Linguistic nationalism: an interventionist alternative to the liberal conceptions of the linguistic market

by Henri Boyer

Abstract

The author reviews the different positions on the sociolinguistic effects of globalisation, and focuses more particularly on linguistic nationalism. Linguistic nationalism is one which is based on language. Boyer describes the two cases / instances of linguistic nationalism in the / within the Spanish state: that of Galician and that of Catalan, with more especial emphasis on the latter.[1]

1. Introduction

I would gladly simplify the sociolinguistic options (regarding language contact management) currently opposed over the "globalisation" and the position of worldwide plurilingualism and local multilingualisms, according to a representation where, at one end of a continuum, liberal "free exchange" that prioritises *laisser faire* policy and the law of market forces (for example De Swaan 2001), is placed at the opposite end to an interventionist focus with two frequently linked variants: linguistic ecology ("altermondialist"), that puts forward arguments of an *ethical and juridical* nature (human rights-linguistic rights) (for example Hagège 2000, Nettle and Romaine 2003, Boudreau et al 2003) and linguistic nationalism, that prioritises *identity positioning* (Boyer 2004) :
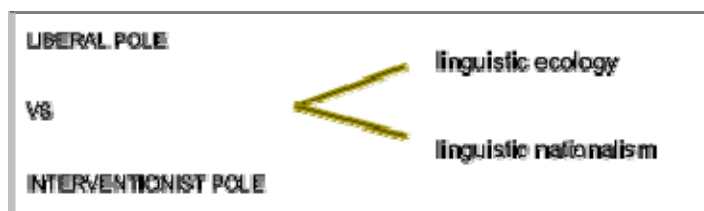
Issue 99-100 (2001) of the Quebec magazine 'Terminogramme' provides an excellent opportunity to fathom the state of the knowledge on the "geostrategies of languages" " (title of the publication in question), in other words the "relations and [language] competition on the international chessboard" (Maurais, 2001, p. 7).

On this issue, regarding the current debate centred on the sociolinguistic effects of globalisation, as stated by R.E. Hamel,

> <<not all the positions agree [...]. Even among those opposed to the total hegemony of English, viewpoints and divergences of strategies persist. We are aware, on the one hand, of the tendency to unconditionally defend all the languages of the world and every citizen's right to receive an education in their language; on the other hand, there is a position in which the main contradiction lies between English, on one side, and the other national and international languages on the other (Hamel, 2001, p. 130).>>

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[1] This article is based on several of my recently published works or those in press: Boyer 2004, Boyer in press 1 Boyer in press 2

The latter position, that of "French sociolinguists [who] warn of the risks of replacement of local languages to the detriment of national and supranational languages" is put forward synthetically, in the article quoted by R.E. Hamel, by a quotation of a "communication by e-mail" from L.J. Calvet (Hamel, 2001, p. 131), for whom "in terms of language politology, the promotion of "minority" or "regional" or "small" languages, follows the same path as English-speaking imperialism".

L.J. Calvet had previously expressed the same position, about Europe in particular, a position whose deliberately and excessively macrosociolinguistic dimension can certainly be praised for its clarity, but in which the bias towards globalisation leaves little room to accommodate the complexity and variety of the positions.

Judge for yourselves:

> <<[globalisation] happily accepts the explosion in speech microcommunities, but copes poorly with intermediary supercentral languages that on a local level represent just as many points of resistance. If, as some wish, Europe were to evolve towards a federation of regions, it may thus move towards the domination of English in coexistence with a plurality of "small" languages such as Galician, Catalan, Basque, Corsican or Alsatian, while French, German and Spanish would be slowly shifted back to the status of central, no longer supercentral languages. From this viewpoint, the defence of "threatened" languages would increase the domination of the hypercentral language, in the same way as, in postcolonial situations, it is language division that strengthens official languages such as English, French or Portuguese. This European scenario is for the time being no more than a hypothesis, but it casts a new light on the debate. (Calvet, 2002, p. 99).>>

From where:

> <<All languages are equal in the eyes of PC discourse, which simply means that all languages are languages, that they all deserve, for example, to be described, but as far as their value or their functions and representations are concerned, they are profoundly unequal (ibid, p. 99).>>

A commentary on the diagnosis put forward in this way imposes itself, although one may always argue, in their defence, that it is a shortcut, and therefore a voluntary simplification. It is not exactly globalisation that wants to grant ever increasing weight to the regions of Europe, but really the defenders (of all types) of a European integration in which the weight of the nation-states, some of which are renowned for their resistance to major losses of sovereignty, would be reduced through the dilution of prerogatives, to put it one way. Nevertheless, not all the regions affected by this perspective constitute historical *speech communities*: of the 250 regions making up the recently formed Assembly of European Regions, how many have their "own language", different from that which is official at state level, such as Catalonia, Galicia or the Basque Country in Spain? Surely a minority. As for the analogy with post-colonial situations, it seems to me to result more from political-media rhetoric than from an authentic comparative analysis.

We could not subscribe to the globalising hypothesis peremptorily put forward by L.J. Calvet concerning "the tendency to put back supercentral languages to the rank of central languages, which would be the central axis of language globalisation". With specific regard to Spain, he can be reassured: Spanish, under the name of Castilian, is not in any way "in the process of being downgraded […] to the level of a regional language, alongside Catalan or Basque" (see specifically Boyer and Lagarde dir. 2002), contrary to what a certain Spanish nationalist discourse would have one believe, a discourse allied to the detractors (a minority in the community) of the sociolinguist normalisation driven by the autonomous government of Catalonia since 1980 (Boyer, 2003). In the same way that Castilian itself is not under threat in Paraguay from the officialisation in 1992 of Guarani… (Hamel, 2001).

It is known that for Calvet, the appropriate model "to bring order to [...] disorder" is the "gravitational model" (Calvet, 2002, p. 26-27, see also Calvet, 1999, p. 76-81).

It is perfectly evident that "a configuration does not only consist [...] of certify an established fact, but a transitive intervention on the facts, a presentation among possible others, according to a logic that gives these facts a certain form, *a certain meaning*" (ibid, p. 28; my emphasis). But precisely, "from among other possible [presentations]" related to language facts linked to globalisation, the one Calvet chooses gives "a certain meaning" that is problematic for all linguists who wish to fully place themselves in W. Labov's "group A", despite the limitations that this categorisation may present (Labov, 1976, p. 357). In fact, it is justified to voice the strongest reservations concerning the purely *countable* chosen configuration, we might say, when the reductive type of viewpoint that it seems to authorise is observed:

> <<It is comfortable to believe that if languages disappear from use it is because of the selfish domination of the "big" languages, and that if English imposes itself as an international tool this is due to the selfish domination of American power. Comfortable but false. If speakers or speech communities submit to the law of the market, if some abandon their language and no longer pass it on to their children, they do not necessarily do so with a knife to their throats, but rather because they consider that it is in their own, or their children's interests. (Calvet 2002, p. 212).>>

A simple reminder of the numerous factors listed by W.F. Mackey that may explain the "obsolescence [of a language]" suffices to underline the strictly polemic value of Calvet's comments:

> <<a language gradually loses its social functions through the bias of emigration, famine, disease, genocide, decrease in birth rate, exogamy, absence of work, absence of instruction, poverty or prohibition. (Mackey, 2001, p. 105).>>

Also in issue 99-100 of *Terminogramme*, the promoter of the "gravitational model" adapted by Calvet, Abram de Swaan, puts forward a series of reflections on "the worldwide constellation of languages" that illustrate the model in question[2], and show its fundamentally and narrowly economist grounding. To tell the truth, the title does not reflect well the nature of the discourse sustained in the article.

In fact, it analyses the relationships between languages, their respective values, and this analysis to a large extent develops from industrial and commercial logic. This can be judged by a number of enunciations analogical in the extreme:

> <<From an economic viewpoint, one can compare languages to industrial norms and to certain distribution networks (De Swaan, 2001, p. 50).>>

> <<Linguistic loyalty is an extreme case of consumer loyalty (ibid, p. 51).>>

> <<When an individual learns a language, chooses an electronic device [...] or calls upon a network of services, in so doing he/she increases the usefulness of this language, of this norm or of this network for all the other users that already make use of it (ibid, p. 51).>>

> <<The more space any given standard [e.g.: PAL and SECAM for television] takes up on the market, [...] the greater the quantity and variety of programmes and recordings offered by the devices conforming to this standard will be. This in turn increases the value of these devices for their users. In this case there is a clear parallelism with languages: the more speakers there are, the more readers and therefore authors and texts produced there will be (ibid, p. 52).>>

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[2] De Swaan also explained this in: "Introduction" and "The Evolving European Language System: A Theory of Communication Potential and Language Competition", International Political Science Review, vol. 14, n°3, July 1993.

It all boils down to "investment", "expected [...] profits ", "cost", etc. since languages are "hypercollective goods". Such rhetoric falls a long way from Bourdieu's analysis on the *economics of linguistic exchanges* within a given community, according to a *market* hierarchisation-articulation, *dominant markets* (official) and *free markets* (peripheral, dissident), because the ecolinguistic dynamics described by Bourdieu is in the end nothing but a denouncement of a allurement: that the linguistic market is independent of the societal (socioeconomic, political, cultural) context. This conception of the relationship between language and society connects with, in this case with regard to the plurilingual market, the conception of Robert Lafont, who considers that "for the coherent sociolinguist, there are never "language questions", but societal questions that usages envelop just as they derive from them " (Lafont, 1994, p. 134).

De Swaan seems indirectly to pay homage to Bourdieu's lucidity on *sociolinguistic economy* when dealing with *free markets* (such as slang) :

> <<Clearly, there are codes and secret languages that allow for the exclusion of laymen; curiously, *in such a case, the central hypothesis of our theory* (the more speakers a language has, the greater its value) *is not valid*. (De Swaan, 2001, p. 52, note 13; my emphasis).>>

I will not dwell on a number of questionable observations that are obviously based on incomplete theoretical and/or factual information, like this one concerning Creole languages:

> <<There are languages that have appeared relatively recently, such as the Creole languages, that were "created" by a relatively small number of people, without doubt very young children, in a very short time (ibid, p. 53, note 15).>>

I quote another of these extraordinary observations on the interruption of language transmission:

> <<The final abandonment [of the "language in implosion"] only takes place when the following generation stops learning the language of the parents (De Swaan, 2001, p. 59).>>

Clearly, it is not the children who stop learning the language of the parents, but the parents that, most often victims of guilt (Lafont, 1971), of self-deprecation, products of a *diglossic ideology*, (Boyer, 1991 and 2003) no longer pass on the dominated language to their children.
De Swaan is much more inspired in matters concerning "the abandonment of the language of origin" (De Swaan, 2001, p. 63) :

> <<The "turning point" in the progression from diglossia to heteroglossia takes effect when, for speakers of the two languages, indigenous and exogenous, the costs of safeguarding the local language start to outweigh its declining additional Q value [...]. Once desertion begins, parents no longer teach [3] the language to their children and, they themselves no longer make the effort to speak it "correctly".>>

Clearly, and in general terms, the suggestions made by De Swaan leave the sociolinguist perplexed. The voids in the bibliographical references to important European research on the areas dealt with, in particular regarding the diglossic conflict, are surprising. They are manifest in statements such as: "To date, the rivalries and compromises between linguistic groups have not attracted much attention" ... (ibid, p. 65).

These critical remarks and specific reservations in no way detract from the global interest of the *Terminogramme* dossier. The merit of this set of contributions lies in its advancement of the knowledge on language management, in how it raises the issues at stake and in its clear identification of the weaknesses of and the obstacles to a reflection in full development. Thus one can, one must discuss the fact that a "strong version of the Sapir-Whorf theory according to which a language imposes limits on the thought of those that speak it " inspires two main types of current geostrategies: "The race for "market share" by representatives of the main international languages, and the protection of languages on the road to disappearance by the community of linguists and representatives of non-governmental organisations involved with the linguistic rights of minorities " (Kibbee, 2001, p. 69).

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[3] *Do not transmit* or *do not speak* would be more appropriate wordings.

2. The globalisation and the disappearance of languages

The dossier includes numerous references to D. Graddol's report edited by the British Council: *The Future Of English?* (1997), which refers to the possible disappearance of many "local languages" (Kibbee, 2001, p. 72). It is surely the "death" threat posed to these languages by globalisation, and their defence, that leads to the most confrontational positionings, as we have seen. Certainly, "languages are not the same as species", but why "[would] the loss of a language [not be] equivalent to the loss of a species"? (Kibbee, 2001, p. 73).

It is difficult not to subscribe to the viewpoint according to which "as researchers we can and must help those who want to defend their linguistic heritage, but we do not have the right to judge those who choose not to do so" (ibid, p. 78). The whole question turns on knowing the extent to which there is real choice, that is to say, freedom of choice. Experience has shown, particularly in the European area, that it is not appropriate to speak of deliberate choice in this matter, but of a violence (not always symbolic) perpetrated on a dominated *linguistic community* and of a stigmatising representational process that results from it, at the end of which the community in question almost entirely *experiences* rather than *chooses* the disappearance of the normal usages of its historical language, although it should be pointed out that the disappearance only occurs in the long, or indeed very long term.

On this issue, D. Nettle and S. Romaine observe that "many […] examples of transition from one language to another illustrate the difficulty of coercion and deliberate choice" (Nettle and Romaine 2003: 102). Indeed, and this is the crux of the ecolinguistic positioning, "language change results from a change in the national or social environment" (ibid, 106). And for example "on closer examination, one realises that, although the speakers of Celtic languages, faced with the conscious or unconscious choice between the metropolitan language [= English] and the peripheral language [= Cornish, Irish, Welsh], often appeared to favour the metropolitan language, *this was not always a deliberate or easy choice*. The Hawaiians for example […] *made this choice within a framework defined and limited by systematic political and cultural dominations"*: "During [the] long conflicts between peripheral and metropolitan languages, *the peoples of the periphery often had no real choice"* (ibid: 152 and 158; my emphasis).

One of the basic principles of linguistic ecology links up with the very foundation of all ecological concerns: "the preservation of a language in its wider sense involves the conservation of the group that speaks it" (ibid: 192). And this preservation clearly needs "top-down strategies" that aim to integrate "language preservation within the general activist movement in favour of the environment" and to "set in motion linguistic policies at a local, regional and international level that are part of a political and general resource management planning" (ibid: 213). Yet they also need "bottom-up strategies" since "granting too much attention to the official policies can be counterproductive in the absence of other activities at lower levels" (ibid: 191). Thus, "the preservation of a language must first begin in the community itself, arising from voluntary efforts, and be financed bottom-up by community resources" (ibid: 2002). This reminds us of the bilingual association-based schools that follow linguistic immersion methods (for example, the *Calandretas* in the Occitan area) set up by activists from languages under domination.

In conclusion, the ecolinguistic position considers that "it is not possible to assure a political, economic or social development without prioritising linguistic development" (ibid: 185)

3. The linguistic nationalism

This interventionist position is clearly noticeably different from another, also interventionist, position: *linguistic nationalism*.   I now consider in rather more detail this second type of interventionist pole that has motivated a great deal of discussion in recent times. To do so, I refer to a number of discourses, both from the social sciences and others of a more engaged type, all concerning essentially *linguistic nationalism*. The spirit of the times is in fact somewhat reticent towards this specific nationalism. In fact, alarmist statements on the risks of separatism caused by the cultural or ethnic nationalisms that would threaten States otherwise considered solidly *national*[4] have abounded following the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. A distorting prism is at work, ready to demonise all nationalisms, especially if they come from the periphery of a historically established nation-state (see for example Lacoste 1998). Here and there, in the specialised

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[4] See on this matter several issues of the French magazine Hérodote; for example: Geopolitical dangers in France (n° 80/1996), The question of Spain (n° 91/1998), Regional nationalisms in Europe (n° 95/1999)…

literature, there is a tendency to impose a desirable distance from "nationalist ideologies that, over past centuries and until recently, included one or another part of the [European] continent" and from the "mechanism" that enables "nationalist passions to focus on languages" (Crépon 2001: 28 and 33). These may be analyses where confusion seems to be maintained by various positionings that do not necessarily link up with each other: *autonomism*, *nationalism*, *independantism* (Lacoste 1998).

Like all *ideologies*, nationalism is a specific socio-cognitive construction, formed by the association of shared *representations*, with the aim of legitimising performative discourses and generating a number of opinions and collective actions (see Boyer 2003: 9-19). We can thus talk about nationalisms with a racialist dominant, an ethnic dominant or a cultural dominant, a category to which what I call *linguistic nationalism* is clearly related.

The position of E. Hobsbawn, a specialist in this area, on this type of nationalism is interesting precisely in that it reveals the difficulty that some specialists seem to have in dealing calmly (without *a prioris*) and rigorously with a topic that must be considered controversial, since it is situated within the political and military turmoils of the two last centuries. It is equally interesting in that it tends to minimise the (socio)linguistic dimension of the nationalist ideological construction, and therefore to relativise the existence of *linguistic nationalism*.

For example, if it is evident that, for "French theoreticians" (on the Revolution), nationality was "determined by French *citizenship*", it is excessive to state that the same theoreticians "had to obstinately fight against all attempts to make the language spoken a criterion for nationality" (Hobsbawn 1992: 31-32) for, as the same author admits, "there is little doubt that, for most Jacobins, a French person who did not speak French was suspicious" (ibid: 33): very early on in fact, the Revolution made a major political issue for the French nation out of linguistic unification of the national territory in favour of French alone (Schlieben-Lange 1996, Boyer 1991: 52-71, Boyer 2003 :49-57). G. Kremnitz also points out that the French revolutionary nation "very quickly begins to define itself in terms of a culturally unified practice" (Kremnitz 2000: 25; see also Hermet 1996).

4. The linguistic nationalisms in Spain

Likewise, the history of peripheral nationalisms in Spain refutes Hobsbawn's claim that "there is an obvious analogy between the way in which racists insist on the importance of racial purity and the horrors of inter-racial exchange, and the way in which so many forms of linguistic nationalism –if not all of them- insist on the need to cleanse the national language of its foreign elements" (Hobsbawn 1990: 139-140). In fact, while the emergence was observed in 19th century Spain of a racialist type of nationalism in the Basque Country, two other peripheral linguistic (and obviously also cultural) nationalisms, Catalan and Galician, have proved their ability, on the one hand to organise community resistance to the a State programmed linguistic assimilation, most specifically the Francoist state[5], and on the other to integrate societal complexity and diversity within their objectives, first and foremost in their linguistic policies. Moreover, Hobsbawn pays passing homage to Catalanism which "[has] attained much more spectacular success than the Basque movement with the assimilation of immigrants (essentially workers) in the country" (Hobsbawn 1992: 180). Precisely, as regards Basque nationalism, L. Joly has adeptly shown that in the Basque Country "even the nationalism from the beginning of the century, of a more clearly racialist nature, granted the language an important status. Within leftist nationalist theories, Basque takes on the role of national language and there is a widespread belief that learning it, using it and defending it are acts of rebellion against Francoism", although "today, the link between Basque nationalism and language [is] very heterogeneous. Even if all Basque nationalists agree to defend the Basque language, there exists a Basque (and basquophone) nationalism for which the language is the quintessence of "basquitude", and to speak it is, as far as possible, an obligation. In contrast, there exists a nationalism that solely protests with respect to the language […] for which the relation between Basque nation and language works in a single direction: a basquophone is Basque, but it is not absolutely necessary to know Basque to be Basque" (Joly 2004: 87-88).

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[5] For, in contrast to Hobsbawn's statement on the "cases where the dominating nation […] actively attempted to eliminate minor languages and cultures", according to whom "until the end of the 19th century, this was rare outside France" (Hobsbawn 1990: 52), "from 18th C on the Spanish state hurled itself into a 'linguicide' and 'glottophagic' Castilian-centrism" (F. Martin in Boyer and Lagarde ed. 2002: 39)

However, it is not a matter here of turning language into the greatest foundation for *all* nationalisms, Basque in particular which is of a rather complex nature. An honest evaluation of course leads one to consider that "*if specific cases are left out*, there is no reason to think that the language is *anything more than one criterion among others* by which people indicate their membership to a human group" (Hobsbawn 1992: 83; my emphasis). But it is precisely "the specific cases" in question that interest me here, as a sociolinguist.

Thus, what follows will (briefly) deal with this so often disparaged nationalism that could, nevertheless, in these times of "globalisation", aspire to a second youth (in relation to the ecolinguistic concern dealt with above, which is often present in contemporary sociolinguistic discourse), especially when it concerns "Stateless nations ", that is to say, minority *nationalities* that are culturally, socially, economically dynamic, as M. Guibernau indicates:

> <<Democratic nationalisms in stateless nations may to a certain extent be considered as a reaction to an ever-increasing globalisation that transforms the traditional nation-state. Through their capacity to create identity in a world where advanced modernity has filled us with doubt about the rational method, considered infallible from the times of the Enlightenment, stateless nations find a specific place and function. These become manifest in the defence of individual rights by claiming the right to keep and develop their cultures without falling into exclusivism, while demanding acknowledgement and respect, and at the same time offering it to those who are different (Guibernau 2000:103).>>

Spain clearly shows two cases of *linguistic nationalism* (the cases of Basque nationalism and especially that of Spanish nationalism being somewhat removed from the centre as far as what concerns us here, despite certain points of convergence) in which two Romance languages are concerned: one in Catalonia (which can be considered a model of this kind), the another one in Galicia. Although the nationalist political option (represented by the Bloque Nacionalista Galego) in the Autonomous Community of Galicia is a minority player in the Community, it has to date played a majority role in Catalonia: the nationalist coalition Convergència i Unió enjoyed undivided power in the Autonomous Community for over twenty years. Within the leftist coalition that took over following the 2003 autonomy elections, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, the second component in terms of the electoral force it represents, claims to be not only nationalist but also independentist.

In Galicia, nationalism did not have any difficulty in proclaiming the primacy of the Galician language as a feature of its identity: it is the main language for 46% of the Galician people (against 37% for Castilian) and one of the two main languages for 17% (Siguan 1999). R. Máiz notes that, in the seminal work for Galician nationalism, *Sempre en Galiza* by Castelao "it is repeatedly said that Galicia is a nation because a series of objective discriminant features converge there; there are essentially three diacritical features: language, land and culture, of which the first stands out as the key factor" (Máiz 2000: 189; my emphasis).

The main problem encountered by Galician nationalism over the language today, following the implementation of an institutional language policy by the Xunta (the autonomous government), is that of a sociolinguistic antagonism between a tendency known as «reintegrationist» or «Lusista» that advocates the conspicuous integration of Galician into lusophony through the orthographic use of Portuguese, and an «autonomist» or «isolationist» tendency that follows the orthographic norms of the Instituto da Lingua Galega (approved by the Real Academia Galega) and made official by the Direcció Xeral de Política Lingüística of the Xunta (Galician autonomous government), official norms which the reintegrationists or Lusistas therefore consider as over-dependent on Castilian (Alén 2000)[6]. This is in fact a dilemma for the nationalists: either Galician is not a full Romance language, but rather a dialect of Portuguese and nationalism is then deprived of linguistic

individuation, or Galician is a full Romance language (mother/sister of Portuguese) and despite its graphic relationship with Castilian, it fully constitutes a differentiating *national* quality. The debate is far from over.

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[6] A third tendency (called "de mínimos") also exists, which while advocating reintegrationism, accepts (provisionally?) certain orthographic concessions to the autonomist tendency.

Whatever happens to the sociolinguistic debate, and this handicap is in my view redhibitory, «there are few signs of any effective mobilisation amongst the bourgeoisie in favour of Galician that may be analogous to the Catalan movement in favour of Catalan in its day. It should not be forgotten that the cultured bourgeoisie was a decisive factor in the "battle for Catalan" (Coseriu 1987: 135).

5. The ideological construction of a linguistic nationalism in Catalonia

In fact, it is surely in Catalonia that the ideological construction of a linguistic nationalism has gone further from a theoretical and sociological standpoint (the bibliography in this field is considerable and is increasing daily through new books, magazines, seminaries, symposia, round tables, debates, dossiers and press articles). Although massive internal immigration (of Spanish speaking origins) modified the demolinguistic equilibrium during the post-war period, while lower than those of Galicia, the figures on the use of Catalan as the main language or one of two main languages remain high: 41% and 16% respectively (Siguan 1999).

Nationalist proclamations of primacy of the *Catalan language* over the other constituent elements in the definition of the *Catalan nation* are abundant in the vast nationalist corpus. One of the founding texts of Catalan nationalism at the end of the 19th century, the well-known *Bases de Manresa* (1892-1893), clearly proves that (in its 3rd Base): "The Catalan language will be the only language of an official nature in Catalonia, and in this region's relations with the central Power" *(Assambleas catalanistes (primera), Manresa,* Barcelona 1893, in *Bases de Manresa* 1992: 229). The language is well defined amongst Catalan nationalists as the "central element to represent the collective identity" that fills a "symbolic and participative function" (Tejerina Montaña 1992: 52-72).

The 20th century has therefore seen the development of a linguistic nationalism "model" which has continued to consolidate itself in the two last decades through a nationalist political power at the head of the autonomic institutions. It may also be said that the language has been the subject of a metonymisation/symbolisation process within the nationalist discourse from a simple *representation* within a political ideology to the central, driving, representational element of the ideology in question.

One of the political actors behind the flourishing of Catalan linguistic nationalism is without question Jordi Pujol. For more than twenty years he presided over the Generalitat de Catalunya (the autonomous government) with a flair for appearing as the champion inflexible defender of the Catalan language while contributing to the establishment of an important language policy machine in autonomous Catalonia (Boyer and Lagarde dir. 2002: 96), through a legislation that spread to the other Communities in Spain with their "own language", and while maintaining a public discourse with a consensual vocation but inspired by an indisputable nationalist positioning.

In one of his more solemn interventions on the matter, a lecture given on 22 March 1995 at the Palau de Congressos de Montjuïc in Barcelona entitled «Què representa la llengua a Catalunya?» (What does the language mean in Catalonia?, Pujol 1996), the then President of the Generalitat delivered a detailed, emphatic explanation of the Catalan "model" of linguistic nationalism. To summarise my reflections, from this long exemplary speech I only highlight the articulation among the various constituent elements of the identitary representation of the Catalan language that Pujol proposed to/imposed on his audience, according to an argumentative construction oriented towards the necessary defence of Catalan, considered to be in a precarious position:

- The Catalan language is the foundation of the Catalan nation.[7]
- The Catalan language is the only historical, patrimonial language of Catalonia
- This language was the victim of a merciless *persecution* that aimed to destroy it. The Spanish state (specifically the Francoist state) is responsible for this.
- Fortunately, Catalans showed their fidelity (from *loyalty*) to their language and withstood this destructive intention

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[7] Nevertheless, the Catalan nation has, from the political standpoint, a variable geometry: limited to the "Principality" in the discourse with a consensual vocation (that of Jordi Pujol, for example), stretching out to the "Catalan Countries" for the campaigning left and extreme left, with (socio)linguists at the forefront (see for example *El nacionalisme català a la fi del segle XX*, Barcelona, Edicions de la Magrana/Edicions 62, 1989).

- Nevertheless, the persecution left serious repercussions: *the Catalan language is in a state of weakness*.
- This weakness, due to the initiative of persecution, legitimises collective action in its favour: both an institutional *linguistic policy* and also *Catalanist political activism*.

This is obviously the establishment of a model of *linguistic nationalism* that presents a hard core of *representations* (exclusivity, a historical-patrimonial nature, the aggression/oppression of which the language is/was a victim, the community loyalty with regard to it, which was exemplary in the past and must extend itself into a linguistic political activism) whose relevance would probably be discovered in a variety of places.

In this way, it is no surprise that Catalonia has become, since the beginning of the 80s, the driving force behind sociolinguistic reconquests for the languages of Spain other than Castilian (Galician, Basque, …), and a well acknowledged example in glottopolitical issues on an international level: in his comparison of three of the contemporary initiatives to revert linguistic substitution, J. A. Fishman (1993), while considering that the objective of full normalisation will take longer to achieve than for Hebrew in Israel or for French in Quebec, greets the restoration in Catalonia of Catalan as a fully active language of communication in a modern society, both on a functional and a symbolic level, a restoration that is moreover consensual (Fishman, 1993). This recognition is shared among the scientific community of sociolinguists that measure the entire route followed in the Principat over two decades of linguistic normalisation. (Boyer and Lagarde dir. 2002)[8]

In fact, the "battle for the language" (Pujadas, 1988), a clearly collective battle where political Catalanism was a powerful driving element, became progressively institutionalised under the direction of the Generalitat, and especially by the action of the Direcció General (today Secretaria) of Política Lingüística and of other structures for glottopolitical management (such as the Consorci per a la Normalització Lingüística).

After a sociolinguistic recovery period, the question was to now turn Catalan into the *priority language* of Catalonia. Thus the new linguistic law of 1998, called the law of *linguistic policy*, clearly specifies the respective statuses of the two official languages in Catalonia, according to the two accepted principles on the matter (Mackey, 1976): the *principle of territoriality*, that establishes Catalan as the "own language" of the Autonomous Community of Catalonia; the *personality principle* that protects the user-citizen is acknowledged through the coofficiality of Castilian and Catalan.

This law, for those responsible for language policy, *strengthens the national identity* and *consolidates the Catalan linguistic model*. Nevertheless, the circumstances in which this law was approved were not as favourable as those of the preceding 1983 linguistic law, and nationalist voluntarism (a mixture of all nationalist tendencies) was certainly a decisive element in its adoption.

The indisputable success of a vigorous linguistic normalisation policy that the 1998 Law set out to broaden, is unquestionably due to the very real aspirations of the Catalanophone community (a community that is without doubt majorly regarded as national) on the matter, without neglecting the effectiveness of the administrative and technical *normalisation* machine. A machine and legal regulations that, by their very effectiveness, institutionalise, some say (one could even say "become part of the administration"), the normalisation initiative, with the risk of partially anaesthetising the nationalist fibre of civil society; on the other hand, it can be seen that the demonstrations in support of linguistic normalisation are often only reactions to hostile manifestations to this normalisation, perceived as anti-Catalanist. That is perhaps one of the limits of an essentially *official* linguistic policy, even when it does try to encourage "bottom-up strategies".

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[8] Previous to the language policy established with the vote on the Statute of Autonomy in 1979, the fight of the peripheral nationalisms in Spain (Catalan initially) to gain the specificity of "nationalities" (Catalonia, Galicia, The Basque Country) as opposed to the "regions" registered in the 1978 Constitution (article 2) (Boyer 1991) should not be forgotten.

6. Conclusions

Nowadays it is not very politically correct, I agree, not to proclaim one's distances from nationalism, linguistic nationalism among others. Of course, the bloody events of the war in Yugoslavia and the childish tensions surrounding the *language* of the new States originating from it (specifically its name) (see for example Djordjevic 2002) have added fuel to the fire of the detractors of linguistic nationalism. In France, they are often the defendants of an uncompromising French nation-state, of which the absolute *unilingualism* is well-known, barely tempered in recent times by essentially international constraints. In Spain, they are the defendants of a whole-Spanish from another era. Of course, one can accuse the Catalan nationalists in power until 2003 of instrumentalising Catalonia's linguistic identity in some respects, in the exercise of autonomous power and in front of the Spanish State. But the sociolinguist's mission is neither to celebrate nor to demonise one or another (glotto)political option. We can and perhaps must serenely observe which political options/decisions (democratically) tend towards the protection of multilingualism, towards the defence of "small languages", "stateless languages" , "minority" or "regional" languages. Now, it must be noted that in the face of threats from "globalisation" on the matter, whether J.L. Calvet likes it or not (Calvet 2002, Boyer 2002), some political options are more pertinent than others in different places. Certain democratic, integrating *linguistic nationalisms*, such as the one that has enabled Catalan to once again become a language of full societal use in Catalonia and has enabled the linguistic question to become the subject of a sometimes tense but promising wide debate in Spain, deserve the sociolinguist's full attention.

Miquel Siguan, as a rigorous observer of the linguistic situation in Spain and in Europe, points exactly to the challenge to which a language such as Catalan is and will be confronted, while clearly signalling citizens' responsibility in the matter in their political choices: "In the foreseeable future, Catalan will continue to exist among a mixture of languages, some of which are very strong at an international level. It will have to fight for its continuity. And what will decide the future of the language will be the decision of the inhabitants of the Catalan lands to go on speaking their language, and the political options available to them when it comes to electing leaders who will defend it" (Siguan 2002 : 55)

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