

Camille Marvin
Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
Conference report

Thanks to a generous grant from the Comité International Permanent des Linguistes, I was able to attend the International Colloquium “Éducation, langues minorisées et plurilinguisme: Quels écueils? Quelles politiques linguistiques?” at the University of Mons in Mons, Belgium from 1-2 September, 2022. I presented my paper “Les éducateurs en tant que créateurs de la politique linguistique dans le Val d’Aran” as part of a panel on the education of minoritized and regional languages in Spain. Our panel offered the conference attendees an understanding of the sociolinguistic conditions affecting three of Spain’s lesser-known regional languages: Leonese, Aragonese and (through my paper) Aranese. With my panel members we were able to compare the findings from our research and discuss how these three educational projects of minoritized language revitalization told a larger story of speaker communities employing language ideologies of the “local” and “territory” to differing degrees in their language policy practices.

Many of the participants’ contributions offered interesting perspectives and novel ideas. I left the conference with a much deeper understanding of the fluidity of power and language authority thanks to the papers and round table discussions carried out by the francophone Canadian researchers present. While I was quite familiar with language-in-education policy in Quebec, I was ignorant of the stakes regarding francophone language rights in the minority context (in Canadian territories outside of Quebec). This was a worthwhile and thought-provoking perspective for the colloquium, as it begot questions of mutable linguistic borders that I can explore in my own doctoral research. Furthermore, the colloquium’s organizers’ decision to include a round table of minority-context francophone Canadian journalists resulted in a discussion of language authority and the precarity of minoritized voices in a neoliberal, late-capitalist context. It was fascinating and led to several insightful one-on-one conversations during coffee and lunch breaks.

Finally, my time at Mons allowed me to meet some of the most established researchers in the field of minority language education, particularly in the francophone sphere. As the colloquium was quite small, and there were not many other doctoral students, I had many opportunities to speak with and receive advice from professors from interdisciplinary backgrounds, and take notice of researchers that I could collaborate with in the future.