

○ **J. CENOZ, *TOWARDS MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION: BASQUE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE***

(BRISTOL: MULTILINGUAL MATTERS, 2009, PP. XVI, 271)

In Australia debates about language policy and language education are frequently contextualised in a monolingual language ideology. While Australia is a richly multicultural nation where many people are bi- or multilingual, in educational contexts, as well as in broader society, what ultimately matters is how well one has acquired standard Australian English. The languages of migrant and indigenous communities remain peripheral to a fundamentally monolingual sense of Australian identity. You don't need to be bilingual to be Australian; it's fine to be monolingual, as long as that language is English.

This attitude towards multilingualism is common in many English-speaking countries where the social and cognitive benefits of multilingualism (Cummins, 1976; Baker, 2003; García, 2009) tend to be subsumed under discourses of expediency and efficiency. It is not uncommon to hear arguments that multilingualism represents a lack of willingness to integrate, an economic or social burden, or is functionally redundant: these days everybody speaks English so what's the point in learning another language?

This view of language, however, is not shared in many countries where societies are historically multilingual and where multilingual education forms a cornerstone of linguistic, educational and social policy and practice. Many countries and regions have explicit objectives of second and third language acquisition at school. Others, including Luxembourg, Quebec, Wales and the Basque Autonomous Community, have bilingual, and in some cases multilingual language-in-education policies aimed at promoting not just the language skills of school-leavers but societal multilingualism. One of these regions, the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) is the subject of this book.

Cenoz seeks to map the complex linguistic terrain of the BAC by looking at language-in-education policies over recent decades and the ways these have influenced language practices. She describes an autonomous region of Spain where societal multilingualism has a long tradition but also one where language practices are rapidly changing. The Basque language, often positioned as a minorised language in relation to a dominant Castilian, now finds itself located within a broader and more complex linguistic field. This includes the role and status of English as an international language and the increasing

significance of migrant communities from Latin America and elsewhere who bring with them their own language biographies. As Cenoz points out: 'One of the main challenges [for Basque bilingual education] is the need to move from bilingualism to multilingualism and from a relatively homogeneous society to a multicultural society' (p.83). In order to do this, she argues, we need to take an international perspective, becoming informed of the different ways these issues have been addressed in other countries and adapting this knowledge to our own particular local contexts.

Cenoz poses the question of how best to understand and to respond to this complex language context by looking in particular at education in the BAC. Her text provides a thorough overview of the significant language-in-education policies and initiatives that have taken place in the BAC in recent decades, as well as a discussion of the numerous research projects that have looked at the Basque language and its place in contemporary Basque society. While much of the research discussed in the book has been published previously, its collation in one volume allows for an informed analysis of the sociolinguistic context in which Basque and other languages are being learned and practiced. The extensiveness of this research over several decades provides an opportunity to look deeply and critically at the success of language initiatives in the BAC from educational as well as sociolinguistic perspectives: an opportunity not available to many lesser-used language communities who do not enjoy the same level of institutional support for their language.

The strength of the book lies in this comprehensive presentation of this different data on language policy and practice in the BAC. These various data look at the issue of multilingualism and education from different perspectives, including a minority language maintenance perspective, an identity perspective (both in terms of individuals and Basque society), the perspectives of language acquisition and education, age, and, as the title suggests, a global perspective. These perspectives frequently intersect, but they also reflect different socio-political contexts in which language-in-education issues have been located, different problematics and different sociolinguistic and political aims to the research.

This opportunity for a comparative analysis of the different research in and around language-in-education in the BAC quickly leads, therefore, to the realization that multilingualism in the BAC, as elsewhere, is highly complex, in particular because of the different discursive, epistemological and ideological contexts of these data. The questions of how best to promote Basque and how best to promote multilingualism, for example, are related, but they are not the same. Does English represent a threat to the development of Basque, or does it represent a paradigmatic shift away from societal diglossia and towards linguistic pluralism? Likewise the issue of access to Basque language education is

often framed in terms of language rights and social justice, but the extent to which the educational and linguistic rights and needs of other groups, for example migrant communities, seldom appears as a research focus. This latter point is particularly relevant because, as is clearly demonstrated, schools in the BAC in which Basque is taught as a second language have significantly lower academic results than those in which Basque is a language of instruction. To what extent should we see this as a success for Basque language education and to what extent is it a failure of education in the BAC to cater to the needs of children who are not learning through Basque?

To her credit, Cenoz does not shy away from addressing the complexity of these at times competing discourses and ideologies. In order to chart a path through the educational and sociolinguistic issues surrounding multilingual education in the BAC she develops what she calls the 'Continua of Multilingual Education', based loosely on Hornberger's continua of bilingualism (Hornberger 2002, 2004). Cenoz describes her continua of multilingualism as 'a comprehensive tool to include the complex reality of multilingual education by looking at different possibilities that go from 'less multilingual' to 'more multilingual' and by looking at multilingual education resulting from the interaction of linguistic, sociolinguistic and educational variables' (p.47). She claims that the 'Continua of Multilingual Education': 'offers the possibility of looking at different linguistic, sociolinguistic and educational aspects of multilingual education without establishing closed categories and hard boundaries' (p.56).

Like all good books, this one raises more questions than it answers. And while Cenoz is not entirely successful in articulating a clear line of critique through the complex sociopolitical, epistemological and pedagogical terrain she is seeking to cover, overall the book provides a welcome contribution to an analysis of multilingual education in the BAC from both educational and sociolinguistic perspectives.

Beyond being an interesting case study, *Towards Multilingual Education* will be of particular use to researchers and educators in multilingualism in the Australian context for several reasons. Firstly, it points out the complexity of the issues involved and the need to develop critical, analytical tools that are adapted to specific contexts and that are able to respond to the needs and expectations of different sections of society. Secondly, it helps create an awareness of the extent to which particular language ideologies and epistemologies can influence language-in-education policy decisions because of the different ways in which the salient issues are conceptually framed. Thirdly, it shows that strong institutional support and investment in lesser-used languages is not in itself enough to guarantee success in the promotion of a language or a particular educational outcome. It underlines the importance for language activists, policy makers and educationalists to

think deeply and to work together to develop language-in-education strategies that are equitable, effective and locally appropriate.

Review by Adam Le Nevez
Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education
Université du Luxembourg

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