

concerning interaction between the interviewer and different groups of speakers. Men, for example, speak more than women; middle-class speakers have a tendency to put more questions to the interviewer than the working class, and to be more expansive in their answers. Thus, the speaker variables of sex and of social class both determine the interaction. In addition, the interviewers posed proportionately more questions to women than to men, and more to working-class than to middle-class informants. It is remarked that the interviewer's strategy of posing questions is itself a sociolinguistic variable. This article is well integrated in international research on the field (although somewhat difficult to read for nonspecialists), and the list of references is impressive.

Sociolinguistic work certainly is not easy, particularly if ambitions, as in this case, are high. There are no instant, ready-made solutions, and methods used by other researchers may prove impossible to apply. Even the best planned investigation may collapse when confronted with reality; fieldwork and transcriptions are incredibly time-consuming. Points of criticism and discussion are always possible to find – for example, in this case the size of the material and some of the standpoints. However, unlike most sociolinguistic work, this book aims to examine material from many different aspects. It contains interesting attempts to develop methodology, with many valuable discussions and analyses.

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FRANSESC GIMENO & BRAULI MONTOYA, *Sociolingüística*. Valencia: Servei de Publicacions, Universitat de València, 1989. Pp. 141.

Catalan sociolinguistics has investigated in depth the uses of Catalan and the attitudes toward it, but has only analyzed very sporadically the mechanism of linguistic change. Until very recently, the kind of sociolinguistics developed in Catalonia was very macro oriented, and left very little space for a more microsociolinguistic approach to the Catalan language.

The present volume is an attempt to reconcile these two separated worlds in the Catalan arena. Before its publication, it seemed as if scholars were

about whether the linguistic code used in Catalonia would be Catalan or Spanish, the focus would be on understanding the real structure of Catalan and its varied use. The reconciliation has been important, because Catalan sociolinguistics previously lacked an analytical approach that, without getting away from the study of language in its social context, would analyze the linguistic structure of Catalan and consider the systematicity of the variation that exists in this language. This variation has been very little studied, as Catalan sociolinguists and language planners have been justifiably worried, after so many years of persecution, about language maintenance, language shift, and the possible death of Catalan.¹

In this book, Gimeno and Montoya have tried to offer "a means of plunging into the world of this mixed discipline [i.e., sociolinguistics], to get deep into its world reality, and to understand its development in the Catalan speaking countries [PP.CC.]" (13).² As their main point, they have chosen the incorporation "within sociolinguistic analysis of a series of levels which will enrich the general theoretical and methodological perspective drawing on our own Romance language and multilingual research" (ibid.). This aim and the book's content, together with the authors' view of sociolinguistics as "an integrative discipline," help to shape one of the first sociolinguistic approaches to the analysis of Catalan.

The approach to sociolinguistics that the authors take as their starting point involves the consideration of language and speech from the viewpoint of the use of Catalan by speakers of a specific speech community and the variation existing within it - variation that is not as chaotic as Chomskyan linguistics would have us believe and that is, in fact, demonstrably systematic. This is the framework of analysis with which Gimeno and Montoya identify themselves, though they also present an integrative view of all the directions of world sociolinguistics, in particular in the PP.CC.

After locating general sociolinguistics historically (15-22), and pointing out current trends in sociolinguistics (23-41), Gimeno and Montoya include a critical review of the state of the art in the PP.CC. (43-66). Lastly, they present an application of their view and method of language variation - in very Labovian style - to the study of Petrer, a municipal area in the País Valencia.³ On the whole, it would have been more satisfying if the authors had restricted themselves to the first three topics, making up a volume of general sociolinguistics with a special mention of a historiography of Catalan sociolinguistics (as is done in the third part of the present volume [43-67]). The study of variation in Petrer might well have been expanded and included in another volume. As it is, the second part (23-42), dealing with sociolinguistic lines of research, is too short; none of the topics is really developed to a satisfying extent. The third part, considering the state of the art in the PP.CC., is a useful review of Catalan sociolinguistic interests and method-

ology; but it could have constituted the topic of a separate book. In fact, the main reasons Gimeno and Montoya give for such briefness in dealing with some topics are "editorial restrictions."

A criticism often leveled at attitude research applies to the most methodological part of the book, that is, the study of variation in Petrer. This critical standpoint is not new: It is reflected in my frequent call for a greater effort not to base sociolinguistic analysis on loose observations about language use and attitude (Sutcliffe & Turell 1991; Turell 1988). I am thinking, for example, of Gimeno and Montoya's words when describing the two Catalan-speaking groups of the joint municipality: "it seems that . . . [they] do not maintain any relationship between them."⁴ The point is that instruments exist that allow researchers to measure quite objectively the degree of contact that exists among speakers of different speech communities (Ash & Myhill 1986; Pujadas & Turell 1991). Gimeno and Montoya should have used them to make their statements more objective and more reliable.

Another point concerns the structure of Part 4. The definition of the linguistic dependent variable under analysis (74-76) might well have been included after the description of the speech community, and before the details about the instruments used (72-73). It is not implied, however, that the order of presentation corresponds to the experimental design procedure followed by the authors.

In sum, this book constitutes a useful *reflection* on the development of general sociolinguistics and on the drawbacks of Catalan sociolinguistics; and it is an illustration of *rigor* in the application of the quantitative variationist model. However, the most important contribution of this book is that it integrates two important concepts: the idea that languages are instruments of communication available to the members of a specific speech community, as their most important symbol of identity, and the idea that formal understanding of language structure and language use (in this case of Catalan) will bring about a better understanding of the nature of language, and of languages in general.

NOTES

1. There are innumerable studies of Catalan dialects, but these have been guided by a very traditional dialectological framework. More recent studies (e.g., Alturo & Turell 1990; Soler 1985) take into consideration both qualitative and quantitative studies of internal structure and sociolinguistic usage.

2. "PP.CC" stands for *països catalans* (Catalunya-Principat, País Valencià, Illes Balears, Catalunya-Nord [in France], and L'Alguer). In this and the following notes, I prefer not to translate the original toponyms.

3. The País Valencià is another Catalan-speaking area that constitutes a political unit of its own, with three provinces: València, Alacant, and Castelló.

4. The bracketing is mine, and "they" refers here to two Catalan-speaking groups that co-

ing community and Preter to the Catalan-speaking one, but in both villages there are Catalan- and Spanish-speaking groups.

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~~AFIA DIL, *Two traditions of the Bengali language*. Cambridge, England: The Islamic Academy, 1991. Pp. 180.~~

~~The book under review is a study of two styles of speaking Bengali (*Bāṅglā*), an Indo-Aryan language spoken primarily in the Indian state of West Bengal and the nation of Bangladesh by over 100 million people. The two styles of speaking the language are based in large part on religious distinctions between Hindus and Muslims. It is significant to note, as Dil does, that the major difference between Hindu and Muslim Bengali in the contemporary sociolinguistic environment is to be found in lexical items rather than in morphology and syntax (48). Hindus tend to use a greater amount of Sanskritic vocabulary, whereas Muslims prefer words derived from Persian and Arabic via Urdu, the major language of Indo-Muslims.~~

~~Vernacular Bengali developed historically from Sanskrit, its parent tongue, in a predominantly Hindu/Buddhist environment, but it absorbed an increasing amount of Perso-Arabic vocabulary with the advent of Islam in north-eastern India. Bengali linguists have shown that the process of incorporating Islamic vocabulary was a gradual and dynamic one, since the Perso-Arabic influence on the language began in the 15th century and culminated in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Thus, the process of incorporating Muslim vocabulary continued unabated for a period of approximately three centuries (59). But Dil correctly points out (72-73) that there was an increased~~