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Must we save the language?
Children's discourse on language and community in Provençal and Scottish language revitalisation movements

JAMES COSTA WILSON
ICAR, Institut Français de l'Éducation, Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon, France

1. CHILDREN AND "LANGUAGE REVITALISATION"[1]

This chapter intends to propose a critical analysis of the types of discourse articulated by children involved in language revitalisation programmes in two Western European contexts, Provence (South-eastern France) and Southern Scotland. It will focus on how the minority language (Occitan and Scots) is described and on what implications this has on the children's categorising the various language groups (language and speech communities) where they are socialised.

Of all the social actors involved in language revitalisation programmes, and despite the central part they play, children are the only ones whose opinion on participation is never required. In fact, children occupy a very ambiguous place in language revitalisation movements: on the one hand, they are perceived as the embodiment of the future of the language involved, and consequently of the group that speaks it. Yet on the other hand they are often accused of not speaking the minority language properly – i.e. usually, with the right accent – or of mixing minority and dominant languages. Consequently, in my experience first as a teacher and then as a sociolinguist in both Scotland and Provence, I have found that adults tend to look on them with a fair amount of suspicion. This seems a fairly widespread pattern in Europe, where "neo-speakers" in general are considered with defiance (for an example in Brittany, see Hornsby, 2005: 195-199 in particular).

When concerned with children, sociolinguistic work on language revitalisation has concentrated on patterns of language acquisition or on bilingualism, and very rarely, if ever, on the discourse that the children involved in such programmes articulate. This mirrors a tendency in anthropology to avoid considering the points of view expressed by children, so much so that the anthropologist Lawrence Hirschfield (2002) wrote an article he entitled "Why don't anthropologists like children?"[2]. Yet, according to the author, "anthropology is premised on a process that children do better than almost all others, namely, acquire cultural knowledge" (Hirschfield, 2002: 624).

While qualitative and critical ethnographic sociolinguistics – the perspective I adopt in this chapter – have possibly paid more attention to what children have to say, studies on issues of language revitalisation remain remarkably silent on that matter. In this respect, tribute ought to be paid to the pioneering work of Fabre back in the 1980s in the Nîmes area near Montpellier in Southern France (Fabre, 1985). In her 1985 article, Fabre seeks to assess the ways in which local children consider their own speech and the opinion they have of Occitan, the local language. Her focus remains however the *language*, and not the *children* themselves.

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[1] I am grateful to Alexandre Duchêne and Julia Sallabank for their insightful comments on an earlier draft of this chapter. Any remaining weaknesses are obviously my own.

[2] A similar opinion about children in linguistic anthropology is expressed in Ochs (2002: 99-100).

In contrast, this chapter focuses on the very discourses of children, asking a set of crucial questions: What do they have to say about the minority languages they are made to study? How does this shape their understanding of their human environment? And, last but not least, in what way is it relevant to the academic study of language revitalisation?

I will concentrate on data collected during interviews with groups of three to five children aged nine to eleven while doing ethnographic fieldwork between 2007 and 2009 in and around two primary schools: the first one was an Occitan immersion school situated in northern Provence, and the second was an ordinary state-funded primary school located in central Scotland. A comparative approach was particularly useful for identifying community belonging and shaping as a sensitive issue the children had to deal with in everyday life.

While geographically unrelated, language issues in Provence and Scotland bear many resemblances. In particular, in both settings language advocates make strong references to the prestigious literary past of Occitan and Scots. The relation of both languages to the now dominant languages, English and French, is also very similar. Typological similarities between minority and majority languages enable the development of specific discourses caused by this proximity. This results in the use of such terms as patois or semi-language, and both Scots and Occitan are often referred to as corrupt varieties of the dominant languages. Yet both speech varieties evolved in different ideological contexts, making comparisons relevant in highlighting how pupils in both contexts react and relate in different ways to dominant ideologies of language.

As I have argued elsewhere (Costa, 2010), language revitalisation movements are not merely about "restoring language", whatever that may mean locally. They are primarily about semiotising and reinvesting linguistic forms made relevant by groups of activists to the invention of a new social project, in which groups are redefined and group belonging is reshaped according to linguistic criteria. Language revitalisation movements are part of contact processes where (minority) groups are shaped according to criteria set to enable them to renegotiate terms of contact with another, "dominant" or "majority" group. As such, they are social movements where language is one primary focus of thought and action.

In their sociology textbook on social movements, Della Porta and Diani (2006) identify three main features characterising such movements:

- they are "involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents";
- they are "linked by dense informal networks";
- they "share a distinct collective identity" (Della Porta and Diani, 2006: 20).

While the first two features apply to language revitalisation movements, the third feature is particularly problematic. In the case of revitalisation movements, that "distinct collective identity" is often still a project, central to the shaping of collective action, and a central issue to the enterprise.

Children are pivotal in this process. As such, an analysis of their discourse on language and other speakers of the minority language is of particular interest for at least two reasons:

- it sheds light on the types of discourse circulating among adults, and on the elements which adults deem relevant to pass on;
- it gives us insights as to how new categories of belonging connected to language are integrated in the everyday lives of children, and how those

categories shape their socialisation as members of those linguistic groups in the making.

Such work is essential particularly among older children in a given school, as their discourse reflects the types of discourse that might get passed on to younger pupils outside the classroom, and outwith the reach of teachers. Children may move on, grow up, forget the minority language, yet discourses on language remain and endure in schools among younger generations, so that beyond idiosyncrasies, more stable elements might be discernable.

As such, narratives of revitalisation, particularly among the young, afford us an opportunity to analyse the types of language ideologies circulating in language-based social movements in condensed form, a form deemed suitable to be transmitted to the next generations. In this chapter, language ideologies are to be understood as a shared body of ideas mediating forms of speech (and in this case, language choices) and social structure (Kroskrity, 2004), in other words a set of naturalised ideas underpinning as well as shaping discourse.

In order to analyse ideologies of group belonging and conceptualising with respect to language practice, I will first explore the discourse of children on language itself, and will then proceed onto examining how this discourse shapes their views of groups and communities around them.

2. USING A MINORITY LANGUAGE AT SCHOOL

The next two sections will provide background information on the types of schools I studied, and will show instances of children's discourse on the languages they teach.

2.1. Teaching (through) minority languages in Provence and Scotland

The data I analyse in the next sections were collected in semi-structured interviews conducted between 2007 and 2009. The schools where I completed my study were distinct from neighbouring schools in their own ways:

- the children in Provence attended a Calandreta primary school[3], an immersive bilingual school founded by an association of parents and running mostly through the medium of Occitan (locally known as Provençal[4], a term generally used by the children themselves);

[3] "Calandreta" is an association running dozens of immersion schools throughout the South of France. This system concerns over 2000 pupils across a vast area encompassing the regions of Provence, Languedoc, Gascony, Limousin and Auvergne. As little literature exists on those schools, readers interested in the subject are directed to the schools' website: http://c-oc.org/calandreta/ as well as to Dompmartin-Normand (2002), Boyer (2005) or Sumien (2009). The first two articles are concerned with the discourse of former Calandreta pupils, the third one with Calandreta teacher training.

[4] A strong controversy emerged at the turn of the millennium in some circles in Provence as to whether Provençal should be considered a language in its own right or a dialect of a wider language, Occitan (see Blanchet 2004; Costa, 2010 for differing analyses). In this chapter I use both terms interchangeably and consider Provençal as the Occitan variety spoken in Provence, as does the Calandreta federation.

- those in Scotland attended a school where teachers had initially introduced Scots[5] in some classes, then gradually in all aspects of education and everyday life, in order to sustain literacy skills among pupils (in the view of teachers, pupils suffered from the distance between their own speech and the Standard English of school, hindering their general progress).

In this respect, the two contexts are fairly different. While the Calandreta teaches most subjects through Occitan, and although pupils in Scotland are entitled to use Scots at all times, there are only a few dedicated Scots-language moments per week. In terms of initial language proficiency, both contexts are also very different. It can safely be said that no child, save rare exceptions, come to the Calandreta with any working knowledge of Occitan, although for some the language might be present in their environment through family or neighbours. In the Scottish school on the other hand, teachers and other educators broadly speaking consider that most children speak a variety of Scots at home. In fact, they tend to categorise as Scots any production containing elements of non-standard language.

These differences highlight another fundamental difference, residing in the approach to language. The approach to Occitan is heavily normative while the attitude to norm in Scots is more relaxed. The dominant attitude towards Scots since the early 2000s has been to accept any form that children might know, and to let them write in whichever way they find meaningful. Those forms may then be discussed in class. Normative ideologies are therefore less present among pupils in Scotland.

This has considerable implications as to who counts as a speaker of Occitan or Scots: while speaking Occitan is submitted to considerable evaluative activity, speaking Scots tends to be much more broadly conceived. In other words, language proficiency is not the only criterion for identifying someone as a speaker of Scots. Whereas Occitan is regularly reported as being spoken by some three million people (Sibille, 2002), and Scots by well over a million people (McClure, 2009), the structure of those populations of speakers, their motivations and patterns of language use differ radically, as will become obvious through analysing the discourse of children. Occitan might be well established as a "language", it is seldom heard in public. The status of Scots is far more insecure, yet varieties subsumed under that label can be heard throughout Scotland on an everyday basis. In other words, comparing the discourse of children in both contexts provides very diverse examples of how school pupils problematise "community" in language revitalisation processes.

Schools are heavily constrained places[6] where ideologies of language are inculcated, reproduced, and rarely challenged. Discourse elicited from such places is therefore itself dependent on such constraints, and it is likely that children speak more or less freely. Yet as will be seen children retain a degree of agency in the shaping of their own narratives, in which elements are borrowed from both discourse on minority and dominant language, and others are formed locally.

2.2. Narrating revitalisation

[5] Scots regroups the Germanic vernacular varieties spoken in Scotland. There is an ongoing linguistic and sociolinguistic debate as to whether it constitutes an autonomous language or a set of eccentric varieties of English (see Millar, 2010; McClure, 2009).

[6] "Places" are to be understood in this context as "spaces made social, hence becoming a space in which humans make social, cultural, political and historical investments" (Blommaert 2008, 211).

The children I interviewed had been mustered by their teachers into groups of three to six, and questions concerned primarily their own experience with the "new" language and the programme they were involved in. In this chapter, I focus on one group in each context.

In Provence, the children chose to use Occitan as the language of interview, whereas in Scotland using Scots was not an option, for an array of reasons – in particular, being an outsider to their normal group of socialisation, I might not have been perceived as a legitimate speaker. Also, the interviews took place inside the school, a place where Standard English is still perceived to be the legitimate variety in Scotland. Using Scots would have also meant raising many questions as to what the children speak, and as to how they might have reacted to my using a brand of Scots learnt from a book.

The children in Scotland had been following Scots language workshops for several months, concentrating on reading and writing. Interviews in Scotland were conducted with the assistance of MF, a prominent Scots language writer who had been teaching the Scots classes in the school in the previous term. The pupils in Provence had been in the Calandreta school for four to seven years, depending on whether they had been to the Calandreta pre-primary school or not.

Talking about the language itself proved a source of great satisfaction for children in both locations, and all were enthusiastic about recounting their feelings and ideas on that topic. In Provence for example, one pupil, Léa, explicitly refers to "saving" Provençal. This is part of a conversation with another pupil, Carla, as they argue over the place Provençal should have in public life. The following extract is part of a one-hour long interview with three girls, Carla, Léa and Sarah. Only Carla and Léa interact here.

Extract n°1:[7]

1	**Léa**	**perdequé en mai es una coma ditz carla es una bela lenga**
		because also it is as carla says a beautiful language
2		**/ fau la sauvar tròbe perdequé**
		it should be saved i think because
3	**Int.**	**fau la sauvar? de que vòu dire fau la sauvar?**
		it should be saved ? what does it mean it should be saved ?
4	**Léa**	**ben / coma dire la sauvar / fau pas la laissar tombar fau /**
		well / how can i say to save it / we shouldn't let it down we should
5		**au contrari fau pas laissar per exemple l'anglés [envaír tot**
		on the contrary we shouldn't let for example english [invade everything
6	**Carla**	**[òc / nos a**
		[yes daniel
7		**dich aquò danieu**
		told us that
8	**Léa**	**o: lo francés envaïr tota la frança**

[7] Int. stands for "Interviewer"; Daniel is the name of the class teacher. /, // and /// stand for breaks, and capitalisation indicates an emphasis by the pupils on a particular term or sentence. Italics indicate use of French.

		or french invade all of France
9	Carla	**es lo provençau que fau que envaís tota la frança**
		it is provençal which should invade all of France
10	Léa	**ben justament sariá pas tròp ben tanben aquí faudriá que *y***
		well precisely that wouldn't so good also there it would be
11		***ait que y ait* un pichòt de tot de'n partot**
		better if there were a bit of everything everywhere
12	Carla	**ben tota la provença / provençau**
		well in all of provence / provençal

Two distinct parts can be identified in this extract, enacting two different types of voices. One voice represents widely circulating language activists' discourse (lines 2 to 7), as exemplified in Carla and Léa's proclaiming of Provençal as beautiful. This standard piece of discourse echoes other studies on language revitalisation where children are socialised into ideologies of minority languages as beautiful (Friedman, 2011: 641). The other voice exemplifies the children's own voice (line 1, and lines 8 to 12).

From line 2 to line 6, the children are re-entextualising discourse, i.e. lifting texts out of their original interaction contexts and making them relevant to new texts and contexts (Bauman and Briggs, 1990). They are transforming discourse widely circulating in minority language activist circles and made available to them to reframe in a meaningful way. In this particular case, they are framing language contact in terms of conflict and competition. This, children accomplish through summoning the voice of their teacher, Daniel, who represents an authoritative view on language – the only such view most children are ever exposed to. This view situates Provençal with respect to both French and English, in such a way that constructs children as defenders of that language – a role Léa and Carla are apparently willing to endorse. The defence of Provençal occurs in a military setting, where other languages are ascribed agentivity, and can "invade" the territory of weaker language. The minority language is thus implicitly framed as a special and rare item entrusted to children, who in turn live in a world where they are surrounded by monolingual others, known only though the language they speak.

The world where the children evolve is thus one where languages are items deserving preservation, in a world where dominant others prey on smaller languages. Yet the reasons for this remain unclear – hence the development of a number of empirical (and essentially idiosyncratic) arguments for "saving Provençal".

As mentioned above, at the beginning of the extract Léa (referring to what Carla said before) presents us with an aesthetic judgement on language: Provençal is "a beautiful language" (line 1). While participating in a very common set of discourse, Léa thus chose to convoke very subjective (and to her more meaningful) reasons rather than the universalistic claims circulating among militants (such as the benefits of worldwide linguistic diversity).

Meaning is also constructed through debate on the status of languages in conflict. From lines 8 to 12, Carla and Léa develop their own argument over responses to the dominance of French, with two different types of arguments. While Carla extends the "invasion" metaphor and argues in favour of increased linguistic homogeneity through the imposition of Provençal throughout France, Léa insists apparently on a more generous point of view, "a little bit of everything everywhere". However, while both pupils are able to express themselves in both French and Provençal, they do not present bilingualism as an option. Instead, they display a view on languages in contact

as juxtaposed entities, and frame languages as autonomous entities without consideration for the individuals or groups who speak them. Carla finally links language and territory (line 12) in a way common among proponents of minority language groups in Europe, while still ignoring actual speakers.

Interestingly also, Carla refers to Provence, a term attached to lived everyday experience, rather than to "Occitania", a historical, linguistic and geographical construct promoted by the Occitan language movement and encompassing all Occitan-speaking regions. In doing this, she relates with her own experience outside school time rather than to the types of discourse she is exposed to in class.

The discourse developed by Carla and Léa is both embedded in the one they hear at school, and yet it expands in an autonomous way and is subject to debate among the children. This allows both girls to develop their own position as regards subjects such as linguistic diversity and global linguistic conflict. This is however set within a wider frame of conflict, as promoted within the Occitan language movement, and Carla and Léa's discourse remains largely disembodied, with speakers conspicuously absent from their debate.

The next extract from Scotland provides the first replies to my questions on the nature of Scots[8]. I had initially expected very similar responses to those collected in Provence. Yet it soon became apparent that language was conceptualised in a significantly different way. Teachers in the school also advocated "saving Scots", as a sign proclaimed in one classroom, yet for the children this did not appear to be a pressing issue. To them, this was the language they all spoke it on an everyday basis, and Scots was understood to be simply a new label reframing their speech from "slang" to "language". Scots just was, and if it had to be anything, then it was "rude", "broad", "coarse", "posh" or, as in the next extract, "popular". Language is therefore not characterised for itself, it is correlated to social and moral evaluations.

Extract n°2

1	**Int.**	so er ok can you tell me a wee bit what the scots
2		language IS / then
3	**Teresa**	er / it's like / it's awfie // popular noo at school / a
4		lo(t) bigger / like xxx with other things that's happening
5	**Connor**	schools are allowed to speak in scots
6	**Teresa**	it's like if you'd speak to like someone / scottish or
7		whatever she would be like / stop talking slang and noo
8		i can say / we get taught that at school

Scots is presented as evolving in a lived in social space, with both Connor and Teresa talking about it not in abstract terms but in relation to speakers, and to a social reality they can refer to. This compares strikingly with the abstract language conjured by Carla and Léa above.

In their opposition between a present that allows public use of Scots ("noo" [now], line 3) and a past that did not, Connor and Teresa too replicate the discourse of language activists. Yet, the past they refer to corresponds to a reality they had themselves experienced or one that had been narrated to them by parents or older

[8] Note that my own use of the term "Scots *language*" was dictated by the context, where the "Scots language" syntagm was the norm set to become dominant by teachers and the school administration.

siblings. Until very recently, using dialectal forms was strictly forbidden in schools and in all formal settings in Scotland[9], and this situation still endures across many parts of the country, as I witnessed myself in several other schools.

The discourse on language serves to express a discourse on shifting authority between a "before" where Scots was banned and associated with uncouth speech, and a today where it is "authorised", and where previous structures are replaced by potential agentivity. In Teresa's words, she now has arguments to legitimise her own speech when told off by adults. This possibility is afforded by the presence of an even greater authority, school and Scots language classes taught by a famous writer.

The shifting of authority takes place against the backdrop of a densely populated social landscape, expressed through the "popularity" of Scots at school, through the presence of an authority allowing or disallowing the use of Scots in schools, and through the existence of individuals criticising the linguistic choices of children. This short piece of narrative on Teresa and Connor's view on vernacular forms of speech relates to a thriving community outside the school walls for whom the vernacular is either an interest or a concern.

Carla and Léa conceptualised language as an object, a threatened entity adults had entrusted them with, yet a strangely disembodied object. Conversely, Teresa and Connor focus on language practice, group categorisation and social evaluation on part of all too real Others, and construe their participation in the Scots language movement as empowering and relevant to their daily lives. Such opposing views on language (as object vs. as practice) unsurprisingly bear on how the children construct the groups they belong to or evolve in, as I will show in the next section.

3. CONJURING GROUPS THROUGH LANGUAGE

Social movements based on language project an idea (and an ideal) of the group they claim to represent. At the same time, their discourse is performative: it seeks to bring into existence the very groups it designates or describes (see Bourdieu, 1991: 221 and 223-224). The analysis of how groups are invented through language is therefore central to an understanding of language revitalisation movements, as such discursive moments reveal who is part of them and who isn't. Discourse on groups is therefore central to the analysis of ideologies associated with language social movements.

To understand how children in Provence and Scotland involved in language revitalisation programmes construct the linguistic worlds in which they evolve, it is important to bring in a distinction between language communities and speech communities (section 3.1). This will allow us to analyse why pupils in both settings talk about their linguistic environments in the way they do (sections 3.2 and 3.3).

3.1. Language and speech communities

Silverstein (1998) distinguishes between two types of groups based on language, "language communities" and "speech communities". According to him, language communities are "groups of people by degree evidencing allegiance to norms of

[9] See Williamson (1982, 1983) for a historical account of the ban on vernacular forms in education in Scotland.

denotational […] language usage, however much or little such allegiance also encompasses an indigenous cultural consciousness of variation and/or change, or is couched in terms of fixity and stasis" (Silverstein, 1998: 402). "Denotational language usage" here stands for "language" in the most common sense of the term in the Western world, i.e. allegiance to a set of more or less fixed grammatical forms, forms of speech usually "influenced by explicitly codified registers deemed […] correct or standard […]" (Silverstein, 1996: 129). In short, those are the standard languages as we know them, set as an ideal for minority languages by generations of sociolinguists working along the lines of a Fishmanian paradigm – a current particularly strong in Catalan and Occitan sociolinguistics (see Sumien, 2006 on the creation of seven distinct yet interrelated regional norms for Occitan). Language communities are thus largely imagined communities based on a shared charter myth founding the group around language.

Speech communities, in contrast, "[indicate] that there are perduring, presupposable regularities of discursive interaction in a group or population" (Silverstein, 1998: 407). They are communities of everyday shared practice, and can involve several "languages".

In an ideal situation (as defined by most European language revitalisation movements), both types of communities should coincide with one other within a well-defined territory, and preferably under one political (and linguistic) authority. Schools are central places where this ideal model is presented as an actual reality, and through the construction of a closed educational community, revitalisation movements can perform such imagined schemes (e.g. through textbooks, advertising material or school language policy), hoping to make them eventually happen throughout their target society.

In most cases this remains a political ideal and project rather than a social reality. Minority language communities remain for the most part theoretical, and speech communities are dwindling everywhere in Europe. In this respect, a contrastive analysis of the Occitan and Scottish (Scots) cases is of particular interest to study the internal dynamics of language revitalisation movements and minority-group formation. In the Occitan case over 150 years of activism have succeeded in shaping a "language" as a set of norms of denotational usage, with well established (yet often competing) standards, dictionaries and grammars, but with less and less regular discursive interaction taking place outwith limited settings such as language activists' meetings. Scots, on the other hand, barely exists as a denotational standardised code (see for instance the TNS-BMRB [2010, 15] Scottish Government survey, indicating that "The majority of adults in the sample [64%] agree that they do not think of Scots as a language"[10]). Non-standard forms of speech (i.e. Scots, according to Scots language movements) are however the everyday medium of communication across many parts of Scotland, and certainly so in the small Central-belt town where I conducted my fieldwork.

In the next section, I set out to explore the ways in which the children I interviewed used language to construct groups as categories relevant to their understanding of the world. More specifically, I show that for a number of reasons,

[10] This survey should however be taken very cautiously, as the very notion of language is not defined. The statement to which the population sample was to react was thus phrased: "I don't really think of Scots as a language, it's more just a way of speaking" (TNS-BMRB, 2010, 15).

the pupils cannot identify with the construct of the militants to superpose language and speech communities.

3.2. Looking for a speech community

Here I wish to show that the idea of a language community remains obscure (but constantly invoked by those in authority) for the pupils of the Provençal school, while their construction of a speech community is only tentative, and generally restricted not even to the school, but to the classroom.

The following extract follows extract 1 (Carla and Léa) chronologically, and provides an example of how both pupils debate on issues of language conflict and the social presence of Provençal outwith the classroom.

Extract 3

1	Léa	**imagina / aquí lo *français* seriá lo provençau a la plaça**
		imagine / here french would be provençal instead
2		**dau *français* e que lo *français* eh ben seriá lo provençau**
		of french and french well would be the provençal
3		**qu'eriam en trin de l'aprendre / eh ben diriam parier diriam**
		that we would be learning / well we'd say the same we'd say
4		**qu'es una polida lenga que faudriá la la sauvar**
		that it is a pretty language that should be saved
5	Carla	**mai dau provençau fau que [se sòrt**
		but about provençal it must [get out
6	Léa	**[ieu tròbe**
		[I think
7	Carla	***parce que* es que dins lei classas calandretas senon i a jamai**
		because it is only in the calandreta classes otherewise there
8		**de de de entendem jamai parlar de gens defòra / provençau**
		is never we never hear people talk outside / provençal
9		**donca:s fau que parlon encara provençau de gens / fau cridar**
		so they should speak provençal people / we should shout
10		**PARLATZ PROVENÇAU ((laughter))**
		SPEAK PROVENÇAL

As we saw above (section 2.2), both girls agree on the necessity to "save Provençal", which, like saving the whales, is presented as a natural and obvious thing to do. How to proceed is however cause for debate, or at least reveals conflicting ideas on the nature of the group that is supposed to use the minority languages, and on its relations with the dominant language.

Léa presents languages as interchangeable: if French were the minority language, she would learn it all the same, framing the question in terms of equity in language diversity and relativising the beauty argument. Carla, on the other hand, presents herself as a language advocate, and argues in favour of concrete measures of language planning, namely getting people to speak the language outside the classroom.

In doing so, Léa and Carla present two outlooks on the linguistic situation of France, and on the Provençal speech community understood in this case as the total number of people in their environment capable of holding a conversation in Provençal. While Léa displays a certain awareness that they, as schoolchildren

learning Provençal, act as little else than a piece of equipment used to convey and support language (lines 1-4), Carla views their role as a potentially active one. What she advocates is for people to be told to use the language in everyday life; yet, and rather ambiguously, her use of impersonal forms ("fau" *one should* or *must*, lines 5 and 9) contrasts with both the active language of Léa (e.g. "diriam" *we would say*, line 3] and her own ("entendem jamai" *we never hear*, line 8). The pupils' experienced reality thus highlights the distance with an ideal world, the coming of which is left to the actions of hypothetical "others". In fact, those "others" can only be conjectural, since, as Carla states, they never hear Provençal outside the school; it is therefore quite likely that both girls would find it practically difficult to identify those who ought to save the language.

A further ambiguity lies in Carla's use of the imperative "parlatz provençau", *speak Provençal* (line 10) to encourage people to use the language, indicating that she assumes people are capable of speaking it. This suggests either that she has never tried to use Provençal outside school time, or that she is unaware of the processes that led to language minorisation and to her own subsequent learning of it.

This extract points to a linguistic inside, the (effectively) bilingual school, and to a linguistic outside, where use of French is not only the norm but also possibly, with some level of uncertainty, the only available medium for general communication. In effect, Léa and Carla's understanding of the Provençal speech community is reduced to the school, and possibly, given the quasi-absence of use of Provençal during recess, to the classroom. This leaves pupils with an idea of an imagined and rather mythical language community based on a "language" they have little first-hand experience of outside school time, Occitan or Provençal (a distinction that remains unclear for most), and a speech community limited to a small group of peers. This inevitably raises some questions as to the role of immersion in education in cases where intergenerational linguistic links no longer favour using the minority language as a primary medium of communication. Indeed, revitalisation processes are presented in Provence as a way to restore a broken link between the language of the people and the children who are said to have lost de language.

In fact, both pupils mention some contact with Provençal outside the school, but it remains sporadic, and often raises questions about their own speech as it is often met with incomprehension. Léa exchanges a few formulaic phrases with an older gentleman at her music club, and Carla occasionally speaks some Provençal with an uncle living further south, but says she doesn't really understand him. I suggest this latter issue strengthens the pupils' sense of community around the classroom.

The speech community issue resurfaced later during the interview, as we discussed the case of a local woman, Mrs R., a native speaker of Occitan whom I had met for another interview a year before, when she was 87. I presented the children with an audio extract of the interview, in which Mrs R. recounted in Provençal a dream she had had a few nights before. When I explained that she had only learnt French at school at the age of ten, the pupils expressed bewilderment:

Extract 4

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1         Carla       DETZ ANS / avans parli provençau
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		TEN years / before I speak provençal[11]
2	**Int.**	**parlava QUE provençau**
		she spoke ONLY provençal
3	**Carla**	***la cha::nce***
		how lucky
4	**Carla, Lea & Sarah**	***la chance***
		how lucky
5	**Carla**	***elle est née quand?***
		when was she born?
6	**Int.**	***elle a* vuechanta vuech ans doncas *elle est née en 1921 euh***
		she is eighty eight so she was born in 1921 er
7		***qu'est-ce que je vous dit 1921 22 quelque chose comme ça***
		what am I talking about 1921 22 something like that
8	**Carla**	***ouh la la***
		oooh
9	**Léa**	***en 1921***
		in 1921
10	**Carla**	***21***
		21

This extract apparently depicts the pupils' encounter with a reality they had not been aware of, namely the existence of people who had learnt French at school. The "monoglot speaker of Provençal" type is seemingly absent from the pupils' own conceptualisation of the Occitan or Provençal language community. This is not surprising given the Calandreta schools' emphasis on the value of bilingualism; yet it also displays a lack of awareness of the process of language change that took place throughout the 20th century, a central element in the charter myth of the Occitan language movement (see Merle, 1977 for a collection of accounts on those processes, exemplifying how common those narratives are among native speakers).

The pupils' "how lucky!" (lines 3 and 4) is difficult to interpret in this context, and should probably not be understood as a praise for a time when people could be monoglot speakers of Occitan. Yet the revelation of a time when the use of the language they are learning as pupils was widespread enough for monolingual speakers to exist certainly opened up a new dimension in their representation of Occitan as a language, and as their language. In fact, they switch to French upon hearing about the elderly woman's linguistic history, illustrating the contrast between their participation in a plurilingual speech community rather than in a monolingual one. Later during the interview, Carla expressed her wish to have been born at the same time as Mrs R., displaying perhaps less empathy towards Mrs R. and her own personal sociolinguistic story as a regret of not being able to participate in similar socialisation networks.

On a more general level, these excerpts show how children involved in a programme of minority language revitalisation react to both the aim of activists to bring into existence both a language community and its corresponding speech community or communities and to the awareness of their solitude as speakers of Provençal. In short, the categories adults promote remain abstract to them, and the

[11] While this last segment literally means: "before, I speak Provençal", I interpreted it as meaning "she only spoke Provençal" and reformulated it thus (line 2). The pupils aligned with my reformulation apparently without any problem.

give and take of everyday life implies the construction of a speech community where both French and Provençal are used not according to rules set by the institution, but according to emerging interactional patterns depending on factors such as interlocutors, moments, place etc. as I was able to observe during my time in the school.

3.3. Articulating existing speech communities with a newfound language community

The Scottish situation provides an interesting contrast to the Provençal one. According to the children themselves, there is no shortage of people who understand or speak what they now call Scots, whether at school, at home or more generally throughout Scotland. There is therefore an easily identifiable 'Scots' speech community in the immediate environment. However, the introduction by language advocates of the term "Scots" to replace what the children formerly identified as "Scottish", "slang" or referred to as "just the way we speak" implies the merging of the local speech community into a wider language community, distinct from the English language community. This provides pupils with a new array of categorising terms they can use to shape community membership around them, and leaves them with the task of articulating both types of community. In the following extract, the children express their lack of confidence as to who is concerned or not by the "Scots language" label.

Extract 5

1	**Int.**	and would you say / it's more old people than young people
2		who speak scots today / or
3	**Robert**	i think it's more young people
4	**All pupils**	((approve))
5	**Int.**	yeah? why / how would ye explain that
6	**Robert**	we:ll because er maybe cause old people didn't do that much
7		scots in school / so they probably didn't know that much /
8		and we know more cause we're doing it in school

In questionnaires I had asked them to complete, most pupils wrote "Scots" as their home language. Yet it remained unclear throughout both the interviews and my observations what reality this term addressed. In the extract above, as I raise a generational issue, Robert links knowledge of Scots with formal education, without however specifying what he means by "knowing Scots". What this reveals however is a certain unawareness of the full extent of language registers used by other generations, a fact confirmed through further observations. In fact, Scots, whatever it might refer to, is widely used among peers, whereas vernacular forms tend to be shunned in the family for intergenerational use, with children being told to "speak properly".

This however leads to a strong paradox: while language advocates present Scots as the language the children use everyday, it is however connected to formal education and to acquisition at school. While the children previously experienced a dichotomy between the high variety of the school and the everyday vernacular they used among peers, that latter variety is suddenly given high status and presented to them in written form. In other words, Scots comes to designate both the everyday vernacular of the

children and the prestige variety found in books, a duality that needs accommodating to by the children.

When Robert depicts Scots as spoken mainly by young people (lines 6-8), he is therefore keeping to safety, and referring to a speech community consisting mainly of his peers, without voicing too much of an opinion regarding the membership (or not) of adults. I suggest the children are developing a view on what their Scots speech community is from their own experience at school and with peers, leaving their linguistic contact with other vernacular speakers aside because of the ambiguous nature of Scots, standing between its status as a written medium and as an everyday language. This in turn underlines the insecure (and recent) nature of their representation of the Scots language community they are presented with at school. A representation that further destabilises their perception of the speech communities they take part in. Throughout interviews and observations, the children used the term Scottish rather than Scots, possibly illustrating further their insecurity with regard to the latter term.

4. CONCLUSION

Speech and language communities are places of socialisation for children, and the importance of how they are presented and represented should not be underestimated. Language revitalisation movements typically aim at destabilising existing views on such communities to replace them with others. Those other representations, being in essence mainly discursive and not (fully) effective in practice, potentially leave much space for insecurity as they replace existing frameworks of thought. The new categories proposed by adults are not fully functional, so that children must adapt them or create new ones, perhaps temporarily, to get on with the give and take of everyday life – to quote the title of Bambi Schieffelin's (1990) famous book on language socialisation.

Overall, the children I interviewed seemed happy to participate in such experiences – or experimentations – and never questioned their participation in such schemes. However, taking part in such programmes demands a strong capacity for adaptation and interpretation, as the often unclear views of adults, be it on language, community or any other matter, are projected on the children without any further consideration. The issue of the target groups where children are to be socialised is never raised, and it is assumed that they will integrate in a local community without any particular reflection about its nature.

One conclusion I draw from my work in Provence and Scotland concerns the importance of paying attention to the discourse of children. Not only does it reflect the discourse of adults, and the ideologies it is premised upon – in this case the necessity to make language and speech communities coincide – but it also reveals how children adapt the categories of adults to their own everyday reality. That reality is not one of language advocacy, or of language revitalisation, hence possibly the lack of discussion about language among children. Those languages have become their owns, and they need not justify themselves about this, unlike adults perhaps. What they need to deal with is how to categorise their environment, and how language fits in that categorising process.

A second conclusion concerns the importance of comparative work. Contrasting such different contexts as the Provençal and Scottish ones highlights different processes taking place under a similar ideological matrix, namely the necessity to

make speech and language communities coincide. In this, social movements based on language seek to imitate processes of nation-state construction, which points to the fundamentally modernist nature of language revitalisation movements. Other areas still need investigating, in particular the role of the written word in both programmes.

Finally, in terms of analysing language revitalisation, and language revitalisation movements, this chapter raises several questions, in particular about the socialisation of children into groups that are still mostly imaginary (i.e. they are in the process of being created) and into wider (e.g. regional, or national) language or speech communities. This dimension is rarely taken into account in the conception and implementation of language immersion programmes, especially in contexts where the target language is no longer a language of everyday use. This is especially true, I suggest, in cases where pupils are likely to cease being exposed to language revitalisation programmes (and to a more or less normative, or academic, version of the language) after primary school (this is especially the case of Provençal). More research needs to be conducted with regard to long-term consequences of short-lived language immersion at primary level, with current research so far (Boyer, 2005) highlighting only lingering memories of good times and very little language practice beyond school years.

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