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Double gateway to the host society? Knowledge and perceptions of Japanese people living in Catalonia regarding language

Abstract

This study explores the degree of language knowledge of Japanese living in Catalonia and their perceptions of the two particular languages used in this multilingual/bilingual society. The data on language proficiency was obtained via a questionnaire survey which was evaluated by the subjects themselves and analysed by means of correspondence analysis. A significant correlation between the degree of knowledge of Castilian and that of Catalan was found, suggesting that Castilian is the first language that almost all subjects learnt upon their arrival in Catalonia or prior to arriving. Catalan, on the other hand, was only learnt by a particular group of subjects who had achieved a certain level in Castilian. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were conducted to determine how the subjects perceive Catalan and Castilian. Commonly, they were perceived in a dichotomous way, with Castilian being a wider-used language and Catalan being a language of limited use not meant for outsiders. Castilian is learnt rather unconditionally, probably because it is the Spanish state's language, which mirrors the traditional language ideology of Japan—one nation, one language. The majority of the subjects had not learnt Catalan for various reasons such as priority given to Castilian and behaviour of the local population.

Introduction

One of the major features of immigrant integration policies in Europe is the high priority given to the knowledge of the host society's language and culture (Triandafyllidou et al. 2011, 200).

Integration is 'a culmination of everyday interactions between and among immigrant newcomers and host communities' (Jiménez 2011, 14), and language is considered a key element for the successful integration (Beacco 2008; De Vroome et al. 2014; Gsir 2014; Krumm and Plutzer 2008). Knowledge of the host language not only impacts social interaction but also spills over into other aspects of social adaptation,

such as confidence in accessing government and other formal and informal services and labour force participation (Lu et al. 2015). Hence, the inability to communicate in the host country's language can make daily life much more difficult and can hinder social, political and economic integration (Collin and Karsenti 2012, 243).

There are many societies where certain languages are used mostly or only in part of a territory by fewer speakers and/or have less prestige or economic utility than other(s) (Woehrling 2008, 17). These less prestigious languages hold less value for immigrants, given their preference to integrate into the society using the nationally dominant language rather than the local language (Kymlicka 2006; Woehrling 2008). This phenomenon clearly occurs in Catalonia; migrants are urged to learn the language that has more instrumental value in their daily lives (Alarcón and Garzón 2011, 147), whilst the Catalan language does not have a status at the national level or even at a state level where the language is the official language other than in Andorra¹.

At present, as previous studies have reported (Aguilera 2001; Beltrán and Sáiz 2001; Boix and Vila 2006; Llompart 2007; Ros 2006), Castilian serves as the host language or language of communication amongst newcomers, while Catalan continues to be the language learned only by those who wish to settle down in Catalonia. As such, both Castilian and Catalan accomplish instrumental functions, although their symbolic value differs widely (Alarcón and Garzón, 2011). Previous studies on language and migrants in Catalonia have often been done in larger groups, such as South Americans (Corona, Nussbaum, and Unamuno 2013; Newman, Patiño-Santos and Trenchs-Parera 2013), Moroccans (Sagaama 2010; Tilmatine 2005), or Chinese (Beltrán and Sáiz 2001), whilst less visible populations with quite different sociocultural profiles have not been focused on specifically. The present study focuses upon one of such populations, namely Japanese living in Catalonia, and explores their knowledge of local languages as

well as perception of these languages in terms of identifying how the use (or lack of use) of each language affects their daily lives. Coming from a society where the myth of monolingualism is still prevalent amongst ordinary people and homogeneity in behaviour is hugely respected, how do they cope with the bilingual/multilingual reality of Catalonia?

Japanese expatriates and languages

Studies on Japanese expatriates around the world – for example, Singapore (Ben-Ari 2003), Düsseldorf (Glebe 2003; Iwamoto et al. 2013), London (White 2003), Hong-Kong (Wing 2005), Manila (Nagata 2008), Malaysia (Rosli 2013) - have commonly described this population as a ‘closed community’ with few relations with the local people. They are not highly motivated to integrate into the host society, as they live there with the expectation that they will return to Japan or move to another country. In fact, many previous studies about Japanese people living overseas have focused on these sojourners², indicating that they mostly relate to their own compatriots and that they try to create and maintain a Japanese atmosphere as much as they can (Ben-Ari 2003; Goodman 1993; Glebe 2003; Sato 1997; White 2003), i.e. to create a ‘home away from home’ (Siu 1952, 37).

It has often been pointed out that one factor influencing this kind of grouping is the lack of knowledge of local language(s) (White 2003; Wing 2005). Their knowledge of the host society’s language is reported to be fairly low in general; for example, Tagalog (Nagata 2008), German (Iwamoto et al. 2013) or Cantonese (Wing 2005). If the host society’s language is English, language learning will be relatively less burdensome for these expatriates, in the sense that it is not a completely new language for them, since all Japanese citizens have studied English as part of compulsory education.

Moreover, the utility value added to English, as seen in the case of Hong Kong where English is the preferred language of learning by Japanese expatriates (Wing 2005), motivates them to learn the language. Otherwise, it may be an extra burden for them and/or discourage them from learning, particularly, if the language in question is not an ‘international’ one.

Their strong ties with their own culture and forming highly developed networks amongst their compatriots also often keeps them from learning local language(s) (Author 2009). In addition, the presence of businesses that meet the requirements of Japanese people (Ben-Ari 2003; Glebe 2003; White 2003), such as grocery stores and real estate agencies, allows them to avoid direct participation in the host society using local language.

These sojourning Japanese often constitute an influential group amongst their compatriots, and as such, their lifestyle and sociocultural/linguistic features are often seen as those of all Japanese residents living in that host society. However, do all the Japanese migrants homogeneously have a low level of knowledge of the host society’s languages as is reported in other studies? And what will happen in a bilingual society where two languages with different utility value coexist?

Starting from the hypothesis that they are likely to learn Castilian while Catalan is learnt only by a limited number, the study addresses the following questions:

- (1) What level of knowledge³ do the Japanese migrants have of Castilian (widely known as Spanish) and Catalan?
- (2) Is Catalan learnt only after having achieved a certain level of Castilian?
- (3) What do Japanese think about the needs of Castilian and Catalan?
- (4) Who was motivated to learn Castilian and/or Catalan though they do not necessarily use it and why?

The significance of this study is that it explores language knowledge, which has not been studied in detail, of Japanese expatriates in a non-English speaking country. Furthermore, the profile of this population is fundamentally different from other economic or political immigrants since an important percentage of them are business and academic sojourners from a wealthy country.

Japanese people in Catalonia

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, currently 8080 Japanese people are living in the whole of Spain (2015)⁴. Most of them are residents that have been living in Spain for more than three months, but without a permanent residency permit; those who possess a permit are in the minority. Although Japanese people continue to arrive every year, their stay is usually short-term, and turnover is much more frequent than in the case of other foreigners.

Catalonia has the largest number of Japanese residents in Spain, representing nearly 40% of the entire Japanese population living in this country. The fact that many Japanese companies are located in this autonomous community helps explain this distribution. According to data compiled by *Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya* (2014), currently 2063 Japanese people are living in Catalonia, with 1911 (92.6%) concentrated in the Province of Barcelona.

In terms of motivation, this population can be classified into the following categories: (1) labour, (2) academic, (3) family, (4) culture⁵ and (5) other (Author 2009). Amongst them, the first two groups, which normally comprise temporary residents, account for a significant percentage⁶. The rest of the subgroups usually comprise long-term residents⁷ such as intermarried families, Japanese families who have settled down in Catalonia or Japanese families in retirement. In any case, note that

the initial motivation for staying can change over time; thus, it does not necessarily correlate with the actual motivation.

Methodology

The objective of this study is to explore the language knowledge of Japanese people living in Catalonia and their perception of the local languages. To achieve these goals and to respond to the aforementioned research questions, a questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews were selected as main instruments.

All the subjects were Japanese nationals living in Catalonia, mostly in Barcelona. Through the collaboration of Japanese institutions and associations in Catalonia (Japanese school of Barcelona, Supplementary school of Japanese language of Barcelona, General Consulate of Japan, Association of Japanese Language Teachers and Japanese Enterprisers Association in Catalonia), we located the subjects for our study by way of judgemental sampling, given the author's sound knowledge of the Japanese community in Catalonia. A snowball method was also employed to obtain additional samples. We localized nearly 200 candidates for our study, but for practical reasons, we accepted only those people readily available to contribute through the two aforementioned sampling methods. Two hundred copies of the questionnaire were distributed, 121 of which were returned completed. The study involved 37 men and 81 women, with three cases where the gender was not specified. A major percentage of the subjects were in their late thirties (N=34) and forties (N=36), which represented 57.9%⁸ of all subjects. Those who were in their fifties or over followed (N=23), whilst the number of those who were in their early thirties (N=6) and less than thirties (N=12) was considerably lower. More than half of the subjects (58%) had been living in Catalonia for less than five years, whilst the rest of them had been living there for more than five

years. Almost half of them (including accompanying families) resided in Catalonia for labour reasons. The second major reason for residence was related to family, including intermarriage, which represented 21% of the subjects. Except for one subject who was born in Catalonia, all the subjects considered that Japanese was their first language.

The data on the degree of language knowledge was collected through a questionnaire survey⁹. By the term *language knowledge* we refer to ‘the competence that one has to make use of a language’ (Vila 2005, 17). Vila (2005) points out the complexity of measuring one’s knowledge since we cannot directly assess our own psychological capacity. Oral and written tests, which are more indirect methods, would have allowed us to obtain observed knowledge, although these tests would have been extremely costly, given the number of individuals we wanted to include. Therefore, a method to obtain *declared knowledge* was adopted. The questionnaire comprised five main parts: personal data, language knowledge, language use, language learning and attitude including the degree of language needs. Concerning language knowledge, the subjects were asked to evaluate their level of Castilian and Catalan in terms of understanding, speaking, reading and writing competence by themselves from 0 to 5 (0: Not at all, 1: Some words, 2: Some simple phrases, 3: A part of text/conversation, 4: Most of text/conversation and 5: With total fluency). The subjects were also asked how and why did they learn Castilian and/or Catalan and how do they evaluate the degree of needs of both languages in their daily lives from 0 to 4 (0: Absolutely unnecessary, 1: Unnecessary, 2: It depends, 3: Necessary and 4: Absolutely necessary). All the questionnaire sheets were distributed by hand to the subjects and were collected afterwards by the researcher.

After collecting the questionnaires, follow-up interviews with a small subset of subjects willing to participate (N = 34) were conducted to identify their views on the

multiple 'worlds' of daily lives This method opens up the possibility of gaining an insight into the experiences, concerns, interests, beliefs, values, knowledge and ways of seeing, thinking and acting of the other (Schostack, 2006: 10).

We collected the data from different types of subjects in terms of their profiles: eight women who accompanied their spouse for labour requirement, five men and one woman who came to Catalonia for labour requirement, eleven women who were living there for family reasons and two men and six women who came for academic purposes. Since language knowledge is a result of language learning and the perception of the language in question has some influence on this process (Gardner 1985; Masgoret and Gardner 2003), it can be expected that our interviewees' underlying perceptions of language would be detected in their discourse about language learning. That is our main interest. The interviews were semi-structured, focusing on (1) the need for local languages in their daily life; (2) learning experience of Castilian and/or Catalan and the motivation; and (3) the way they learned Castilian and/or Catalan, although the interviewees were free to introduce new topics as they wished.

All the interviews were conducted in Japanese, audio-recorded and transcribed word for word (King and Horrocks 2010). The duration of the interviews was between 50 and 90 min, depending on the interviewee and circumstance. The interviews were conducted individually, though in some cases we conducted group-interviews, dependent on the interviewees' circumstances.

The data on the language knowledge was quantitatively analysed through correspondence analysis to verify the hypothesis that some correlation exists between our subjects' degree of knowledge of Catalan and Castilian. This method is used to describe relationships of dependence and independence; that is to say, difference or similarity, between two variables in a multidimensional space based on the cross-

tabulation data. For the purpose of our study, the degree of knowledge of Castilian in the four basic skills and the degree of knowledge of Catalan in the same four basic skills were used as variables.

On the other hand, transcriptions of the interviews were qualitatively analysed in a way that the theme of each fragment can be classified according to these topics. By *topic* we refer to what is represented through propositions, and therefore, can express opinions, and consequently ideologies (Van Dijk:2003)¹⁰.

Results and discussion

What level of knowledge do the Japanese migrants have of Castilian and Catalan?

The analysis of the results obtained from the questionnaires revealed the subjects' degree of knowledge of Catalan and Castilian (Figure 1). It must be remembered, however, that the results obtained provide a general overview, while extreme cases (maximum and minimum) can bias results. Regardless of length of residency or motivation for stay, all the subjects had some knowledge of Castilian in varying degrees, whilst only a limited number of subjects had some knowledge of Catalan. All the subjects who declared they had a high level of Catalan knowledge (level 4 and 5) are long-term residents. In fact, a significant correlation was found between the length of residence and the level of Catalan knowledge¹¹. It would therefore appear that, as far as our subjects are concerned, Castilian is a language which is learned first. To verify it statistically, in the next section our subjects' degree of knowledge of both languages will be analysed.

Figure 1 Degree of knowledge of Castilian and Catalan: Number of responses.

[Figure 1 near here]

Is Catalan learnt after having achieved a certain level of Castilian?¹²

A strong correlation between the degree of knowledge of Castilian and Catalan (p-value < 0.0001) was observed in all skills: the result suggest that a fairly high degree of Castilian knowledge does not necessarily equate to the same degree of knowledge of Catalan, whilst those who have a good command of Catalan also have an good command of Castilian, which is observed more remarkably in productive competencies, speaking and writing, than in receptive competencies, understanding and reading. This tendency has been observed more remarkably in productive competencies, speaking and writing. The extent of the subjects' writing skills deviates somewhat from this tendency; although subjects can write the greater part of a text in Castilian, they could only write a few words in Catalan.

Figure 2. Relationship between reading skills in Castilian and Catalan.

[Figure 2 near here]

Figure 3. Relationship between writing skills in Castilian and Catalan.

[Figure 3 near here]

What do Japanese think about the needs of Castilian and Catalan?

Language needs for adult immigrants vary depending on the type of migrants (Beacco 2008). As observed in Figure 4, a significant number of subjects view Castilian as absolutely necessary (63.6%), whereas only a very small number of them find it unnecessary. In contrast, quite different results were obtained regarding Catalan; the most frequent response was 'it depends on the situation' (38.8%), which was seen in only 8.3% in Castilian. This result clearly shows the different perceptions of the two

languages; Catalan is not perceived as a language of common use, whereas Castilian is seen as much more common. This can also be confirmed by the fact that 28.9% of the respondents do not find Catalan necessary in their actual day-to-day lives, whereas only 0.2% of the respondents felt that they do not need Castilian.

Need in terms of languages of origin and the host society's language varies depending on various factors, such as the type of migrant, use of the language of origin within the host society and the different stages of the migration process (see Beacco, 2008). In the case of our subjects, a statistically significant correlation was found between length of residency in Catalonia and the degree of need of Catalan ($r = .451$, $p < 0.01$). On the contrary, the degree of need of Castilian has little to do with the length of residency.

Figure 4 'Do you think Castilian and Catalan are necessary for your day-to-day life?'
Number of responses (N = 121)

[Figure 4 near here]

Who was motivated to learn Castilian and why?

Almost all our subjects have learnt Castilian. The most frequently indicated motivations for learning this language were associated with pragmatic reasons such as 'to live in Catalonia' (N = 58), 'for work or study' (N=53), and 'for its utility' (N = 45)¹³.

Nonetheless, if we consider their profile, it was found that those who live using predominantly Castilian had learned this language more for social integration, which implies that they see Castilian as an instrument for integration into Catalan society.

Castilian is the first language that almost all the subjects learnt, since immigration policy is within the domain of the Spanish Government (Boix and Vila 2006; Ros 2006; Rovira et al. 2004)¹⁴, as such, in order to access Catalonia, migrants

cannot avoid Castilian from the offset; the required documentation for residency or work permits must be completed in Castilian. In this way, Castilian becomes a criterion for migrants in order to gain legal access to Catalonia (Zapata-Barrero 2006).

Furthermore, they have learnt it first due to it being 'Spain's national language'. This belief reflects the monolingual language ideology of Japan. Hence, there is a ready assumption that to live in a Spanish territory, the language they should learn is Castilian. Those who hold firm on this belief are likely to give priority to Castilian.

Interviewees MKM¹⁵, YSK and HAB clearly stated that it is more important to improve their Castilian skills before starting to learn Catalan.

In general, temporary residents do not achieve a good level of Castilian. Maintaining their original lifestyle takes the highest priority; they are not so interested in being integrated into the host society. However, this does not mean that they are totally indifferent to languages; they are simply not motivated to make the effort for a temporary goal:

ISB: Even though it is a temporary residence, **I would make an effort to learn the local language if it would be advantageous for me** when I go back to Japan in the future. [...] That is, Catalan would be a language I will never use once I leave here.
[laugh]

Another important motivation for learning Castilian for temporary residents has much to do with the local population's level of English: 'Unexpectedly, they do not speak English well and I can't understand what they are saying (in English)' (MKM).

This statement suggests that the subject assumed the role of English as *lingua franca*, but it seems not to apply in Catalonia. In this regard, one of the motivating factors for our subjects for learning Castilian is a less constructive one; they felt that there is no option other than to learn Castilian at a minimal level, since it is not really possible to completely avoid the host society's language(s), particularly for those who

enrol their children at local schools. However, for some subjects, the reason why they do not use English pertains to the matter of courtesy, because ‘to impose English on them seems a bit arrogant’ (HKM, ISZ).

The long-term residents have learnt Castilian to live in Catalonia, while almost no subjects had learnt Catalan first. In a society where a local and a nationally dominant language are used alongside each other, learning the national language seems more necessary, useful and attractive for immigrants than learning a regional language, since knowledge in the national language avails more economic opportunities and geographic mobility (Kymlicka 2006; Woehrling 2008). In fact, some subjects who live using predominantly Castilian give priority to Castilian for this reason.

Though very few, some subjects have not learnt Castilian or given it up, because they ‘will go back to Japan’ (N=12) or ‘hardly use it’ (N=9), which implies that their interpersonal relationships are limited to their compatriots:

HMZ: As most of my friends are Japanese, I use Spanish only when communicating with the *portero* (‘concierge’ in Castilian). So, **I didn’t find much need to learn Spanish**. Then I began to wonder, since I did not use Spanish, I would not learn it at all (sic.). So, I gave up [laughter].

Regarding the method of learning, studying at language academies is the most popular choice amongst our subjects; selected by 35% (N = 62)¹⁶, followed by private lessons at 21% (N = 38). Amongst temporary residents, private lessons are the most popular method; they are most likely able to find a Japanese teacher who can translate, if necessary, into Japanese; Glebe’s (2003) study on the Japanese community in Düsseldorf reported that more than 40% of the workers had not had any language training before they arrived. Similarly, our subjects confessed that they had come to Catalonia without having had any prior language training. After arriving, they often

leave language learning to their spouses, since the workers themselves have less need for local languages; however, their spouses have to relate more with the host society, particularly if they have children attending a local school. Furthermore, accompanying spouses have more spare time, because they are not permitted to work during their stay in Catalonia due to visa restrictions. Hence, there is a certain ‘division of labour’ between the couples, which SYM regarded as the major cause for his failure to learn the language. YSK and DCL also depend on their spouse in terms of language learning. They are fully aware that the women have to face language related problems alone.

Amongst long-term residents, on the other hand, language academies are the most frequently chosen method. Some of them had already learnt Castilian before they came to Catalonia for academic or work purposes, typically as a second language at university. Some subjects had furthered their studies in language courses offered at academies or universities after settling in Catalonia.

Who was motivated to learn Catalan though they do not necessarily use it and why?

Of the subjects, 48.7% declared that they had learnt some Catalan (N = 59). Like Castilian, the most frequently indicated motivation for learning this language was to ‘live in Catalonia’ (N = 32), but what makes a difference is that the desire for social integration was the second most frequently indicated reason (N = 22).

Catalan is learnt mainly by long-term residents, especially by those who employ it as the main language in their daily lives, though they are very few. The subjects indicated that they appreciate its utility, suggesting that they are exposed to Catalan due to familiar and/or circumstantial reasons, and perceive it as an indispensable tool in their daily lives.

Spouses' attitudes towards Catalan often signify the motivation for learning this language. EMR, whose spouse is a Catalan speaker and considers the language of the utmost importance, also highly appreciates it as a language for learning to live in Catalonia:

EMR: As my husband has many relations with the people who are engaged in Catalan literature, he does not speak to me expressly in *Castellano* (sic.). If we had lived in Barcelona, the circumstances would be different, but we moved to Sabadell¹⁷ where my husband used to live. In most of the circles we move in, Catalan is spoken, so I thought that it would be better to learn Catalan to properly understand what the local people are saying. So I began to learn Catalan.

Like the other subjects, she had learnt Castilian first, although she began to wonder to what extent she and her spouse would be able to understand each other in a language which is not the first language for either of them. So, she made the decision to use Catalan exclusively when communicating with her husband, since she is well aware that use of Castilian merely as a 'common language' does not make any sense for Catalan-speakers.

The rest of the subjects have declared that they had never learnt Catalan, mainly because they 'hardly use it' (N = 12) or 'will go back to Japan' (N = 9). These reasons imply their limited relationship with the local population and their perception of local language learning during their stay in Catalonia.

Not learning Catalan was found to be particularly prevalent amongst temporary residents as well as those who have just arrived in Catalonia. A number of reasons were given for this. First, learning Catalan can be considered a burden for some. For immigrants, learning the host society's language, when it is vastly different from their

own, is an arduous task. In a bilingual society like Catalonia, if immigrants wish to learn 'a local language' (as opposed to a 'national language'), the burden of learning this language is often exacerbated by the necessity of having to learn the national language as well (Boerhling 2008). Therefore, once a certain level is achieved in Castilian, the subjects expressed how they often do not wish to improve their skills nor wish to learn Catalan.

As such, the second factor which prevented the subjects from learning Catalan is the priority given to Castilian. KHI, an exchange student, explained that he majored in Castilian at his university in Japan, which is his justification for not learning Catalan, because he is afraid of 'mixing up' the two languages.

Third, some subjects see Catalan as something irrelevant and/or beyond their reach. This attitude is reflected in a lack of seriousness when they talk about learning Catalan:

YSK: I was joking and about to buy a Catalan text book, but I didn't buy it because I thought that it would never be of use to me.

However, this view of Catalan, that of it having no association with outsiders, can cause self-exclusion, as can be seen by the following comment:

DCL: When they (local colleagues) talk in Catalan, I don't have to intervene.

For DCL, Catalan is a sort of marker, the use of which indicates to him whether he should join in the conversation. In fact, the workers interviewed explained that local workers usually spoke in Castilian so that their Japanese colleagues could understand. However, when discussing a topic which has little to do with their Japanese colleagues, they speak in Catalan.

This view of Catalan also has a lot to do with the local population's behaviour, which is the fourth factor preventing Catalan learning. Use of appropriate language in a particular situation plays a role of maintaining sociolinguistic boundaries between the in-group and outsiders, which is often seen in many minority language in Europe (McEwan-Fujita 2010). In Catalonia, use of Castilian was associated with unknown quantities as well as known outsiders, whilst Catalan is used only with those who are known to be Catalan (Woolard 1989). Bilingual conversations without accommodation have also been avoided (ibid.) in the way that Catalan speakers shifted to Castilian (see Vila and Galindo 2012). Due to this traditional *linguistic etiquette* (Woolard 1989, 69-73)¹⁸, there is no need for newcomers to speak Catalan, an underlying issue that newcomers have actually complained about (Brugué et al. 2013; Junyent et al. 2011; Llompart 2007). This inertia of Catalan-speakers to assume that the language adopted by outsider is Castilian is established so firmly amongst Catalan-speakers that even those outsiders who usually speak Catalan generally submit to it and end up speaking Castilian (Junyent et al. 2011, 96). As our subjects explained, Catalan speakers automatically start speaking in Castilian on witnessing their Oriental appearance. As such, when this happens, those who are hoping to become part of Catalan society may feel excluded. For EMR, who wishes to be fully integrated into Catalan society, this attitude of the local people seemed offensive.

AKI, who is a Japanese language teacher, learned Catalan and was very eager to use the language. However, she illustrated in two different situations how difficult it is for an outsider to use Catalan: on the one hand, she wondered if it was appropriate for her to use Catalan in a Japanese language class for her own interest, since there were students from non-Catalan speaking area; people talk to her in Castilian even though she made a great deal of effort to talk them in Catalan, on the other. Though the situations

differ, both of her experiences suggest that Catalan is perceived as a language not for outsiders.

Similarly, RKT attributes the reason for not having learnt Catalan to the lack of disposition of Catalan learning for outsiders. She tried to learn Catalan and asked local colleagues for advice; however, they did not take her seriously. This attitude held by the local people discouraged her and she also found it contradictory: she was motivated to learn Catalan having seen the use of the language promoted socially, but for her, the promotion did not seem to include outsiders. Other interviewees who came to Catalonia at about the same time also remember Catalan being reserved for the locals. The behaviour of the local people turns Catalan into ‘a language not for outsiders’, creating an invisible barrier which separates outsiders from Catalans.

In this way, the two languages are seen in a dichotomous way, with Catalan being a language reserved for Catalans, while Castilian is a language open to everyone (Author 2009). In a society like Catalonia’s, where a minority language and a majority language coexist, speakers of the two languages are likely to be assimilated to dichotomous values, such as in-group/outsider; from somewhere/nowhere; authentic/anonymous (see Hornsby 2015; McEwan-Fujita 2010; Pujolar and González 2013; Woolard 2008). In such contexts, minority languages are considered authentic and linked to the identity, which can constrain the acquisition and use of this language as a second language (Woolard 2008). In regard with authenticity and identity, a tension emerges between ‘native speakers’ and ‘new speakers’. Native speakers are considered to be authentic speakers of the language (Hornsby 2015; O’Rourke and Ramallo 2013; Walsh and Ó Murchadha 2013; Woolard 2008), whereas new speakers are non-native speakers of the language or local varieties (Puigdevall 2014), and they are not necessarily seen as legitimate speakers of the language. Some of our subjects, who were

trying to or had already become new speakers of Catalan, experienced frustration because of these sociolinguistic boundaries between native and new speakers. Since native speakers were reluctant to engage with non-native speakers in a minority language (McEwan-Fujita 2010), they had a problem to persuade native speakers to communicate in this language (Newcombe 2007).

Consequently, Catalan has not come to work as a host language for immigrants, as summarized by RYN:

RYN: [...] Spanish is not the usual language here, is it? Anyway, the usual language is Catalan. **So no matter how well I learn Spanish, I'm still a foreigner.**

Those who are not interested in being integrated with Catalan society do not care about these issues. Rather, it is one of the major factors that discourages them from learning Catalan, since they presume that 'those who speak Catalan are completely bilingual' (ISZ) and 'you can make yourself understood in Castilian' (IZO). Rovira et al. (2004) also pointed out that Castilian has an important presence amongst newcomers, since almost all Catalan speakers also speak Castilian fluently, whilst the same cannot necessarily be said about Castilian speakers, and Castilian is omnipresent in the public domain in Catalonia. Therefore, they do not find any need to learn another language in addition to Castilian. From this point of view, we can suppose the utilitarian perspective is that they are indifferent about the interlocutor's usual language as long as they can make themselves understood.

The geographical areas where the language is used represent the fifth factor affecting Catalan learning. Whether the local language has official status at the national level may also affect the legal and social usefulness of the Catalan. A local language that is recognized as official at the national level can be used in some instances outside of its territorial base (Woehrling 2008, 39). However, Catalan is used in a very limited

area, which is often cited as the reason why our subjects did not feel motivated to learn this language. Furthermore, most of our subjects were living in the metropolitan area of Barcelona where Castilian is widely used.

Nevertheless, those who have not learnt Catalan at least concede its important and symbolic role: ‘(If they talk to me in Catalan), I would think: “Now I’m a Catalan!” Yes, I would be happy’ (RYK). The fact that RYK is from Osaka has much influence on his perception of Catalan. Since the local variety of his hometown has a significant symbolic role in identity, he considers the language key to social integration. KHI also recognized Catalan’s symbolic value: ‘Certainly, they are happy to hear you talk in Catalan even if it is broken Catalan’, adding that he would like to learn Catalan as ‘proof of my stay in Barcelona’, but merely as a part of his bank of knowledge, not for daily use.

In the field of work as well, some subjects admitted that using Catalan is important for establishing good relationships with local people:

TKY: Certainly, it would be nice if you were greeted in Catalan when you visit villages, or if you spoke in Catalan instead of Spanish at press conferences. Yes, I understand it, but on the other hand I wonder: is it really worth learning Catalan only for this purpose? Well, if I had had time, I would have learnt it, I think.

TKY’s answer is an ambivalent one, which is typically heard when our subjects were asked about learning Catalan; they admitted it has an important role in establishing good relationships with Catalan people, although the various factors that we have outlined in this study cause them to hesitate in learning Catalan. Hence, some answered that they would learn Catalan –but only if they have mastered Castilian— under certain conditions, such as time to spare or long-term stay, but still viewed it as something optional and not indispensable for their daily lives:

EKK: Well, if I had enough time (to learn Catalan), and as a kind of hobby, it would be nice. [...] Maybe I would prefer learning other things if I had time to learn Catalan. [laughter]

In this way, despite admitting that Catalan has an important role in establishing good relationships with Catalan people, it seems that those who have not learnt Catalan cannot avoid perceiving it as a secondary language.

Concluding remarks

In Catalonia, speakers' bilingual practices have always been sensitive to keeping a clear sense of the boundaries between the two languages as well as between their communities of speakers, which is reflected in the norm of choosing the language of communication according to the interlocutor's ethnolinguistic identities (Pujolar and González 2013:138-139). Recent demolinguistic/sociolinguistic changes in Catalonia, however, make the distinction between Catalan-speakers and Castilian-speakers imprecise, and Catalan is increasingly becoming an anonymous language due to the new contemporary condition of mobility and access to language (ibid:139). Yet, the results of our study suggest that, as far as our subjects are concerned, clear sociolinguistic boundaries still exist between 'Catalans' and 'outsiders' from outside Spain, and Castilian continues to be an anonymous language amongst our subjects. Firstly, our data show that Castilian was the first language learned unconditionally by almost all the subjects with varying levels, regardless of the length of stay or reason for residency. Contrarily, Catalan is learnt only by some subjects once they had learnt Spanish, as seen from the results of the correspondence analysis.

Secondly, the reasons for learning Castilian are pragmatic ones, since it is the first gateway to access Catalonia, except for those few who came with previous knowledge of Castilian. Some of our subjects were motivated to learn Catalan

particularly due to family circumstance. Those who have learnt it but do not use it daily, have achieved only a limited level, mostly just to forge stronger relationships and to create ties with the Catalan people (Brugués et al. 2013, 83). The subjects demonstrated awareness of the fact that ‘you will be seen in a favourable light by the locals if you are willing to take the time and the effort to learn this ‘regional language’ (See Alarcón and Garzón 2011). That is, Catalan is symbolic in nature.

In this way, Castilian is perceived as a necessary language in the daily life of our subjects, whilst Catalan is viewed as a secondary language, or, at most, needed under certain conditions. Those who consider Catalan unnecessary are mostly temporary residents who learn Castilian only for their day-to-day business during a transitory stay.

Finally, the main reasons for not learning Catalan are twofold: the perceived status of Castilian (and consequently that of Catalan) and the local people’s behaviour. These two reasons interrelate in a way that our subjects perceive Catalan as a secondary and optional language, raising an important question about minority language learning on the part of ‘outsiders’. As we have seen before, the strong tie between ethnic identity and Catalan language has caused our subjects to develop an ambivalent view about this language. The integrity of the ethnolinguistic border of the Catalan group (Boix 1993) may create an invisible barrier with a certain atmosphere, leading to outsiders’ use of Catalan being totally uncommon. Therefore, some subjects were not encouraged to learn Catalan, although they understand its important role for integration, which leads to an interest in learning it. Furthermore, it may be associated with Japanese society’s orientation toward homogeneity in behaviour (Tani 2012). Provided that Castilian is seen as anonymous language amongst them, the use of Catalan is not a common behaviour, which may be avoided in order not to be ‘different’ from others (Author 2009).

This study highlights the current state of sociolinguistic boundaries between ‘locals’ and ‘outsiders from outside Spain’, both qualitatively and quantitatively with regard to Japanese living in Catalonia. In sum, results of this study suggest that, at present, Catalan does not work as Catalonia’s host language and is perceived as something irrelevant or beyond the reach by our subjects. As long as Castilian intervenes between the Catalan society and migrants, and the local population stay within the norm of linguistic etiquette in interacting with the outsiders from outside Spain; the use of Catalan with and by these migrants will not be perceived as totally natural. Most of our subjects live in Barcelona, where Catalan plays an instrumental role for integration, but to a much lesser extent when compared to villages or smaller towns, where it is used daily as the main language. Yet, our subjects’ experiences tell us that Catalan plays an important role if one wishes to live more comfortably because integration is not fully successful unless migrants feel welcomed by the society, and the Catalan language provides the key for that (Aguilera 2001). In this sense, Catalan can be considered the second gateway to the host society.

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¹ Torres et al. (2006) reported that in Andorra, Catalan is not used extensively enough by all the groups of the country so that it can attract newcomers with a different first language.

² Siu (1952) defined sojourner as ‘a type of stranger who spends many years of his lifetime in a foreign country without being assimilated’ (ibid, 34). Here, this term is used to refer to temporary residents in foreign countries assuming they return to their home country.

³ I have used this term considering the definition of Vila (2005) as well as taking into account that this term is also used by Council of the European Union. However, the term *competence* is often used to refer to *knowledge* (ex. Ellis 1994; Hymes 1972), and Vila (2005) himself adds this point. I use the term *knowledge* in Ellis (1994)’s sense of *competence* to refer to ‘a language user’s underlying knowledge of language which is drawn on in actual performance’ (ibid: 697).

⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000086464.pdf>

⁵ As a recent phenomenon, we can also add those who come to Catalonia for cultural reasons, such as passion for football, especially for *Futbol Club Barcelona* (widely known as *Barça*). Some young children leave Japan to have professional training to improve their football skills in the youth club and live in Catalonia for longer periods.

⁶ Those who came for labour reason were the largest group, since the emergence of the Japanese community is directly related to the inversion of capital originating from Japan (Beltrán and Sáiz 2002). Recently, however, those who came to Catalonia for academic reasons became the largest sector.

⁷ ‘Those who moved their livelihood from Japan to overseas’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan) permanently or with an intention to do that for the time being.

⁸ Those who did not respond were also included.

⁹ The questionnaires were elaborated on the basis of the pilot survey of *Xarxes socials i ús lingüístic* (Social network and language use) of the Institut de Sociolingüística Catalana (1997), which we found suitable for our study.

¹⁰ According to Van Dijk (2003), topics or themes of discourse represent more important information of the discourse and allow receivers to know about what the discourses are.

¹¹ $r = .514$ (Understanding), $r = .444$ (Speaking), $r = .467$ (Reading), $r = .487$ (Writing).

¹² Further information on other language skills will be available upon request.

¹³ Multiple answers allowed, based on 242 total responses.

¹⁴ Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia of 2006 includes reception and integration of immigrants as a competence of Catalan government.

¹⁵ To guarantee the privacy of our participants, their names have been codified.

¹⁶ Multiple answers allowed, based on 177 total responses.

¹⁷ A city situated 20 km from Barcelona.

¹⁸ ‘According to a traditional etiquette dating at least from the Franco years that continues to influence language choices, it is proper to speak Catalan only to those who are known to be Catalan or for whom there are clear signals of Catalan identity, even though it is recognized that most Castilian speakers easily learn to understand Catalan’ (Woolard 1989, 69)