

LINGUISTIC POLICY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA¹

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In this case study we present some aspects of the linguistic situation in Catalonia with special focus on its incidence at the University of Barcelona and the way our institution is managing it.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. *The Catalan Language: its Origins*

Culture is the chief identifying element of all peoples. This is especially significant in the case of the Catalan people. Of particular importance within cultural patterns is the role of language, perhaps the most readily identifiable element of all.

Catalan, a Romance tongue, is a descendant of Latin, like French, Spanish (or Castilian), Italian, Galaico-Portuguese, Occitan, Romanian, Romansh. Its origins may be traced back to a period of formation between the VII and the VIII centuries. Writings from the IX, X and XI centuries show Catalan words and even entire Catalan sentences in texts in Latin. In the XII century it appears as a consolidated written language, and many documents entirely written in Catalan date from this period. The first known literary wri-

1. Case study presented at the Council of Europe's Higher Education and Research Committee's 1995 Forum Role Conference, *Higher Education for Tolerance in Europe*, held in Ljubljana, 18-20 October 1995.

tings are from the end of the twelfth century. The Majorcan medieval philosopher Ramon Llull (1235-1316), author of the *Ars Magna*, wrote more than thirty books in Catalan. The code of maritime law *Consolat del Mar*, which lay down the law for commerce in the Mediterranean sea, was written by Catalans in the XIII century, and there exists a Catalan version from the XIV century.

1.2. *Territory and Population*

The geographic area which is known as the Catalan-speaking territories constitutes essentially a strip on the Mediterranean coast encompassing Catalonia (with approximately 6 million inhabitants), Valencia (with almost 4 million) and the Balearic Islands (3/4 of a million) in Spain, the small independent state of Andorra (65,000) in the Pyrenees, and a part in southern France (known for historical reasons as North Catalonia, with 3/8 of a million inhabitants). This amounts to a total population of around 11 million people. Nevertheless, the number of Catalan speakers is actually lower, as we will shortly see in the figures below.

1.3. *Recent Centuries*

The year 1714 marks a turning point in Catalan politics and had deep and pervading influences as far as the language was concerned. From the XV century on Catalonia shared the Spanish Crown with Castile, but retained its own institutions (among them one of the oldest parliaments in Europe) and laws. A dynastic conflict resulted in the defeat of Catalonia by the Castilian army in 1714. The victorious king, Spain's first Bourbon monarch, imposed rigid centralism, and attempted to annihilate Catalonia's personality by issuing the extremely harsh *Decreto de Nueva Planta* (1716), which meant the end of Catalan self-rule, the abolition of the historic institutions and the beginning of a policy of imposition of the Spanish language in the new administration.

As a punishment to the city, the University of Barcelona — founded in 1450 — was closed and moved to the town of Cervera. The University did not return to Barcelona until 1837.

The Catalan language lost its legal status in 1714 and the following period of the XVIII, XIX and XX centuries —until 1975— marked a time of hardship for the Catalan language and culture. The language only acquired

a certain level of officialdom during the Napoleonic occupation (1810-1814) and later full officialdom during the second Spanish Republic (1931-1939) which ended with the Civil War. It is not an exaggeration to say that for centuries the Catalan language endured a persecution —with phases of different intensity— from a Spanish State intent on its annihilation.

Fortunately, all this belongs to the past, of course, and in a sense it is correct to say that the past must be buried. But not before we extract the lessons from it. It is by learning from history that we will avoid making the same mistakes again.

Between 1716 and 1975 (the end of Franco's dictatorship), there are many instances of new official rulings aiming to ban Catalan from the courts, from the schools (and naturally from the University), and even from the instruction of Christian doctrine by the Church. In the area of education, the years 1768 (*Carlos III: Real Cédula de Aranjuez*), 1857 (*Ley Moyano*), 1902 (*Romanones: Real Orden*), stand out for the repressive measures that they produced, not to mention the laws and decrees passed by the twentieth-century dictatorships.

1.4. *The Renaixença (The Renaissance)*

The XIX century witnessed an industrial development in Catalonia which was far ahead of most of the rest of Spain. This was the background for a social and cultural phenomenon, known as the *Renaixença* (the Renaissance). It helped to reverse the trend of decadence of the Catalan language, and a literary movement flourished — as happened in other European countries. At the end of the century, the movement had also acquired a nationalist dimension, advocating the restoration of the rights of the Catalan people.

This resurgence of literary Catalan made it necessary for fixed norms to be established; in 1913, the *orthographical norms* of the linguist Pompeu Fabra were published and adopted almost immediately. This put an end to the anarchy that dominated the writing norms of Catalan, and served as the basis for the unification and standardization of literary language.

1.5. *Immigration*

The fact that not all the population of Catalonia itself speak Catalan is due to the huge migratory movements of population from other parts of

Spain that have arrived in Catalonia in this century. This sociological fact should be added to the phenomena of political oppression and the official imposition of Spanish. Statistics tell us that 40% of the present adult population in Catalonia were not born in Catalonia —33.1% if we include children (and 31.6 % if immigration from other Catalan-speaking territories is not taken into account). I would draw your attention to the size of these figures, and the enormous impact that these movements of population have had on the society of Catalonia, a nation without political rights of any kind when these migratory movements took place. Catalonia was unable to offer the immigrants the socio-economic, urbanistic, educational and cultural structures that would allow them a smooth and natural incorporation into Catalan society from their own cultures. The two main waves of immigration took place in the twenties and the sixties, both times of dictatorship —the first headed by Primo de Rivera, and the second by Franco, who were particularly ruthless in their repression of the rights of the Catalan people. In these situations it was very difficult to welcome and to introduce the newcomers to a knowledge of Catalan culture— especially the language —and to invite them to share, with the rest of the population, the cultural legacy that had developed for centuries in the Catalan-speaking territories.

Nonetheless, the process of integration never stopped and political Catalanism always expressed —even in clandestinity— its willingness to integrate people who had decided to settle in Catalonia, without renouncing their own roots and culture.

1.6. *Catalan Identity*

A typical trait of Catalan identity is its openness. Heredity is, of course, a factor, as it is everywhere, but there is also a large component of will, of choice, as regards being Catalan. As proof of this fact, let me mention the social success of the definition introduced in the 60's by the mainstream Catalan movements: *A Catalan is any person that lives and works in Catalonia*. No ethnic barriers, no pre-requisites —nothing but the will to be Catalan. «Catalan» is not a closed identity for those that were born and bred in Catalonia but an identity open to all the people living there.

Since the language is the most visible token of Catalan identity, it is essential, for this integration to succeed, that Catalan be the common language of all the population in Catalonia, without detriment to the other

languages —above all, of course, Spanish— that the population know and use. This has a legal aspect, with which we will deal shortly, and a social one as well. As regards the social aspect I would like to note two points:

a) One characteristic of the Catalan language is of great help to those wishing to learn it: its similarity to the other Romance languages. In a matter of months, the average Spanish-speaking person is able to understand Catalan and can try to use it, without the need of formal classes or instruction, just by social interaction.

b) On a more philosophical level, and simplifying somewhat the concept of identity, identification by language is much more ideologically neutral than other common traits of identification. Religion, for instance, is a much more complicated subject, because it provides rules of personal and social behaviour and also carries a concept of truth, in opposition to error, which has often led to intolerance.

Every group differentiation (language, religion, skin colour, etc.) is open to interpretation by certain groups as a sign of superiority over other groups. This can be extremely dangerous —as we know from history— and a conscious and continuous effort must be made to promote the value of tolerance. Education in the spirit of tolerance and respect for differences is essential for harmonious coexistence. The solution to the phenomenon of intolerance is not an impoverishing homogeneity, but a positive recognition of the enriching diversity.

In the case of Catalan there can be little chauvinism in a language which, though much loved by those who use it, has a relatively modest number of speakers. Regrettably, chauvinism in fact often comes from the side of the powerful languages, in which now and then rather patronizing feelings and attitudes with respect to other less extended languages are voiced.

1.7. *The Legal Status of Languages in Catalonia*

The present Spanish Constitution was approved by referendum in 1978 and the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia in 1979. Valencia and the Balearic Islands also obtained their Statutes immediately afterwards. Catalan and Spanish (Castilian) have since then been official languages in Catalonia, Valencia (where Catalan is also known as Valencian) and the Balearic Islands. It is worth mentioning the distinction made by the Statute of Catalonia between the two official languages, due to the fact that

only Catalan is endowed with the character of being — quite logically indeed, as its name indicates — the language which is Catalonia's own. This reference that so strongly connects language and territory is fundamental to the understanding of the role of Catalan as the national language of Catalonia.

1.8. *The Recent Years*

With the advent of democracy at the end of the seventies, Catalan society and its new government had to take on the process of rebuilding after the cultural disaster that Franco's regime had brought to Catalonia. Most of the young and adult population were more or less illiterate in their own language. And although there was a widespread social awareness of the need to restore Catalan to its rightful place, and a tradition of activism coming from the years of repression, there was also a profound inertia, habits of behaviour, and attitudes, generated during the long period of repression, which had to be overcome. And there was no quick way of resolving this situation; today, eighteen years after the devolution of Catalan self-government, we are still witness to the consequences of a cultural ordeal that lasted for 260 years. But complaining is not a solution either, and a few years later, in 1983, the Catalan Parliament unanimously approved the *Law of Linguistic Normalization*, today in effect, which gave an official impulse to the recovery of the Catalan language. One of the first measures was, of course, to promote the expansion of the knowledge of Catalan.

1.9. *The Present*

Here we give the figures from the population census of 1991. The percentages show the population in terms of the four basic skills: understanding, speaking, reading and writing.²

2. The data from North Catalonia in France, where Catalan has no officiality whatsoever, are from *Média Pluriel Méditerranée: Catalan. Pratiques et représentations dans les Pyrénées Orientales*. July 1993. The data from Andorra are from the 1994 census (no linguistic census of Andorra is as yet available).

BASIC SKILLS

Territory	population	understand	speak	read	write
Catalonia	6,059,494	93.8%	68.3	67.6	39.9
Valencia	3,831,221	82.1	50.6	37.7	15.1
Balearic Islands	709,146	88.8	66.7	55.0	25.9
Total	10,599,861	89.3	61.8	50.6	30.1
North Catalonia (F.)	363,793	63.2
Andorra	65,487

(1)

Comparison with the data of the 1986 census shows steady progress in all the fields. These are the figures in the case of Catalonia:

CATALONIA

Skill	1986	1991
Understand	90.3%	93.8
Speak	64.0	68.3
Read	60.5	67.6
Write	31.5	39.9

(2)

A poll in 1993 by the official Spanish Centre for Sociological Research gives the following results for the adult population (18 years or older)

CATALONIA (1993)

Do not understand Catalan	4%
Understand it but do not speak it	22
Speak it but it is not her/his principal tongue	23
Speak it and it is her/his principal tongue	50
Use catalan and Spanish without distinction	1

(3)

As all these figures indicate, progress is being made in the broadening of knowledge of Catalan. The process is slow, and the role of education of the young generations, providing them with a standard academic background in Catalan, is a central aspect which breaks entirely with the past. According to the legal framework, the official policy of the Catalan government is that all students must reach full competence in both Catalan and Spanish at the end of their schooling period.

Today, even though there are indicators that allow for optimism, we must also recognize that we have not yet reached the point where we can say that our language and culture are not at risk in the foreseeable future. The existence of these basic skills of understanding, speaking, reading and writing is only the necessary condition for a language to be alive. The real test is the sufficient condition, the use of the language. According to a recent poll³ commissioned by the Catalan Institute of Sociolinguistics, on a scale from 1 to 9, the use of Catalan scores 4.87, a little below the mid-point of the scale and well below what would be expected of the common language of an integrated society.

Another interesting result of this poll is a measure of attitudes towards the normalization of Catalan. Normalization is considered necessary by a factor of 20 to 1 among citizens whose usual language is Catalan, and by a factor of 4 to 1 among citizens whose usual language is Spanish.

To complement this brief introduction to the present situation of Catalan, let us consider some cultural indicators:

— Two public television stations with coverage in Catalonia (regular satellite emissions will start next year). Many other local stations. (There are two other public Spanish stations (with some programmes in Catalan) and three private stations, in Spanish.)

— Several radio stations, public and private.

— Production of books: 1993, 5,905 titles.

— Several newspapers and magazines (A low rate though: 11 % of the total).

— Some popular computer programs have Catalan versions, Windows, AmiPro, WordPerfect, MS Word, IBM's AIX, etc. Windows 95 is scheduled to appear in Catalan next November.

3. INUSCAT 1994. J. M. Aragay and J. Sabaté. Universitat de Barcelona, Fundació Bosch i Gimpera.

2. CATALAN AND THE UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA

The UB was one of the first institutions where the Catalan language was declared official after the end of Franco's regime. This happened before the approval of the Spanish Constitution and is an example of the special sensitivity of the university community towards the most identifiable cultural expression of Catalonia.

Efforts to extend and improve the knowledge of Catalan of members of the university community started immediately. Due to the political circumstances, the majority of teachers and students, although most were Catalan-speakers, had no academic background in the language. Today, in 1995, thanks to the efforts of primary and secondary schools, we can say with satisfaction that our students are the first generation in our history to enter the university with standard academic skills in Catalan.

Shortly after the Spanish Law of University Autonomy, the UB prepared its Statute which was approved in 1985. In it, Catalan is simply defined as the official language of the university, with Catalan and Spanish together considered the working languages of university life. The cornerstone of the Statute in this respect is the freedom of use of either language by the individual members of the university community, and the prevalence of Catalan in the official and institutional uses. This means in particular that teachers and students have the right to use the language of their choice in ordinary academic activities. It also means that, in order for this provision to be universally applicable, everybody in the university community must know both languages. As we explain later, the university has provided the means for this goal to be achieved, in conjunction with the aid of the Catalan government.

A picture of the present situation is given by the following figures for undergraduate studies in the 1992-93 academic year. Student numbers total 68,404 and the percentages shown correspond to the teaching given in Catalan.

DIVISION I. HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (15,061 STUDENTS)

School	students	%
Fine Arts	2,125	59.4
Philosophy	1,253	38.1
Philology	5,510	67.9
Geografy and History	6,173	74.0

DIVISION II. LEGAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (29,105 STUDENTS)

School	students	%
Law	11,251	35.3
Economics	9,804	29.3
Busines Science	8,050	28.2

DIVISION III. EXPERIMENTAL AND MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES (8,161 STUDENTS)

School	students	%
Biology	3,023	82.2
Physics	1,432	71.0
Geology	425	86.1
Mathematics	950	80.3
Chemistry	2,331	71.9

DIVISION IV. HEALTH SCIENCES (11,098 STUDENTS)

School	students	%
Farmacy	3,639	67.5
Nursing and chiropody	1,048	56.5
Medicine	1,815	61.0
Dentistry	493	57.6
Psychology	4,103	39.4

DIVISION V. EDUCATION SCIENCES (4,979 STUDENTS)

School	students	%
Pedagogy	2,120	60.4
Theacher Training	2.859	56.2

(4)

The total figure for teaching given in Catalan is 61.1%.

2.1. *The Linguistic Policy Commission*

Another provision of the Statute was the creation of *the Linguistic Policy Commission*, with the specific assignment to promote the normalization of the Catalan language in the academic and administrative fields. The Commission is made up by representatives of the academic staff, students and administrative staff, and normally meets twice a year. This Commission discusses, analyzes, proposes and supervises measures to pursue the normalization process.

2.2. *Linguistic Training*

In the first stages of this process, attention was mainly devoted to the linguistic training offered to the members of the university community and the normalization of all the administrative activity and documentation.

The first language courses at the UB were organized in 1978. Today, seventeen years later, the university offers a wide range of courses at all levels, and also courses in terminology and other specialist areas. University students who successfully complete these courses are awarded credits which serve towards the obtention of degrees.

These new specialist courses are as follows:

- Scientific language for health sciences.
- Scientific language for experimental and mathematical sciences.
- Scientific language for business and economic sciences.
- Terminology in legal language.
- Writing skills.
- Legal writing skills.

2.3. *Data and Attitudes*

Data concerning the academic staff, the administrative staff and the students, has been compiled and analyzed in order to quantitatively assess the situation and needs of the university community.

Here are some data from these studies:⁴

4. Sources: *Actituds lingüístiques; coneixements i ús de la llengua catalana de l'alumnat de la UB, 1991-92*. Servei de Llengua Catalana, UB 1993. *Actituds lingüístiques, coneixements i ús de la llengua catalana del professorat de la UB, 1991-92*. Servei de Llengua Catalana, UB 1993.

FIRST LANGUAGE⁵ OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

First Language	teachers	students
Catalan	53.8 %	41.7
Spanish	38.5	45.2
Both	4.7	11.7
Another	3.0	1.3

(5)

And this is the opinion of the students vis-à-vis the presence of Catalan at the UB:

DIVISION I. HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

School	Insufficient	Sufficient	Excessive
Fine Arts	42.1 %	52.7	5.1
Philosophy	42.0	50.9	7.1
Philology	32.8	60.5	6.7
Geography and History	31.6	58.2	10.1

DIVISION II. LEGAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

School	Insufficient	Sufficient	Excessive
Law	55.4	38.8	5.9
Economics	51.1	42.0	6.9
Business Science	45.3	49.0	5.7

DIVISION III. EXPERIMENTAL AND MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

School	Insufficient	Sufficient	Excessive
Biology	21.9	70.6	7.4
Physics	27.7	65.2	7.1
Geology	25.7	65.8	8.6
Mathematics	19.1	70.6	10.3
Chemistry	33.8	59.5	6.7

5. i.e. the language in which subjects learnt to speak.

DIVISION IV. HEALTH SCIENCES

School	Insufficient	Sufficient	Excessive
Pharmacy	20.1	68.6	11.3
Nursing	46.4	50.0	3.6
Medicine	43.2	47.1	9.7
Dentistry	47.4	46.9	5.7
Psychology	40.9	55.5	3.6
Chiropody	60.8	37.3	2.0

DIVISION V. EDUCATION SCIENCES

School	Insufficient	Sufficient	Excessive
Pedagogy	44.8	49.7	5.5
Teacher Training	30.6	60.7	8.7

(6)

The correlation of this table with table (4) is remarkable. The greater the presence of Catalan in teaching, the more positive is the opinion of the students, and vice-versa. Here are the total figures of the previous table divided according to the first language of the students.

STUDENTS' OPINION ON THE NUMBER OF CLASSES TAUGHT IN CATALAN

First Language	Insufficient	Sufficient	Excessive
Catalan	59.0 %	39.9	1.2
Spanish	18.7	68.1	13.2
Both	35.5	61.5	3.0
Another	20.5	53.4	26.0

(7)

2.4 . *The Catalan Language Service*

The Catalan Language Service was created in 1988 to provide technical support to the linguistic normalization throughout its different areas:

research, teaching, administration and services. It offers the university community the following services:

a) Linguistic advice:

- *Correcting* administrative, scientific and technical texts related to teaching and research.
- *Translating* administrative, scientific and technical texts related to teaching and research.
- *Clarifying linguistic enquiries* on aspects of grammar and form and on administrative terminology and phraseology.
- *Advising on producing administrative documents*, concerning all aspects related to writing and design.

These services are available by phone, by fax or on computer network.

b) Terminology:

- *Solving precise terminological demands* on technical and scientific lexis by phone or correspondence.
- *Advising on producing vocabularies* for teaching and research; linguistic and methodological supervision.

c) Documentation:

- *Precise bibliographical research and documentary advice* on applied linguistics.
- *Producing and disseminating linguistic and documentary material* (vocabularies for administration staff and for teaching. The Linguistic and Administrative glossaries and guidelines. Sociolinguistic data).

d) Linguistic Training:

- *General courses in the Catalan language:*
 - For non-native speakers.
 - For native speakers.

- *Specific courses:*
 - For university students: oral comprehension, written language, phonetic correctness, writing techniques, legal terminology.
 - For administration and service staff: administrative language, and language related to dealing with the public.
 - For teaching staff: scientific language, specific courses for teaching purposes.
- *Self-access centre on language learning:*
This service contains different kinds of resources and materials specially prepared for the self-study of both oral and written language. The service offers the university community three locations on campus.

e) Sociolinguistics:

- *Information* on the linguistic rights of the university community.
- *Collecting* and disseminating sociolinguistic data.
- *Coordination* and technical support for the Linguistic Enhancement Network.

2.5. *The Linguistic Enhancement Network*

In order to dynamize and coordinate the actions aimed at stimulating the use of Catalan in all areas of the UB, the Commission of Linguistic Policy approved a Plan of Linguistic Normalization in 1990. As part of the plan the Linguistic Enhancement Network was created around 3 years ago. This is a structure—a network—that links the Commissions of Linguistic Normalization at each centre (or school) and has the technical support of the Catalan Language Service. These commissions, comprised by members of all sectors of the UB, are presided by the dean of the school—or the person whom he/she delegates. Each commission takes responsibility for the tasks of the linguistic normalization at the centre. The Commission identifies and evaluates the specific needs of the centre, disseminates the relevant information and the normalization resources, and plans the actions to be taken, under the supervision of the Commission of Linguistic Policy of the UB. Tasks that are presently underway are:

- Coordination with the Catalan Language Service for the compilation of sociolinguistic information.

- Presentation of proposals for the translation into Catalan of university manuals and books.
- The monitoring of other materials used in teaching and the proposals of translations to Catalan — when appropriate.
- Diffusion through the Centres of the materials of linguistic support produced by the Catalan Language Service.
- Preparation of basic vocabularies of the various study areas, with the technical assistance of the Catalan Language Service.
- Coordination with the Catalan Language Service for the programming of specific courses of Catalan at the centre.
- Organization of other activities, conferences, forums, etc.

3. THE FUTURE, AND THE LESSONS

As far as university life is concerned, I should mention a number of basic principles which have underscored the UB's linguistic policy:

- To *facilitate the process*, by providing the instruments (both political and technical) to encourage the participation of all the sectors of the university community.
- To achieve maximum *consensus* in the decision-making process.
- To state clearly and to promote the *linguistic rights* of the members of the university community, as derived from the legal status of languages in Catalonia.
- To act in *coordination* with the other universities in the Catalan-speaking territories.
- To keep up with developments in *Catalan society* at all times.

These principles have been a major help in preventing or solving potential conflicts. As is clear from the figures above, it is not the case that the university community is homogeneous and aligns with a single opinion; but the great majority of members of the university community support the process of linguistic normalization and further progress is expected in the next coming years. This progress is by no means incompatible with the reality of our universities as multilingual institutions. Indeed, interaction with a worldwide scientific community is an essential component of university life, and the international participation of the UB has increased markedly in recent years.

From a more general perspective, the challenges facing the Catalan language in the future are many, some of which are common to all languages of similar demographic extension, and some not.

- These common challenges include the fact that all small languages must face situations never encountered in the past, and many questions still remain open. Catching up with new technological changes —with profound influence on the information revolution— will not always be easy for a small language —nor will it be cheap. The increasing number of citizens proficient in a number of languages and the growing presence of these languages in the life of the community (in the cultural sphere, in books, multimedia, mass media, entertainment industry, etc.) may pave the way for radical changes in the future. The mobility of population, as yet small-scale between European States, but expected to rise continuously, will put more pressure on these small languages. A conflict between linguistic diversity on the one side and the homogeneizing trends dictated by practical and economical purposes on the other is likely to develop, if indeed it has not already emerged. The cultural heritage of mankind is at stake, and it is not clear to what extent the small languages will succeed in retaining stable communication spaces in their own societies.
- Besides these «general» challenges, Catalan in Spain is facing the fact that our society also uses another language: Castilian (or Spanish), one of the most important languages in the world and with an objective superiority in terms of its quantitative cultural production. As I have said, the normalization of our language has not yet reached the point at which we can look at the future with confidence. The present legal status may prove insufficient with regard to this end, and perhaps clearer legal statements in favour of the prevalence of Catalan in its own territory will be necessary. A related issue is that of the integration of immigrants into Catalan society. This is a matter of time, and may take more than one generation, but the difficulties for Catalan here cannot be ignored, because of the overwhelming presence of Spanish in the mass media (for instance) in our society. Nevertheless, there are reasons for cautious optimism too: knowledge of Catalan is growing and our young citizens are learning it at school, something that was not the case before.

- Finally, there is a political question which has a direct relation with linguistic issues. A concept of centralist and unitarist Spain, with uniform structures of the State, and with aspirations to cultural homogeneity, prevailed for centuries until the end of Franco's era. This is the model of Spain associated with the Inquisition, intolerance and also anti-Europeanism.

To the mainstream Catalan political organizations, the model of modern Spain is a very different one: a plurilinguistic, pluricultural and plurinational Spain. Important steps towards this model have undoubtedly been taken in the present democracy. But sometimes there are small clouds on the horizon, clouds of intolerance and nostalgia for a past of domination, clouds that remind us of a past that we would like to see buried forever. The pendulum of history seems to bring new waves of fanaticism and intolerance, not only in Spain, not only in Europe. That is why it is so important that this Forum Role Conference should succeed in its goals.

Strictly on the linguistic side, we Catalans have had, for more than two centuries, the Spanish State in front of us—not behind us, not supporting us. But now things are starting to change and indeed our efforts are already meeting some success. The present generation of university students is the first in history which has learnt Catalan in a normal fashion in school. The era of antidemocratic imposition is over, and it must never return. We must bury the past and continue, as has been the case in the recent years, to cultivate dialogue, mutual respect and tolerance, as the most positive contribution to the building of the Europe of the XXI century. The task is in our hands.