Language Attitudes and Loyalties in the Valencian Country

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Abstract

This article provides a brief explanation of our line of research into language attitudes and loyalties in the Valencian Country and the elements of its social structure. We are also looking at the structural relationships between loyalties and variables of social structure in the Valencian Country and, using scientific means, creating a guide map to indicate the social dependence of each loyalty. Thus, the aim of language policy may vary, depending on the dimension that we want to promote. However, for reasons of space, we will limit ourselves here to presenting the composition of our measuring tools and their frequency in the linguistic context of the Valencian Country, in both urban areas and the country as a whole.

1. Language policy planning

The language policy of the Valencian Country began, as in other Autonomous Communities, with the approval of the Act on the Use and Teaching of Valencian in 1983, which promoted the use of Valencian and the standardisation of the language.

Political intervention in language must use certain parameters and measuring tools to help evaluate the actions carried out by public organisations in this field, and it must make use of analyses in order to discover the best lines for policies.

Our research focuses on this area: we search for relevant and reliable tools and instruments to improve the effectiveness of intervention, and to indicate the lines where the scope and direction of this action will have a bearing on the type of results.

Survey data1 can be used as a basis for theoretical hypotheses on languages in contact, and language loyalties and attitudes. Thus, with the use of indicators, we can establish or deduce loyalties towards the language of the Community of Valencia and discover how they are characterised socially. These loyalties can then be used to establish five types of language attitude (five groups) through the analysis of conglomerates throughout the territory, taking into account their internal social structure.

Readers should see the two earlier studies for a more in-depth and accurate view of the results, preparation of the data, formation of the language loyalties and groups, their social composition, and the regression models and structural models that we created.

We will now move on to explain **Why**, **When**, and **How** language policies are created, in relation to how they take on meaning, situations prior to language policies, and in terms of the measuring instruments that we have created, which are based on social structure.

1.1. Why. Language as an element of symbolic domination

The importance of language policy planning lies in the idea that language is a central element of human societies. Far from being arbitrary, this type of intervention promotes ways of understanding the world insofar as the object of the intervention (language) becomes a tool of cosmovision and of symbolic domination, reflecting other types of domination.

Rather than looking at language from an analytical point of view, in terms of syntax or sentence structure, here we take it as a reference for objectivising our understanding of the world.

An individual's cosmovision is mentally encoded and structured by the group of symbols that is language. We use language to communicate and transmit, to understand the world, to symbolise what surrounds us and make it our own through socialisation; through language, we share experiences, we transform the subjective into objective, i.e. we understand it in a specific way, and not in any another. In short, language mediates the processes of production and reproduction of social reality. Through language, we objectify the society that we collectively experience and construct (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

Since language shapes our understanding of the world, objectifying it and marking us with it as a form of identification, of who we are, it is able to reflect changes in socio-economic hierarchy or structure that occur in society. It does so through changes in linguistic standards that refer to valuation, specific spheres of use and knowledge about and of language itself.

Changes in linguistic standards are based on the hierarchization of relationships and, more specifically, on the capacity for domination that develops. Economic domination can crystallise into changes in linguistic standards whereby the dominator (with its linguistic code) symbolically tries to impose its idea of the world, i.e. the adoption of a given linguistic standard is the result of mechanisms of symbolic domination acting in conjunction with other types of domination (e. g. economic, political).

Symbolic domination is exercised through symbols, by selecting a set of ways of representing reality, that conceals other possible representations, thus hiding parts of the same reality. If this symbolic domination is successful, acceptance of the domination by dominant groups is guaranteed (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1994).

Symbolic domination becomes a mechanism for legitimating changes by creating structures of plausibility that make domination unconscious while helping to define reality in a certain way. We understand symbolic domination to be the set of unconscious actions perceived as non-coercive, but which are the product of a social determinism that is far removed from any conscious intention (Bourdieu, 1985).

In short, domination of the structures through which we see the world (language) guarantees the unconscious acceptance of another type of domination as 'normal'.

Thus, language policies are able to create structures of plausibility that add value to language, rediscover spheres that will guarantee its use, and teach the language, ensuring competence in it. This is achieved by creating markets through which language becomes cultural capital, because we are not faced with a situation of linguistic speculation that can tell us whether we know a language well but where we are unable to produce or reproduce anything using that language.

1.2. When. Social spheres for language

Language as a tool of domination needs a market in which to develop and through which, it gains value. Thus, linguistic cultural capital becomes so when social institutions create a sphere in which it can develop, take on meaning and progressively increase in value.

In our case, the Valencian Country, there are two ways of understanding reality based on two linguistic systems (Spanish-Valencian); the most powerful group legitimates and creates spheres or areas of use and increases its markets, thus reproducing its language and understanding of the world in a certain way. This is achieved by appropriating spheres that belonged to the other language (Valencian), which is progressively devalued by the reduction in its market.

Therefore, we have two struggles for the expansion of markets, for legitimating and valuing one language over the other, for conflict between languages in contact caused by objectivising invasions into language spheres.

This market expansion-reduction dynamic is based on a number of different processes related to bilingualism, diglossia, language shift and standardisation (in that order) Hence, bilingual situations with contact between two different linguistic systems alternating with each other leads to the legitimation-loss of prestige of linguistic spheres. We understand that the term is similar to what Ninyoles calls 'diglossia', since the use of a given language is subordinate to relationships in a hierarchised social structure reflected in a hierarchy of linguistic uses and languages.

A language expands its spheres by reducing those of the other language, reflecting a process of language shift. This situation gradually becomes monolingual in the dominant language. However, if language conflict is declared between languages, this can lead to standardisation of the language in decline with the aim of standardising the speech of each area and recovering linguistic spheres (depending on the intensity and direction of the language policy).

Language conflict occurs when certain individuals and groups question and doubt the direction of the shift, problematising it and setting up processes of social action to increase the spheres occupied by the language in decline, thus initiating the language standardisation processes (Ninyoles, 1969). Language standardisation is therefore always preceded by the problematization and conflictiveness of the social definition of language uses (Tejerina, 1992).

As Benjamín Tejerina (1992) points out, the same conscience of the disappearance of a territory's own language can lead to a defensive reaction promoting the recovery of the original language, depending on the linguistic community's valuation of the collective identity represented by that language. Language standardisation requires the social construction of favourable socio-political conditions, the will of the

linguistic community and the appropriate social action (Mollà and Palanca, 1987); all of these elements depend on the valuational dimension of the language.

1.3 How. Language loyalties and attitudes

Attitudes towards language provide the vehicle and reference point for all of these linguistic situations as well as for symbolic domination, language planning and the legitimation of social spheres.

For van Dijk (1998), attitudes lie in the conscience of individuals, forming part of their cognitive world; they are made up of a series of opinions shared by a social group. Thus, they are specific, structured series' of beliefs that are shared socially.

These attitudes are Bourdieu's *habitus* (1979, 1992) in that they are the fruit of experiences, products of a whole series of historical, social, economic, political and cultural implications that continuously interact with one and other, turning the subjective into the objective on analysis.

Unlike rational, individual action, the concept of *habitus* follows the logic of social action, incorporating the objective into corpuses so that the subjective also becomes social. Habitus is a socialised subjectivity.

"*Habitus* are long-lasting, transposable systems of schemes of perception, appreciation and action resulting from the penetration of the social institution in corpuses." (Bourdieu, 1992).

The habitus to which we refer are linked and are the product of combining different types of language loyalties. These loyalties are indicators that we have constructed using the questions from surveys. We have used these indicators to measure: the level of competential loyalty in terms of knowledge of a language; primary, secondary and written instrumental loyalties according to oral and written use of the language; lastly, we have observed valuational loyalty, which concerns the valuation of language.

As we have said, we can use this combination of loyalties to observe certain attitudes or *habitus* located within specific language groups in the social structure. Thus, we find five types of language *habitus*, which we have termed loyalty, competence, idealisation, use and assimilation. These terms relate to the main feature of each language group.

2. Social and linguistic loyalties

As we pointed out earlier, the indicators of language loyalty were constructed using the questions on knowledge, use and evaluation of Valencian from the surveys that we analysed.

Depending on its function, we can consider language in an instrumental or valuational dimension. The instrumental dimension takes place 'on' the language, whereas the valuational dimension is that used when we talk 'about' the language. Ninyoles (1975) credits this distinction to Fishmann (1989). For our analyses, we have added a third dimension – competence.

We have processed the information from the questions using weighted averages of response.

The weighted average consists in giving different values to the answers according to their relation with our central concept: linguistic loyalty. Of course, this weighted average can be challenged but it allows us to objectivize our measurement and its further discussion.

This has given us five loyalties which relate to language competence, use and valuation.

2.1. Competential loyalty

This type of indicator aims to measure the capacity to understand, to speak, to read and to write.

	Q1: Do you understand Valencian?	Q2: Do you speak Valencian?	Q3: Do you read Valencian?	Q4: Do you write Valencian?
Any	1	1	1	1
A little	2	2	2	2
Fairly	3	3	3	3
Fluently	4	4	4	4

We assign to the understanding of Valencian a weighted average of 1, as it is the lowest level of competence; we allocate a 2 to speaking and reading insofar as both skills show a higher level of competence than only to understand the language and they imply a process of codification and decodification, both oral and written. Finally, we assign a weighted average of 3 to writing as we consider it as the higher possible level of competence.

We apply this allocation of weighted averages to the four options of answer in each and every of the four questions: "any" is rated with 0 as it shows no competence; "a little" is rated with 1; "fairly" with 2; "fluently" with 3. At the end, from this we get a new variable according to which an individidual can reach a maximum score of 24 (understand, speak, read and write fluently) and a minimum score of 0 (not to have any of the four competences). In order to work with an indicator ranging between the values 0 and 1, we divide it by 24. We call this new variable *competencial loyalty*.

2.2. Primary instrumental loyalty

By means of this indicator which has been built up from variables q5a, q5b, q5c and q5f, we aim to measure the level of use of Valencian compared to Spanish, in the main spheres of primary social relationships, i.e. at home, with friends, in small, privately-owned shops and in the workplace with workmates. We allocate a weighted average of 1, 2, 3 and 4 to take into consideration a stronger loyalty of use of Valencian in the spheres more distant from the family circle.

In this case, the answers to the questions range from "always in Spanish" (0 value) as far as it does not imply any loyalty towards the oral use of Valencian in primary social relationships, "mainly in Spanish" (1), "more Spanish than Valencian" (2), "both" (3), "more Valencian than Spanish" (4),"mainly in Valencian" (5) and "always in Valencian" (6).

In which language do you speak...	Q5a ... at home?	Q5b ... with friends?	Q5c ... with workmates?	Q5f ... in small, privately-owned shops?
Always in Val.	1	1	1	1
Mainly in Val.	2	2	2	2
> Val than Spa	3	3	3	3
Both	4	4	4	4
> Spa than Val	5	5	5	5
Mainly in Spanish	6	6	6	6
Always in Spanish	7	7	7	7

We obtain therefore a variable ranging from a minimum of 0 for those who always use Spanish in the studied social domains, to a maximum of 60 for those who always use Valencian. As in the former case, in order to use an indicator between 0 and 1, we dividide the new variable by 60. We call it *primary instrumental loyalty*.

2.3. Secondary instrumental loyalty

We have used the same method as above to build up the secondary instrumental indicator. In this case we have used the questions q5d, q5e and q5g referring to the use of language in relationships outside the workplace, in the street with strangers and in large chain-stores, respectively. The first question has been weighted with 2 as far as we consider that in the workplace the external relations (customers, providers,...) lead the individual to use more communicative resources than when meeting a stranger in the street or shopping in large chain-stores.

Likewise, if we take into account that the answering options for these two variables are the same than in the former case, we are going to obtain a new variable with a maximum score of 24 for those using always Valencian in the considered fields and a minimum score of 0 for those using always Spanish. We divide by 24 so that the secondary instrumental indicator ranges between 0 and 1.

2.4. Written instrumental loyalty

The above two indicators enable us to measure the oral use of Valencian, but we need a more complete vision of instrumental loyalty. To do so, we have constructed an indicator of written use to discover the level of written, active (written) and passive (reading) use of Valencian in the population studied. For this we have used the questions q6 by means of which we asked the respondents what do they use to read in Valencian: q6a "nothing" (0 value); q6b "signs and posters" (1); q6c "advertisements" (2); q6d "cartoons" (3); q6e "communications from official authorities" (4); q6f "reviews and magazines" (5); q6g "books" (7). We have furthermore used the question 7 asking if the person writes something in Valencian (10 value), so that and taking into account that the 8 questions are dichotomic, a respondent who answers "yes" to all of them will obtain a score of 32. In order to fix the new indicator between 0 and 1, we divide it by 32. This is the w*ritten instrumental loyalty indicator.*

2.5. Valuational loyalty

Finally,we have used questions q9 and q10 to establish the valuational loyalty indicator. To the first one, the respondants answer if they believe that current use of the language has increased (2 value), is stable (1) or has decreased (0) with respect to the past; to the second, they answer if they think the language should be used more (2), as currently (1) or less (0). We have rated higher the willingness of a higher use (weighted average 3) than the opinion of the current use compared to the past (1). The maximum score for this indicator is 8 if the respondant replies "yes" to the two questions. To obtain an indicator ranging from 0 to 1 we have divided it by 8, as in the afore-mentioned indicators.

3. Linguistic attitudinal groups

Indicators are important in that they enable us to classify the population and attribute certain language attitudes. In fact, the dimensions of language loyalty that we have obtained do not function separately; they combine to offer a global attitude towards the processes of shift/standardisation of the Valencian language.

The next step is therefore to classify the individuals we have been studying according to the indicators of linguistic loyalty. To do so we have chosen the cluster analysis method which allows to standardize the values of the indicators so that values under the average are negative and those above are positive. Finally the same elements of the samples are gathered according their level of affinity.

We have constructed linguistic groups from our analysis of these conglomerates. The positive and negative combination of loyalties results in the observation of five groups. These are loyal, users, competent, idealisers and assimilated.

In short, the cluster analysis allows us to establish five groups with the attitudinal characteristics showed in the table below:

Groups	Competential	Primary instrum.	Secondary instrum.	Written instrum.	Valuational	Linguistic attitude	Typology
1	+	+	+	+	+	Valuational, competential, instrumental	Loyal
2	+/−	+	+	−	+	Instrumental (oral), valuational, competential	Users
3	+	−	−	+	−	Competential, non-valuational, instrumental (written)	Competent
4	−	−	−	−	+	Valuational, non-competential, non-instrumental	Idealisers
5	−	−	−	−	−	non-competential, non-instrumental, non-valuational	Assimilated

a) Loyal. Includes individuals with an overall, above-average score in all loyalties. This group has high competential, instrumental and valuational loyalties. These individuals display a highly positive attitude towards the standardisation of Valencian and are opposed to the process of language shift.

b)Users. This conglomerate has high oral Instrumental loyalties, a negative competential and written instrumental loyalty, and a positive (but low) valuational loyalty. This group habitually uses Valencian orally, but does not know the language very well and does not, therefore, write in it.

c) Competent. They have a high competential and written instrumental loyalty but negative values in oral instrumental and valuational loyalties. They know the language very well, but do not use it or value it.

d) Idealisers. Individuals with negative linguistic loyalties in all areas, except for valuation. They do not know the language well and do not use it, but have a very important, explicit valuation.

e) Assimilated. Lastly, we obtain a group of individuals with negative language loyalties in all the dimensions considered. The attitude of this group is far from language loyalty to Valencian. It has no

competence, does not use the language and does not value it. This polarisation leads us to see them as being totally integrated into Spanish and opposed to language standardisation.

4. Language attitudes and loyalties in the Valencian Country

Following this outline of our abstract measuring instruments, we will now turn to locate them in a working context, albeit through a very general look at the linguistic situation of the Valencian Country. The following diagrams offer a static view of situations of language shift and standardisation which, for reasons of space, do not analyse the social structure behind each indicator and group. The diagrams refer to data for the whole of the Valencian Country and for urban areas.

**Figure 1. Loyalties in the Valencian Country**
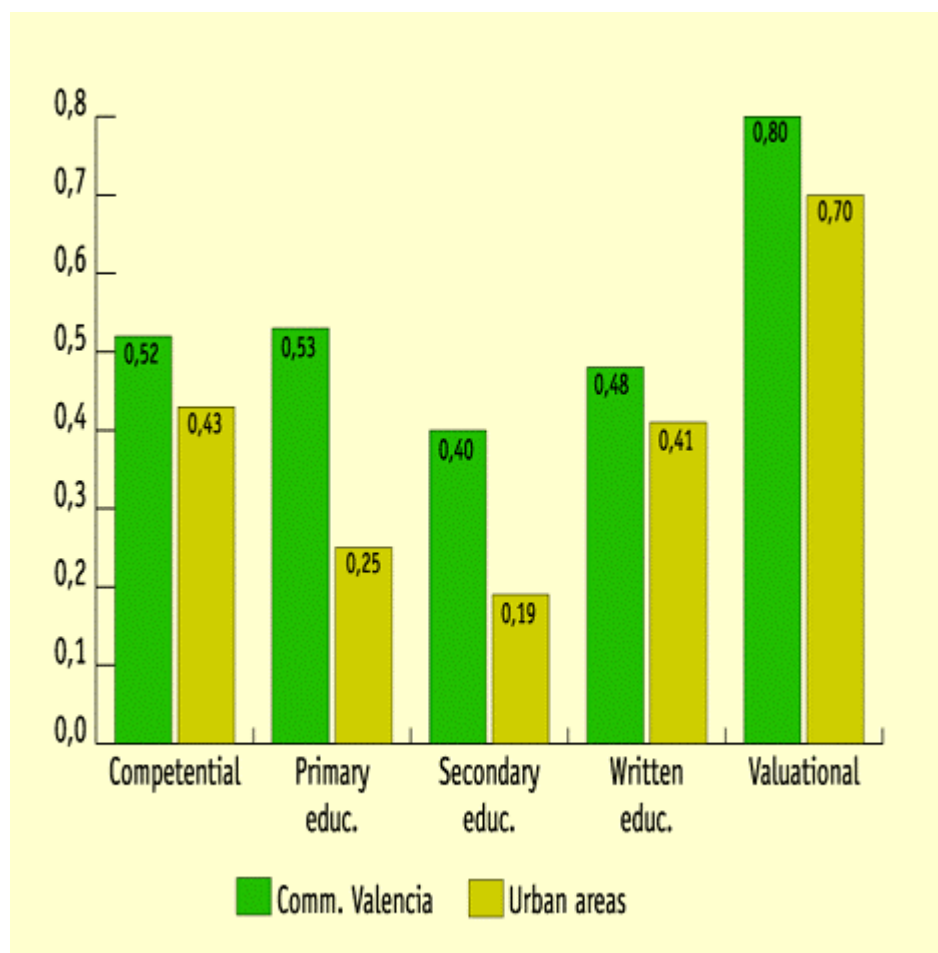
The diagram on loyalties reveals a reduction in all loyalties in urban areas in comparison with the territory as a whole; the most significant reduction is that of primary and secondary oral instrumental loyalties. However, the main problems of loyalty towards Valencian lie in the secondary instrumental dimension, in both urban areas and the Country as a whole. Oral instrumental use in secondary relationships is always lower than the use of Valencian in primary relationships. Thus, a diglossic linguistic situation arises since, otherwise, primary and secondary instrumental loyalty would coincide, and this is not the case here.

A further difference between urban areas and the Valencian Country as a whole can be appreciated in primary oral use (primary instrumental loyalty) – which exceeds written (written instrumental loyalty) and even competential loyalty to a slight degree, whereas this does not occur in urban areas. In urban areas, oral use (the most habitual in social communication), is lower than the written presence of the language and the competential level. This suggests that schemes to promote the language in these cities have only been successful in the competential area of signage and certain forms of written communication.

Another clear difference is the contrast between the average scores of valuational loyalty and the rest of the loyalties. This leads us to believe that, generally-speaking, the average attitude of the population of

the Valencian Country is similar to Ninyoles' *compensatory idealisation* (Castelló, 2000). However, we also believe that, if it were not for this high valuational loyalty, instrumental loyalties would be even lower.

Figure 2. Language attitudes in the Valencian Country
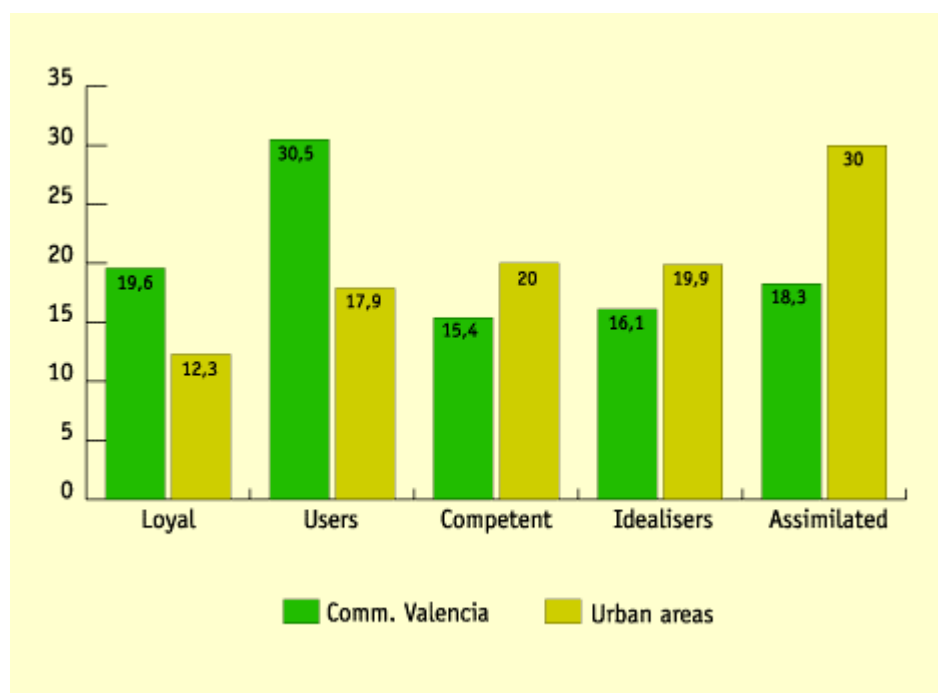
If we quantify the presence of these attitudes in the Valencian Country as a whole and in urban areas, we see that, while the modal category in the former is *users* with 30.5 % of cases, the modal presence in urban areas is *assimilated* with a frequency of 30 %. These are the two categories with the biggest differences. In fact, the split between the two clearly occurs in the macrogroups of use rather than in those of competence. Thus, we see that the relative presence of *loyal* and *users* in the Country as a whole is greater than its presence in urban areas, whilst the opposite occurs with the relative presence of *competent*, *idealisers* and *assimilated*.

5. Conclusion

At this point in our analyses, we can conclude from this general outline that the processes of language standardisation in the Valencian Country and language planning must first locate the subjects of linguistic action and then influence the aspects that they would like to promote, with the primary reference being the social characterisation of attitudinal subjects and the dimensional features that make up the various groups.

The indicators of language loyalties also reveal a diglossic situation in the Valencian Country, determined generally by the difference in uses at home and otherwise, where it mediatized. This aspect is accentuated much more in urban areas, oral use outside the home is much lower even though it is taught much more. We also observe a predominance of valuational loyalty, which we believe may influence other types of loyalty involving oral and written uses, and the legitimation and expansion of markets for language.

Linguistic groups reveal a predominance of groups integrated into Spanish in urban areas who know the language but do not use it (assimilated and competent); these differ from the Valencian Country as a whole, where we find groups that use the language, such as loyal and users.

The comparison of indicators and groups for urban areas and the Valencian Country as a whole are useful in that they reveal that language policies must be studied where they are to be applied in order to be effective. Thus, for urban areas, it would be interesting to intervene in oral aspects, promoting uses, rather than teaching the language.

Measuring instruments created to assess the linguistic situation of the Valencian Country suggest following up research in the direction of the dynamism of a given linguistic situation. Indicators of language loyalties

and groups can reveal the static situation that can be found when performing studies, but the social situation of the language is of a more dynamic nature.

Thus, the creation of tools and the use of statistical scientific processes enable us to continue our studies both longitudinally, through time, and obliquely, by taking the appropriateness of language policies as a reference. These policies depend on the territorial area of intervention and the direction of the policy as regards the aims. We now invite our readers to consult the research on which this article is based.

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