1. Introduction

The multilingual character of the Spanish state is defined by the coexistence of four languages: Castilian, Catalan, Basque, and Galician. Valencian is predominantly considered a geographical variety of Catalan. The Spanish Constitution of 1978 acknowledged Castilian (Spanish) to be the national language of the state and granted the rest of the languages, formerly dialects, coofficiality in their respective “Comunidades Autonomas” (henceforth C.A.). These languages vary considerably nonetheless in their status, institutional support, and number of speakers.

The aim of this paper is to present various results of research on intergroup perception between linguistic groups in Spain. We will argue that ethnocultural vitality and social identity of group members are both central concepts in order to understand two processes in intergroup relations: ingroup bias and attributions.

To this end we will proceed in the following way: first, we will discuss some unaddressed points in three main theoretical frameworks and the alternatives that we propose. Then, we will illustrate these points through the analysis of the social situation of five linguistic groups in Spain.

Finally, we will present the results of our research, which highlight that both ingroup bias and social attribution are processes that can be studied when language is the salient dimension of intergroup categorization. Moreover, they show that these processes can be better understood when ethnocultural vitality and comparative identity have a central role in the analyses.

2. Theoretical background

Tajfel’s theory (1978) states that people’s social identity derives from their membership in groups and is linked to the process of intergroup differentiation. This consists in maintaining valued differences in the ingroup in comparison to relevant outgroups in order to achieve positive distinctiveness. Two basic processes seem to play a major role in intergroup differentiation: categorization, which produces an increase in
both intergroup differences and intragroup similarities; and social comparison, which implies that a positive social identity of the members of a group is a direct consequence of the outcome of the comparison between the ingroup and relevant outgroups. Intergroup differentiation produces behavioural bias in favor of the ingroup.

When we think about the theory we find three different problems. First, the concept of social identity is the result of the comparative process between the ingroup and the outgroups, but it has nevertheless been measured empirically in absolute terms as the degree of identification with the ingroup.

Second, social identity and intergroup relations have been predominantly studied in an experimental context of two groups instead of a multigroup context. Moreover, most studies testing the theory have involved groups at the same level of inclusiveness. Under these circumstances the other group is always considered to be the negative referent of the ingroup. This implies a certain experimental reductionism in relation to most social situations, while it also takes for granted the universality of ingroup bias. This assumed universality might be questioned if we take into account a wider diversity of groups in each context.

Third, from the theory itself we cannot ascertain beforehand which group or groups will be chosen as outgroups.

Concerning the first and the second problem, we have developed a new concept called “comparative identity,” which is defined, in our case, as the difference between identification with the C.A. group and identification with Spain. This enables us to study social identity in comparative and interrelated terms, that is, as group identities that include one another at different levels of generality. Positive comparative identity would imply higher identification with the C.A. group than with Spain, while negative comparative identity would refer to the opposite case.

The second frame is the theory of ethnomlinguistic vitality and intergroup relations of Giles et al. (1977). It focuses directly on the role of language in intergroup relations. It amounts to an integration of the theory of social identity we have described so far and Giles’s (1973) theory of linguistic accommodation. The theory first analyzes the sociostructural determinants that might encourage a group to use its own language as a vehicle for communication or discourage it from doing so. These determinants are the status of the language, the number of speakers, and the institutional support it receives, all of which constitute the ethnomlinguistic vitality of a group.

Those groups enjoying greater vitality will use their language as a normal means of communication in a larger number of contexts. On the other hand, when members of a group have a stronger linguistic identity and perceive their language to be threatened, they will emphasize its use with a strategy called “linguistic divergence” (Giles 1973; Giles et al. 1977; Bourhis et al. 1978).

Thus, two factors seem theoretically relevant in order to understand the role of language in intergroup relations: ethnomlinguistic vitality (henceforth E.V.) and linguistic identity.

However, the theory does not state the possible interdependency of E.V. with respect to the context of comparison. Nevertheless, this context seems important to determine which group’s E.V. is high or low. That is, E.V. is a relative concept.

Moreover, the degree to which a group perceives its linguistic vitality might also help to determine the groups against which ingroup bias is shown. In relation to this point our hypothesis is that both high E.V. and high comparative identity will strengthen ingroup bias and will also help to select the groups against which this ingroup bias will appear.

Our third theoretical framework is that of social attribution. This refers to recent contributions to attribution theory, which attempt to render this theory and research more social (Hewstone and Jaspers 1984; Deschamps 1986). According to these authors, one way to do this is to relate social categorization and social identity with attributions.

The former authors also point out the interest in studying not only attributions about individual actors but also those concerning complex social events. An example of this would be the increasing use of a certain language in a given social context.

We think that when observers try to explain a social event, that is, the use of a language in our context, the type of explanations selected should be in accordance with the observers’ social identity level. In this sense, our main hypothesis is that subjects with a high comparative identity will tend to interpret language behavior through group attributions. Conversely, subjects with low comparative identity will resort more to personal attributions. By “group attributions” we mean those that refer to the social membership of the actor, as opposed to personal attributions that concern his individual dispositions or circumstances.

When we consider target groups (groups to which attributions are referred) in relation to their ethnomlinguistic vitality and their social identity, we would predict the following: first, high comparative identity will result in a high proportion of group attributions. Second, high vitality will also yield group attributions.

The joint effect of the two variables will increase group attributions. Likewise, when both variables are low, the ratio of group attributions will decrease. As to the cases where one of the variables is high and the other is low, we would expect that a high identity and a low vitality will
foster group attributions more than a low identity and a high vitality. Furthermore, when high identity and low vitality cooccur, group attributions will acknowledge the intentional character of the use of language as a means of reaffirming their social identity through a wider language use.

3. Linguistic differentiation in the Spanish context

At present different bilingual C.A. groups in Spain are redefining their status in a more favorable direction and expressing it by a wider use of their language (Basque, Catalan, Galician, and Valencian).

As the aim of the present paper is to focus on the ingroup bias of different linguistic groups and on attributions concerning language use, we will proceed by presenting a summary of our five experimental groups according to their E.V. and social identity (Ros et al. 1987). The results that follow can be better understood against this background.

According to the model of ethnolinguistic vitality (Giles et al. 1977), we can introduce the different vitality that these languages enjoy today by presenting an approximate outline of the situation. Their vitality is considered interdependently and in relation to Castilian (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Demography</th>
<th>Institutional Support</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Castilian</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalan</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>med-high</td>
<td>med-high</td>
<td>med-high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valencian</td>
<td>med-low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>med-low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galician</td>
<td>med-low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>med-low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Ethnolinguistic vitality of C.A. languages in Spain

Source: Ros et al. (1987).

who live in Catalonia identify themselves as Catalans and see this language as the basic dimension of their social identity (Strubell 1981).

Valencian does not have a strong vitality (Ros and Giles 1979). It is predominantly used in rural areas; people in urban areas, especially Valencia city, speak mostly Castilian (Mira 1981). Institutional support for the language is much weaker than that for Catalan in Catalonia. Some Valencians do not feel that their language is an important component of their identity or a language of prestige (Ros 1984). Others strive to define their "psychological distinctiveness" (Giles 1973) by augmenting their differences from Catalan and regarding their language as a unique variety.

Basque was recently standardized around the "Batua" variety and is spoken by around 27 percent of the population in the Basque C.A. Native speakers are called euskaldunak and are mainly concentrated in rural areas. Basque people that can only speak Castilian are called eraldunak. In the past Basque native speakers seeking social mobility spoke Castilian to their children. However, the changing status of the language has altered this trend and at present the young and more educated are learning and speaking their language (Ruiz Olanbuenaga et al. 1983). Institutional support for the language is growing, encouraging its use in primary and secondary education as well as in the mass media. Despite this rather diglossic situation in favor of Castilian, the Basque language seems the best symbol of their social identity (Ugalde 1979). This positive "psycholinguistic distinctiveness" is based on two facts: that their language is not shared by any other social group; and that it is a very antique language with unique historical roots.

Galician is spoken by the majority of the population that lives on agricultural and fishing resources. The majority of Galician speakers live in rural areas. Castilian is spoken mainly in the cities, especially in the capitals of the four provinces. Vilarino (1981) points out that there is a direct relationship between social class and language preference. Castilian having a higher status. Even though institutional support is slowly encouraging the use of Galician in education, Castilian continues to be more instrumental. Favorable attitudes toward the community language use are not as strong as in other C.A.s. Some teachers consider that speaking Galician is a hindrance for learning (Rojo 1981).

Summing up, we can see that the overall vitality of these languages is quite different: Castilian holds the dominant position, followed by Catalan, Basque, Valencian, and finally Galician. We suspect that these various patterns of sociolinguistic vitality will affect their language attitudes and ethnic identity.

Let us now examine the levels of group identification of our five
experimental linguistic groups, as shown in our previous publication (Ros et al. 1987).

While all groups identify strongly with the ingroup (direct identification), there is more variation in regard to comparative identification. We used the comparative identification index (identification with the C.A. minus identification with Spain) for two main reasons. First, it proved itself to be a better index than direct ingroup identification, due to its greater variability. Second, it fitted very well within our theoretical frame, according to which social identity is a result of a comparative and differentiating process.

Comparative identification is extremely high for the Basques, high for the Catalans, and lower for Valencians and Galicians. The Castilians are the only ones to identify themselves more with Spain than with their own C.A. ingroup. The groups with a high comparative identity also see their language as an important component of their identity.

In Table 2 we also present some results of different variables (obtained from the same sample as the present study; see Ros et al. 1987) that can help us understand our intergroup linguistic context; use of C.A. language; language preference; language identity; perceived ingroup evaluation by outgroups.

Perceived ethnonlinguistic vitality was also measured in our five experimental groups through two indexes: use of C.A. languages as opposed to Spanish in formal and informal contexts; and preference for speaking the C.A. language in comparison to Spanish. These indexes were chosen instead of the sociostructural variables used by Giles et al. since they give a more comparative understanding of the relative vitality of each language in an intergroup linguistic context in terms of the individual linguistic behavior.

When we compare the actual use of Spanish or the C.A. language to the preference for the use of either of them, we see that Spanish is strongly predominant in the frequency of use over the C.A. languages except in the case of Catalan. On the other hand, all the bilingual communities would rather speak the C.A. language, especially the Basques, thus showing an important gap between their linguistic preference and their actual performance.

The groups with a high ethnonlinguistic vitality, as in the case of Castilians and Catalans, think they are better valued by other groups than the rest.

To summarize, Catalans have a high social identity (comparative identity) and language vitality. Basques have a high identity but a mid-low vitality, and Calicians and Valencians are low in both dimensions. Castilians, the only nonbilingual group, have a negative comparative identity and a language with a high vitality. However, this vitality should not be attributed directly or exclusively to the Castilian group, since their language is not restricted to one C.A. but used nationwide.

4. Method

The sample consisted of 168 first-year university students (around 30 from each C.A. group) from the faculty of history. Each of the five samples was approximately equivalent to the others in terms of age, sex, and social and economic status.

In order to manipulate intergroup linguistic categorization we used the matched-guise technique (Lambert et al. 1960). Following this method, a tape containing the same weather forecast in each of the five languages was played to the groups of students. The order of the messages was randomized for every C.A. group; however, all of them heard their own ingroup language last. In addition, Basque never appeared as the first language, because it is the only language that is not understood at all outside its C.A. and therefore the meaning of the message could have been misinterpreted. The voices, though belonging to different speakers for the sake of native accents, were matched as to pitch and pace as much as possible. A small test among native judges confirmed all the voices as belonging to native speakers.

After hearing each of the five speakers, students filled in a questionnaire on which they were asked to identify the speaker's language, to describe in their own words the people who speak that language, and to provide reasons why that person spoke the language. Responses were then processed through content analysis, and one system of categories was developed from the data on intergroup perception (see Appendix 1) and another from the data on intergroup attribution (see Appendix 2).
Each sentence that expressed an independent idea was coded as a unit of analysis. Training of coders was stopped after they reached adequate reliability. Reliability indexes were also checked on a representative sample of questionnaires after the coding was performed and none of them fell below .85. (This means that agreement among the judges was obtained in 85 out of every 100 phrases.) We classified as group attributions categories 2, 6, and 9; and as personal attributions categories 5 and 7 (see Appendix 2).

Even though the samples were reasonably matched, as we have just stated, that does not imply that they are representative of their respective C.A. Hence generalizations with regard to C.A. group behavior and attitude should be made with great care.

5. Results

5.1. Ingroup/outgroup evaluation

Group descriptions were obtained through free answers of the subjects, which were content-analyzed. Initially a system of 70 categories was developed from the data. This scheme was later summarized, by retaining only those categories that were frequently used to describe at least one group. The remaining categories were collapsed within the category "others." The category system was exhaustive and all categories were mutually exclusive (see Appendix 1). As was mentioned earlier, each phrase that expressed an independent idea constituted a unit of analysis. Each unit was also rated in terms of its evaluative aspect as positive (1), negative (−1), or neutral (0). The latter coding was carried out according to the cultural standards of the evaluation conveyed by an adjective or a behavior. An agreement was reached among all judges whenever there was any discrepancy.

An evaluation index was developed to compare the evaluation of each ingroup to that of the different outgroups, as given by the subjects. This evaluation index is the proportion of positive attributes minus negative ones to the total number of attributes (positive, negative, and neutral) emitted by each subject for a certain group. This index has a range of −1 to +1. When it approaches the positive pole it denotes that positive evaluations are predominant; when it approaches the negative pole it indicates that negative evaluations prevail; and finally, when it nears 0, it shows that there is about the same number of positive and negative attributes.

Table 3 shows the evaluations given by each C.A. group in regard to each ingroup and each of the outgroups. An ANOVA was performed on the evaluations emitted by each C.A. group toward its own ingroup compared with the evaluation given to each of the four outgroups pair by pair (rows in Table 3). Let us examine in detail the results of this comparison. Only one C.A. group, Castilians, shows a significant ingroup bias in all comparisons. That is, Castilians upgrade their ingroup in comparison to the evaluation they give to all other groups.

Table 3 shows the statistical significance of the differences between the evaluation of each ingroup with each of the outgroups pair by pair (ingroup→outgroup, ingroup→outgroup, etc.)

Castilians increase their positive distinctiveness by enlarging their differences with respect to Basques, F(1,19)=9.43, p<.01, and so with respect to Catalans, F(1,16)=7.27, p<.05; Galicians, F(1,17)=5.80, p<.05; and Valencians, F(1,16)=5.55, p=.05.

Basques differentiate themselves significantly from Galicians, F(1,35)=13.96, p<.001; and Castilians, F(1,32)=4.41, p<.05. Valencians show a positive differentiation from Basques, F(1,19)=5.84, p<.05; and a tendency in the same direction in relation to Catalans, F(1,19)=4.68, p<.10. Catalans differentiate themselves positively from Castilians, F(1,25)=4.32, p<.05. Galicians are the only group not showing any sign of positive differentiation.

When we consider these results in relation to those of language vitality and social identity some interesting patterns come to light. Intergroup categorization in a multiple group context produces differentiation. However, this effect is not independent of the linguistic vitality and social identity of group members. Those groups that show a strong ingroup identification or manifest a more positive attitude toward their language use are the ones that show a more pervasive ingroup bias.
A second theme about outgroup selection is worth noting. The choice of the groups selected as outgroups also seems to be related to social identity and language vitality.

Groups with a high degree of E.V. tend to view other C.A. as outgroups. This is especially so in the case of Castilians, because they may feel the increase of the other languages as a threat to their own. On the other hand, bilingual groups who identify with their language and strive to revitalize it against the national language (and show it psychologically through their comparative identity) predominantly choose one outgroup, Castilians. That is the group that represents a threat to their social identity and language survival.

Those groups with a lower comparative identity either do not pick up any other group as an outgroup or tend to choose those groups with a more dissimilar linguistic and social identity from their own for this purpose.

5.2. Language use and social attribution

Content analysis was used for coding subjects' attributions. A system of 69 categories was developed. They were later collapsed into 12 major categories according to their content: “Characteristics of the language,” “Ingroup,” “Environment,” “Geography,” “Personal intention,” “Ethnocentrism,” “Lack of competence in other languages,” “Tautologies,” “Lack of identity,” “Error,” and “No answer” (see Appendix 2).

The type of attributions that emerge when subjects are freely allowed to respond seem to show the limits of the individualistic trend in most of the attribution research. Although a wide range of responses are placed on the individual level (i.e. “personal intention”) or the context level (like “geography” or “environment”), there are other attributions that focus on the group level since they imply attitudes shared within a group (i.e. the categories “ingroup” and “ethnocentrism”). Thus we suggest that besides attributions that have to do with the personal identity of the actor, others concerning his or her social identity are often used in the context of intergroup comparisons, especially when social categorization is made salient.

An analysis of correspondence was performed on the attributions for speaking the languages. This method (Benzcri, 1976) could be understood as a kind of principal components analysis valid even for nominal variables, based on an χ² distance computed from the theoretical hypothetical distribution where the variables are independent.

Input data is showed in Table 4. For each target group the answers given by the members of the ingroup are excluded. The data show the percentage of subjects who used each category (at least one) for each of these outgroups. Thus, we intended to study the attributions made by members of the outgroups to explain the use of certain languages.

We obtained two main factors in terms of categories of attribution and target groups. These two factors account for 91 percent of the variance. The first factor accounts for 77.41 percent of the variance and the second for 13.66 percent.

The axes can be defined according to the absolute contribution and the relative contribution of the categories. The absolute contribution of a category (row or column category) to a certain axis is the proportion of variance of this axis explained by this category. Adding up the absolute contributions of all categories (either from the row or from the column) we would have all the variance of the axis. Thus, in order to understand the meaning of the axis, one has to look at the absolute contribution of the categories.

The relative contribution of an axis to a category (row or column category) is the proportion of variance of this category explained by the axis. Again, if we add up the relative contributions of each of the axes to a certain category we would have all the variance of the category, provided that the axes accounted for 100 percent of the variance. The
coordinate of a category (row or column category) on an axis represents the score of the category on the axis. The sign is arbitrary. Categories with the same sign (positive or negative) covary in the same direction. Categories of a different sign covary in an opposite direction. In our case, we are interested in the absolute contributions of the categories in the rows (types of attributions) and the relative contributions of the categories in the columns (C.A. groups), that is, which types of attributions define the factors and how well the use of each community language is explained by the factors.

Linguistic behavior of a group will be best explained in terms of the high use of the attributions on the same pole of the axis (where the group is to be found) and in terms of the low use of the attributions of the opposite pole, all this notwithstanding the relative contribution of different attributions in the explanation of the variance of the axis.

Going back to the data (see Table 5), we observe that the first and by far the most important axis is defined at one pole by the category “ingroup identification” (40% of the variance) and at the other pole by the categories “characteristics of the language” (27% of the variance) and “lack of knowledge of other languages” (27% of the variance).

The second axis is defined at one pole by the category “lack of identification” (36% of the variance of the axis) and at the other extreme, by the category “ethnocentrism” (19% of the variance).

Let us see now how the use of the different languages is explained by the axes. That of Castilian is explained almost totally by the first factor (Ctr 99%). That means that speaking Castilian is attributed to “the characteristics of this language” and to “the lack of knowledge of other languages.” This is quite logical if we bear in mind that, while the Castilian language is common to all C.A. groups, the Castilian community is monolingual.

The Basque and the Valencian languages are also very well accounted for by the first factor (their respective Ctr is 83% and 54%) but at the

Table 5. Analyses of correspondence of attributional data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution categories</th>
<th>Axes and contributions:</th>
<th>Groups explained</th>
<th>Axe 1</th>
<th>Axe 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Axe 1</td>
<td>Cor</td>
<td>Axe 2</td>
<td>Cor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang. char.</td>
<td>-61</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingroup</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tautology</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. int.</td>
<td>-12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnocentr.</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack comp.</td>
<td>-93</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>-21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>-14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack ident.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-78</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistake</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>-29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Cor = coordinate, Ca = absolute contribution, Ctr = relative contribution.

Figure 1. Attributions of use of C.A. languages

ENV = environment  
ETH = ethnocentrism  
GEO = geography  
ING = ingroup  
LAN = language characteristics  
LI = lack of identity  
P.I. = personal intention  
TAU = taautology  
bas = use of Basque  
cas = use of Castilian  
cat = use of Catalan  
gal = use of Galician  
val = use of Valencian
other extreme. That is, speaking Basque and Valencian is attributed to “ingroup identification.”

The Galician language is almost perfectly accounted for by the second factor (Ct to the variance is 95%). In other words, speaking Galician is attributed to “lack of identification” and is much less attributed to “ethnocentrism” than the other languages.

The attributions for speaking Catalan are not explained satisfactorily by these two main factors.

5.3.2. Language attributions and social identity. Differences in the social identity of subjects making attributions have been taken into account following the proposals of the social attribution perspective. Accordingly, we divided our sample into two groups regardless of which C.A. they belonged to — one of subjects with high comparative ingroup identification, and the other of subjects with low comparative ingroup identification — and we compared their respective attributions toward the linguistic behaviour of each C.A. group through a second analysis of correspondence.

Table 6 shows the different use of attribution categories by high comparative identity and low comparative identity subjects. The first five columns show the percentages of “higs” (belonging to all C.A. groups) using each category for each language community. The following five columns show the corresponding percentages in the case of “lows.” Once again, for each target group we eliminated the answers of the members of the ingroup.

Two factors explain 69 percent of the variance. The first factor accounts for 51.76 percent of the variance and the second factor for 17.19 percent.

Looking at the data in Table 7 we see that the first factor is defined by “ingroup” (Ca 40%) at one pole and “language characteristics” (Ca 28%) and “lack of knowledge of other languages” (Ca 24%) at the other. Factor two is mainly defined by “personal intention” (Ca 18%) at one pole and by “lack of knowledge of other languages” (Ca 21%) and “tautology” (Ca 20%) at the other.

Table 6. Percentage of subjects with high and low comparative identity using categories of attribution for each C.A. group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution categories</th>
<th>Percentage of high comparative identity judging</th>
<th>Percentage of low comparative identity judging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lang. char.</td>
<td>Gal  51.9  59.1  25.3  11.4  43  30.4  1.3  8.9  2.6  6.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingroup</td>
<td>Cat  12.1  71.9  24.2  12.1  19.3  33.3  6.1  1.5  3.9  4.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Basq 10.5  60.5  22.8  7.0  38.2  17.5  3.5  —  —  —</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Val  10.2  39.2  30.3  6.6  38.2  27.6  1.3  —  —  —</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tautology</td>
<td>Cast 10.2  63.6  39.6  16.7  24.2  23.1  —  —  —  —</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. int.</td>
<td>Gal  8.6  54.4  31.6  26.3  29.8  38.6  —  —  —  —</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnocent.</td>
<td>Cat  12.1  58.6  41.4  19.0  22.4  43.1  5.2  5.3  1.7  3.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack comp.</td>
<td>Basq 12.1  12.1  41.4  19.0  22.4  43.1  5.2  5.3  1.7  3.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Val  10.2  63.6  39.6  16.7  24.2  23.1  —  —  —  —</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack ident.</td>
<td>Cast 10.2  63.6  39.6  16.7  24.2  23.1  —  —  —  —</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistake</td>
<td>Gal  10.2  63.6  39.6  16.7  24.2  23.1  —  —  —  —</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>Cast 10.2  63.6  39.6  16.7  24.2  23.1  —  —  —  —</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Attributions of use of C.A. languages by high and low comparative identity subjects

ENV = environment
ETH = ethnocentrism
GEO = geography
ING = ingroup
LAN = language characteristics
L.I. = lack of identity
P.I. = personal intention
TAU = tautology

basL = use of Basque seen by low identity subjects
casl = use of Castilian seen by low identity subjects
caslL = use of Castilian seen by low identity subjects
gall = use of Galician seen by low identity subjects
gallL = use of Galician seen by low identity subjects
vaLL = use of Valencian seen by low identity subjects
bassH = use of Basque seen by high identity subjects
cashL = use of Castilian seen by high identity subjects
cashH = use of Castilian seen by high identity subjects
gallH = use of Galician seen by high identity subjects
vaLL = use of Valencian seen by high identity subjects
Spanish is explained by the same type of attributions by both high and low comparative identity observers. We should also note that “highs” resort more often to tautological attributions in order to explain the use of languages, since speaking a particular language appears as entirely normal to them. Thus the use of the category “tautology,” which may seem to reflect a rather automatic and dull answer, may also be interpreted as a sign of a militant linguistic attitude in a group that considers speaking their language as the “natural thing” to do.

However, an important qualification is in point regarding the comparison of subjects with high versus low comparative identity. Given that the subjects with high comparative identity are a strong majority in some C.A.s but a minority in others, the comparison of highs versus lows in our analysis is clearly contingent upon the characteristics of the communities from which these two groups originate.

6. Discussion

This paper has focused on the importance of applying the concepts of comparative identity and ethnolinguistic vitality to the study of ingroup bias and social attribution in a linguistic intergroup context.

Two issues were of theoretical interest regarding the process of ingroup bias: one, the relevance of social identity and E.V. of group members on ingroup differentiation; and two, the reference outgroup to be selected in an intergroup linguistic context. In regard to the first issue, theory (Giles and Johnson 1981) predicts that ingroup differentiation will be stronger when individuals (1) identify strongly with their ethnic group and consider language an important dimension of their identity and (2) perceive their ingroup to have a high ethnolinguistic vitality.

Our work shows that comparative identity seems to be a better relational concept of social identity than ingroup identification in a context of intergroup relations. The hypotheses were that high E.V. and positive comparative identity would strengthen ingroup bias and would also help to select the groups against which ingroup bias would be shown.

The degree of E.V. seems to affect the scope of ingroup bias. The group with the highest E.V. is the one that shows a more persistent ingroup bias. This positive differentiation is obtained through all the rest of the groups. The groups with a lower degree of E.V. as compared to Spanish may represent a threat to the linguistic status of Castilian, especially in the case of Catalan. Groups with a lower degree of E.V. (Catalans, Basques, and Valencians) also show ingroup bias but to a smaller degree.
All groups except Galician differentiate themselves from at least one group irrespective of their degree of comparative identity. However, this concept seems useful to understand the outgroup selected for positive differentiation. Positive comparative identity represents a stronger identification with a social category of a lower level (the C.A. group) than a higher one (Spaniards). Hence the groups that have this positive identity (Catalans and Basques) select as outgroup the group that linguistically represents a strong hindrance to their linguistic revitalization, that is, the Castilian group. This is the only monolingual group in our study.

Negative comparative identity means more identification with the wider category of Spaniards than with the lower (C.A.) ingroup categorization. The Castilian group is the only one that shows this negative comparative identity, but one has to take into account that, given the fact that the national language and the ingroup language are the same, no language discrepancy is involved between these levels of social categorization. In this case all groups are selected as outgroups partly because their ingroup languages represent a threat to the status of the Spanish language.

Neutral comparative identity means equal identification with the C.A. group and with the wider social category of Spaniards. In this case when ingroup bias appears, outgroup selection seems to be determined by those bilingual groups that represent the most distant position from the ingroup in terms of ethno-linguistic vitality and linguistic attitudes. For instance, Valencians differentiate themselves from Catalans and Basques.

In short, E.V. seems a more important determinant of the scope of ingroup bias than comparative identity when the context is structured in intergroup terms and a linguistic categorization is made salient. However, comparative identity seems a useful concept to explain which groups will be selected in order to achieve positive differentiation. The general picture seems to suggest that targets for differentiation are chosen reciprocally between those groups that accept and those that reject the present ranking of the linguistic status, and that comparative identity may be used as a cue of the position of the different groups in this dimension.

When we look at the attributions concerning the use of C.A. languages, we should note first that explanations obtained from free answers do not exactly match the internal-external or situational-dispositional distinction, thus supporting the views of some of the critics of the attributional work (Lalljee 1981; Ross and Fletcher 1986) when they point out that the use of such general categories obscures the heterogeneity of the attributions. In our study another important distinction emerges between explanations that refer to individual factors like “personal intention” and “lack of competence in other languages” and those related to group membership like “ingroup identification,” “ethnocentrism,” and “lack of identity.” This distinction appears when subjects are asked to explain a linguistic behavior, which can be perceived as a result of either the personal or the social identity of the actor. We can therefore emphasize the dependence of attributional dimensions from the particular context of explanation, thus casting some reasonable doubts on the traditional abstract dimensions used in the literature.

The final set of hypotheses concerned the type of attributions expected toward groups that vary in their E.V. and comparative identity. It was predicted that positive comparative identity of target groups would lead to more group attributions and that high E.V. of target groups would also lead to the increase of group attributions. Only the first hypothesis was confirmed.

As for the interaction of the two variables, the only interesting result is that of high positive comparative identity and medium vitality (the Basque group). This group receives the highest rate of group attributions. This group is also the one that shows the most militant attitude toward language revitalization.

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Appendix 1. Category system for ingroup-outgroup description

1. COMPETENCE and ACHIEVEMENT. Intellectual (e.g. intelligent–stupid), cultural, and professional.
2. SOCIAIBILITY. Relational traits (e.g. rough–gentle, nice–unpleasant, warm–cold).
3. PERSONALITY. Personality traits not included in the previous category.
4. MORALITY. Traits that involve a clear moral evaluation (e.g. mean–generous, honest–deceitful, selfish–altruistic).
5. SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION. This category reflects
   (a) subject’s evaluation (acknowledged by the subject himself as his personal opinion) towards C.A. groups and their language;
   (b) explicit support or criticism of the group in its attempt at self-assertion;
   (c) emotional reaction toward the group;
   (d) references to personal experience with members of the group.
6. EVALUATION BY SOCIETY. Evaluation that the group receives by society at large.
7. IDENTITY. National identity or identification. Cultural identity. Active defense of language or culture. Language as a sign of identity.
9. OTHERS.
Note: For the evaluation index items were coded as expressing a positive, a negative, or a neutral view of the group. When the evaluation of items was not straightforward it was also coded as neutral. In the cases where there were doubts, agreement was reached among judges.

Appendix 2. Category system for language attribution

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANGUAGE. This comprises attributions referred to language aspects, such as its easiness or difficulty, its evaluation by the subject, or its degree of diffusion (e.g. “because it is an easy language” or “very widely used”).

2. INGROUP IDENTIFICATION. Speaking the language is attributed either to group cohesion or to the identification or active defense of the speaker toward his ingroup from a political, cultural, or linguistic point of view (e.g. “because it is the language of their group” or “because we have to actively strive for its survival”).

3. ENVIRONMENT. This encompasses explanations linked to situational demands like socialization, imposition by others, or work (e.g. “He speaks that language because it is the one spoken at home,” “because it was imposed on him,” or “because it is required in his job”).

4. GEOGRAPHY. This includes those attributions related to place of birth or residence (e.g. “Because he lives in Catalonia”).

5. PERSONAL INTENTION. This refers to interpretations referring to a purposive and intentional action on the part of the speaker, such as his subjective facility in speaking the language, his preference or personal effort, or a wish to make oneself understood (e.g. “because he/she wants to speak it” or “likes speaking it”).

6. ETHNOCENTRISM. This refers to language behavior perceived as a means to reject other group members, for instance through speaking a language they cannot understand (e.g. “because it is a means to reject those who cannot understand them”).

7. LACK OF COMPETENCE IN OTHER LANGUAGES. This relates language use to lack of ability in any other language.

8. TAUTOLOGY. This includes explanations that are not real explanations since they repeat part of the formulation of the question (e.g. “Because it is his language.” “Because he is Basque”).

9. LACK OF IDENTITY. This encompasses explanations that point out that a lack of identity leads the person not to speak that language.

10. ERROR. This includes all the responses that are not explanations for the linguistic behavior.

11. OTHERS. This includes all explanations not included in the previous categories.

12. NO ANSWER.

Notes

1. This research was conducted with the financial support of the C.A.I.C.Y.T. (National Commission of Technical and Scientific Research).

2. “Comunidades Autónomas” are the present semifederal divisions of the Spanish state, some of which have a language of their own.

References


