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PERCEPTIONS AND LINGUISTIC AWARENESS ON THE RESULTS OF SURVEYS CARRIED OUT IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY ON CATALAN DIALECTS¹

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Abstract

Antoni M. Alcover, the founder of Catalan dialectology, travelled widely throughout the Catalan linguistic domain between 1900 and 1928 in order to collect data to develop different projects, among which were a dialectal dictionary and a study on Catalan conjugation. In some cases, the scope of these journeys went beyond the Catalan area, because in order to further his studies Alcover travelled to various Spanish cities and visited many European countries to contact prestigious Romance scholars.

Several descriptions of these travels were collected in the form of a diary which in general systematically detailed the different activities, the anecdotes that emerged, the localities he visited, the informants interviewed and, in some cases, the most important characteristics of the language of various localities. In addition to these data, the diaries also collected a number of statements related to speech perception by both the interviewer and the informants. As a result of one of Alcover's views, published in his diary of 1907, which describes his first study trip abroad, his controversy with the writer Miguel de Unamuno became known, because the Majorcan dialectologist stated that the Spanish language was "rough, dry, too metallic" as opposed to the Catalan language, which was more "harmonious".

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In this work, all Alcover's diaries are analysed and the different appraisal elements that appear concerning language and dialects, both from the point of view of the researcher and of the informants, are classified. Some informants, as stated in several diaries, felt ashamed of using some morphological forms and they concealed or hid certain words or forms during the survey. Some of the prejudices and attitudes detected in the diaries are linked to the prejudices that are the result of the cultural tradition, which started already in the past centuries, but can still be found today, in the opinion of some speakers.

Keywords

perception, linguistic attitudes, dialectology, linguistic awareness

PERCEPCIONES Y CONCIENCIA LINGÜÍSTICA EN LOS RESULTADOS DE ENCUESTAS REALIZADAS EN EL SIGLO XX SOBRE LOS DIALECTOS CATALÁN

Resumen

Antoni M. Alcover, fundador de la dialectología catalana, recorrió ampliamente el dominio lingüístico catalán entre 1900 y 1928 con el fin de recopilar datos para desarrollar diferentes proyectos, entre ellos un diccionario dialectal y un estudio sobre la conjugación catalana. En algunos casos, el alcance de estos viajes superó el área catalana, ya que, para continuar sus estudios, Alcover viajó a varias ciudades españolas y visitó muchos países europeos para contactar con los romanistas más prestigiosos.

Diversas descripciones de estos viajes se publicaron en forma de dietario que solía detallar sistemáticamente las diferentes actividades que Alcover realizaba, las anécdotas que surgían, las localidades visitadas, los informantes entrevistados y, en algunos casos, las características más importantes del lenguaje de algunos lugares. Además de estos datos, los dietarios también reunieron una serie de declaraciones relacionadas sobre la percepción de los dialectos tanto por parte del entrevistador como por los informantes. Resultado de uno de los puntos de vista de Alcover sobre este aspecto, publicado en el dietario de 1907, que describe su primer viaje de estudios al extranjero, fue la polémica que se suscitó con el escritor Miguel de Unamuno, ya el dialectólogo mallorquín declaró que el idioma español era "áspero, demasiado metálico" comparado con el catalán, que era más "armonioso".

En este trabajo se analizan todos los dietarios de Alcover y se clasifican los diferentes elementos de valoración que surgen sobre el lenguaje y los dialectos, tanto desde el punto de vista del investigador como de los informantes. Algunos informantes, como consta en varios dietarios, se sentían avergonzados al usar algunas formas morfológicas y ocultaban o disimulaban ciertas palabras o expresiones durante la encuesta. Algunos de los prejuicios y actitudes detectados en los dietarios están vinculados a prejuicios que son el resultado de la tradición cultural, iniciados ya en siglos pasados, pero que, según algunos hablantes, todavía se pueden encontrar hoy en día.

Palabras clave

percepción, actitudes lingüísticas, dialectología, conciencia lingüística

1. Introduction

Antoni M. Alcover (b. Manacor 1862, d. Palma 1932), the founder of Catalan dialectology, travelled widely throughout the Catalan linguistic domain between 1900 and 1928 in order to collect data to develop different projects, among which were a dialectal dictionary and a study on Catalan conjugation.

Several descriptions of these travels were collected in the form of a diary which in general systematically detailed the different activities, the anecdotes that emerged, the localities he visited, the informants he interviewed and, in some cases, the most important characteristics of the language of various localities. In addition to these data, the diaries also collected a number of statements related to speech perception by both the interviewer and the informants. One of Alcover's views, published in his 1907 diary, which describes his first study trip abroad, led to his controversy with the writer Miguel de Unamuno becoming known, because the Majorcan dialectologist stated that the Spanish language was "rough, dry, too metallic" as opposed to the Catalan language, which was more "harmonious".

In this work, all Alcover's diaries are analysed and the different appraisal elements that appear concerning language and dialects, both from the point of view of the researcher and of the informants, are classified. Some informants, as stated in several diaries, felt ashamed of using some morphological forms and they concealed or hid certain words or forms during the survey. Some of the prejudices and attitudes detected in the diaries are linked to the prejudices that are the result of the cultural tradition, which already started in past centuries, but can still be found today, in the opinion of some speakers.

2. Linguistic awareness, language attitudes and linguistic prejudices

In addition to his extensive dialectal and lexicographic studies, Alcover is also known for his activity as a polemicist, who developed particularly in youth work, based on his contributions in different journals in Palma de Mallorca. Years later he had personal confrontations with various scholars, not only for philological reasons but also linguistic ones. Among them is especially Ramón Menéndez Pidal, to whom he dedicated an extensive treatise of almost 350 pages — the “Questions de llengua y literatura catalana” ‘Questions of Catalan linguistics and literature’ — in order to refute the theses of the Spanish scholar in which he declared the supremacy of Spanish over Catalan: “El catalán no tiene construcción propia. La sintaxis es la castellana y solo varían las voces” ‘Catalan does not have its own construction. Its syntax is Spanish and only the words change’.

Also noteworthy is the linguistic controversy that arose between Miguel de Unamuno and Alcover. This was reflected in the exchange that took place mainly in the pages of the journal *Nuevo Mundo* and in the Majorcan weekly journal *La Aurora*, edited and almost exclusively written by Alcover.

The reasons that moved Unamuno to argue with Alcover appear in a fragment of the *Dietari de l'exida de Mn. Antoni M. Alcover a Alemania y altres nacions* ‘Diari of the trip of Mn. Antoni M. Alcover to Germany and other countries’, written on July 7, 1907, and entitled “A Halle. Cal Dr. Schädel. El Dr. Villà. ¡El castellá qualificat de turch!” ‘To Halle. To Dr. Schädel’s house. Dr. Villà. The Spanish qualified as Turkish!’ (*Bolletí del Diccionari de la llengua catalana*, BDLC, V, 1908, 13-14).

Unamuno’s reaction responds to three stimuli: to the perception that Alcover and his friends have of the Spanish language — ‘troben aquexa llengua molt aspra, seca, massa metálica’ ‘they find this language very rough, dry, too metallic’; to the contrast that they make with Catalan — more ‘armoniós’ ‘it is more harmonious’; and to the statement that speaking Catalan with a Catalan accent serves to give it a certain softness.

Alcover’s opinion about Spanish and his perception of this language are based, on the one hand, on linguistic prejudices that can be seen in the statements of the

Majorcan dialectologist; and, on the other hand, on the opposition that he proposes between Spanish and Catalan, which is manifested in some cases as a confrontation between the dominant language and the dominated one.

Linguistic attitudes are a manifestation of the social attitude of the individual in relation to his language and the use that he makes of it. They are based on linguistic awareness, since individuals are aware of certain linguistic realities that affect them.

Linguistic prejudices are also included in the section on linguistic attitudes. In addition to prejudices, based on stereotypes or beliefs, these attitudes also cover aspects such as self-esteem, prestige or rejection. As will be seen in the following section, Alcover was aware of these sociolinguistic aspects while developing his studies of dialect research.

As for his awareness of his own language, it is undeniable that the exaltation and purification of Catalan completely polarized Alcover's life and activities. And these attitudes were motivated by usual nineteenth-century feelings of love for the motherland and language.

With respect to the perception of languages other than his own, Alcover's opinions on Spanish, which were susceptible of criticism by Unamuno, are indicative of certain value judgments, of certain linguistic prejudices. That is to say, Alcover had internalized, in an uncritical way, some appreciations relative to Spanish and its perception. These assumptions are, in fact, a part of his cultural legacy and in turn affect the way, also inherited, of understanding the reality that surrounds him.

Alcover's opinions (prejudices) are the result of a wider tradition that goes back to the Enlightenment of the 18th century. During this century (see Tusón 1997) the idea, later assumed by the Romantics and especially by the German politician and philologist Karl Wilhelm Humboldt, that languages come from the "genius" of nations, was consolidated. And it, in turn, is the result of two elements: the sort of government and the climatic characteristics of each land.

In 1782, the same idea can be found in the *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* by Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, and in 1784 in the Languedocian writer Antoine de Rivarol, who insists on the union between the character of nations and the

“genius” of their languages and associates the musical, voluptuous languages with the benign climates and the rough, deaf languages with the hard climates.

These stereotyped opinions also affected the views of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who, in the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, adopts the former ideology and, when referring to primitive languages, again establishes differences between languages because of the climate. From this moment on, the contrast between languages of the north, sweeter, striking and clear, and those of the south, loud, lively and dark, expanded. Saussure himself (1972: 203), in talking about the causes of phonetic changes, repeats the widespread idea that changes are motivated by “une adaptation aux conditions du sol et du ‘climat’”. However, the climate factor does not seem decisive, according to him, since it does not admit generalizations.

The “sweet-rough” pair, which was also used by the Valencian scholar Marco Antonio de Orellana in his work *Valencia antigua y moderna* in the 18th century, includes appreciation values: the word “sweet” implies a positive assessment. And the negative assessment of “rough” is what offends Unamuno, who in turn expressed other prejudices, also inherited from tradition, and other negative considerations towards the Catalan language.

3. Perception and linguistic attitudes in dialectal enquiries

Centred mainly in rural areas, although some urban areas were also visited, Alcover’s surveys fit fully into the parameters of traditional dialectology, which, in its initial stages, was exempt from a sociolinguistic perspective. However, his diaries show certain problems that in some cases become recurrent subjects. These problems are concentrated in two sectors. On the one hand, in the set of social variables that can intervene in dialectal variation, such as age, sex, profession, social class, origin or level of education of the informants; on the other hand, in the set of linguistic attitudes that can induce the speakers to a certain use of their dialect: identity, linguistic awareness, self-esteem or prestige. They can have linguistic repercussions, because all contribute directly to linguistic variation and, more particularly, to dialectal variation. The last group will be examined in this paper.

Diaries include information on the various attitudes that could be presented by the informants surveyed, and which extend pragmatically along two opposing poles: from disinterested collaboration in fieldwork to misunderstanding in relation to the objectives of the surveys, passing through attitudes which denote a high dose of linguistic prejudices, adopted especially by educated people.

In general, the response of the informants interviewed during the various stages of the survey was positive, although there are samples of misunderstanding, which generated attitudes of rejection and desertion. Alcover collects some of these experiences in his journals.

At Montlluís, in the Alta Cerdanya, neither of the two selected informants, “neither the old nor the young are able to understand our objective, and we realize immediately that we bother them, although they, genteel as they are, strive to conceal it”² (BDLC, III, 1906-1907, 271).

In some cases the fear of ridicule appears: “Dr. Schädel is coming to ask her too. That woman, the seller, gets nervous and ends by telling us that we are laughing at her”³ (BDLC, III, 1906-1907, 273-274).

And there are also prejudices regarding dialects: “In the tobacconist’s there would be twelve or thirteen people, small and large, men and women. [...] Two gentlemen come in, one from Perpignan, and, when they see us and find out what we are doing, the man from Perpignan tells us: “*Mais* you, making these people talk, you will not find the real Catalan.” “We are not looking for the real Catalan precisely,” I say, “but the one which is spoken here, and as they speak it, not educated people, but those who are not.” “But,” he replied, “here you will find nothing more than *patués*, and Catalan is a language with a grammar that is sold in Perpignan and is written in Barcelona.” “But you see,” I answer, “we are not interested in what they say or sell in Perpignan or what they have done or stopped doing in Barcelona, but in what is

² “...ni la vella ni la jove s’arriben a fer càrrech del nostre objectiu, y al punt traslluim que feym nosa, encara qu’elles, fines com són, malavetjin amagarmosho”.

³ “S’entrega’l Dr. Schädel per treure’n raca també ell. Aquella dona, l’estanquera, s’apura i acaba per dir-mos que mos en reym d’ella”.

spoken in Montlluís, and that is reason why we have come”⁴ (BDLC, III, 1906-1907, 273-274).

Faced with these attitudes, Alcover has no choice but to withdraw: “That gentleman excuses himself and ... goes away, and we do the same, with much regret that we can not get all this linguistic treasure, locked up in that unapproachable people”⁵ (BDLC, III, 1906-1907, 274).

Next, other linguistic attitudes are illustrated with examples of diaries.

3.1 Self-esteem

Regarding self-esteem, from a linguistic point of view, Alcover detected, especially in the Valencian area, a notable lack of consideration for language: “...people from Elche have the same problem as those from Monòver and Alicante: they love their language too little; they hold it for nothing”⁶ (BDLC, X, 1918-1919, 169).

The lack of affection towards the language is also found in the Aragonese border: “Catalan people from Aragon have a great misfortune: they feel inferior for speaking Catalan, they despise their language deeply, and they believe that by speaking Spanish, they are a great thing... And they do not want to call themselves Catalan, but Aragonese. Poor people! It is the infallible way of being annulled and killed as a people. No one will ever go there to learn Spanish from the rude mixture that they make of languages, not speaking any of them well”⁷ (BDLC, III, 1906-1907, 326).

⁴ Dins l'estanch hi devia haver dotze o tretze persones entre petits i grans, homes i dones. (...) entren dos senyors, un d'ells de Perpinyà, y, com mos veuen, y s'enteren de lo que feym, el de Perpinyà mos diu: —*Mais* vustès, fent enraonar aquesta gent, trubaran pas lu *veritable* català. —És que no cercam, li dich jo, el *veritable* precisament, sinó el qu'es parla aquí, y tal com el parlen, no la gent de lletres, sino'ls qui no'n tenen cap. —Però, respon ell, aquí nu trubarán vustès qu'un patués, y el català és una llenga que té una gramàtica que la venen a Perpinyà y que la feren a Barcelona. —Però veu, li replich, ara per ara no mos interessa lo que diuen o venen a Perpinyà ni lo que han fet o dexat de fer a Barcelona, sino lo que parlen a Mont-lluís, y per això hi som venguts”.

⁵ “Aquell senyor s'escusa i... buyda, y nosaltres feym dos diners de lo metex, amb molt de greu de l'ànima de no poder treure tot aquex tresor lingüístic, tancat amb tants panys i forrellats dins aquella gent inabordable”.

⁶ “...pateixen els d'Elx del mateix mal que els de Monòver i els d'Alacant: estimen massa poc llur llengua; la tenen per no-res”.

⁷ “Aquests catalans d'Aragó tenen una gran desgràcia: se tenen a manco parlar català, desprecien fonament la llengua pròpia, i se figuren, parlant castellà, tenir... la *Seu plena d'ous*, i no es volen dir catalans, sinó aragonesos. Pobra gent! És la manera infalible de romandre anul·lats i morts com a poble.

3.2 Prestige

Prestige, which motivates positive attitudes in speakers, can be considered as a process of concession, esteem and respect towards individuals or groups that have certain characteristics, and also implies the imitation of their behaviour and beliefs.

Alcover frequently finds the preponderance of certain varieties with respect to others. The latter, because of the pressure of the prestigious variety, gradually lose their characteristic features. It is the penetration of the variety spoken in Barcelona in Catalonia, or the dialect of Perpignan in French territory. The result is the adoption of features, both phonetic and morphological, of the dominant variety, which motivates the propagation of linguistic change.

The influence of Barcelona is confirmed by Alcover in several localities in both eastern and western areas. Thus, he says: "In Figueras the influence of the Barcelona dialect is great"⁸ (BDLC, III, 1906-1907, 363).

And, as regards the western area: "As Tremp is the capital of the watershed of its name and of all these mountains and it is more in contact with Lleida and Barcelona, there is a powerful invasion of the dialect from Barcelona, which can be seen in people of a certain culture who have left the population. This causes a divergence between the language of children and illiterate people and the language of those other people, a divergence that is found immediately among the people who we have gathered"⁹ (BDLC, III, 1906-1907, 343).

As for other morphological aspects, some speakers from Lleida show the influence of Barcelona on the pronunciation of the subjunctive in [-i], [-is], [-i], [-in] of the central and eastern dialects, "but it is only used by some self-conceited people

Ningú hi anirà mai a aprendre el castellà de la barreja toixarruda i grollera que fan de les llengües, no parlant-ne bé cap".

⁸ "A Figueres és grossa la influència del dialecte barceloní".

⁹ "Com que Tremp és la capital de la conca del seu nom i de totes aquestes muntanyes i està més en contacte amb Lleida i amb Barcelona, s'hi nota tot d'una una poderosa invasió del dialecte barceloní, que es manifesta preferentment en les persones de certa cultura i que han sortit de la població. Això fa que resulti una divergència entre el parlar dels nois i gent il·literata i el parlar d'aquelles altres persones, divergència que troben tot d'una entre la gent que hi tenen aplegada".

who want to imitate the language of Barcelona, by cutting their own linguistic personality”¹⁰ (BDLC, X, 1918-1919, 239).

This influence has more powerful repercussions on educated people and on people who move frequently.

The influence of Perpignan is also felt in Roussillon. In Prats de Molló, Alcover notes that “... some are people of a certain culture ... but they resent an excess of the linguistic influence of Perpignan. Like Barcelona in all Spanish Catalonia, in all French Catalonia Perpignan exerts a great linguistic influence, introducing and imposing its dialectal variety in all places”¹¹ (BDLC, III, 1906-1907, 264).

3.3 Linguistic rejection

Linguistic attitudes are manifested through behaviours that can be positive – acceptance of their own linguistic variety — or negative — rejection. Alcover pointed out certain negative attitudes that are reflected through the denial or the concealment of dialectal traits by informants from various localities.

In Alcalà de Xivert “...the subjunctive in *-os, -o, -on* (*canto, cantos, canto, canton*) is already found; but they are ashamed in the presence of outsiders and hide it, although sometimes they say it without realizing”¹² (BDLC, X, 1918-1919, 201).

The same happens in Mallorca, particularly in Son Servera: “Those people of Son Servera who want to hide their accent pronounce [æ] (between a clear [a] and a open [ɛ])”¹³ (BDLC, XI, 1920, 37). In Son Servera they pronounce [ɛæ] the stressed ‘a’.

The reason of these reactions is shame or the fear of appearing ridiculous, mainly to outsiders or external observers.

¹⁰ “...però sols l’usen alguns presumits que volen fer lo parlar de Barcelona, escapollantse llur pròpia personalitat lingüística”.

¹¹ “...alguns son gent de certa cultura (...) pero se ressenten un poch massa de l’influència llingüística de Perpinyà. Lo metex que Barcelona dins tota Catalunya espanyola, Perpinyà dins tota Catalunya francesa eczerceix una gran influència llingüística, aficant y imposant per tot arreu la seua varietat dialectal”.

¹² “... ja’s troba lo subjuntiu en *-os, -o, -on* (*canto, cantos, canto, canton*); però se’n donen vergonya davant els esters i se’n amaguen, si bé llavò los escapa”.

¹³ “Els serverins que volen dissimular llur accent fan [æ] (entre [a] clara i [ɛ] oberta)”.

3.4 The relationship between Spanish and Catalan

The more or less intense coexistence of two languages in one territory originates phenomena that affect all linguistic levels. This fact, in itself a source of variation and change, complements the internal linguistic factors generated by the dynamics of language and by extra-linguistic factors, such as society and context. When speaking of the contact of languages in Catalonia, the relationship between Catalan and Castilian cannot be ignored. The linguistic phenomena resulting from this interaction may be interferences, convergences, borrowings, and alternations and, obviously, affect the dominated language to a greater extent than the dominant one.

In relation to the influence of Spanish, Alcover speaks about what happens in the Valencian Country and in the Balearics, especially in Valencia, and at the beginning of the 20th century there was a clear Castilianisation of society and use of Spanish in schools (BDLC, X, 1918-1919, 166) and in preaching (BDLC, X, 1918-1919, 178). At the same time, an anti-Catalanist attitude has been created that has lasted until today: “In the Kingdom of Valencia negative attitudes and rage against *catalanistas* and even Catalan people are still very intense and alive”¹⁴ (BDLC, XII, 19121-1922, 333).

4. Two particular situations

Alcover's writings constitute concise compilations of various information that provide data on factors that may have a direct or indirect impact on the development and results of the dialect survey. In general, the dialectologist never offers an overall view of a territory or a specific dialectal area but rather makes particular statements about some of the localities visited. Nevertheless, the diaries gather explicit commentaries on two Catalan-speaking territories that belong administratively and politically to other nations: Roussillon (also called Northern Catalonia) and the city of Alghero in Sardinia. Alcover, from his personal point of view, makes a few brief

¹⁴ “Dins tot el Reyne de València segueix ben remolesta i vitenca la prevenció i la betzèrria contra els *catalanistes* i fins i tot contra els catalans”.

observations and poses an unfavourable prospect in both cases. Let us look at what he says about Roussillon.

4.1 The case of Roussillon

Initially, Alcover notes that in Roussillon the language used to address an outsider is French and that, in his presence, native speakers deny that they know how to speak Catalan. Thus, in 1906, he accounts for one of the surveys. They find an old lady with a granddaughter, “about thirteen, who starts by saying: *Je ne sais pas parler catalan*. This utterance is usual among the youth of these territories. However, they speak Catalan among themselves; in front of a stranger, in French”¹⁵ (BDLC, III, 1906-1907, 271).

In addition to this initial attitude, the dialectologist highlights the indifference that speakers feel towards Catalan: “I had already mentioned to Dr. Schädel that, when entering the Spanish Catalonia, things would change completely; the indifference and coldness towards the Catalan language that we find all over French Catalonia would end, except for very few exceptions, and we would find, almost everywhere, enthusiasm and fervour towards it, and we would no longer find any difficulties or obstacles for our studies”¹⁶ (BDLC, III, 1906-1907, 278).

Finally, Alcover cannot avoid offering a negative view of the future of the language in this territory, which he rectifies partially after a conversation with one of the interviewees. He argues that Catalan is preserved at the family level. However, this fact shows the treatment that Catalan receives as language B in a situation of clear diglossia.

¹⁵ “... d’uns tretze anys, que comença per dirnos: *Je ne sais pas parler catalan*. Aqueixa sortida es obligada entre’l jovent fi d’aquexes terres. Amb tot y axò, ells amb ells parlen català; devant un foraster, en francès”.

¹⁶ “Ja hu havia fet avinent a n-el Dr. Schädel, que, en entrar dins Catalunya espanyola, mudaria la cosa de sol a rel, s’acabaria aquella indiferència y fredor envers la llengua catalana que trobàvem per tot arreu dins Catalunya francesa, salves raríssimes escepcions, t trobaríem, casi per tot, entusiasme y fervor envers d’ella, y ja no toparíem en pus dificultats ni entrebanchs, p’els nostres estudis”.

4.2. The case of Alghero

The situation regarding Catalan is no more favorable in the city of Alghero. Alguerés undergoes the pressure of Italian: “He [Alcover refers to the Italian philologist Venanzio Todesco] has told me to speak Catalan to him; I have done so, but he soon responded that he realized that it was not the same thing to hear Alguerese as Catalans: people from Alghero have Italianized their pronunciation of Catalan very much, and that is why it is easier for Italians to understand them than speakers from Catalonia and the Balearic Islands” (BDLC, VII, 1912-1913, 343).¹⁷

For this reason, Alcover changes to Italian to address Todesco and people from Alghero (BDLC, VII, 1912-1913, 343): “In view of the difficulty I have noticed they had in understanding me, I spoke to them in Italian when I had to tell them something that needed to be understood soon and well” (BDLC, VII, 1912-1913, 348).¹⁸

The pressure on Alguerés does not come only from Italian but from the Sardinian dialects. Thus, “Alghero in Sardinia is a linguistic islet, I mean, one only speaks Catalan in Alguer; in other towns of Sardinia, even those closest to Alghero, people speak Sardinian dialects, almost all of them from primitive Latin or invaded and saturated with Latin” (BDLC, VII, 1912-1913, 348).¹⁹

As was the case with Roussillon in Northern Catalonia, Alguerés arouses little interest among the speakers: Joan Palomba, a teacher of Alghero, enthusiast of Catalan, author of a *Gramàtica de l’Alguerès*, very appreciable [...] is the only one or

¹⁷ “Ell m’ha dit que li parlàs català; jo ho he fet, pero ell aviat m’ha dit que comprenia que no era lo meteix sentir parlar algueresos que catalans: els algueresos han italianisada molt la pronuncia de llur català, i per això pe’ls italians son més bons d’entendre que no els catalans o balears”.

¹⁸ “En vista de la dificultat que he notada que tenien d’entendre’m, los parlava en italià quan els havia de dir res que fos necessari que ho entenguessin aviat i bé”.

¹⁹ “L’Alguer dins Sardenya és un illot lingüístic, vull dir, sols se parla català a Alguer; a les altres poblacions de Sardenya, fins les més acostades a Alguer, parlen dialectes sarts, sortits casi tots del llatí primitiu o invadits i saturats de llatinitat. De manera que el català d’Alguer du demunt les costelles dues grans influències: 1a. la de l’italià literari; 2a. la dels dialectes sards, veinats de l’Alguer. Aquestes dues influències i l’aïllament de Catalunya i de tot l’altre domini lingüístic català han obrat tan fort demunt el català d’Alguer, que li han donada una fesomia tota particular, que la allunya massa de totes les altres varietats catalanes, de tots els altres dialectes catalans”.

almost the only one who worries about the fate of his dialect in Alghero, that is to say, of *Catalan Alguerés*” (BDLC, VII, 1912-1913, 348).²⁰

The prospective is negative for the dialect: “The impression that Alguerés has given to me and listening to its speakers has been one of sadness. I have found the language too detached, too *distanced* from the other Catalan dialects; and I have found the speakers too much in love with Italian, too cold for their native tongue. I am very afraid that, except for Palomba, there are very few who want the dialect for anything more than to talk with family and friends or to hide from outsiders who do not inspire confidence” (BDLC, VII, 1912-1913, 349).²¹

5. Conclusions

The results of Alcover’s fieldwork to develop three of his fundamental projects for the knowledge of Catalan varieties — the *Diccionari català-valencià-balear*, *La flexió verbal en els dialectes catalans* and a grammar whose materials have been lost — provide some remarkable data about phonetics, morphology, syntax, lexicon and folklore which give an account of the state of the language and its dialects at the beginning of the 20th century. They also include specific aspects related to the methodology used in the fieldwork and the data collection process. And, lastly, they also offer, as the previous reflections have shown, a set of information related to the linguistic attitudes of the informants that undoubtedly influence the quality of their answers.

In an incipient period of Catalan dialect studies, it is remarkable that Alcover took into account, albeit impressionistically and non-systematically, certain aspects related

²⁰ “En Juan Palomba, Mestre Públic d’Alguer, entusiasta del català, autor d’una *Gramàtica de l’Alguerès*, ben apreciable [...] En Palomba és l’únic o casi l’únic que es preocupa a l’Alguer de la sort del seu dialecte, és a dir, del *català alguerès*”.

²¹ “De manera que l’impressió que m’ha feta l’alguerès i el sentir els algueresos, es estado de tristor. La llengua l’he trobada massa decantada, massa *distanciada* dels altres dialectes catalans; i els algueresos els he trobats massa enamorats de l’italià, massa freds per llur nadiu llenguatge. Me tem molt que, fora d’En Palomba, no siguen ben re-de-poquets que’l vulguen per qualche cosa més que per parlar en família i amb els amics per amagar-se dels forasters que no inspiren confiança”.

to the incidence of sociolinguistic variables and the importance of linguistic attitudes and their repercussions on the development of dialect researches.

A view of the present dialectal reality reveals the almost complete disappearance of the subjunctives in *-o*, *-os*, *-o*, *-on*, to which Alcover alluded, and the situation of Rosellón and the city of Alghero are critical. The dedialectalisation process develops inexorably and the diglossia threatens language substitution, since it has moved from unidirectional bilingualism to French or Italian monolingualism.

At the same time, Alcover was aware that dialect enquiries could fail because of the prejudices of informants, when in some cases they prefer forms of dominant or more prestigious varieties instead of their dialectal realizations. In order to avoid this type of belief, he chose as informants, for his verbal morphology surveys, children and young people, who, in his opinion, were free of this sort of prejudice. Although he, as we have seen in the first part of this work, was not alien to the linguistic prejudices resulting from a deeply rooted tradition, and which, in turn, were mixed with personal feelings and beliefs especially when his mother tongue came into confrontation with a dominant language.

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