

MINORITY LANGUAGE FAMILIES IN DIASPORA: CATALANS IN NEW YORK CITY



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Catalans in NYC: Sociolinguistic Profile



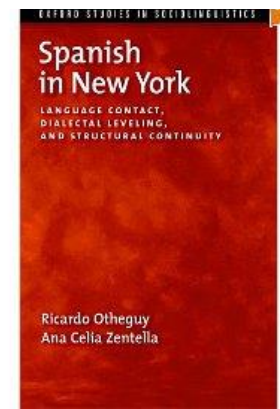
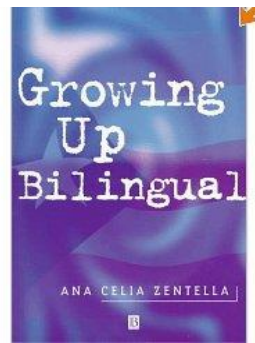
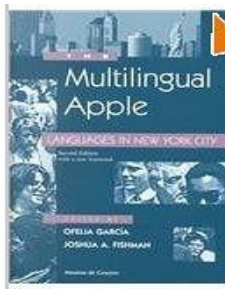
- **Immigrants of opportunity**, or ‘fortunate immigrants’. They are people trying to improve their lives, but who will stay in the USA only as long as it works for them.
- Upon arrival in the new country, they do not usually seek out a community of **compatriots** who have already established a minority identity.
- A reputation (**stereotypes**) does not precede them.
- They keep tight links to their **extended families** in the home country (frequent visits and phone/electronic communication).
- Abundance of **mixed marriages**.
- Relative abundance of **resources**.
- **High expectations** for themselves and their children (96% university)



Lindenfeld and Varro 2008; Extra and Verhoeven 1993;
Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Casesnoves & J. Daussa 2015

CATALANS IN NYC: SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE

- Upon arrival, they encounter a **highly multilingual society** that however promotes the **hegemony of English**, and in which **Spanish is massively present** (Fuller 2013; Del Valle 2006).
- Even though there is a traditional **abandonment** of mother tongues other than English (Fishman 1991), the spread of an ideology of **cosmopolitanism** (Woolard 2008, 2013) among wealthy people brings the promotion of **bilingualism**.
- Bilingualism is especially encouraged in **English and Spanish**. Other languages count less (pace Mandarin)



CATALANS IN NYC: SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE



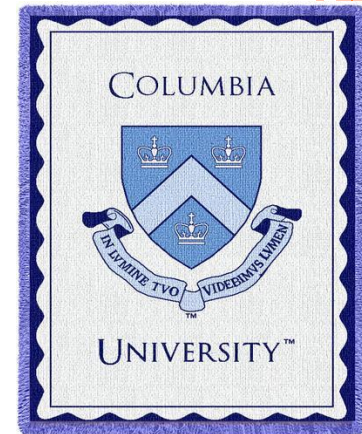
- The Catalan presence in the public discourse of the USA is **basically non-existent**; it is a bit more visible in NYC (Casesnoves & J. Daussà 2013, 2015)



nyork.cervantes.es



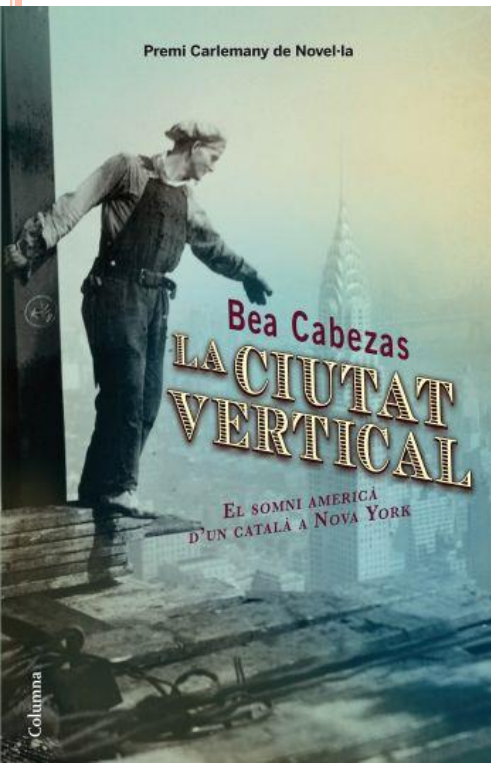
**Generalitat
de Catalunya**



Catalan Institute of America
Celebrating and promoting Catalan culture in the United States



**North
American
Catalan
Society**



CATALANS IN NYC: WHY ARE THEY INTERESTING?



- Interesting combination of languages potentially available for transmission: **two 'globalized' or 'international' languages**, English and Spanish (Ammon, 2003; Crystal 2003) with a strong presence in the immediate context, and Catalan, **a minoritized language** that has been subjected to revitalization campaigns during the formative years of the parents. (In many cases, a **fourth language** is also available from the other parent.)

What are the linguistic choices of these parents when it comes to language transmission to their children?





CATALANS IN NYC: WHY ARE THEY INTERESTING?

- **Educating multilingual children** is an adventure ideally shared by teachers and parents. In order to encourage families to embark on, and persist in, the multilingual challenge, teachers benefit from a deep **understanding of why** parents decide to transmit which of their languages or not, and how they manage (or not).
- Mixed and migrant families offer a particularly interesting case, since typically parents are forced to make **conscious choices** regarding their language repertoire. They can also illuminate the dynamics concerning societal multilingualism, where choices might be more environmentally mediated.

Fishman 1991; Silverstein 1993; Cenoz, 2009; García 2009; Schwartz 2010; Spolsky 2012; Schwartz & Verschik 2013; Grenoble 2013; Curdt-Christiansen 2014; Boix-Fuster & Paradís 2015





RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What **factors** determine parent's choices?

Expectations: Economic and social pressures will have a strong role in determining parent's choices. Language attitudes should play an important role (Wölck 1986, ff.).

- How do linguistic policies and ideologies at the **local and transnational** level influence people's linguistic choices (short and long term)? **Minority cosmopolitanism** (Lanz, in press) (Curdt-Christiansen 2014)





CATALANS IN NYC: EXPECTATIONS

- By convergence, this situation is likely to either produce **monolingual** English speaking children, or children who are **bilingual in English and Spanish**.
- The odds for the weaker language (Catalan) to be transmitted are low.
- Especially in **trilingual** settings in which each parent contributes one language other than English, **Catalan** is expected to be the one **left behind**.



THE NYC STUDY



- **Born in Catalonia**; they grew up under the language revitalization campaigns of the 1980s and 1990s, continuing today.
- At least 2 years in the USA (mean of 8); **children USA born**
- Special focus on those who, in ethnographic work as well as in a questionnaire, claim the will to maintain and transmit a **minority Catalan identity** to some extent.
- 70 participants.





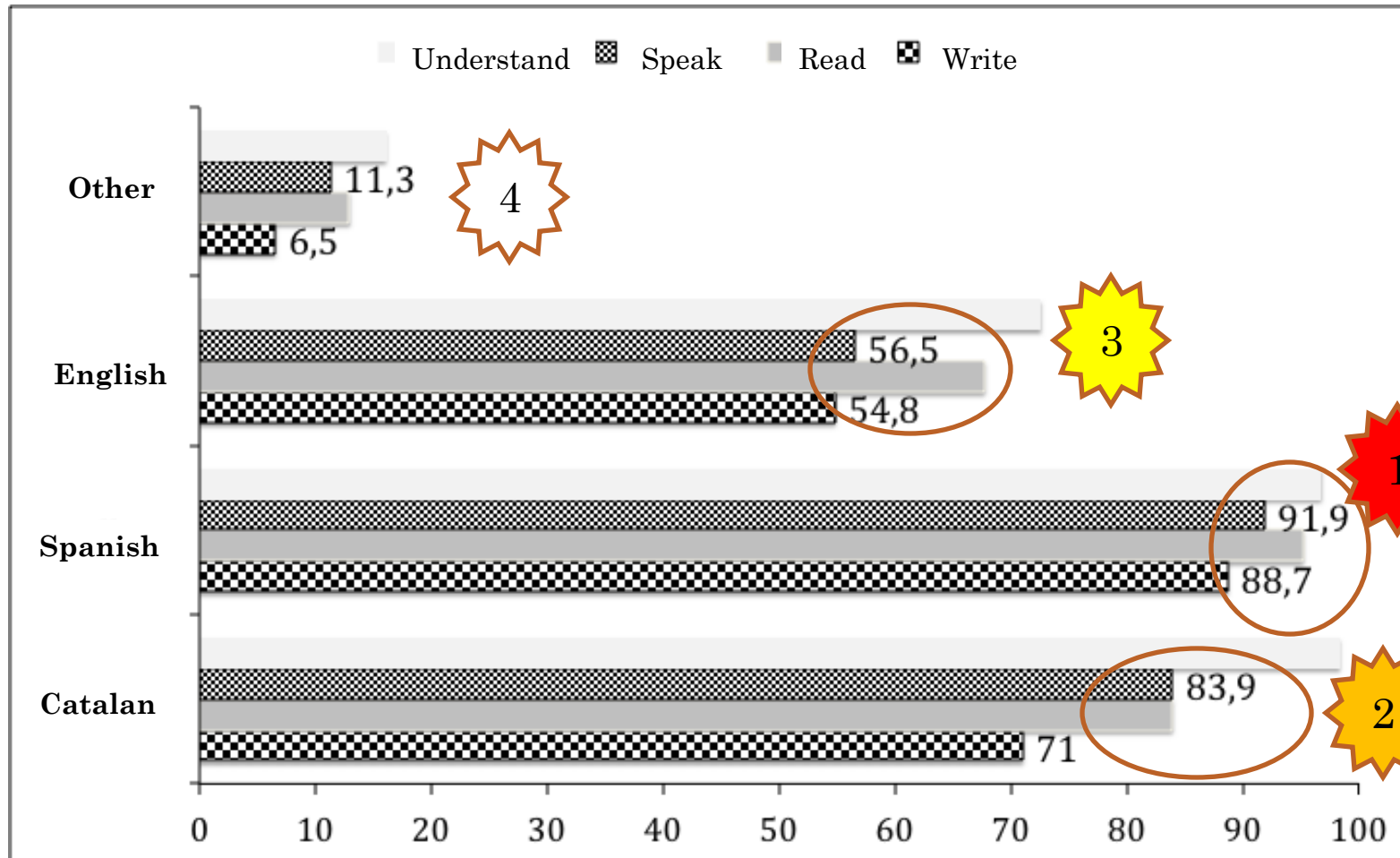
SELF-IDENTIFICATION

	Catalan	Spanish	American
Not at all	0.0	37.1	51.6
A little	0.0	35.5	21.0
Quite	1.8	14.5	16.1
A lot	17.6	8.1	11.3
Fully	80.6	4.8	0.0





LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY

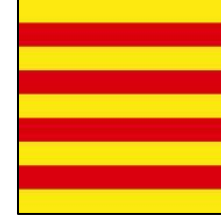




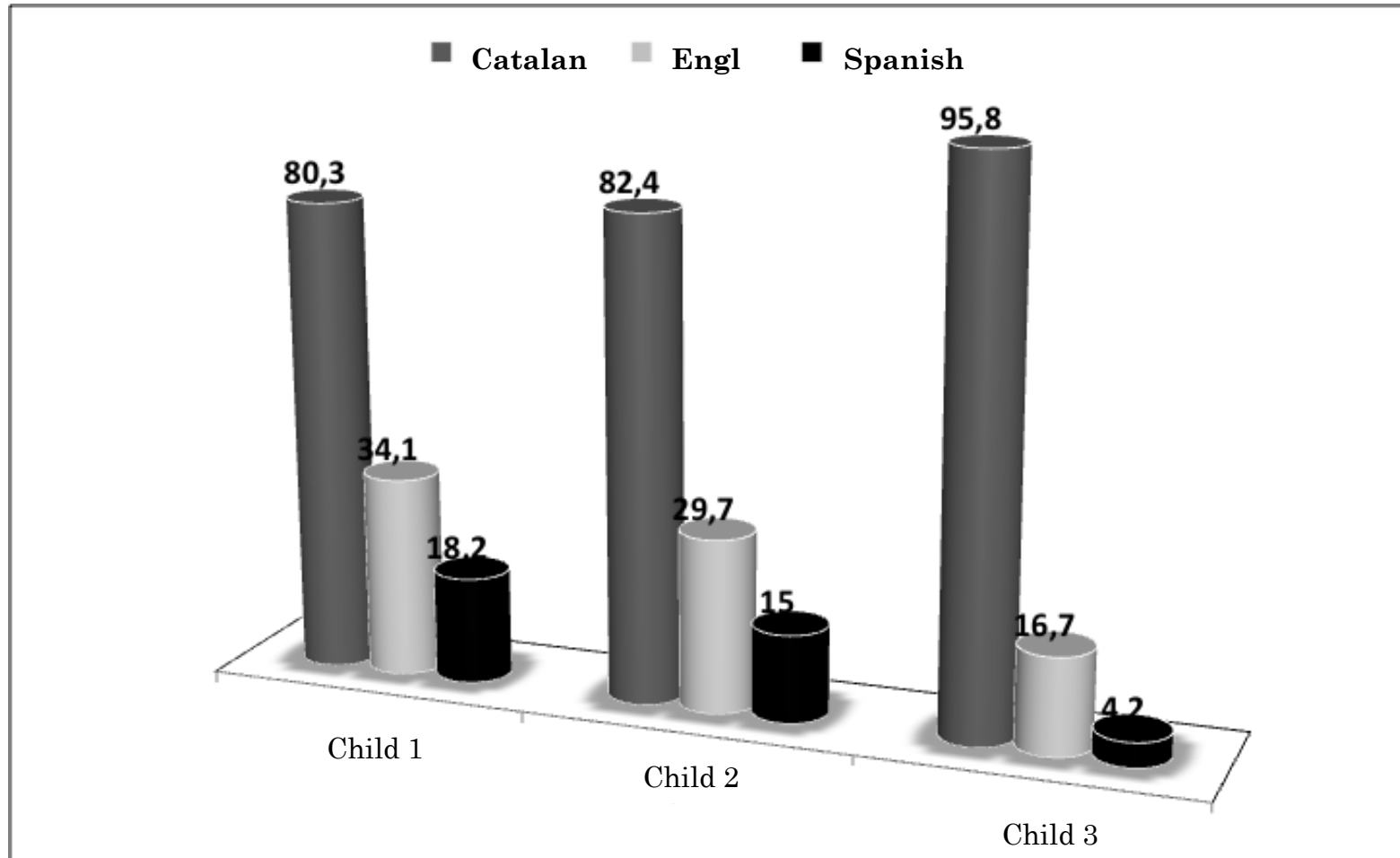
LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY

- Parent's schooling in Catalan increases competence in Catalan; a higher level of education causes higher level of English; competence in Spanish is independent from schooling.





LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION





LINGUISTIC FEATURES: CHILDREN

- Children are located at some point within the **bilingual continuum**, and in many cases they are **cyclic bilinguals** (Silva Corvalán 1998, 2001; Grosjean 2008; García 2009; Cenoz 2014; Silva-Corvalán, C., and J. Treffers-Daller, 2015; Hornsby 2015)
- Their linguistic outcomes show the usual phenomena in **multilingual grammars**:
(Lanza 1997; García 2009; Sorace, A., 2011; Pavlenko 2011; Silva-Corvalán 2014)
borrowings, calques, interferences,
convergences, code-switching,
translanguaging

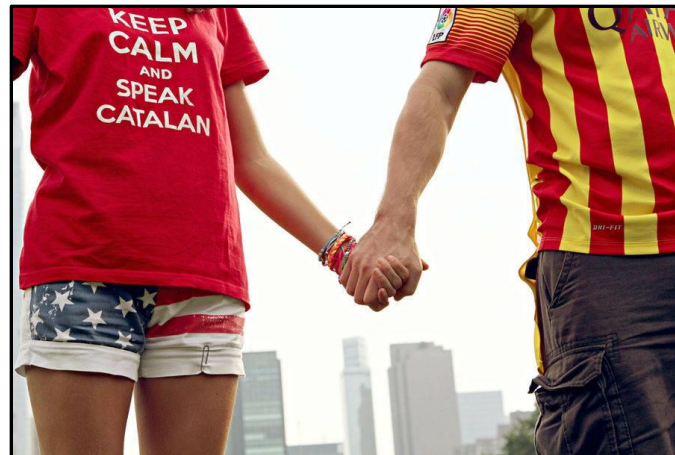
Some of these due to incomplete acquisition, and some to converged lects.



LINGUISTIC FEATURES: ADULTS



- Adults oftentimes present language **contact phenomena** (sometimes referred to as linguistic *attrition*.) (Silva Corvalán 2001; Winford 2003; Escobar & Wölck 2009; Hickey 2013; Schmid, M.S., B. Köpke, M. Keijzer & L. Weilemar, 2004)



- No true evidence of *dialectal leveling* nor *ethnolects* related to Catalan (yet). (Otheguy & Centella 2012; Wölck 1976; 1985; 2002; Hickey 2013)

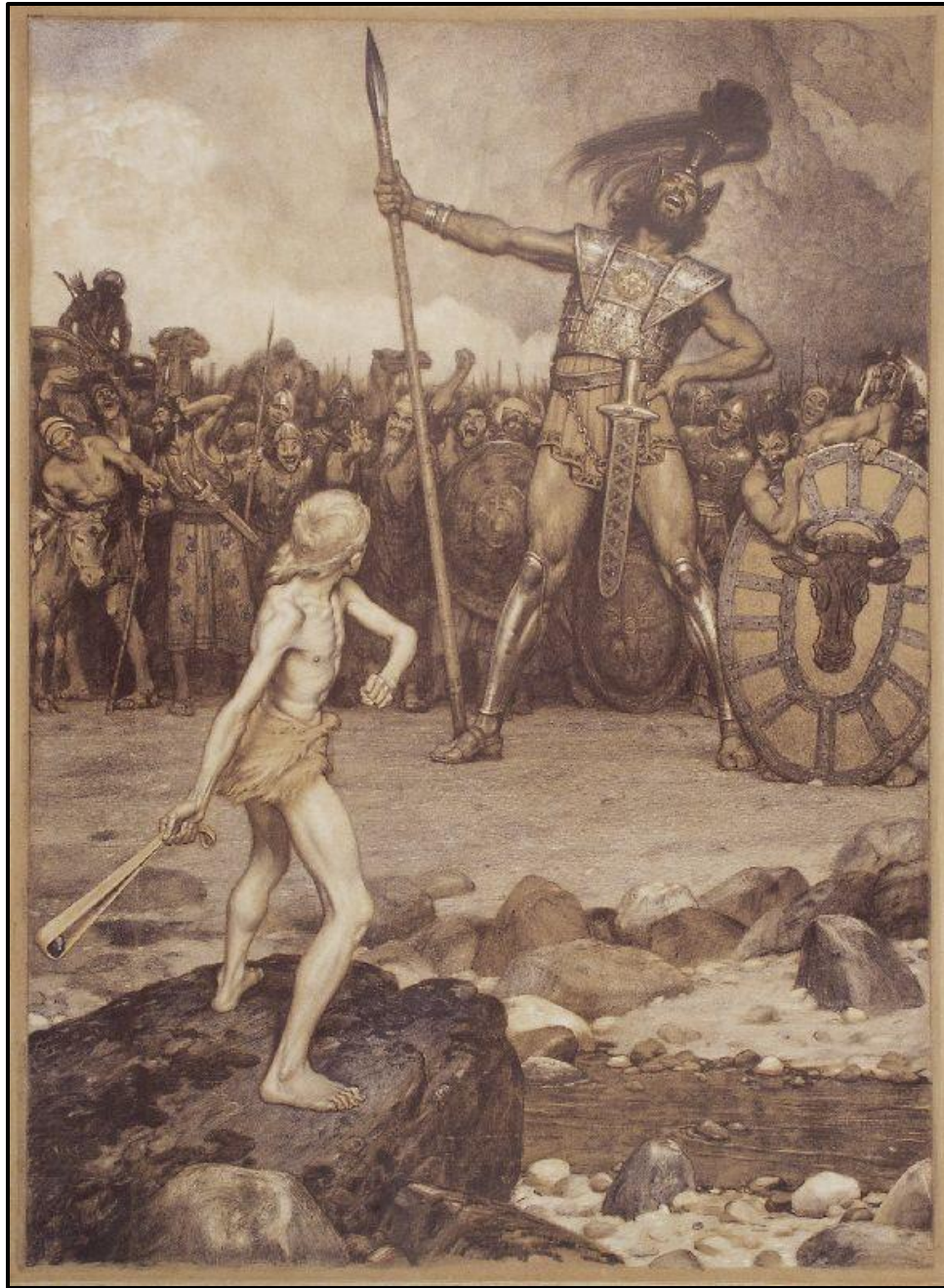




LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION: CONCLUSION

- Despite of higher competence in Spanish than in Catalan, and despite of environmental conditions that would favor Spanish (or just English), but not Catalan, there is higher transmission of Catalan than Spanish to the children within the family.





O. Schindler, 1888

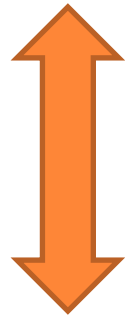
Why?

(Why is Catalan beating the odds?)



MINORITY LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE

Social Networks



Language Ideologies and Attitudes



INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION

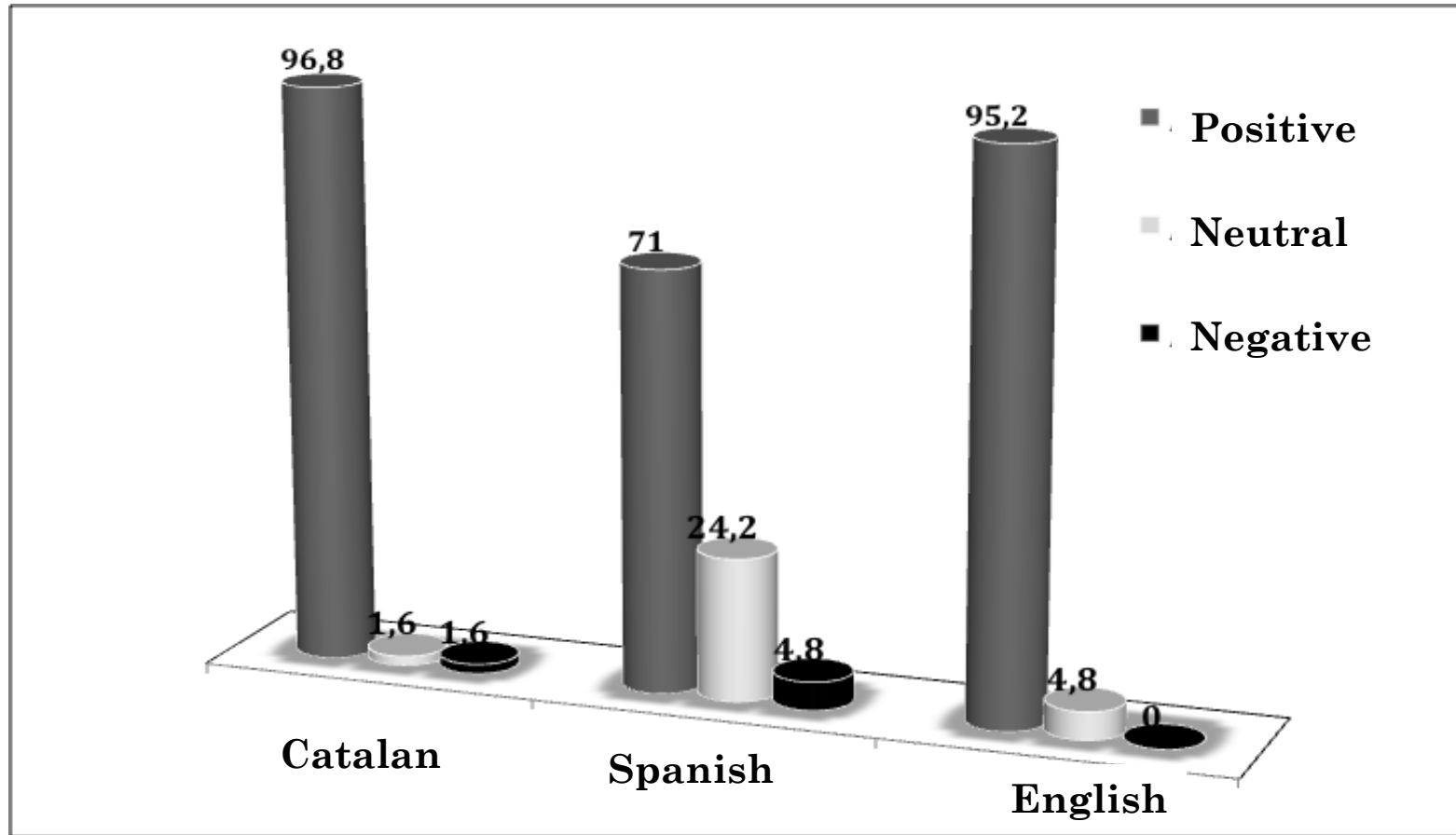
Social Networks

Language Ideologies and Attitudes





GENERAL ATTITUDES



Cf. Lasagabaster 2006
Casesnoves and Juarros-Daussà, 2012



CATALANS IN NYC: LINGUISTIC ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE



- Attitudes toward each language:
 - **Instrumental** –economic or academic value; feasibility
 - **Integrative** –feeling part of the community and partaking in their activities
 - **Personal** –pleasure, prestige or personal gain

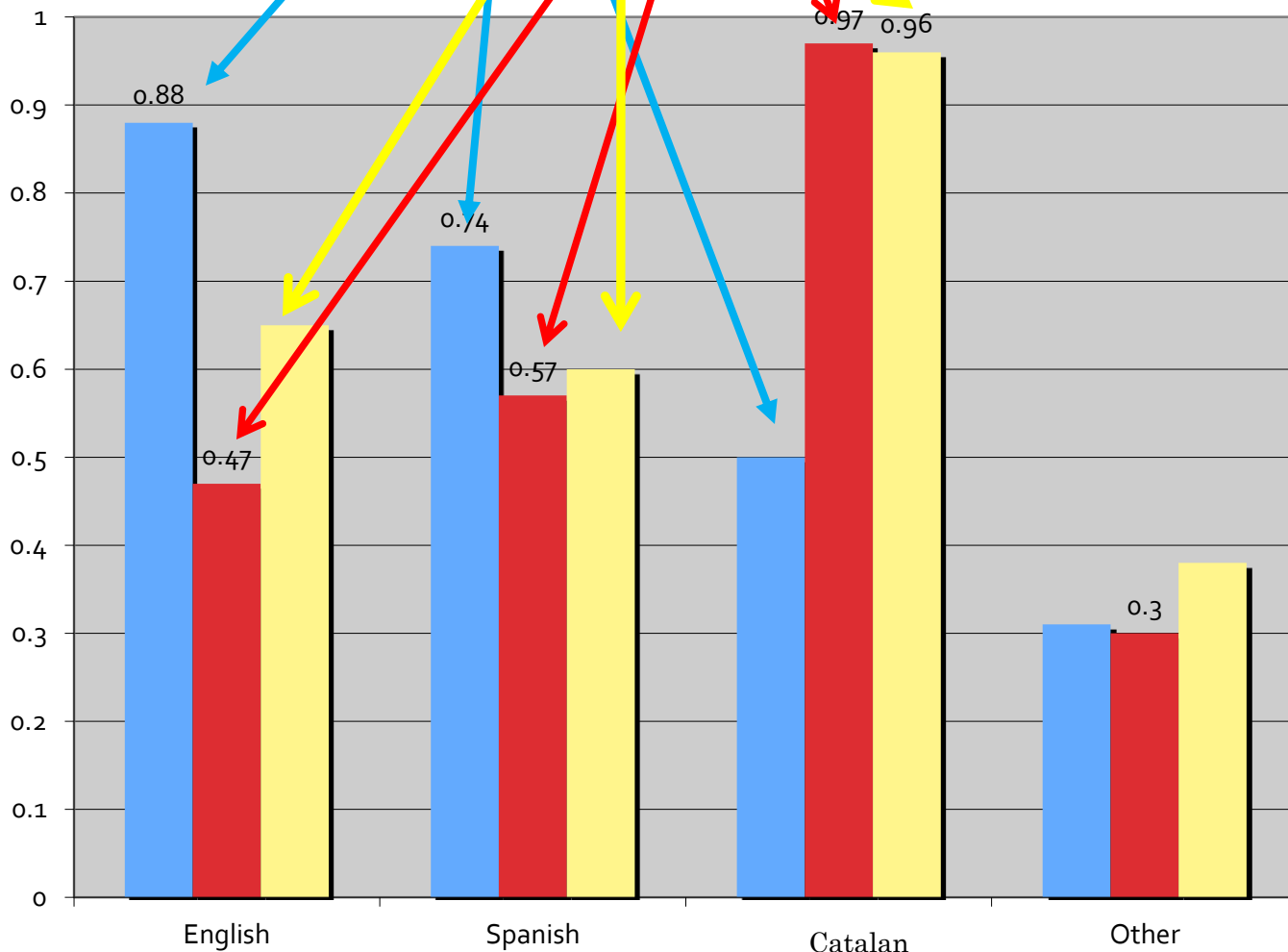
CATALANS IN NYC: LINGUISTIC ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE




- Wölck 2005
 - Perú, Scotland, Northern Germany, USA, Canada

The majority language tends to evoke positive reactions along the instrumental dimension, while the minority variety elicit positive responses in the personal-affective semantic category.



LINGUISTIC ATTITUDES



-  Instrumental
-  Integrative
-  Personal



FIRST LESSON

- The transmission of heritage language is in some cases a highly charged emotional issue for parents.
 - It contributes to the harmony of the family (De Houwer 2015).
 - It contributes to the positive development of the children (especially in later years).

Heritage languages cannot be ignored in the school

Are they acquiring the majority language?

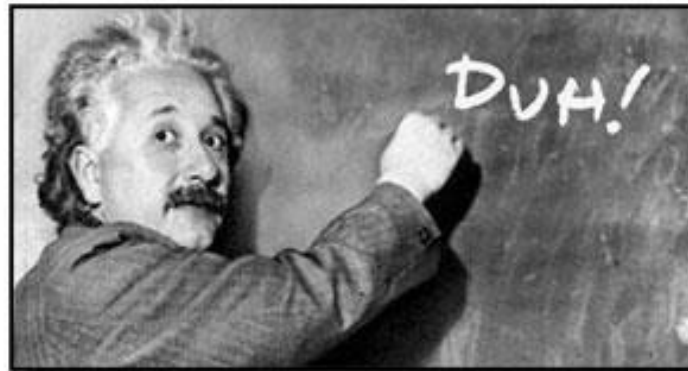


Are they keeping their (home) multilingualism?



So, the minority language gets transmitted because of the *emotional* component:

Isn't it always like that?



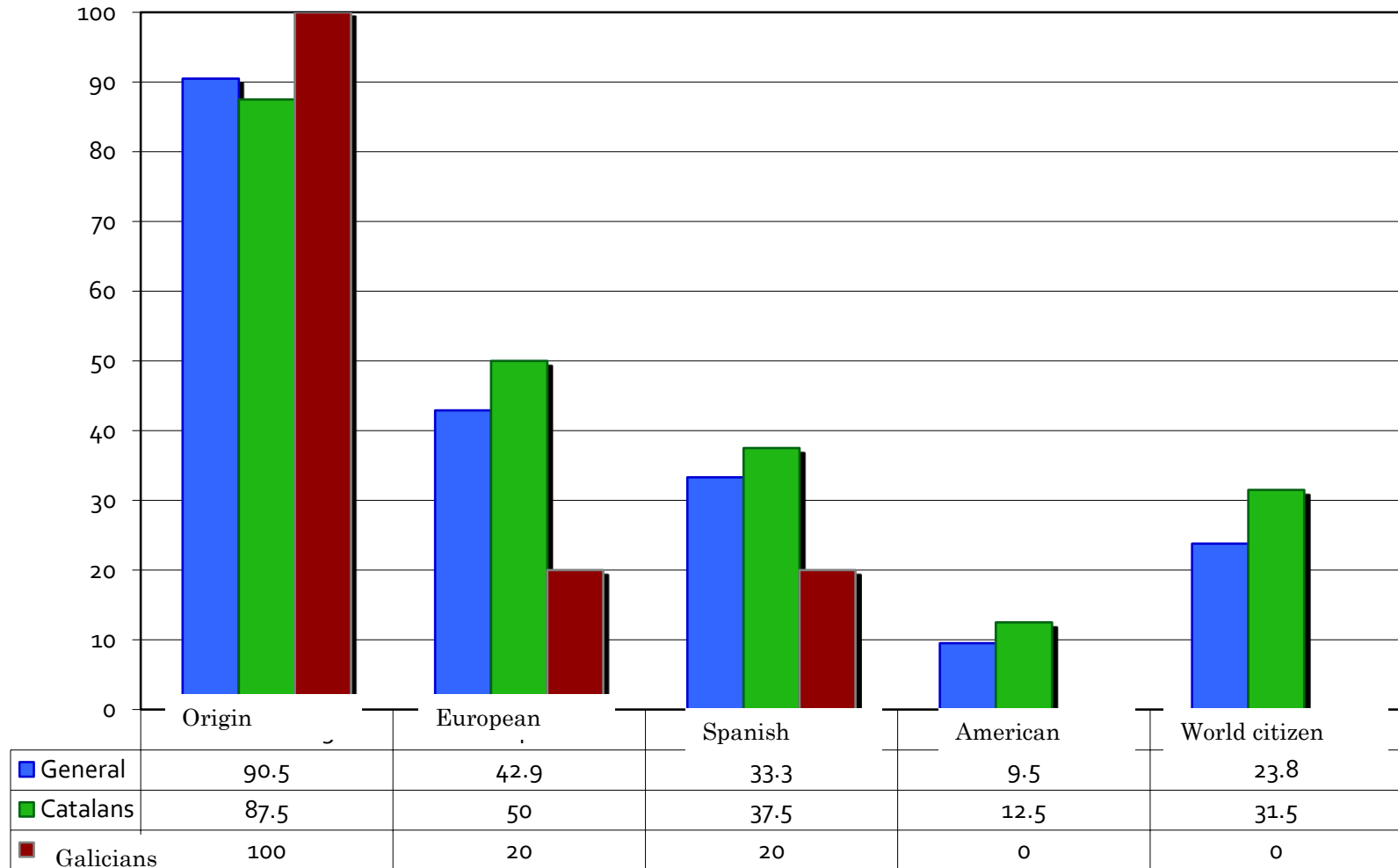
CATALAN VS. GALICIAN



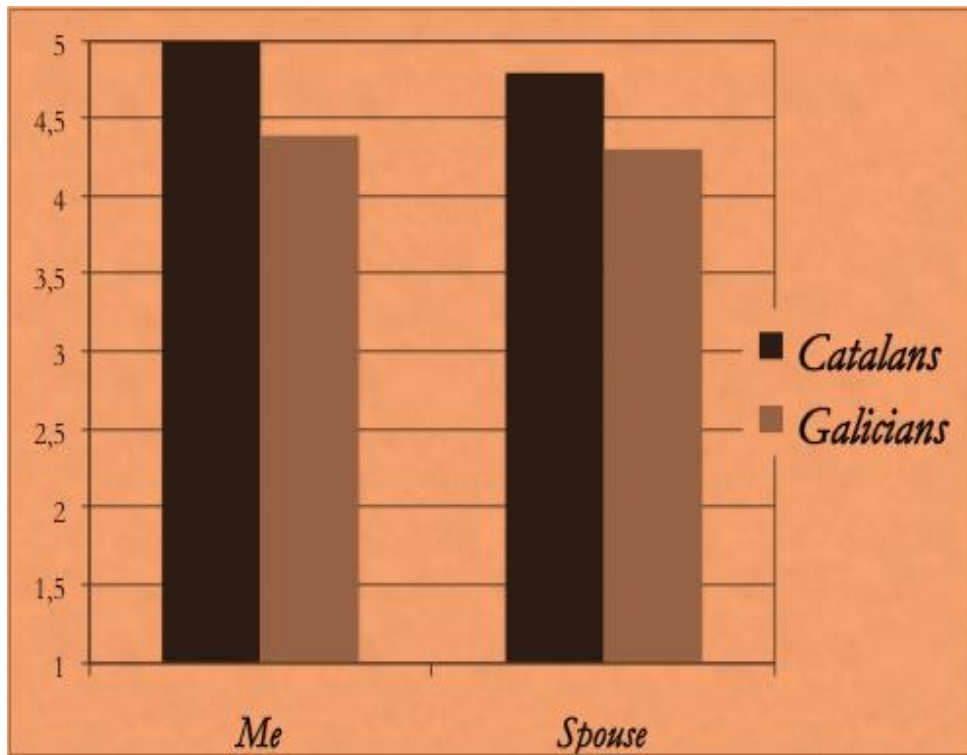
Catalan and Galician populations have in common their **native bilingualism** and the **minoritized** nature of their (**revitalized**) language, but they differ in the **attitudinal profiles** towards their minority language in the country of origin (O'Rourke, Bernadette. 2006; Casesnoves-Ferrer and Sankoff 2009).



CATALANS AND GALICIANS: ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION



ATTITUDES TOWARD MULTILINGUALISM



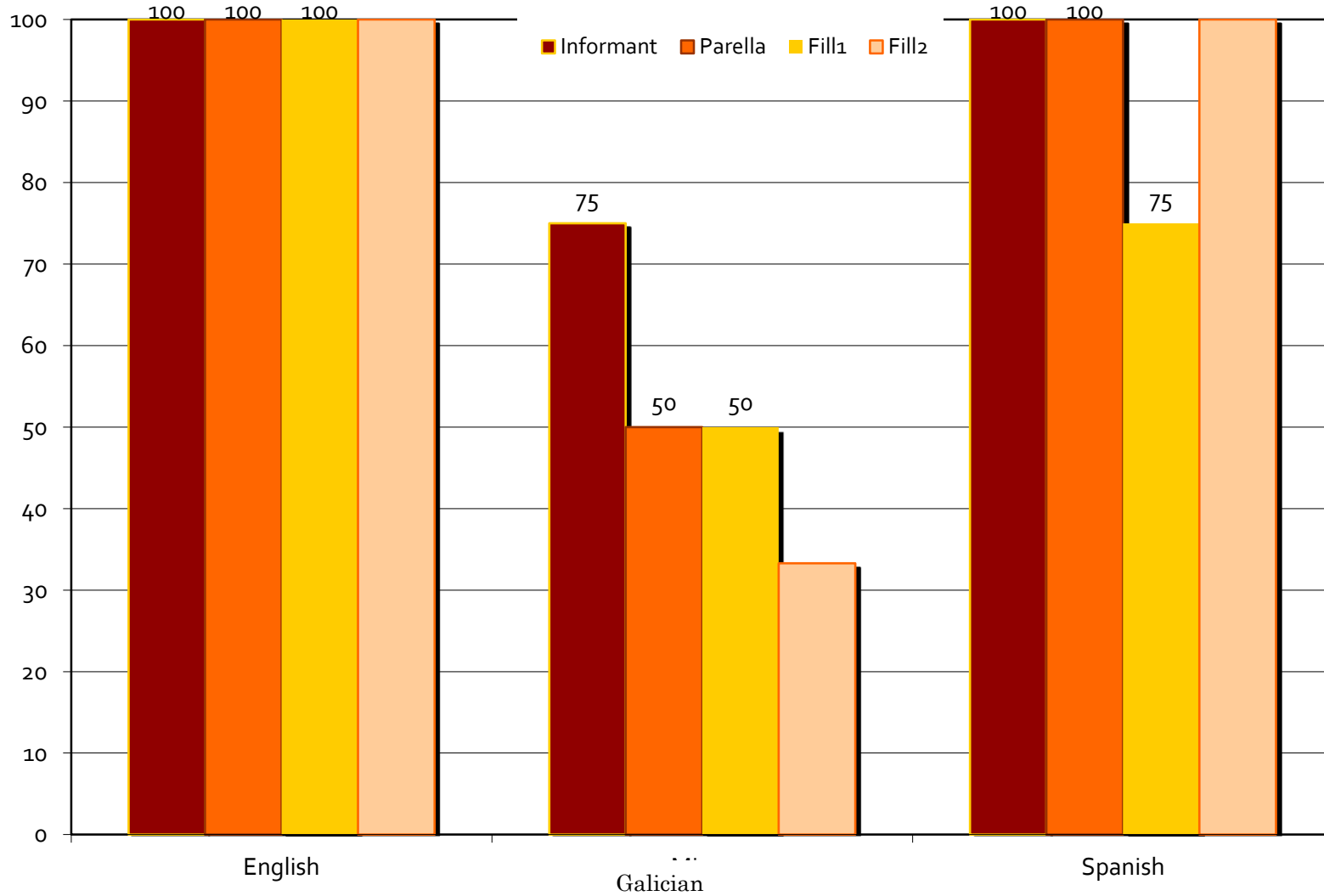
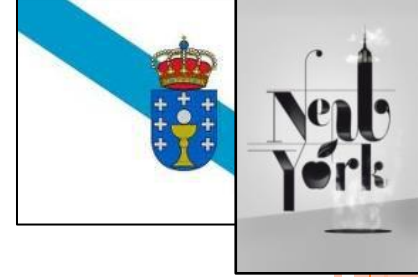
“You see the world in a different way”

“It opens up a whole new world for you”

“The more languages, the better”

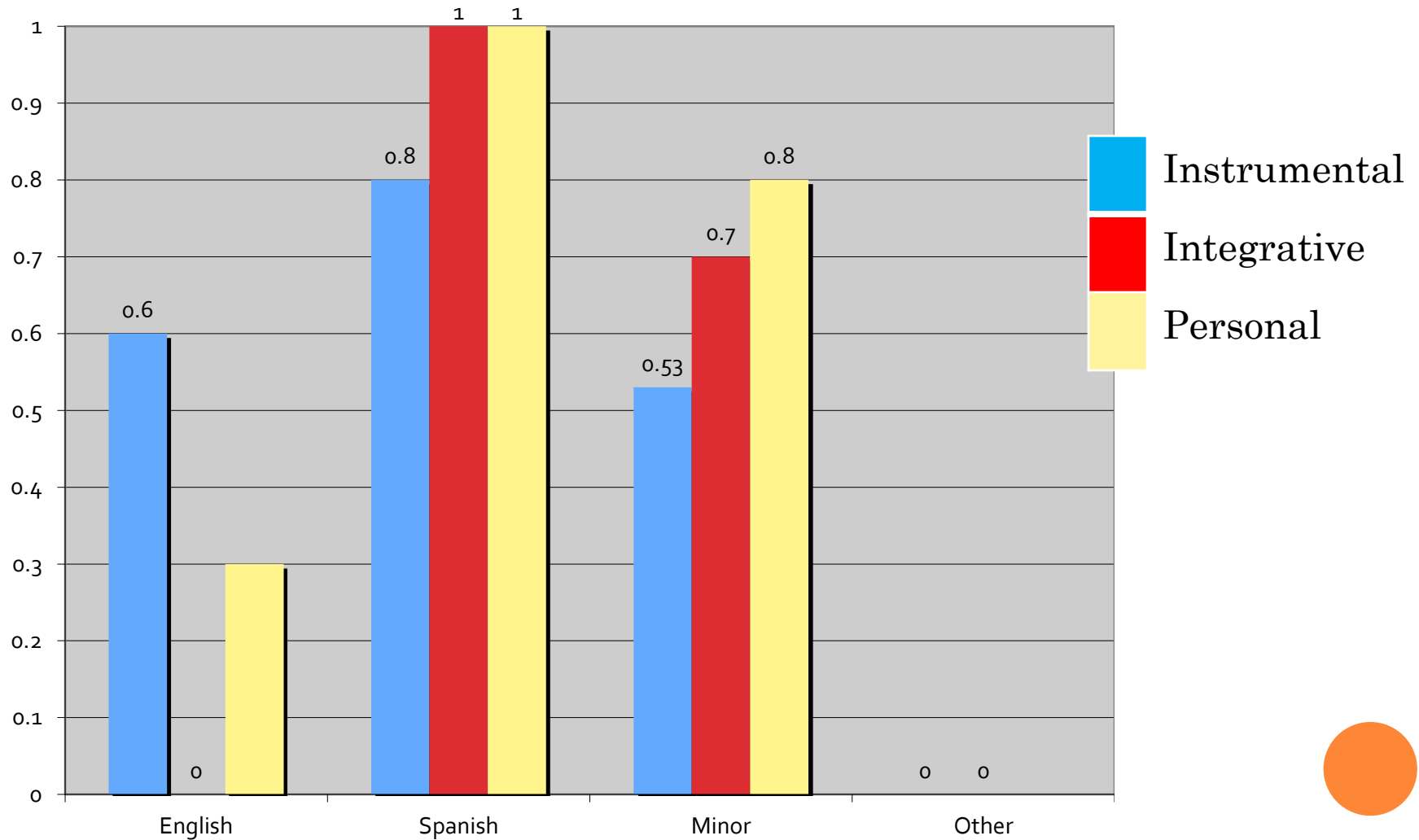


GALICIANS: USE





GALICIANS: ATTITUDES AND VALUES





CONCLUSIONS

- English is present in all homes.
- Language transmission patterns of Spanish and the minority language vary:
 - Catalans are more likely to include Catalan, in a significant number of cases at the cost of Spanish.
 - Galicians are less motivated to include Galician, and in no case at the cost of Spanish.





CONCLUSIONS

- The values assigned to the minority language vary, and are correlated with its transmission likelihood
 - The high integrative value of Catalan and its central, almost exclusive, symbolic value in the construction of Catalan identity favors (or perhaps allows) its transmission, despite of Spanish having a higher instrumental value.
 - Galician language has a less monopolizing symbolic value in the construction of Galician identity, and less integrative value; as a result, migrant Galicians tend to chose Spanish for transmission, based on its higher economic (instrumental) value.



CONCLUSION: IDEOLOGIES

- An increase in the ideology of **Minority Cosmopolitanism** in Catalonia has recently promoted the idea that the minority culture does not need of the **interposition** of a local majority culture in order to reach the international, cosmopolitan level (Lanz, in press)
 - This ideology might be impacting the behavior of Catalans in diaspora.
- This ideology is not prevalent in Galicia, so Galicians are still operating on the premises of Spanish being the necessary step into the wider world.
 - And that might be influencing language transmission decisions in the diaspora.



CONCLUSION: EDUCATION

- Schools need to learn about the role that different languages have in the family, in order to help the development of **harmonious bilingualism** (De Houwer 2015).
 - Parents have powerful reasons to choose which language(s) to transmit (or not) to their children.
 - Teachers can be powerful allies in their common goal of educating children.



Diolch yn fawr

Moitas grazas!

Moltes gràcies!

¡Muchas gracias!

Thank you!



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