

The linguistic norm in Northern Catalonia and community members' attitude towards their own language

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Summary: Standard Catalan is based on the Central dialect and, specifically, on Barcelona speech. However, there are standard variants for all dialects, except for the Northern one. Furthermore, the sociolinguistic situation in Northern Catalan differs from that in other Catalan-speaking territories in that the language has almost disappeared. Some cultural activists are still trying to recover the Catalan language by using it in as many situations as possible. The objective of this article is to analyse the variety of Catalan – standard or dialectal forms – used in literature, the media, and education and what this usage demonstrates about Northern Catalans' attitudes towards their own language.

Keywords: Northern Catalan, standard Catalan, sociolinguistics, language attitudes ■

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Northern Catalonia is the Catalan-speaking area located in the *Pyrénées Orientales* department, which includes the southernmost portion of France's Mediterranean coast. This department is divided into six regions. The Northern Catalan dialect is spoken in four of them: Rosselló, Vallespir, Conflent and Capcir. The Central dialect, also spoken in Barcelona (with a few differences), is spoken in the Cerdanya. The department also includes the Occitan-speaking region of Fenolhedés. The normative of Catalan is based on the Barcelona dialect, but the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* (IEC), the institution that officially regulates standards for the Catalan language, has also provided specifications for normative varieties of all dialects, except the Northern one. The aim of this article is to analyse the kind of language that Northern speakers use today in formal situations, in terms of the relationship between dialectal and normative forms. Their views regarding the use of normative Catalan in Northern Catalonia will be analysed in order



to determine if any normative-dialectal diglossia is present, and to examine what this reveals about community members' attitudes toward their own language. In order to better contextualize the current situation in Northern Catalonia, some historical perspective will be included, beginning with the work of Northern Catalan intellectuals in the latter half of the 20th century.

First, however, it is necessary to define and clarify some of the terms used in this article. The name “Catalonia” (or *Principat*, “Principality”) refers to the region in North-Eastern Spain. The region now known as Northern Catalonia was part of the *Principat* until 1659, when the Hispanic Monarchy ceded the north-easternmost counties of Catalonia to the Kingdom of France under the Treaty of the Pyrenees; thus, Northern Catalonia has been under French administration for more than 350 years. The most widely spoken dialect in Catalonia is the central one, which is spoken in the major cities of Barcelona, Girona, and Tarragona; a different dialect known as Northwestern Catalan is spoken in the western part of Catalonia, which includes the city of Lleida. In Northern Catalonia, the most widely spoken dialect is the Rossellonès or Northern dialect; as has already been stated, it is spoken in the Rosselló, Conflent, Capcir, and Vallespir regions, while Central Catalan is spoken in Cerdanya. Catalonia and Northern Catalonia are two components of the Catalan Countries (*Països Catalans*), a name given to the Catalan-speaking territories as a whole. The Catalan Countries also include the Balearic Islands, Valencia, the *Franja de Ponent* (eastern fringe) in Aragon, the microstate of Andorra, and the city of Alguer (Alghero) on Sardinia. This article uses Catalan placenames, including “Rosselló” (*Roussillon* in French), when no genuinely English term (e.g. Catalonia) exists.



The situation of Catalan in Northern Catalonia is extremely delicate with regards to almost all of the nine factors that determine the vitality of a language (UNESCO, 2003), which we are going to examine. This situation must be taken into account in order to understand the position of Northern Catalan speakers. The latest survey, the *Enquesta d'Usos Lingüístics a la Catalunya del Nord* (EULCN, 2016), shows that only the 1.3% of the population habitually speak Catalan, while 4.4% speak both Catalan and French and 87.1% speak only French. The remaining 7.1% belong to other linguistic profiles, including immigrants who speak a third language. This survey does not give the absolute number of speakers, but it does provide the

rate of intergenerational language transmission, which is lower than 1%. The most positive data is that a majority of Northern Catalans believe that Catalan should be more widely taught in schools and have a greater presence in social events. The Catalan language has currently no official status in France and is present in only a few media outlets in the area; its presence is entirely lacking in many other domains. The number of children learning Catalan is limited and the vast majority of the available pedagogical material for teaching literacy and other subjects is in other dialectal forms, primarily Central Catalan.

The sociolinguistic context in Northern Catalonia differs greatly from that of the dialectal areas that are located in Spain, and particularly from that of the neighbouring *Principat*, where the Catalan language is most widely spoken. This specificity must be examined in order to better understand the positions that Northern Catalans have adopted with regards to the language model they believe ought to be used in Northern Catalonia. Northern Catalonia administratively belongs to France, a centralist state *par excellence* that has created a strong national consciousness inextricably linked to the French language. Since the annexation of the northern Catalan counties under the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659, the population living between the mountains of Corberes, in the North of the *Pyrenées-Orientales* department, and the mountains of Albera, in the South, has been influenced by a system of propaganda that glorifies the official culture of the French nation-state, while demeaning all other cultures present within the “national territory” and relegating them to the sphere of family and village life. The local Catalan population, like many others in the case of the construction of the French nation-state, took advantage of the economic boost that the country was experiencing and further assumed the new model built from the French Revolution and the republican model of the 19th century: in many ways, France has been the state that provided people a hopeful future as citizens and opportunities for socioeconomic advancement.

Beginning in the late 19th century, the creation of a national consciousness tied to the French language was aided by a new French institution, the *instruction publique* or state school system. The 1881 Jules Ferry law definitively established free secular education in French. The effects of such changes were studied by the historian Eugen Weber, who sought to explain the process of transforming “Peasants into Frenchmen” (Weber, 1983). In the 20th century, the model of a rural society made up of small towns was left behind. Agriculture did not provide social advancement and

was associated with former times. Now, modernity imposed other models that were spread to all households through mass media, especially after cinema, radio and television became widespread. The language spoken by the characters that appeared on the small screen was French.

These changes obviously had sociolinguistic consequences, but the effects of key political events must also be taken into account, namely the two World Wars. The conflict of 1914–1918 sent the Catalan-speaking youth to fight, for the first time, against an enemy they shared with all French citizens. This bloodshed created an irreversible bond. More than 8,500 Northern Catalan soldiers perished fighting for France in this conflict. The first natively bilingual generations began to emerge after the war. These were the people who would experience the Second World War of 1940–1945. Once again, Northern Catalans went to fight for France, at a time of growing French nationalist sentiment. The members of this bilingual generation would definitively interrupt the linguistic transmission of the Catalan language to their children. The moment in which this intergeneration transmission ceased varied according to each family's social and geographic situation, but it can be affirmed that this social or sociolinguistic practice of speaking only French to children was introduced roughly during the war years (Puig Moreno, 1979; Verdaguer, 1992).



In order to analyse how debates around the proper language model developed in Northern Catalonia, it is necessary to understand the sociolinguistic and political situation in this region. Northern Catalonia was a society that associated its own language with an outdated model that was only suitable for use in certain restricted areas; it was not considered suitable for use in formal situations and high literature. However, the process of language normalization that took place in the *Principat* between the end of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century led to a fairly intense debate among Northern Catalan intellectuals. For a detailed discussion of this debate, see the recent studies by August Rafanell (2007) and Nicolas Berjoan (2011).

Disputes about the language of Northern Catalonia have always been of minor nature; there has never been a linguistic secessionist movement, such as those found in some Catalan-speaking areas like Valencia (where some locals argue that Valencian is a separate language from Catalan, despite consensus among linguists that they are the same language). In

Northern Catalonia, the Catalan language is seen as Catalan and not called by any other name. The Catalan spoken there is known to be a local variety with slight differences from other regions, but everybody is fully aware that it is the same language. In any case, it is the French state that has been responsible for creating ideologies related to languages, but it has not needed to create an ideological separation between Catalans because a border already had done so.

Despite the few early discussions of intellectuals referenced by Rafanell and Berjoan, during the 20th century there will be some activists who will act in the case of Catalan. They generally favour the use of standard Catalan over the Northern dialect. Behind this choice appears the fact that generally the standard has standing and brings them to a greater cultural, linguistic and historical community, *els Països Catalans*, the Catalan Countries. As the French language acquired great prestige, largely through compulsory education, it was important to move the own language closer to that of the *Principat*, where there was a stronger literary tradition in Catalan and a more favourable political situation. Planes (1976: 21) describes the situation in these terms:

Dialectalitzar massa és posar el català en una situació d'inferioritat de cara al francès [...], tota accentuació de diferències que existeixen entre catalans del Nord i del Sud és dolenta per al progrés del català. La població Nord-Catalana [sic.] és traumatitzada per la frontera.

This “trauma” caused by the state border has been more or less cured by the events of the late 20th century and early 21st century. The end of Franco’s dictatorship in Spain ushered in a new era of increased cross-border contacts, particularly with regards to the work of Catalan language and culture activists from both sides of the Albera mountains. Since the restoration of Catalonia’s autonomous government as part of the post-Franco political transition in Spain, Catalan has enjoyed a resurgence as a language of government and education. While Catalans from the Spanish side might once have envied the freedom enjoyed by their Northern neighbours, citizens of a democratic France, today the Catalan-speaking area with a higher standing is the *Principat*, whose international reputation has grown since the 1980s, with one especially transformative event being the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. This period marked the end of the superiority complex of “French Catalonia”, which in turn developed an inferiority complex in the face of the growing prestige of “Spanish Catalonia”. Despite

the recent Spanish economic crisis, there remain significant economic differences between the *Pyrénées Orientales*, which is one of the poorest regions in France, and the Spanish autonomous community of Catalonia. The Girona region, which borders Northern Catalonia to the south, is the richest in Spain. The economic situation in the Balearic Islands and Valencia is also better than in Northern Catalonia. Thus, these territories have a high reputation in the area and can be attractive in many ways.

In terms of economy, the South Catalan regions, especially Catalonia, are the most attractive; in terms of use of the own language, there is the same situation. Therefore during the second half of the 20th century, the standard of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* (IEC) became accepted and widely used in Catalan-language texts produced in Northern Catalonia. Orthographic, morphological and syntactic dialectal features are practically absent from these texts. Paroxytone words are accentuated as if they were proparoxytone (*musica* written *música*), plurals of words with elision of the final *n* recover the *n* even though it is never pronounced in the spoken dialect (*catalans*, not *catalàs*), the negation neglects the *pas* and keeps the *no*, etc.¹ Sometimes the letter *i* remains as the termination of the first-person singular of the present indicative tense (*canti*, *rebi*, *dormi*), but it rarely appears in others tenses (so *cantavi*, *rebrüi*, *dormissi* are usually written *cantava*, *rebría*, *dormís*).

In many cases, the language model used copies the Barcelona normative form, something that an earlier generation of “Catalanists” (in the sense of those who study the Catalan language) such as Berga, Amade, Pastre and Pons had advocated in the *Revue Catalane*, a Northern Catalan publication from the first decade of the 20th century. It is even possible to read and hear examples in which some forms that could be used, as in other dialects, are avoided in favour of Central Catalan forms. See this sentence: “Per aquesta sola raó podeu ben pensar que estimo el meu poble, el meu Rosselló i la meua bella llengua catalana” (Gensane, 1976: 7). In the Northern Catalan dialect (“Rossellonès”), this same sentence would read “Per *aqueixa*² sola raó podeu pensar que *estimi* el meu *vilatge*, el meu Rosselló i la *meua* bella llengua catalana”. *Aqueixa*, *vilatge* and *meua* are accepted as standard. The only change that would be made according to the standard of the time is *estimi*; the first-person singular verb ending *-i* is accepted in the new *Gramàtica de la llengua catalana* by IEC (2016). Creixell (1976) com-

1 For a full description of the Rossellonès dialect grammar, cf. Gómez Duran (2016).

2 *Aquesta* is also possible, although in a secondary form.

ments on these choices of words and advises the preferential use of the Rossellonès dialect; for example, if *ruixat* ‘downpour’ is admitted, there is no need to use *xàfec*, which is unknown in the dialect. However, this idea is not really followed by other authors.

Many texts contain dialectal words, but they usually appear due to the author’s ignorance of standard forms, as in this sentence: “Aleshores quin català dialectal tenim de llestar?” (Gensane, 1976: 8) Here there is a dialectal word and an expression that is limited to a restricted linguistic area: the verb *llestar* ‘to choose’ and the periphrasis of obligation *tenir de* ‘to have to’. Given that the article argues in favour of using a language without dialectal words, the author’s use of such forms cannot be considered deliberate.

In the 20th century, no academic studies were produced that might serve as a basis for a dialectal standard to complete the model of the IEC – or even diverge or differ from this model.³ The most important study was the PhD thesis of Pierre Fouché (1924a; 1924b), which covers phonetics, phonology and morphology from the perspective of historical grammar. His thesis, however, was published in Toulouse and does not appear to have had much of an impact on Northern Catalan society (we have hardly seen it mentioned in other works). A few years earlier, another author, Carles Grandó, had studied the grammar of Rossellonès Catalan. Though he was not a linguist, he wrote *El sota-dialecte català de Perpinyà i de la plana del Rosselló* (Grandó, 1917), a monograph awarded by the *Institut d’Estudis Catalans*, now exhumed and transliterated through the PhD thesis by Vilarasa Ruiz (2011). Finally, we highlight the work and the reflection done by Lluís Creixell during the last quarter of the century: despite the author’s lack of formal linguistic training, he was undoubtedly one of the leading experts and analysts of the local linguistic situation. Thus, for a variety of reasons, it must be concluded that the public debate about the Catalan language was not influenced by any academic studies by linguistics; rather, those involved in the debate were writers and others with an interest in the language, most of whom approached the question from an amateur perspective.

An example of a person with this kind of amateur vision is Gerard Vassalls, who was a strong supporter of dialectal forms (Grau, 2006) until, after several studies, he erroneously concluded that the Rossellonès dialect was derived from the Occitan language and most dialectal words were

3 Idali Vera, a Catalan teacher and politician from Elna (Roussillon), is preparing a style manual for Northern Catalonia media, which includes dialectal forms.

actually Occitanisms (Vassalls, 1974: 11).⁴ From then on, he opted for normative forms. This approach is shared by many authors, who also added that *Rossellonès* Catalan contains many Gallicisms, and they therefore chose to use standard Catalan. That said, it is important to be careful with discussing Northern dialect variants because many could be considered archaisms or variants of Occitan when, actually, they are not – rather, the proximity or promiscuity with this language leads to similar forms that have the same origin (Peytaví Deixona, 2009b). No proposals currently exist as to which words could be accepted as normative and which ones should be polished.

However, some authors wanted to claim the local lexicon as their own. The first “Rossellonist” to include dialectal words in a dictionary was the aforementioned Creixell (1974), in his *Diccionari bàsic francès-català*. This volume is aimed at French speakers from Northern Catalonia who want to learn to speak Catalan and who may already have a passive knowledge of the language. See some of the dictionary entries:

bein, faba! [R]; caram!
repas, àpat m., repeix m. [R].
papillon, papallona f., parpallol m [R].
tracteur, tractor m. [tr^ok'to]

In the dictionary, Catalan translations usually use the standard, but Roussillon dialectal words are also included and marked with [R]. In the last example, *tracteur*, Creixell gives the normative pronunciation so that Northern Catalan readers will see that it is different from the way they would pronounce the word, which is [trətt'œrt]. The transcription system used is adapted from the International Phonetic Alphabet because of “des nécessités pratiques et typographiques” (Creixell, 1974: 17). In the introduction to the dictionary the author devotes a section to dialect words, *rossellonesismes*:

Aquesta inclusió de mots de casa [...] en comptes de crear una impressió diferenciadora en l'utilitzador, ans al contrari, **ha d'ajudar-lo a prendre consciència d'una llengua pancatalana general, a superar el localisme integrant-lo precisament al corpus de l'idioma**. Cal insistir-hi, una colla d'aspectes [...] pertanyen al català d'altres zones i no són, doncs, estranyeses nord-pirinenques. Això fa que, per exemple, els rossellonesos no han d'hesitar a usar literàriament PUS (viu també a Mallorca). (Creixell, 1974: 11–12)

4 This article, published in *Sant Joan i Barres* (cf. below), is one of the few that deal with grammar: the author compares the phonetic of *que / què* (“that / what”) in Roussillon dialect and in Occitan.

Creixell's unpublished postgraduate thesis (*Diplôme d'études approfondies*), entitled *L'estàndard. Problemes de la normativització en cerca del model* (Creixell, 1989), aims to contribute to the general and situational reflection on the language model in the debate over the past and present Catalan language. This paper deserves special attention and its reading contextualizes quite well the state of the matter from the Northern Catalan perspective at the end of the 20th century. Creixell makes proposals for a local standard that considers tradition and variation while in pragmatic language he advocates a natural convergence of the dialect. He emphasizes the contributions that the dialect –and in this case, Rossellonès– can make to the language as a whole and he demonstrates the impossibility of applying Castilianisms, commonly present in the speech of Catalan speakers from the Spanish side of the border, in most of the Catalan variant used in the Rosselló. Creixell proposes the standardization of the genuine words used between Albera and Corberes as part of the whole Catalan language.

In those years many authors shared the same reflection with Creixell, showing that Catalan had most of the tools needed for a completely normal use of the language yet is still struggling to fully standardize. This opinion, that there is a need to avoid pointless disputes over the use of dialectal versus normative forms and find a middle ground, is advocated by Peytaví Deixona in his recent article (Peytaví Deixona, 2016). In fact, Creixell's comparative analysis of Northern Catalan includes comparisons to other languages; he is very knowledgeable about the range offered by diatopic variation. While the self-taught aspect of Creixell's work might be criticised, his studies demonstrate extensive professional knowledge of the subject matter and it is a shame that they are not better-known today.

The next vocabulary study that deserves mention is the *Vocabulari Rossellonès* compiled by Botet (1997). It is a dictionary of Rossellonès words with the equivalents in French and normative Catalan and contains examples most of which are from literary sources. Botet's dictionary served as the basis for Verdaguer's (2002) *Diccionari del rossellonès*. Both contain only dialectal words; words shared with the rest of the linguistic domain are not reproduced. Finally, Camps and Botet (2013) recently published the *Dictionnaire nord catalan / Diccionari nord català*, which gives three forms for each word: Northern, Central normative and French translation. Although these three dictionaries reproduce dialectal words, in all of them the adherence to the standard is evident.

Verdaguer also adds the etymology of the Occitanisms and Gallicisms, but he has a tendency to attribute to these languages more influence than it

would be, which has already been mentioned above (Gómez Duran, 2011). For example, the expression *a polit* ‘slowly, caution!’ is considered an Occitanism even though it also exists in Girona and it is construed using Catalan words: the preposition *a* and the adjective *polit* ‘clean, delicate’. In this case, the Occitan origin that Verdaguer proposes cannot be ruled out, because the same words exist in that language, but neither can the possibility be excluded that it evolved independently in Catalan. Some words containing the derivative *-aire*, such as *llauraire* ‘farmer’ (there is also *pagès*) or *jogaire* ‘player’, are also considered Occitanisms by Verdaguer, but once more, their origin could be explained by an internal mechanism of Catalan.

In short, up until the present a small number of grammatical studies have been produced that could serve as a reference for proposing a standard for Rossellonès Catalan. Existing studies of vocabulary actually could be used for regulation in this area, even though they were written without any intention of contributing to the creation of a standard, as seen in the introduction to the *Diccionari del rossellonès* (emphasis added):

aquest diccionari no pretén ser de cap manera normatiu, ni fins recollir la llengua estàndard, [...], cada nord-català és, en matèria de llengua, un cas particular. Sens dubte no seria constructiu de presentar una obra d'aquest tipus (normativa), no havent-hi la possibilitat d'aconsellar i encara menys d'imposar solucions. Més que res, una tal obra descoratjaria. El nostre llibre recull informació, sovint comentada, sobre la parla dels nord-catalans, sobretot als segles XIX i XX, gràcies a l'observació i a l'estudi de les obres publicades. El lector hi pot aprendre molt, i millorar, si vol, les seves coneixences lingüístiques. A més a més li pot servir a entendre un text i, si cal, a escriure'n un. Però en aquest segon cas l'escriptor resta lliure d'escriure tal o tal forma. (Verdaguer, 2002: 8)

We underline the sentence “cada nord-català és, en matèria de llengua, un cas particular” (‘every Northern Catalan is, with regards to language, an individual case’) because it illustrates the idea that there is no dialectal unity. In fact, this is one of the arguments used by several authors against the use of the Rossellonès dialect in writing:

Primerament a Catalunya-Nord, definició geogràfica de la divisió administrativa «Pirineus Orientals», constatem que se parlen un nombre important de dialectes catalans. Hi trobem els següents : els dialectes de la Plana del Rosselló, el de la Marenda, el de la Salanca, el del Vallespir, el del Fenllet, el de la Cerdanya, el del Capcir i afegim els dialectes professionals utilitzats pels hortolans, vinyaters, pastres, vaquers, pairers, fusters, mariners, pescaires, caçaires i també no podem descuidar l'existència de la parla occitana del Fenolledès. (Gensane, 1976: 8)

This idea would have immediately been refuted if there had been linguistic studies. The research carried out by Gómez Duran (2016) indicates precisely that subdialectal differences are minimal. The *Alta Cerdanya* must be considered separately from the rest of Northern Catalonia because speech there is close to Central Catalan, but the other *comarques* have a high degree of linguistic unity. As everywhere, there are words that have a very limited geographic extension, but the vast majority of the lexicon is shared, just as grammatical features are.

Verdaguer's position on the Rossellonès dialect deserves a more detailed analysis. Pere Verdaguer was a member of the *Grup Rossellonès d'Estudis Catalans* (GREC). He wrote a weekly column in Catalan for many years in *L'Indépendant*, the largest newspaper in the *Pyrenées-Orientales*, and he has participated actively in Northern Catalan literary circles as a writer and as a linguist. His work was recognized by the IEC in 1993, when he became the first representative of Northern Catalonia admitted to the Language and Literature Section (*Secció Filològica*).

In the articles that he wrote for *L'Indépendant*, some of which are collected in Verdaguer (1974; 1982), he sought to explain the standard language to people who had no access to education in Catalan, so that they could eliminate barbarisms and dialectalisms from their speech, thus bringing Northern speech close to the standard. Each article describes a particular aspect of the dialect, most commonly vocabulary, though syntactic and morphological problems are discussed occasionally. Verdaguer's position is ambiguous because he tries to use dialectal words that the reader can recognize, but sometimes, when he could choose a Rosellonès word accepted by the standard, he picks one that is unknown in this area. This can be illustrated with an article in which he speaks about the scope of negation, from the following example: “Cal pas anar a buscar aigua a la font” (Verdaguer, 1974: 104–105). The use of the postverbal particle *pas* instead of *no* is characteristic of the Northern dialect. However the verb *buscar* ‘to look for’ is not; the only local word is *cercar*. Here *cercar*, which is also admitted, clearly could be used, but Verdaguer prefers *buscar*, commonly used in Central Catalan. Likewise, he never uses the conjunction *mes* ‘but’, the determiner *qualque*, nor *un munt*, etc.

Verdaguer helped raise awareness of the Rossellonès dialect in different media outlets in Northern Catalonia, and even in the rest of Catalonia, but he never intended for these forms to be accepted as normative. In one paper, he paraphrases Pompeu Fabra, the author of the normative of the Catalan language, when he says that “convenia d'enriquir i envigorir la llen-

gua escrita amb les aportacions dels dialectes. Per això s'havia de veure amb joia que cada escriptor es complagués a usar el major nombre de paraules i expressions pròpies del seu parlar regional". He concludes: "interpretant la intel·ligent obertura de Fabra, al Rosselló volem per una banda recuperar les riqueses dialectals i per l'altra lluitar per la conservació i l'enaltiment del nostre idioma comú" (Verdaguer, 1976: 48–49). Although he wrote dialectalisms when he published in Northern Catalan newspapers, he never intended for the dialectal richness to enter the general dictionary. Thereby, when he writes formal texts, he only uses normative forms (and we should even say Central forms).

Verdaguer was one of the founders of the GREC, created in 1960.⁵ This association aims to promote the use of Catalan in Northern Catalonia, including in the area of education, and wants to generalize the rules of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*. Its adhesion to the standard is therefore clear. One of the contributions of the GREC was *Sant Joan i Barres*, a review published from 1962 to 1988. The review was modern-looking and its contents included lessons in standard Catalan, as well as short research articles and reflections on the language. The GREC included people from the world of letters, as well as members from the world of society and politics belonging to different ideological currents.

In the 1960s, the Catalan language began to have some presence outside the family, at the same time, paradoxically, that the use of the language began to decrease at home because intergenerational transmission had ceased after the Second World War. This process was slow and the first Catalan lessons were not introduced in elementary schools until 1975; Verdaguer explains how Catalan first came to be taught in a few schools:

5 As it appears in the magazine *Tramontane* (No. 439–440, 1960, p. 232), the first *GREC* is defined as follows: "Un *Grup rossellonès d'estudis catalans* a été créé à Perpignan. Son but est de vulgariser ce qu'il convient de savoir de la langue catalane et de mettre en relief la culture qui y est attachée." The management committee consists of "Membres d'honneur : J.S. Pons, C. Grandó, Guiter, Brazès, Francis. Président : Llech-Walter. Vice-présidents : Jordi Pere Cerdà, J. Deloncle. Secrétaire général : Paul Roure. Secrétaire : E. Oliveres-Picó. Trésorière : Mme Maiffret. Conseillers : Mmes Grau et Cayrol, MM. Bassèdes, Bauby, Bernis, Cortade, Chaumeil, Despéramons, Grau, Loumagne, Mas, Pépratx, Ponsich, Ruf, Ruffat, abbé Vergès." The *GREC* aims at "organiser des cours de langue, de littérature et de culture catalane en situant ces disciplines dans leur cadre géographique et historique". Information provided by Marie Grau, Université de Perpignan-Via Domitia.

Gràcies a la iniciativa d'un inspector i del G.R.E.C. la llei Deixonne s'aplica en algunes dotzenes de classes. Recordem que la llei Deixonne, del 1951, preveia la possibilitat d'ensenyar el català [like all other "regional languages" (*langues régionales*)] a raó d'una hora setmanal a condició que els pares ho demanessin i els mestres acceptessin de fer-ho (i en tinguessin la capacitat). Els mestres no tenien cap formació catalana [...]. En aquestes condicions els consellers del G.R.E.C. encoratjaven els mestres a ensenyar el català que sabien, amb incorreccions o no, amb dialectalismes o no, i que no es preocupessin si el seu català era molt local. (Verdaguer, 1984: 102)

The introduction of the Catalan language into the classroom sparked a debate in the pages of newspapers about the proper teaching model. In response to this controversy, the GREC devoted a full double issue of *Sant Joan i Barres* (nos. 63–64, 1976) to this question, publishing articles written by several readers and members of the GREC. It includes an article by Verdaguer that provides a good overview of the situation of the teaching of Catalan. Verdaguer raises the issue that Catalan-language classes are taught by those teachers who volunteer to do so, many of whom do not have any formal training in Catalan. As a result, the only Catalan they could teach is the Catalan they learned in their towns and villages: "L'actitud més lògica, més justa i més eficaç a adoptar consisteix a basar-se sobre els coneixements de la llengua parlada dels mestres voluntaris" (Verdaguer, 1976: 48). Costa and Duran (1981) also stated that teachers did not have any training and, therefore, they could only use this local Catalan. Verdaguer argued in favour of using this language model because parents could recognize it and would be able to talk with their children, whereas the teaching of standard forms could cause parents to feel that School Catalan is too distant from that which they spoke and therefore to conclude that attempting to speak their children's Catalan would be too difficult. Another reason to favour the teaching of local forms was that the children may already have a passive knowledge that they could convert into active without too much effort.

This same view was defended by Bernardó and Rieu (1977). They added that Northern Catalans found that the Catalan spoken in Spanish regions used many Castilian forms and therefore viewed it as a foreign language. The authors feared this mentality could lead to a rupture between elderly speakers and young people studying standard Catalan, a situation that would indeed come to pass in the last decades of the 20th century. While middle-aged people might more easily understand that there are differences between their own Catalan and the Catalan that children learn at school, elderly people might tend to focus on differences instead of points

of convergence. It must be remembered that the practice of speaking French to children had been very strongly established among the Northern Catalonia population. When grandparents made the effort to speak Catalan with grandchildren (which must be considered an exceptional situation) and the grandchildren used a word learned at school with which the grandparents were not familiar, the older generation said that the younger generation spoke “Spanish” and that they did not know this language. Inversely, the grandchildren corrected their grandparents because they did not speak Catalan “correctly” – that is to say, they did not speak the Catalan taught in schools (Peytaví Deixona, 2007). It was precisely for this reason that Bernardó and Rieu argued in 1977 that the language model taught in schools should be the Rossellonès variety, which at the same time would give this variety greater prestige. The situation of Catalan in schools will be discussed further in a moment.



Thus far, this article has looked at the sociolinguistic context, the (lack of) existing studies, and the views of a few authors with regards to the use of Northern Catalan versus standard Catalan forms. The remainder of the text will be devoted to analysing the varieties of Catalan used by several notable Northern Catalans, including reporters, teachers, public servants, singers, and both amateur and professional writers. Since the GREC stopped publishing *Sant Joan i Barres* in 1988, its only publication has been the *Almanac Català del Rosselló*. The conception of the *Almanac* is completely different: it is a collection of tales and poems written primarily by amateur authors, although there are some by professional writers. The degree to which texts adhere to the standard established by the IEC differs between amateurs, who do not know the rules, and professionals. In the first case, editors and proof-readers adapt the written form to the standard orthography, while retaining most of the morphological, syntactical and lexical forms of the Rossellonès dialect, though these are not accepted by the IEC. On the other hand, the professional authors use standard grammar, while attempting to maximize the use of Rossellonès terms – so long as these terms are also accepted in the normative dictionary.

Another publication that appeared during the same period was the magazine *Terra Nostra*, which has been published in Prada since 1965 by Ramon Gual. Each issue is a monograph, without set periodicity, with the common denominator of Northern Catalan topics. The language of publi-

cation is mostly, though not exclusively, Catalan. In addition to the magazine, Terra Nostra publishes on Catalan topics with a collection called *Biblioteca de Catalunya-Nord*. As in the case of *Sant Joan i Barres*, the language model is usually the standard, but it may include some lexical or grammatical Rossellonès forms, especially when songs and folk tales are transcribed.

In the last ten years, three more reviews in Catalan have appeared in Northern Catalonia. *Vallespir* (2005–) is entirely in Catalan. It is a cultural review focused on the Vallespir region and covers a variety of topics, including history, literature and nature. As in the *Almanac Català del Rosselló*, the articles written by the editorial board are in perfect standard Catalan, while the short stories by folk authors include some dialectal forms. They are engaged in the standard forms, but at the same time they respect the dialect as much as possible, which is the same criterion applied in *Mirmanda* (2006–). This bilingual Catalan-French university review examines the idea of borders, with a territorial focus that covers the Catalan areas lying on either side of the easternmost portion of the Spanish-French border, that is to say Northern Catalonia and the North of Catalonia. Finally, *Aïnes Noves* has been published by the professors of Catalan at the University of Perpignan in 2007, 2008, 2011 and 2016. Although the title is in a dialectal form (*aïnes* ‘tools’, rather than *eïnes* in the standard), the articles are in standard Catalan.

There have been other smaller magazines published in Catalan or bilingual Catalan-French, which Verdaguer (1997) and Jané (2011) list. Besides these journals, there are other media outlets that use Catalan, such as the online newspaper *La Clau*. The website itself and all news items published by *La Clau* have two versions, one in French and the other in Catalan. The approach to the language used is based on standard Catalan, but many Northern forms are included when accepted as standard, even if they differ from Central Catalan. For instance, they use the feminine possessive *meua*, the demonstrative *aqueix* or some specific words like *heretatge* instead of *herència*.

The position of *Ràdio Arrels*, however, is absolutely normative. Northern Catalonia’s only entirely Catalan-language radio station does not seem to have made a deliberate decisions to use only standard Catalan, but it must be noted that all announcers speak standard language, and many of them come from the Spanish side of the state border. Listeners are aware of this and when they are interviewed on the radio they naturally tend to speak in standard Catalan, if they are able to do so, due to the well-known phenomenon of mimicry.

Some presenters and entertainers speak in a dialectal form. Two examples are the composer-songwriter Joan-Pau Giné (1947–1993), author of the records *Adiu, ça va?* (Giné, 1978) and *Bona nit, cargol* (Giné, 1984), and the radio presenter Gerard Jacquet (b. 1955). The latter is a singer, poet, playwright and entertainer. As a host at the public radio station *France Bleu Roussillon*, Jacquet is committed to the Rossellonès dialect, with the intention of redeveloping it, though many Catalan nationalists criticize him because he does so in French. One of his most recent published works, *Le petit dico d'aquí I & II* (2008; 2009), includes various Catalan expressions used in the French spoken in Northern Catalonia, which he illustrates with everyday humorous situations with folklorist tone. He manages to give some much-needed dignity to the language in a region where its situation is precarious. In some cases, he uses words or phrases that have largely fallen into disuse: here he slips into “patrimonialization” or the fossilization of the dialect.⁶ The two volumes of *Le petit dico d'aquí* are bestsellers in Northern Catalonia, which shows that there is widespread interest in local language and culture, but this also reflects a situation in which, in order to connect with the Catalan language, most Northern Catalans must do so through French.

The songwriter Giné contributed to *Els llibrets d'en Titella* (Sabench / López / Giné, 1980), a book designed for teachers and consisting of ten children's tales presenting everyday situations. This book is unique among the publications reviewed for this article in that it offers an orthographical proposal that differs from the standard (as Vassalls did, as stated above). For instance, there are some adapted forms, such as an open *o* always emphasized with an accent: *lo que vòl dire; fôrves de los que l'han perduda*. This feature serves to distinguish between *o* pronounced as [u] (*dos, fonzò, tot*) and *o* pronounced as [o] (*tròbi, sòla, pòc*).

The publishing house *El Trabucaire* has been in operation since 1985. It publishes books in Catalan, Occitan and French, but has positioned itself as primarily Catalanist from the beginning. *El Trabucaire*'s books are quality products, both in substance and in form. They include literary and scientific works and books intended for the general public on topics such as history, sociology, and education, as well as a good number of dictionaries. The language model used by the publishing house is the standard, which is associated with a modern view of language, as seen in the company's definition of its own philosophy on its website:

6 Whatever it is, the writings of Gerard Jacquet would deserve both philological and sociological study.

La seva línia de força és d'afirmar i de demostrar pel seu treball que la cultura catalana i la cultura occitana són les expressions dinàmiques de pobles vius, i que es situen “a la punta” a nivell de la qualitat. L'editorial porta una especial atenció a la normalització de l'estatut d'autor nord-català: l'autor nord-català és un creador “sense frontera” que cal fer reconèixer com a català –o occità– i com a escriptor. [...] Les nostres llengües i les nostres cultures s'enriqueixen mútuament dels contactes que cal multiplicar i ampliar, en contra de tots els partidaris del tancament i de l'exclusió. Serà només al tractar les nostres llengües i les nostres cultures com a professionals, sent rigorosos sobre la qualitat tot respectant les nostres orientacions, que podrem arribar a una situació de normalitat cultural i perquè no esdevenir una eina eficaç del desenvolupament local.⁷

At the institutional level, when Catalan is used – which is not a common occurrence – it is always in the standard form. The municipal government of Perpignan makes some use of the language, unlike the Council of the Department (*Conseil Général*) of the *Pyrenées-Orientales*, which does not even have a Catalan version of its website.⁸ The University of Perpignan's website has some pages translated into Catalan.⁹ There are private institutions that promote Catalan, such as the rugby clubs USAP (rugby union) and *Dragons Catalans* (rugby league) and the educational association *La Bres-sola*. All of them have their websites in standard Catalan. Among private-sector companies, use of the language is increasing: new business objectives and opportunities are increasingly oriented southwards, towards the other side of the state border. In the case of the USAP rugby club,¹⁰ certain dialectal words appear on fan merchandise such as stickers for cars (*nins a bord* ‘children on board’, *aixurit* ‘clever’), but not in formal texts. A sign at the exit of the Aimé Giral stadium reads *Sortiu lentament* ‘go out slowly’ (close to the French *Sortez lentement*), whereas native speakers of the Rossellonès variety of Catalan would say “Salliu a poc a poc” (*a poc a poc* could be used at the stadium, because it is a normative form). Another example of the use of standard Catalan words rather than local forms is the absence on the USAP website of the word *jogaire* ‘player’, a word used by all Northern speakers, including members of USAP (players, staff or partners); instead, the club uses the standard form *jugador* in its official texts.

7 Website of the publisher *Trabucaire*, in the section *La Maison d'édition* [accessed 03/03/2012]: <www.trabucaire.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=2>. At our last access on 17/05/2016, we could not find this presentation any longer.

8 Website of the City of Perpignan, in Catalan version, and of the *Conseil Général* [accessed 11/05/2016]: <www.perpinya.com/ca> and <www.cg66.fr/>.

9 <www.univ-perp.fr/ca/> [accessed 11/05/2016].

10 Website of USAP [accessed 11/05/2016]: <www.usap.cat/index.php>.

The educational institutions that teach in Catalan are *La Bressola* (completely immersive), the school *Arrels* (partially immersive) and some bilingual schools in the public educational system (few subjects in Catalan). The language variety that they use is the normative one, but they try to use a few dialectal words whenever they can. The problem in relation to the dialect is, in some aspects, close to that which emerged when Catalan first began to be taught in a few schools in the 1970s, although to a lesser extent: there are not enough qualified teachers from Northern Catalonia. Therefore, many teachers come from the *Principat*, especially in *La Bressola* schools, which are private; teachers are not French public servants and may be hired from across the border. These teachers naturally speak their dialect, which is most often Central Catalan. On the other hand, teachers educated in Northern Catalonia at the Université de Perpignan-Via Domitia have learned normative Catalan. As a result, the Catalan spoken by people who studied at these schools is essentially normative.

However, there are approximations to the own dialect. The *Associació per a l'ensenyament del català* (APLEC) publishes a monthly magazine for children, *Mil Dimonis*, using mainly dialectal words and verbal forms. Since the first decade of this century, the local branch of France's Ministry of Education – the *Inspection Académique des Pyrénées-Orientales* under the aegis of the regional headquarters in Montpellier – has made timid attempts to recover the local variety in the few Catalan classes that are offered in public schools. The *Centre Régional de Documentation Pédagogique* (CRDP) has begun to publish children's books with Rossellonès words, as seen in titles such as *Llop meu* or *En Teo i el menjaire de lletres*.¹¹ This dialectalization should not be seen as a secessionist attempt, but rather as a way of maintaining local tradition.

The most popular Catalan-language novelists in Northern Catalonia today are Joan-Lluís Lluís and Joan-Daniel Bezsonoff. The former fully adopts the Central Catalan standard, though he sometimes uses some Rossellonès forms as witness marks. For example, the book *Xocolata desfeta* (Lluís, 2010) retells the same story in 123 different styles. Of these retellings, one is written entirely in the Rossellonès dialect, while the rest do not use it at all. On the other hand, Bezsonoff uses a model with some dialectal forms, albeit few. For instance, in *Una educació francesa* (Bezsonoff, 2009), a collection of articles published in the magazine *L'Avenç* based on

11 Publications can be accessed at the website <www.crdp-montpellier.fr/langues-regionales/catalan/ressources/sceren.html> [11/05/2016].

the author's childhood memories, each article may contain some words from the Rossellonès dialect (*de trucalembut* 'of doubtful worth', *un bri* 'a little bit', *alga* 'eagle', *emplegar* 'to use, to employ', etc.). Bezsonoff writes *la meua* (rather than *la meva* 'my'), *llur* 'their'. Verbs in the first person singular sometimes, but not always, end with the *-i* termination characteristic of Northern Catalan conjugation. Both of these contemporary Northern Catalan authors prefer to use a standard variety of Catalan that brings them closer to the rest of the linguistic area and allows them to enter the broader market for Catalan-language literature. The perception that standard Catalan is necessary for success is not necessarily accurate because the use of dialectal forms could give the work of Northern Catalan a unique appeal, even though 99% of their readership speaks a different dialect.



To recapitulate and conclude: Northern Catalan lacks a specific norm, unlike the rest of dialects, which have some specific grammar and lexical forms accepted as standard by the IEC. Some studies of the Rossellonès dialect were produced during the 20th century, particularly centred on vocabulary, but none of them really served as a basis for establishing a standard. Popular ideas have often carried a lot of weight; it was believed that there were too many subdialectal varieties and that standardisation was not feasible because it would necessarily exclude many local forms of speech, and therefore fail to solve the problem at hand because the new standard language would be too distant from popular forms.

In general, the actors whose work has been analysed here follow this rule: the dialectal language is for folkloric pieces, while the standard is assigned to elevated formal texts. Nonetheless, most of the authors introduce as many dialectal solutions as possible, demonstrating an appreciation for the language of the region. This shows that there is no doubt that people think that dialectal and standard forms belong to the same language; there is a clear identification. At the same time, it must also be noted that many dialectal forms are being lost because intergenerational transmission has long been interrupted and some of the new speakers have access to Catalan only through the school system, which teaches the standard.

The influence of Catalonia, both in terms of the more favourable economic situation and the strength of the Catalan language in almost all the domains on the Spanish side of the border, combined with the weak position of Northern Catalonia, is capital. Prestige is the crucial factor that

leads Northern Catalans to opt for the standard model of the language, with a few Northern touches. Standard Catalan, the language of Barcelona and Girona, is the only form that can stand as an alternative to the powerful French language and thus ensure that Catalan continues to have a presence in the life of Northern Catalonia. The language model is changing in the area because the interruption of intergenerational transmission was effective and today efforts at “revernacularization” take the best available path, which means looking southward across the state border, where the Catalan language remains widely spoken. ■

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