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Paolo Coluzzi. *Minority Language Planning and Micronationalism in Italy: An Analysis of the Situation of Friulan, Cimbrian and Western Lombard with Reference to Spanish Minority Languages.* Bern: Peter Lang, 2007. 348pp.

Reviewed by Federico Gobbo

It is always difficult to make comparison between sociolinguistic profiles of languages belonging to different areas, as the variables to be taken into account are so many that one runs the risk of obtaining meaningless results. Nonetheless, the risk can be avoided if the analysis of the sociolinguistic profiles and their comparison are supported by strong and clear models. This is exactly the case in this ambitious book, which aims to describe the situation of three minority languages in Italy (Friulan, Cimbrian and Western Lombard) and compare them with three minority languages in Spain (respectively, Galician with Friulan, Cimbrian with Aranese, Western Lombard with Asturian).

The focus is mainly on the minority languages in Italy, Spanish minority languages being used for comparison. However, if three chapters are dedicated to a granular description of the sociolinguistic profiles — more or less the second half of the book — the first half of the book describes the model, which is still based on Cooper's (1989) classic partition of language planning into status, corpus and acquisition. The author recognizes that more subtle distinctions, e.g. the neoclassical vs. historical-structural approach by Tollefson (1991), or the non-ecological vs. ecological approach by Mühlhäuser (1996) are “insightful and useful and they roughly match each other, but they could all be subsumed under a dichotomy that seems to me essential if one wishes to understand the motives that lie behind language planning, and therefore appreciate the choice of means and results” (122). The essential dichotomy meant by the author is majority language planning vs. minority language planning, respectively related to majority languages (such as Italian or Spanish) and minority languages (already mentioned).

This model is actually used for obtaining the sociolinguistic profiles that are applied both to Italy and Spain through comparison and contrast. In particular, the most interesting parts are devoted to the intertwined concepts of nationalism, regionalism, and so on under the dichotomy macronationalism vs. micronationalism. The contrast between Italy and Spain is very interesting exactly because the two countries share some common traits in their recent history (described in Chapter 4), so that the differences can emerge with particular clarity in the book.

To accommodate the title “micronationalism in Italy,” the author was obliged to locate the main focus of the book (Friulan, Cimbrian and Western Lombard) in the Italian context, briefly describing the situation of Valle d’Aosta/Vallée d’Aoste, Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol, Slovene in Italy, and other examples. This choice has the unavoidable result of incompleteness and a certain superficiality. If the description of Slovene in Friuli makes sense for obvious reasons, since Friulan is mainly spoken there, why deal for example with Aostans, if they have no evident connection with the minority languages under analysis? A great deal of data is (rightfully) provided, but, in my view, the unwary reader could be confused, and the non-specialist could not always find his or her way easily. Another point of potential confusion is use of the term *Milanese* instead of Western Lombard as the title of Chapter 9, when Western Lombard was (correctly) included in the title of the book. The author explains his choice in this way: “the term Milanese will be used for its brevity and, most importantly, for its currency and diffusion” (252). This seems unconvincing, as the book is written in English, and the amount of literature about *Milanese*/Western Lombard in English is not so large as to justify the argument of diffusion (it would be different if the book were written in Italian). Finally, the treatment of the political phenomenon of the Northern League (*Lega Nord*) and ‘Padanian’ nationalism is already partly out of date, though this is hardly the fault of the author, given the rapid changes in political situation in Italy in the last three years.

However, the above criticisms are of minor importance compared with the general value of the book itself. In fact, this book is a good example of how socio-linguistic modeling and data can be fruitfully put into relation, in order to extract more information from the data than is ordinarily possible and to verify the model in action at the same time. The book is recommended especially to people involved in the field of minority language planning in other parts of the world, both for comparison with the data results and for possible use of the model with a more methodological perspective.

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