FACTORS OF ANDALUSIAN ETHNOLINGUISTIC IDENTITY

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Abstract

This paper analyses the details of the process by which the Andalusian ethnolinguistic identity is one of the most stigmatised in the Hispanic cultural context, which is even taken as an example of this type of processes at a global level. Among the reasons for the stigmatisation of speakers and scribes of the Andalusian language are the framework of power relations characteristic of colonisation and the dynamics of acculturation and underestimation of the cultural —and therefore linguistic— traits of the subalternised Andalusian people (whose territory is located in the western Mediterranean, in the Spanish state). Among the effects of these dynamics is also a kind of linguistic resilience that has been developing, especially in recent decades, a socio-cultural movement known as Andalophile, an agent of a whole diversity of ethno-literary production, oral, musical and visual literature which, sometimes unintentionally, poses a challenge to the ethnocentric perspective of linguistic Spanishism, building a linguistic identity without complexes among broad sectors of Andalusian society.

Keywords

Ethnolinguistic Identity, Stigmatization, Andalusian Language, Linguistic Resilience, Ethno-Literature, Linguistic Spanishism

The contemporary Andalusian people appear as the result of a long historical process characterised by continuities in the background and discontinuities in time. The peculiarities of its geographical location as a crossroads between the African and European continents (in addition to its later link with the American continent after the European conquest), and the Mediterranean and Atlantic seas have given the Andalusian territory a character of "frontier world" since ancient times, where successive cultural clashes, the installation and coexistence of different peoples, "specific tensions and continuous syntheses" (J. A. Lacombe 2001) have been frequent; in this sense, the history of Andalusia takes on the appearance of a succession of "adaptations". Furthermore, from the perspective of Geography studies, Professor G. Cano, Emeritus Professor at the University of Seville (US), points out the persistence of structural features of different types —population, territory, uses of ecosystems, forms of life and cultures, forms of linguistic expression...— together with the territorial factor and historical continuity.

J. A. Lacombe Avellán, Professor of History of Economics at the UMA, has outlined five phases in the Andalusian historical process, which takes us back more than 2,500 years: an initial autochthonous phase (based on a consolidated autochthonous civilisational substratum around the Tartessian culture, which extends until Romanisation), the phase of Baetica after the Roman conquest (key senatorial province, imposition of Latin and subsequent acceptance of Christianity), the phase of Al-Andalus (eight decisive centuries in the cultural identity of the Andalusian people, maintenance, transformation and extension of the preceding classical civilisation, to which is added the Islamisation of the majority of the population, together with Christianity and Judaism), the Castilian phase (when the Andalusian territory was conquered by Castile and an inquisitorial period of intolerance of ethnic plurality began, as well as forced Castilianisation) and the current Spanish phase (which began in the early 19th century as a result of the push for Spanish nationalism, culminating in the socioeconomic peripheralisation of Andalusia in the centralist conformation of the current nation-state Spain).

In tracing an Andalusian cultural identity or ethnicity throughout these stages in the historical identity of Andalusia—one of the profound aspects that we have previously referred to as background continuities—, Isidoro Moreno Navarro (2013 and 2012), Professor of Social Anthropology at the US, has already proposed three

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of the basic structural characteristics of this Andalusian cultural identity: an accentuated anthropocentrism or tendency to personalise social relations, as well as the rejection of any kind of inferiority, real or symbolic (which leads to the emergence of an egalitarian sentiment and ideology), in addition to a worldview and a relativistic attitude towards ideas and things (which is the basis of tolerance and permissiveness, and explains the flexibility of Andalusian culture).

The general and specific observable features of Andalusian ethnicity have been and are widely studied, especially from a socio-anthropological perspective, one of the best recent compendiums of which can be found in the collective work by I. Moreno & J. Águdo (coords.) (2012): Expresiones culturales andaluzas. Likewise, in 2001, the Andalusian Ombudsman's Office published another multidisciplinary report entitled La identidad del pueblo andaluz (The Identity of the Andalusian People), with the participation of renowned historians, geographers, social anthropologists, philologists and economists.

Both compendiums address, with several of the procedures typical of social sciences, among others, a multitude of aspects, dimensions and markers whose special combination have given rise to the observable singularity of the current Andalusian culture: specific historical process, territorial singularity in its diversity, specific forms of sociability, power relations and political culture (J. Escalera 2012), which are reflected in an enormous and rich Andalusian festive heritage (J. Escalera 1997), manifestations of popular baroque and even animist religiosity, specific colonial and extractivist economic dynamics (Moreno & Delgado 2013), flamenco and other Andalusian artistic and aesthetic expressions, symbolic universe, as well as various features of Andalusian linguistic identity.

Flamenco —a singular cultural expression emanating from the vicissitudes of Andalusian society in modernity and crystallising in the 19th century— is widely studied as an Andalusian cultural phenomenon, the result of the encounter in the land of Andalusia of the Calé people, the Negro-African slaves and slaves with the preceding indigenous Moorish heritage. Special attention should be paid to the traditional link between flamenco and Andalusian linguistic features, whose peculiar relationship has been dealt with, among others, by the specialist J. C. Ríos (2009), and the lecturers A. M. Rodríguez Ramos (2018) and C. Cruces (2001: 78). The latter details in particular that

The flamenco copla, moreover, is performed with a uniquely Andalusian vocabulary, making use of its own spelling, idioms and turns of phrase of Andalusian speech and its ownlexicon, not only to construct popular flamenco poetry —of great influence on prominent cultured poets— but also to adapt the measure of the musical rhythm to the contents of the lyrics.

The most obvious direct link between the flamenco language and the Andalusian language comes from the character of popular culture of fundamentally oral transmission, both of the vast majority of the contemporary Andalusian people and of the flamenco subgroup or subculture. This situation is compounded by socio-political and economic structural conditioning factors—which appeared after the Castilian conquest and colonisation and were accentuated in the contemporary Spanish period—in the form of undervaluation, disregard and even institutional stigmatisation of the linguistic uses of Andalusian popular culture (Snopenko 2007), Andalusian linguistic reality which ends up being put off in the educational system (Hijano del Río & Ruiz Morales 2003) and across the socioeconomic spectrum towards marginality, vulgarity, lack of intelligence or academic training, or as a sign of socio-cultural disabilities, among other supposed defects.

Regarding the origin of the linguistic stigmatisation of the majority Andalusian uses—even today—in popular oral culture, the Ukrainian philologist E. A. Snopenko (2007) has traced its perhaps more remote origin to the normativist process crystallised in 1492 by the institutionalisation of the Gramática de la lengua castellana (Grammar of the Castilian language) by Elio Antonio de Nebrija—who, although of Andalusian origin, was educated in Salamanca and did not hesitate to place himself at the service of the royal authorities of the conquering Castile. At the very beginning of what is known as the Spanish Golden Age, at a time when part of Andalusian middle and upper class society came to have an important economic and political weight in the Crown of Castile as a whole, a process of competition for the dominant linguistic norm began between the Toledan or Castilian norm and the Sevillian or Andalusian norm. Nebrija, despite being Andalusian by origin, opted for the imposition of the Castilian norm and recommended into the so-called Catholic Monarchs. Quite a few Andalusian authors of the time pushed for the recognition of the values of their linguistic variety (e.g. Juan de Valdés, García de Sta. María, Francisco Delicado, Fernando de Herrera, Damasio de Frías, Juan Villar, J. de Barahona, Bernardo de Aldrete, Arias Montano, etc.), although they eventually lost in the struggle for the dominant norm, with the result that the Andalusian-speaking population—who are "del Andalucía, allá donde la lengua no está muy pura", "tierra de moros"— was progressively relegated to the clandestine realm of anomie, vulgarity, incorrectness, faulty pronunciation and impurity—in line with the ethnicist mainstream of the Christian-Castilian casticismo of the time (Stallaert 1998, Zayas 2006).

F. García Duarte argues, with regard to the origins of the Andalusian norm, that the official Spanish historiography should be revised with the new data provided by the most recent research, including data relating to
population movements and repopulations around the Andalusian and Castilian periods of Andalusian historical identity. Thus, a more than probable early influence of Andalusian Romance in the shaping of the original Castilian, a consequence of the migrations of Andalusian Mozarabic people towards the north of the Iberian Peninsula, must be considered (García Duarte 2017), and the data on the maintenance of large layers of mimetised Christian-New Moorish population despite the successive expulsion decrees, which ultimately proved to be unsuccessful, despite the reluctant Spanish historiography that considers the ethnic cleansing of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries to have been successful and effective. Thus, the origin of many contemporary Andalusian linguistic features can no longer be traced exclusively to a northern Castilian-Aragonese and Leonese repopulation of unpopulated land, but rather to the proven persistence of large masses of indigenous Moorish population mimicked and moderately acculturated in accordance with the customs of the Castilian conquerors; this situation would be at the basis of the hasty learning of Castilian as a second or new language by the Andalusians in those centuries, in many cases on the basis of a Romance remnant of the Arabised Andalusians (García Duarte 2021, A. M. Rodríguez 2018). Moreover, according to the specialist in language history J. A. Frago Gracia (1993: 535) after analysing notarial acts from the 13th century, as soon as Lower Andalusia was conquered,

it is evident that the formation of the Andalusian dialect took place much earlier than usually assumed, to the extent that the first evolutionary steps are already evident in the last third of the 13th century, having reached in the 15th century the configuration of a Castilian of Andalusia notably differentiated from that of other regions (cf. in García & Reondo 2006: 26).

Later, the beginning of the Spanish phase of Andalusia’s historical identity in the 19th century, with the centralist and enlightened establishment of the nation-state and a universal and at the same time exclusive educational system, would lead to an accentuation of the marginality of the Andalusian norm, forcing Andalusian schoolchildren to “speak well” and to renounce their vernacular registers (Hijano del Río 2004).

Since modern times and until recent times, Andalusian linguistic varieties have ended up being undervalued, stigmatised and relegated to the oral registers of popular culture, and the authors who have written and published in Andalusian in recent centuries have been few, unconnected and practically intuitive in their orthography. Nevertheless, the philologist G. Redondo, together with the specialist F. García Duarte (2006 and 2013) have found almost around a hundred authors who have written some or most of their literary production in the Andalusian language, from the beginning of "literary Andalusianism" at the end of the 18th century —La infancia de Jesú-Christo (The Childhood of Jesus Christ), by Gaspar Fernández y Ávila (1784), with a definite intentionality, which culminates a multitude of Andalusian fragments and "errata" of the preceding centuries—, and developed in the successive 19th and 20th centuries until the emergence of the current Andalophile cultural movement from the end of the 20th century onwards.

The historical stigmatisation of Andalusian has been “softening” its undervaluation and disparagement in contemporary times, transforming its linguistic pseudo-arguments towards the consideration of the linguistic competence of Andalusian speakers, as if it were characteristic of the members of Andalusian popular culture to be less competent in the linguistic handling —of Spanish or Castilian, since from the ethnocentric perspective of linguistic Spanishism Andalusian as a language does not exist. In this respect, British linguists Rusi Jaspal and Ioanna Sitaridou (2013) have analysed the Andalusian context as a paradigmatic example of a stigmatised linguistic identity, despite which a large part of the Andalusian-speaking population resists, maintaining their ethno-linguistic identity and vitality (vid. also CENTRA 2022).

Assistant Professor of General Linguistics at the UAM Ph.D. Ígor Rodríguez Iglesias analyses these sociolinguistic processes in terms of the coloniality of being, knowledge and power as the basis of the linguistic inferiorisation of Andalusia (2017), the negation of Andalusian linguistic uniqueness (2016a) —in its evident diversity, as occurs in so many other linguistic and cultural contexts around the world—, as well as a decapitalisation —in Frantz Fanon’s terms—, invisibilisation and general devaluation of Andalusian features and people, linguistically-based social discrimination that forms a typical framework of racism, perceivable in Andalusia in a similar way to other similar situations in other societies (2016b).

Manuel Rodríguez Illana, Ph.D. in Journalism and Psychology, also adopts a decolonial perspective to analyse and denounce the linguistic colonisation of Andalusia, both in the educational system (2017b) and in the media (2017a and 2017c); a process and dynamics deeply rooted in Spanish society that this scholar calls Andalophobia (2019), a consequence, among other factors, of the ideology of linguistic Spanishism described by Juan Carlos Moreno Cabrera (2013 and 2015), Professor of General Linguistics at the UAM.

Moreno Cabrera himself has denounced how linguistic facts are intentionally twisted and manipulated by philologists imbued with linguistic Spanishism —or Spanish nationalism projected onto Linguistics—, as in the specific case of the treatment of Andalusian in the phonology of the Nueva Gramática de la lengua española (New Grammar of the Spanish language) of the RAE and the ASALE (J. C. Moreno 2012). Moreover, without being a native Andalusian or Andalusian speaker, this internationally recognized Castilian linguist defends the existence of the Andalusian language against other organic specialists of “Spanishist linguistic supremacism” (2022).
We find in the academic and popular Andalusian and Hispanic spheres a different conceptualisation of the entity of what a large part of Andalusians speak, of the series of features and characteristics which, depending on the conceptual and ideological framework, are placed at a different distance from the Castilian (or Spanish) language:

For some, they range from a myriad of vulgarisms and incorrect expressions (lack of education and culture), to an expression of the richness and variety of the Spanish language. For others, they form the corpus of an underground language with its own resources (in the process of minoritisation) which elucidate an evolution of linguistic substrata cited by history in the area of Andalusia (in SW Europe and/or NW Africa). Between one intellectual and political stance and the other are the ever-present and versatile intermediate points (Porrah 2001).

Thus, there is a diversity of descriptions of the distinctive Andalusian facts in the linguistic sphere, according to the position adopted, ranging from Andalusian language, andalú (Andalusian), Andalusian dialect, Andalusian speech, Andalusian speeches, Spanish spoken in Andalusia or a mere Andalusian accent. However, the official classification of Andalusian in the Estatuto de Autonomía para Andalucía (Statute of Autonomy for Andalusia) is 'Andalusian linguistic modality', according to Articles 10.4 and 213 of the Statute.

Ph.D. Javier Martín González, Associate Professor of English Linguistics at the University of Seville, also spoke about the discrimination against the Andalusian linguistic reality. He is surprised by the passion and vehemence with which Andalusian linguistic claims are attacked by those people—even reputed specialists in Philology—seduced by Spanish nationalism and the grandeur and glories of pan-Hispanic linguistic imperialism (vid. Moreno Cabrera 2015). For example, in the face of the angry visceral reactions following the translation of Le Petit Prince into Andalusian in 2017, Martín (2017: 1) expresses the following reflection:

What is more, the extreme reaction of those who, because of their academic and professional specialities, are supposed to give their opinions from a position of knowledge and calm, but who, nevertheless, have fallen into the same trap and have even branded them as nonsense and ridiculed the Andalusian people, is also surprising. In my opinion, they have once again highlighted the need to ask why such disproportionate, discriminatory, visceral behaviour, so lacking in any scientific justification, is being shown.

In this sociolinguistic work, Martín, from his perspective as a specialist, goes through these discriminatory attitudes towards Andalusian speakers, detecting situations of essentialist structural marginalisation created by discursive rhetoric:

If the question is posed as a problem of intelligence, the [Andalusian] speakers will want to modify their way of communicating and/or will be ashamed of themselves, falling into a pernicious submission derived from the supposed inferiority that is transmitted to them with the contemptuous valuation of their specific way of speaking. But something even more serious is produced: the necessary context will have been created so that socially influential figures (politicians, teachers, intellectuals, audience leaders in the different media, etc.) will never be lacking in indoctrinating the new generations in the imposed idea or publicly stigmatising those who they consider do not fit their standard or who refuse to conform to it by means of self-correction. In this sense, let us recall the shameful case of the comments directed against Diego Cañamero, a member of the Spanish Parliament, whose worth as a political representative at the national level was questioned for maintaining his Andalusian pronunciation (J. Martín 2017: 5).

On the Andalusian-Spanish academic side denalist of the uniqueness and linguistic values of the set of vernacular Andalusian varieties the work of the philologist Antonio Narbona, Professor of Spanish Language at the US, "corresponding member of the Royal Spanish Academy for Andalusia", who coordinated in 2009 a publication entitled La identidad lingüística de Andalucía —including chapters by R. Cano, R. Morillo-Velarde, E. Méndez and J. J. de Bustos, a publication which claims to be a "new approach to Andalusian linguistic identity based on scientific rigour"—, stands out in the academic Andalusian-Spanish negationist side. However, if we examine his different arguments one by one, the general impression is that Professor Narbona undervalues a multitude of Andalusian linguistic singularities —although they are evidently not present in all Andalusian varieties—, ignores the perspective of linguistic description as opposed to the normativist one, and hides or misrepresents values or characteristics of the popular Andalusian linguistic reality which diverge from the RAE's spirit of exclusivist standardisation (cf. Moreno Cabrera 2012 and Redondo 2018); thus placing the "problem of Andalusian speech", in short, not in the linguistic sphere but in the political and socioeconomic sphere. On the other hand, in 2004, the Andalophile philologist Gorka Redondo explained the most relevant keys to the geographical, sociolingual and grammatical coordinates that frame the definition of the current Andalusian language in an article entitled "Lo
q’entendemó por andalú” (What we understand by Andalusian).

It should therefore be borne in mind that not the entire population living in Andalusia speaks Andalusian, not even the entire native population—the vast majority—, and that many of those who consider that they speak Andalusian actually use an intermediate register—which many members of the Andalophile movement call ‘casteluz’— between Andalú and Spanish, based on the use of Andalusian phonemes and intonations (or accent) of what is grammatically normative Castilian. Moreover, only a small literary vanguard writes in Andalusian.

In the various classes on Andalusian Culture at my university and in lectures, I usually use the following description of andalú to disambiguate it: a natural language of fundamentally oral transmission proper to the Andalusian people, or the language proper to the indigenous Andalusians, whose linguistic-grammatical description includes many features of phonetics and phonology, morphosyntax, semantics and lexicon, as well as many (non-institutional) contributions of a grammatical, orthographic and literary nature.

Moreover, a large part of the Andalusian population tends to change register between Castilian or standard normative Spanish, its ‘Casteluz’ substitute and Andalú, a language with its own identity, and even English, among other more minority linguistic registers.

Regarding the contemporary resurgence of concerns for the dignification, recognition and writing of the Andalusian language, the anthropologist who writes this report published two articles at the end of the second millennium (Porrah 1998 and 2000b) contextualising its mainly oral character among the Andalusian population and indicating the need to generate a written support for this orality, a need which had been raised since previous decades by various authors and specialists. The contemporary, conscious and systematic writing of Andalú—albeit by means of various orthographic proposals1— has been developing uninterruptedly and in crescendo since the end of the 1980s until the present day, an ethnocultural language which has given rise to what is known as the Andalophile movement or cultural movement in defence of the Andalusian language.

Also, we published in 2002 in the Belgian literary magazine micRomania a second report and compilation of contemporary developments and initiatives in writing in Andalusian under the title “Écrire en andalú: un défi qui prend corps envers et contre tout” (Writing in Andalú: a challenge that takes shape against all odds). In the same year, 2002, the Hunta d’ekritoreh en andalú... / Reunión de escritores-as en andaluz / 1st Meeting of Andalusian Writers, a biennial congress that will hold its 11th Hunta in the town of Armería/Almería in 2022, began its journey in Mijas/Mijas. During the course of the 3rd Hunta in 2006, the Society for the Andalusian Language Study (Z.E.A.) was founded, an Andalusian reference institution which has organised successive Hunta since then, its first president being the philologist Gorka Reondo Lanzá. The proceedings published every two years of the Hunta d’ekritoreh include contributions by some fifty authors who have participated and continue to participate actively in the Andalophile movement.

Some literary landmarks of reference in the development of this cultural movement, among others:

— (1934 and subsequent reeditions of 1951, 1980 and 1998) Vocabulario andaluz. The extensive Andalusian dictionary compiled by Antonio Alcalá Venceslada is still the main reference for those who write and study the vocabulary of the Andalusian language. It uses metatextuality in Castilian or Spanish.

— (1961-65) Atlas Lingüístico y Etnográfico de Andalucía (ALEA). Four volumes of a titanic fieldwork with surveys carried out in 230 places in Andalusia, whose main author was the professor of Dialectology Manuel Alvar. Published by the University of Granada and the CSIC. Metatextuality in Spanish.


— (2017) Er Prinzipito. First translation into the Andalusian language of Saint-Exupéry’s literary classic Le Petit Prince, by anthropologist Huan Porrah, commissioned by the German publishing house Tintenfaß and supported by the ZEA. The fierce reactions against this publication from sectors of linguistic Spanishism led to a strengthening of the awareness of Andalusian ethno-linguistic identity among many Andalusian speakers.

1 To mention some of such proposals, the main ones are: NOTA-Porrah (Normah Ortográfikah pa la Trakhrikriz del Andalú), Normá Ortográfica pa l’Andalú (G. Reondo 2015), Propuehta ortográfica i gramaticâ pa un andalú omologao (Proyecto PAO), Propuesta de ortografia andaluza EPA. Una propuehta básica pa poer prinzipiar a ehcribir en andalú (T. Gutier & P. Arbadú 2016), among other. There is also a succinct Recomendación ortográfica de la ZEA 2019 (Spelling Recommendation of the ZEA 2019), with the intention of establishing minimum criteria to be taken into account in the various proposals mentioned. Vid. https://zea-andalu.org/propuehtah-ortografikah/.

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We find several significant data on the current linguistic awareness of Andalusians. In the publication *La identidad lingüística de Andalucía* (coord. Narbona 2009) they focus on the dialectal feature syllabic — which groups Andalusian varieties around three axes: lisp, seseo and distinction— and carry out a demolinguistic simulation between raw and simulated data of the volumetric distribution corresponding to the three types of speakers of Andalusian, concluding that there is a proportional balance between the three sets of variants: "the results of the simulation offer us a different image of the Andalusian linguistic reality, a sort of demolinguistic X-ray, which is reflected in Graph 3(...):

Corresponding in number of Andalusian speakers, according to the data of this simulation, in accordance with the following distribution:

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<td>Seseo</td>
<td>2,923,813</td>
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<td>Distinction</td>
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<td>Lisp</td>
<td>2,335,005</td>
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On the other hand, CENTRA (Andalusian Studies Centre) has published this year its report *Identidad de Andalucía. Demoscopic study 2022*, in which it looks, among other aspects, at the surveyed opinion of the Andalusian population on the Andalusian linguistic issue, reduced and reinterpreted institutionally and commercially as an 'accent' in recent years. Thus, when asked the question "Tell me how much you identify with your accent", the following bulky results appear:

In relation to the previous question, the opinion poll also asks the surveyed population about their reaction to the linguistic stigmatisation of the Andalusian accent:

This shows that, although positive identification with Andalusian is largely overwhelming (68.4+21%), in the case of reacting to external stigmatisation, the majority is more simple (39.5+10.5+3.7%) than almost unanimous.

Finally, we should recall the reflection of Jaspal & Sitaridou (2013) after analysing the Andalusian context as a paradigmatic example of stigmatised linguistic identity, a situation that a large part of the Andalusian-speaking population resists while maintaining their ethno-linguistic identity and vitality, in spite of everything.


Sociedad para el Estudio del Andalú (Z.E.A.) on line: https://zea-andalu.org/

