

6th June, 1972

Dear Mr. Carnaghan,

Thank you for your letter of May 29th. I can't say that I've ever heard Catalan ll pronounced y and am rather surprised by what your acquaintance has told you. In every region of Catalonia, as far as I know, ll is pronounced, more or less as Gili describes it, like the lli in William, phonetic [ / ]. This applies in any position, thus llet (= milk) [ / ]; alli (= there) [ / ]; ball (= dance) [ / ]. With b and y there certainly is some confusion: Barcelona speech is very Castilianised in this respect and barely distinguishes between the two sounds. In other regions, though, a very clear distinction is preserved. Thus vi bo (= good wine) in Barcelona (and district) is pronounced [ bi bó ] but elsewhere one hears [ ví bó ]. The y sound is strongly rooted and its influence is felt in the pronunciation of Castilian. There is a joke about the inhabitants of Vich who are supposed to pronounce Castilian En Vich venden vino bueno y barato (= In Vich they sell good, cheap wine) as En Vich venden vino bueno y varato!

About periodicals; there is Presència from Girona, partly in Catalan, which I believe I mentioned to you before. Another children's paper is Cavall fort, all Catalan. There are other odd things, but nothing of any great weight or importance. For further information, addresses etc., I suggest that you contact Serra d'Or Apartat 121, Barcelona.

On my trip to Spain at Easter I did not manage to locate the Catalan primer for English speakers. I did learn, though, that it's a phrase-book of limited scope and very dubious merit. I am continuing to persevere with Teach Yourself Catalan and intend to finish it this summer come what may. I'm afraid I didn't read the article you mention in the Telegraph; it's a paper which I don't often see.

I have heard of the A.I.D.L.C.M. but have had no contact with them. I would guess that a representative from Barcelona will not be far from the centre of its activities which, I imagine, will be aimed at UNESCO.

Please forgive the rather hasty tone of this reply. It's a very busy time of year with exams etc., and I wanted to answer you before your departure for Catalonia. I trust that your travels will be both enjoyable and linguistically profitable.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Alan Yates.