Language Policy in the Province of Alicante

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Alicante is one of three provinces in the Autonomous Community of Valencia in eastern Spain. Since 1982, Valencian has had official status in the region alongside Castilian. Whilst neighbouring Catalonia is considered an example of successful language revitalisation (Fishman, 1991), the vitality of Valencian in the province of Alicante varies considerably according to geographical and social circumstances (Survey of Knowledge and Social Use of Valencian, 2010).

Following a successful pilot study in 2013, this paper will present original data to be collected in early 2014. Adopting Spolsky’s tripartite framework of language policy (2004), the fieldwork will test the hypothesis that Alicante province is linguistically diverse and that language practices, beliefs and management vary according to the geographic and diachronic context.

This paper will analyse fieldwork data and argue that if efforts to revitalise Valencian are to succeed, language management must be revised so that future measures consider the language ecology of Alicante (Haugen, 1972) and target local circumstances, rather than the Valencian Community as a whole. In addition to analysing the data according to Spolsky’s model, participants’ linguistic self-representation will be disclosed through an analysis of ethnographic material collected in the form of linguistic autobiographies. As such, it will be possible to position Valencian in both the individual and community repertoire, and comment upon how language policy in the province of Alicante has changed over time.

References


Survey of Knowledge and Social Use of Valencian 2010 <URLhttp://www.cefe.gva.es/polin/docs/siesdocs/encuesta2010/index.html>, accessed 01.08.13

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