fact that the Romanian collective is the second largest one in Catalonia, counting 88.776 people (INE, 2018), it has a relatively scarce representation in the specialised literature. A series of analyses of the Romanian migration in the Spanish context were carried out by Marcu (2012; 2015), who observed how the opening of the Schengen area borders to Romania in 2002 has marked a new stage in Romanian migration, leading to the development of a culture of migration. The children raised in this migration culture have constructed hybrid identities, which incorporate elements of the cultures of origin and of the host society (Marcu 2012). Petreñas et al. (2018) observed a similar hybrid identity being constructed by young people of Romanian origin living in Catalonia. Nonetheless, Rojas et al. (2014) found that Romanians' acculturation profiles depend on context and their prejudices towards the autochthonous community. Romanians who were less prejudiced towards Spaniards assimilated in public areas and integrated in private contexts, while those who were more prejudiced tended to adopt a separation profile in private and to integrate in public areas.

Considering the aforementioned theoretical and empirical findings, the RLCC course provides an optimal context to study the language attitudes of Romanian youth, which will contribute to understanding the attitudes of the one of the most important communities in Catalonia. For this purpose, a mixed method study has been conducted, using qualitative data to expound on the quantitative attitudinal patterns identified. Specifically, the objectives were: a) to describe the language attitudes of secondary education students of Romanian origin; b) to analyse where Romanian youth stands in comparison with other immigrant groups living in Catalonia; c) to analyse the effect of attendance at the RLCC program on language attitudes; d) to gain in-depth insights into the configurative aspects of these attitudes.

3 Methodology

3.1 Participants

The quantitative data was gathered from 131 secondary education Romanian students (74 girls and 57 boys; $M_{\text{age}} = 15.06$, $SD = 1.58$) studying in two provinces of Catalonia (Lleida and Tarragona). They were all born in Romania and had been residing in the region for between 1 and 12 years, with a mean of the length of residence of 5.71 years ($SD = 2.46$). The sample included the entire population of Romanian secondary education students who at the time had been taking optional RLCC classes in Catalonia ($n = 43$) and, for comparative analyses, classmates of these students who had not attended RLCC classes ($n = 88$).

Following, the qualitative study/stage counted with a subsample of 34 students (19 girls and 15 boys). Among these, 14 participated in the RLCC programme and 20 did not participate.

3.2 Instruments

Language attitudes towards Catalan, Spanish, and Romanian were assessed through three scales. Each scale contained 10 dichotomous items covering various aspects (i.e., the aesthetic of a language, the instrumental value, language learning, and language use). Students were asked to indicate if they agreed or not with each of these statements. An answer indicating a favourable attitude was codified with +1 and one indicating a negative attitude with -1. The final score for each language was placed on a scale ranging from -10 (very negative attitude) to +10 (very positive attitude). The questionnaire selected was among the most used in previous language attitude research conducted in Catalonia (e.g., Huguet, Janés, et al., 2008; Ianos, Huguet, Janés, et al., 2017; Madariaga et al., 2013, 2016).

Additionally, demographic variables were also included in the questionnaire, participants filling in data regarding their age, sex, country of birth, and length of residence in Catalonia.

The qualitative study was realised through in-depth semi-structured interviews. The interview consisted of various sections addressing language use, perceived language competences, language attitudes, self-identifications, perceptions of prejudice and discrimination, and well-being. In this paper, we focus on the analysis of the data regarding language attitudes.

3.3 Procedure

The study was approved by the Department of Education of the Government of Catalonia, after which the written consent of both students and parents was requested. Participants were also guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, according to the ethical guidelines of the European Commission (2010). Firstly, the participants filled in the language attitudes questionnaire in specially assigned classrooms. The average time of completion was between 15 and 30 minutes.

Secondly, some of the students were interviewed in the language of their choice – the one they felt most comfortable to use among Romanian, Spanish, and Catalan. This was possible due to the participation of Romanian researchers during all the stages of the study, from its design to its implementation and analysis. This collaboration with members of the studied group is in line with participative qualitative studies (Petreñas, Lapresta & Huguet 2018) and aims to enrich our understanding of the data.

The quantitative data was analysed using the software package SPSS v.20, which served to compute descriptive statistics and analyses of variance. Regarding the qualitative data, a content theme analysis based on categories (Bardin 1986) was conducted with the help of the ATLAS-TI v.6 software. Three main categories were established initially: attitudes towards Spanish, attitudes towards Catalan, and attitudes towards Romanian. Through an inductive process the following categories further emerged: instrumental and integrative motivation, social status of language, language learning, migratory expectancies, and linguistic discrimination.

4 Findings

4.1 Quantitative data regarding language attitudes

Considering that the final scores of the language attitudes scales can vary from -10 to 10, a first look at the means that describe the attitudes towards Catalan, Spanish, and Romanian on the part of Romanian students suggest that these are mostly neutral and favourable.

A mixed-design ANOVA with language attitudes as the within-subjects factor and RLCC attendance as the between-subjects factor was carried out to analyse the effect of students' participation in the RLCC course on their attitudinal patterns (see Table 1 for the corresponding descriptive statistics). The results, adjusted with the Huynh-Feldt factor ($\epsilon =$

.91), did not confirm the expected interaction effect between language attitudes and RLCC attendance ($F_{(1.81, 233.67)} = 2.72, p = .111$). Furthermore, RLCC attendance did not influence the language attitudes held by Romanian youths ($F_{(1, 129)} = 0.15, p = .699$).

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of language attitudes depending on RLCC attendance

RLCC attendance	Variables	M	SD
Attended	1. Attitudes towards Catalan	3.67	5.18
	2. Attitudes towards Spanish	7.35	2.53
	3. Attitudes towards Romanian	7.07	2.77
Did not attend	1. Attitudes towards Catalan	4.68	4.55
	2. Attitudes towards Spanish	6.82	2.67
	3. Attitudes towards Romanian	6.14	3.43

On the other hand, there were significant differences between the three languages investigated ($F_{(1.81, 233.67)} = 21.01, p < .001$). Namely, regardless if they attended or not the RLCC course, participants showed the least positive attitudes towards Catalan ($M = 4.35, SD = 4.77$), seeing that these were significantly lower than their attitudes towards Spanish ($t_{(130)} = 5.30, p < .001, r = .44$) and towards Romanian ($t_{(130)} = 5.00, p < .001, r = .42$); and there were no significant differences between the attitudes towards Spanish ($M = 6.99, SD = 2.63$) and the attitudes towards Romanian ($M = 6.44, SD = 3.25, t_{(130)} = 1.21, p = .685, r = .11$).

4.2 Qualitative data regarding language attitudes

The qualitative results are presented according to the attitudes towards the three languages: Catalan, Spanish, and Romanian. As can be seen throughout the results, the youth who attend the RLCC program and those who do not attend are specified.

4.2.1 Attitudes towards Catalan – the mediation of integrative motivation and social status

Most of the participants showed negative attitudes towards Catalan, while preferring Spanish. Only few of those interviewed expressed more positive attitudes towards Catalan than towards Spanish.

Interviewer: And what has helped you the most to learn the three languages?

Ana: Spanish: my desire to learn something new. And I was enthusiastic that...even if I came here on holiday, it was something new! And if you are enthusiastic to learn something new, you do. Catalan: I was already not that enthusiastic anymore because I had to learn a language I didn't really like.

(Ana, 17 years old, no attendance)

The qualitative results improve our understanding of the reasons for their negative attitudes towards Catalan. The most widespread reason given in their discourses seems to be related to the difficulty of learning the language. Generally, the respondents consider that learning Catalan is more difficult than learning Spanish. This is what Elena says referring to Catalan,

Interviewer: Ok. Was it easy or difficult for you?

Elena: Difficult. Pretty difficult.

Interviewer: Why was it difficult?

Elena: Well, I was little and I was scared of the new world, if I can say like this, and... It was difficult. It was hard.

(Elena, 14 years old, attendance)

On the other hand, those who show more positive attitudes towards Catalan agree that it has been easier for them to learn Catalan than Spanish. It seems that the difficulty or ease of language learning is strongly interrelated with the language attitudes they construct.

Participants also highlighted previous contact with the language as an important element in attitude formation. A significant part of the participants had had contact with Spanish before their arrival, because they had studied it as a foreign language or because they watched soap operas, and they were familiar with it. Subsequently, when they arrived, they encountered another language they did not expect – which determined a more negative relationship with the Catalan language.

Associated with the above, most of the students mention that the first contact with Catalan usually occurs in the school context, specifically in the newcomers' reception classroom. Therefore, it can be inferred that attitudes towards Catalan are largely related to the first school experiences in the host society.

Interviewer: And what was your contact, for example, with the Catalan language? Have you been to school, outside of school?

Bogdan: No, no. The first time it was, it was here at the institute. Because I started with the reception classroom ... and this ... and it was the first time that the words came out a bit strange, I did not understand anything ... Because my father told me, before coming here: "Well, you go to learn a new language that is different ... "And me:" How?

Different? “I say: But if we go to the same place?” “No, no, we’re going somewhere else, now.”

(Bogdan, 16 years old, no attendance)

Nonetheless, most of the discourses include a clear instrumental orientation, since they refer to the fact that learning Catalan facilitates their academic access and progress. Some students explain that they wish to study at the University of Barcelona, and that for this purpose they need to be fluent in Catalan. Besides this instrumental dimension, the attitude towards Catalan has a clearly integrating component. Raluca expounds:

Raluca: Well, if you are in Catalonia, it’s proper to speak Catalan and a lot of Catalans will see you with different eyes, maybe, if you speak Catalan.

Interviewer: With different eyes, you mean better or worse?

Raluca: Better.

Interviewer: Why?

Raluca: Because. I don’t know, because it’s their language and they feel more comfortable speaking this language.

(Raluca, 16 years old, attendance)

Raluca outlines a background of the complex social reality regarding bilingualism and the role of the Catalan language in Catalonia. Olivia (18 years old, no attendance) says that “I do not like Catalan, but I like to live here, and I want to feel integrated”. In this regard, many agree that speaking in Catalan positively influences how Catalans view them and, consequently, they feel more integrated, because, according to their interpretation, the autochthones value the added effort made to respect and use Catalan. Maria (17 years old, no attendance) comments: “I mean they appreciate you more if you speak Catalan, especially if you’re an immigrant, than if you speak Castilian”. This aspect leads to a higher social status if Catalan is spoken. Apart from the role that language plays in social integration, others consider it is important to speak Catalan in order to revitalize the language, as explained by Codrina (15 years old, attendance) “if we didn’t speak Catalan this language will disappear and that doesn’t seem fair”.

Finally, the political dimension of language appears in their discourse as one of the arguments used to explain why it is better for them as immigrants to speak Catalan.

Interviewer: And do you think it is well regarded to speak Catalan in society?

Maria: Yes. In Catalonia, it is. Because they are very nationalist, they want independence and they want that Catalonia to be independent and all that...that means that if you start to speak Catalan or you speak Catalan they appreciate you more than if you speak Castilian.

(Maria, 17 years old, no attendance)

4.2.2 The possibilities that Spanish opens: attitudes towards Spanish

In line with the above, the qualitative results show more positive attitudes towards Spanish – actually, none of the participants show negative attitudes towards this language. Although Catalan seems to have a higher social status in the Catalan context, Spanish is greatly appreciated by the participants. The most common reason that all the young people interviewed agree on is the possibilities of internationalization that Spanish offers them. They place Spanish as an internationally useful and valued language that will allow them to move and interact in other countries. For example, Diana and Codrina explain:

Interviewer: But you consider that Catalan, Romanian, Spanish are useful to you?

Diana: Spanish, yes. Spanish yes, I think so because there are many countries where it is spoken., and many people who speak it. And I think yes, the most important I think is Spanish.

(Diana, 16 years old, no attendance)

Interviewer: Do you like to learn and speak Spanish?

Codrina: Yes.

Interviewer: Why?

Codrina: Because ... I mean, even if you're here you still have to know how to speak it. And if you want to leave Catalonia, you have to speak Spanish. And because in other countries they speak it and it's good to know.

(Codrina, 15 years old, attendance)

As it can be seen, Diana discusses the usefulness of Spanish, even more so than her own language, Romanian, while Codrina refers more to the motivational dimension that drives her to want to speak Spanish.

Another reason frequently mentioned, and that appears in contrast with Catalan, is again the ease with which they can learn Spanish. In fact, Razvan confirms that because it is easier for him, it leads to greater use.

Interviewer: Aha, I understand. Collectively, what language do the young Romanian here use more of the three?

Razvan: Spanish.

Interviewer: Spanish. Why do you think that is?

Razvan: Because it is, a bit easier than Catalan.

(Razvan, 14 years old, no attendance)

In addition, despite the fact that the language used in the educational system is Catalan, the ease of Spanish use also exists in academic contexts.

Interviewer: For you, is it easy or difficult to learn Catalan?

Octavian: Well...

Interviewer: To learn ok? We are talking about learning situations.

Octavian: For me, Spanish is easier. I do not know, it's easier for me to see as well when I read it.

(Octavian, 17 years old, no attendance)

Octavian, in alignment with other participants, reports that the ease with Spanish also extends to reading. Again, ease of learning and attitudes are interrelated.

4.2.3 Through emotional anchor to invisibilization: the attitudes towards Romanian

Regarding Romanian, all the participants agree on an emotional bond, on an anchor that unites them in an emotional and symbolic way with their place of origin and with the family they have left behind in Romania.

Interviewer: And with Romanian? How do you see learning and speaking Romanian?

Laura: Yes, Romanian is also very useful... essential to learn it... because to know how to speak and write it all Romanians who are abroad... because it is your mother tongue even if they don't want to and it is very important to know it. At least to say Hello in your own language, where you come from.... and....

(Laura, 15 years old, attendance)

Notwithstanding the emotional link, some of the participants report that there are people within the Romanian collective who have more positive attitudes towards Spanish than towards Romanian. And this may be one of the reasons why they choose not to continue learning their heritage language when they are in the host society. This is how Madalina portrays it:

Interviewer: I understand, ok. And at general level, do you think that the other youngsters would reply the same way as you did? Would it be a different situation for them?

Madalina: So youngsters who are from Romania maybe came here when they were young or maybe don't know to write.

Interviewer: What? Romanian?

Madalina: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok.

Madalina: And they don't come to Romanian classes.

Interviewer: They don't attend Romanian classes.

Madalina: No, not really. And I don't know, they like Spanish more.

(Madalina, 14 years old, attendance)

Along these lines, the prospect of future migration also influences their attitude towards their language of origin. For Vlad (16 years old, attendance), for example, who believes that learning Romanian is "a waste of time, is the truth. Because they think they do not want to go

back to Romania, or do not plan to go there in the future”. Ana, on the other hand, appreciates it because she plans to return to Romania.

Interviewer: And do you think that in general, the other Romanians consider it useful to learn and speak Catalan, Spanish or Romanian? Referring to Catalan?

Ana: Some don’t because... Ok, they learn it because, like it or not, they live here.

Interviewer: But do they think it’s useful?

Ana: Some don’t because, the same, they feel that we’re Romanian, we’re going back to Romania....and some feel that in Romanian you have nothing to do with the two languages anymore.

(Ana, 17 years old, no attendance)

Furthermore, many agree that the lack of use of Romanian is causing it to lose visibility in their lives, and to be relegated to the family environment.

Interviewer: Aha. And the Romanian? You like to speak it?

Gabriela: Yes, I like it, but as I told you before, it is very difficult for me to speak it, because... I, I live here and it is very difficult to speak four languages. And as I use Spanish much more, I have forgotten most of the words. I can write, I can read, but the words.... let’s see, I say them when I talk to you, as you can see that I am speaking half Romanian and more Spanish... well, I use, let’s see, I use the Spanish words to communicate with my mother. Because if I try, for example, look, “zahăr” [sugar], I forget how it is said. I say “azúcar” [sugar]. Then, my mother will yell, leaving me shocked, and say: “Speak Romanian!”. But I say to her, “I can’t. It’s your fault for bringing me here.”

(Gabriela, 15 years old, no attendance)

This loss of visibility of the Romanian language is also due to external factors, such as the avoidance of discrimination and “misunderstandings” in the host society, as Mihai explains.

Interviewer: I understand. And Romanian? Is it well regarded to speak it?

Mihai: I don’t think so.

Interviewer: Why is that?

Mihai: Well some do not even understand it maybe... For instance, if you are talking or you say a joke and you laugh with the person you are talking to, maybe someone next to you who does not understand what you are saying can say that you are laughing at him or that you are talking about him...

(Mihai, 15 years old, no attendance)

This invisibility also prompts them to make an effort in their pronunciation in Spanish and Catalan so as not to appear Romanian, which means that they find themselves in situations such as the one narrated by Cosmin, and a significant number of the study’s participants.

Cosmin: You are integrated when you speak the contact language, when you have a good pronunciation ... Right? When there is not a difference. Same as in my case. No one can tell the difference, right? For example, I have a friend I’ve known for a long time ... we’ve known each other for 6 years, and she was not in my class, she was in the other class, so she never knew about my real name. She always knew that my name was Juan,

she knew nothing about where I was from. Until this year. Because this year she comes to my class, and she told me: “You’re Romanian, really?”.

(Cosmin, 17 years old, no attendance)

Thus, although the attitudes towards Romanian are favourable overall, they have a more emotional and symbolic component than a pragmatic one. In their daily lives, students of Romanian origin tend to make their heritage language invisible in order to feel better integrated into the host society, either by reducing the contexts of use, which makes them less competent, or by becoming highly competent in Catalan and Spanish so as not to appear Romanian.

5 Discussion and conclusions

Overall, Romanian young people show a clear preference for Spanish and Romanian in contrast with Catalan, which received the lowest ratings. Moreover, the in-depth interviews conducted offer several insights into the configuration of these language attitudes.

While attitudes towards Spanish and Romanian appear to have similar degrees of favourability, the meanings associated with each language are widely different. Spanish was well liked for its international presence and ease of learning, while Romanian was appreciated mostly for the emotional and symbolic bond with their heritage culture and family. Although the quantitative results showed that the attitudes towards Spanish and attitudes towards Romanian were highly similar, as no statistically significant differences between the two were detected, the qualitative results showed a preference for Spanish, primarily driven by instrumental considerations. Namely, some Romanian teenagers focus on the benefits of knowing an international language widely used around the world, such as Spanish, in the detriment of a language with low status and prestige as Romanian. This is further conditioned by their future migrant expectations (Petreñas, Lapresta & Huguet 2016). These results are not surprising considering the wealth of studies noting that languages of wider communication are preferred to heritage languages by people who “seek additional memberships in sodalities forged on the basis of shared aspirations rather than that of shared origins” (Adejunmobi 2004:205).

Furthermore, the attitudes towards Catalan were the least positive ones. Nevertheless, there is a considerable diversity among the participants – as indicated by the relatively high standard deviation and observed in the qualitative data. The negative attitudes manifested by most of

the students seem to have roots in the perceived difficulty of learning Catalan – a challenge many of the newcomers did not expect before arriving. The surprise of encountering two official languages instead of only one has also been reported by other immigrant groups (Huguet, Janés & Chireac 2008; Madariaga, Huguet & Janés 2016; Trenchs-Parera & Newman 2015).

The relevance of previous contact with the language or lack thereof in language attitudes construction points to at least two aspects to consider in future policy making. Firstly, making Catalan more visible internationally, especially in the media, increasing thus the odds that immigrants would have come into contact with the language before arriving in Catalonia, and would have developed incipient favourable attitudes. Secondly, as the first contact with Catalan mostly takes place in the reception classrooms, we need to inquire how to capitalise on their substantial potential of being a breeding ground of positive language attitudes. The information offered by the Romanian participants indicates that their first school experiences with the Catalan language were not optimal for the construction of positive attitudes towards the regional language. Along these lines, spending a high number of hours in the reception classrooms risks becoming a segregation practice (Siqués, Perera & Vila 2012) and it does not provide an adequate exposure to Catalan (Newman, Patiño-Santos & Trenchs-Parera 2012). Additionally, more time spent in the mainstream classrooms has been found to be associated with higher language competences (Vila et al. 2009; Siqués, Perera & Vila 2012). A possible redesign would consist of incorporating its resources in the mainstream classroom, instead of organizing them in a separate physical space (Siles et al. 2015).

Attitudes towards Catalan might be further improved by potentiating the integrative motivation of learning and using the language. Most of the participants with favourable attitudes showed an acute awareness of the importance of Catalan for their social integration. They have perceived the host society's attitudes, beliefs, and preferences and adapted accordingly. This phenomenon can be described as a double-sided coin. On the one hand, speaking Catalan has elicited positive reactions from the autochthonous populations, which has been found to make immigrants feel more integrated and to encourage a more frequent use of the language (Newman, Patiño-Santos & Trenchs-Parera 2012; Ianos et al. 2017). On the other hand, speaking Romanian was reported to lead to negative or uncomfortable situations marked by discrimination or misunderstandings. As a result, Romanian youngsters avoid speaking their language in public places and strive to lose their accent. The

disheartening conclusion to which this data points seems to be that young Romanians' language attitudes are guided by the host society's message of assimilation. Additionally, assimilationist patterns were identified in the identity construction of young Romanians (Petreñas, Lapresta & Huguet 2016; Petreñas, Lapresta & Huguet 2018). Similar observations were also made with respect to immigrants of Moroccan origin (Alarcón & Garzón 2013). Young people of immigrant origin usually perceive that their languages are not valued by the Catalan society (Alarcón 2010; Lapresta, Huguet & Janés 2010). Thus, there seems to be a disjoint between the political discourse and the educational and linguistic policies adopted, on one side, and the general attitudes and practices of the society, on the other side.

Previous studies carried out in Barcelona (Newman, Trenchs-Parera & Ng 2008; Trenchs-Parera & Newman 2009; Woolard & Frekko 2012) emphasised the emergence of a linguistic cosmopolitanism. In the light of the present findings, further investigation is required to understand the sociolinguistics contexts where cosmopolitan and the assimilationist ideologies are usually found. In this regard, although the sample of this study included the whole population of secondary education students of Romanian origin attending the RLCC program, they were all living in Lleida and Tarragona. There might be regional differences across Catalan territories, or between urban and rural areas, which will need future study. Nonetheless, cultivation of favourable attitudes towards multilingualism and cosmopolitanism is vital for social cohesion and harmony (Lasagabaster 2017; Newman, Trenchs-Parera & Ng 2008; Woolard & Frekko 2012).

Furthermore, both quantitative and qualitative data showed that participation in the RLCC program did not affect the language attitudes of young Romanians. Nevertheless, an important limitation of the study is the small quantitative sample. Although the whole population of secondary education Romanian students attending the RLCC program was included, the relatively small number of participants invites caution when generalizing the results. On the other hand, this is counteracted by the many voices collected at qualitative level, which allowed a more in-depth analysis of aspects that usually remain rather descriptive at quantitative level.

While it seems clear that programs dedicated to the visibilization and maintenance of heritage languages, such as the RLCC program, are unquestionably needed, a reconceptualization of these might be beneficial. However, further analyses regarding the contents and methodology of the course would be first required first, to know which aspects could be improved. It seems

relevant to suggest a stronger focus on processes of language attitude and identity construction, as well as on helping young migrants to value their heritage languages.

Returning to Lewis' (1981) guidelines for successful linguistic policies, the aforementioned findings highlight the imperative of aligning population's attitudes and policy principles and objectives. Initiatives that foster favourable language attitudes and cosmopolitan ideologies will be successful only if they focus on all the groups involved – both the autochthonous and the various immigrant communities.

References

- Adejunmobi, Moradew. 2004. *Vernacular Palaver. Imaginations of the Local and Non-Native Languages in West Africa*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Alarcón, Amado & Luis Garzón. 2013. Children of immigrants and social mobility in officially bilingual societies. The case of Catalonia. *Spanish in Context* 10(1). 92–113. doi:10.1075/sic.10.1.04ala.
- Alarcón, Amado, Sònia Parella & Jessica Yiu. 2013. Educational and Occupational Ambitions among the Spanish ‘Second Generation’: The Case of Barcelona. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40(10). 1614–1636. doi:10.1080/1369183X.2013.831550.
- Alarcón, Irma. 2010. Advanced Heritage Learners of Spanish: A Sociolinguistic Profile for Pedagogical Purposes. *Foreign Language Annals* 43(2). 269–288. doi:10.1111/j.1944-9720.2010.01078.x. <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2010.01078.x>.
- Bardin, Laurence. 1986. *El análisis de contenido*. Madrid: Akal.
- Bel, Aurora, Josep Maria Serra & Ignasi Vila. 1991. *El coneixement de llengua catalana a 6è, 7è i 8è d'EGB*. Barcelona: ICE Universitat de Barcelona.
- Bernaus, Mercè, Emilee Moore & Adriana Cordeiro Azevedo. 2007. Affective Factors Influencing Plurilingual Students’ Acquisition of Catalan in a Catalan-Spanish Bilingual Context. *The Modern Language Journal* 91(2). 235–246. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2007.00542.x.
- Cummins, Jim. 1998. Immersion education for the millennium: What we have learned from 30 years of research on second language immersion. In M. R. Childs & R.M. Bostwick (eds.), *Learning through two languages: Research and practice. Second Katoh Gakuen International Symposium on Immersion and Bilingual Education*, 34–47. Katoh Gakuen, Japan.
- Edwards, Catrin Wyn. 2016. Language-in-education policies, immigration and social cohesion in Catalonia: the case of Vic. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 19(5). 530–545. doi:10.1080/13670050.2015.1023253.
- Estors Sastre, Laura. 2014. Les actituds lingüístiques segons l’origen dels aprenents de català com a llengua d’acollida. *Treballs de Sociolingüística Catalana* 24. 153–171. doi:10.2436/20.2504.01.74.

- Fishman, Joshua A. 1991. *Reversing language shift*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Fishman, Joshua A. 2001. *Can threatened languages be saved? Reversing language shift, Revisited : A 21st century perspective*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Fukuda, Makiko. 2016. Double gateway to the host society? Knowledge and perceptions of Japanese people living in Catalonia regarding language. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 4632(March). 1–16. doi:10.1080/01434632.2016.1146288.
- Generalitat de Catalunya. 2009. *Pla per a la llengua i la cohesió social. Educació i convivència intercultural*. Retrieved from http://www.xtec.cat/alfresco/d/d/workspace/SpacesStore/2d96e1d3-81fc-4de9-9fec-508acde1dcbe/Annex1_aules_nov_09.pdf.
- Generalitat de Catalunya. 2015. *La llengua a l'escola catalana. Un model d'èxit*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya. Departament d'Ensenyament.
- Generalitat de Catalunya. 2017. *Pla de ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya. Departament de Treball i Afers Socials. Retrieved from http://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/web/.content/03ambits_tematics/05immigracio_refugi/03politiquesplansactuacio/pla_ciutadania_immigracio/pla_2017_2020/ANNEX-v-18.9.17.pdf.
- Generalitat de Catalunya. 2018. *El model lingüístic del sistema educatiu de Catalunya. L'aprenentatge i l'ús de les llengües en un context educatiu multilingüe i multicultural*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya. Departament d'Ensenyament.
- Grup d'Estudi de Llengües Amenaçades. 2018. *Les llengües a Catalunya*. Retrieved from http://www.gela.cat/doku.php?id=llengues#dokuwiki__top
- Hoffmann, Charlotte. 2000. Balancing language planning and language rights: Catalonia's uneasy juggling act. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 21(5). 425–441.
- Huguet, Àngel. 2007. Minority languages and curriculum: The case of Spain. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 20(1). 70–86. doi:10.2167/lcc327.0.
- Huguet, Àngel, Judit Janés & Silvia Maria Chireac. 2008. Mother tongue as a determining variable in language attitudes. The case of immigrant Latin American students in Spain. *Language and Intercultural Communication* 8(4). 246–260. doi:10.1080/14708470802303082.

- Huguet, Àngel, David Lasagabaster & Ignasi Vila. 2008. Bilingual education in Spain: present realities and future challenges. In Jim Cummins & Nancy H. Hornberger (eds.) *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*. 1672-1682. New York, NY: Springer.
- Ianos, Maria Adelina, Àngel Huguet, Judit Janés & Cecilio Lapresta. 2017. Can language attitudes be improved? A longitudinal study of immigrant students in Catalonia (Spain). *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 20(3). 331–345. doi:10.1080/13670050.2015.1051508.
- Ianos, Maria Adelina, Àngel Huguet & Cecilio Lapresta. 2017. Attitudinal patterns of secondary education students in Catalonia. The direct and moderator effects of origin. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 38(2). 113–129. doi:10.1080/01434632.2016.1177060.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE). 2018. *INEBase*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ine.es/inebmenu/indice.htm#nogo>.
- Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya (IDESCAT). 2018. *Població estrangera 1 de gener. Per sexe i grups d'edat*. Retrieved from: <https://www.idescat.cat/indicadors/?id=anuals&n=10332>
- Institutul Limbii Romana. 2017. *Limba, cultura si civilizatie romana* [Romanian language, culture, and Civilization]. Retrieved from <http://www.ilr.ro/category/spania/>
- Lapresta, Cecilio, Silvia Maria Chireac, Àngel Huguet, José Luis Navarro, Monica Querol & Clara Sansó. 2009. *Actitudes lingüísticas, escuela e inmigración. Los escolares ante la diversidad lingüística y cultural*. Madrid: Ministerio de Educación, Subdirección General de Información y Publicaciones.
- Lapresta, Cecilio, Àngel Huguet & Judit Janés. 2010. Análisis discursivo de las actitudes lingüísticas de los escolares de origen inmigrante en Cataluña. *Revista de Educación* 353. 521–547.
- Lapresta, Cecilio, Àngel Huguet & Judit Janés. 2018. Opening perspectives from an integrated analysis: language attitudes, place of birth and self-identification. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 21(2). 151–163. doi:10.1080/13670050.2016.1144709.
- Lasagabaster, David. 2017. Language learning motivation and language attitudes in multilingual Spain from an international perspective. *The Modern Language Journal*

101(3). 583–596. doi:10.1111/modl.12414.

Lewis, E. Glyn. 1981. *Bilingualism and bilingual education*. Oxford, UK: Pergamon.

Madariaga, José-María, Àngel Huguet & Judit Janés. 2016. Language attitudes in Catalan multilingual classrooms: educational implications. *Language and Intercultural Communication* 16(2). 216–234. doi: 10.1080/14708477.2015.1118111

Madariaga, José-María, Àngel Huguet & Cecilio Lapresta. 2013. Attitudes, social pressure and inclusive education in classrooms with cultural and linguistic diversity. *Educación XXI* 16(1). 305–328. doi:10.5944/educXXI.16.1.728.

Marcu, Silvia. 2012. Emotions on the move: belonging, sense of place and feelings identities among young Romanian immigrants in Spain. *Journal of Youth Studies* 15(2). 207–223. doi:10.1080/13676261.2011.630996.

Marcu, Silvia. 2015. From the Marginal Immigrant to the Mobile Citizen: Reconstruction of Identity of Romanian Migrants in Spain. *Population, Space and Place* 21. 506–517. doi:10.1002/psp.1845.

Newman, Michael. 2011. Different ways to hate a language in Catalonia: Interpreting low solidarity scores in language attitude studies. In Jim Michnowicz & Robin Dodsworth (eds.), *Selected Proceedings of the 5th Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics*, 40–49. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

Newman, Michael, Adriana Patiño-Santos & Mireia Trenchs-Parera. 2013. Linguistic reception of Latin American students in Catalonia and their responses to educational language policies. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 16(2). 195–209. doi:10.1080/13670050.2012.720669.

Newman, Michael, Mireia Trenchs-Parera & Shukhan Ng. 2008. Normalizing bilingualism: The effects of the Catalan linguistic normalization policy one generation after. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 12(3). 306–333.

Petreñas, Cristina, Cecilio Lapresta & Àngel Huguet. 2016. El papel de la L1 en la construcción de la auto-identificación cultural: Análisis de las trayectorias de jóvenes rumanos en Cataluña. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics* 31(2). 39–56.

Petreñas, Cristina, Cecilio Lapresta & Àngel Huguet. 2018. Redefining cultural identity through language in young Romanian migrants in Spain. *Language and Intercultural Communication* 18(2). 225–240. doi:10.1080/14708477.2016.1221416.

- Portes, Alejandro & Alejandro Rivas. 2011. The adaptation of migrant children. *The Future of children / Center for the Future of Children, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation* 21(1). 219–46.
- Pujolar, Joan & Isaac González. 2013. Linguistic ‘ mudes ’ and the de-ethnicization of language choice in Catalonia. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 16(2). 138–152. doi:10.1080/13670050.2012.720664.
- Pujolar, Joan & Maite Puigdevall. 2015. Linguistic mudes: How to become a new speaker in Catalonia. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2015(231). 167–187. doi:10.1515/ijsl-2014-0037.
- Rojas Tejada, Antonio J., Maria Soledad Navas, Pablo Sayans & Isabel Cuadrado. 2014. Acculturation preference profiles of Spaniards and Romanian immigrants: The role of prejudice and public and private acculturation areas. *The Journal of Social Psychology* 154(4). 339–351. doi:10.1080/00224545.2014.903223.
- Serra, Josep Maria. 1990. Resultados académicos y desarrollo cognitivo en un programa de inmersión dirigido a escolares de nivel sociocultural bajo. *Infancia y Aprendizaje* 47. 55–65.
- Siles, Belinda, M^aJose Segura, Cristina Petreñas & Ignasi Puigdemívol. 2015. El treball en xarxa per a l'èxit educatiu de l'alumnat amb necessitats educatives especials. *Àmbits de Psicopedagogia i Orientació* 43. 1–9.
- Siqués, Carina, Santiago Perera & Ignasi Vila. 2012. Variables implicadas en la adquisición del catalán en las aulas de acogida de educación primaria de Cataluña. Un estudio empírico. *Anales de Psicología* 28(2). 444–456.
- Siqués, Carina, Ignasi Vila & Santiago Perera. 2009. Percepciones y actitudes del alumnado extranjero y del profesorado : un estudio empírico en las aulas de acogida de Cataluña. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology* 7(17). 103–132.
- Trenchs-Parera, Mireia. 2013. Les vivències sociolingüístiques i el multilingüisme dels joves d'origen xinès a Catalunya. *Revista de didàctica de la llengua i de la literatura*(60). 28–39.
- Trenchs-Parera, Mireia, Imanol Larrea Mendizabal & Michael Newman. 2014. La normalització del cosmopolitisme lingüístic entre els joves del segle XXI? Una exploració de les ideologies lingüístiques a Catalunya. *Treballs de Sociolingüística*

Catalana 24. 281–301. doi:10.2436/20.2504.01.80.

Trenchs-Parera, Mireia & Michael Newman. 2009. Diversity of language ideologies in Spanish-speaking youth of different origins in Catalonia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 30(6). 509–524. doi:10.1080/01434630903147914.

Trenchs-Parera, Mireia & Michael Newman. 2015. Language Policies, Ideologies, and Attitudes, Part 2: International Immigration, Globalization and the Future of Catalan. *Linguistics and Language Compass* 9(12). 491–501. doi:10.1111/lnc3.12155.

Vila, Ignasi. 1995. *El català i el castellà en el sistema educatiu de Catalunya*. Barcelona: ICE Horsori.

Vila, Ignasi, Imma Canal, Pere Mayans, Santiago Perera, Josep Maria Serra & Carina Siqués. 2009. Las aulas de acogida de la educación primaria de Cataluña el curso 2005-2006: sus efectos sobre el conocimiento de catalán y la adaptación escolar. *Infancia y Aprendizaje* 32(3). 307–327.

Woolard, Kathryn A. & Susan E. Frekko. 2012. Catalan in the twenty-first century: romantic publics and cosmopolitan communities. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 16(2). 129–137. doi:10.1080/13670050.2012.720663.