

## **“From Left to Right”: the Influence of Political Orientation on the Language Attitudes of the Population of Palma de Mallorca toward Catalan and Spanish**

The interplay between language attitudes and language policy in contemporary society has become increasingly complex. In certain contexts, these elements appear to mutually influence and complement each other (Bertolotti & Coll, 2020; Kester, 2020), whereas in other instances, they seem to diverge. The present work explores this phenomenon in the context of the Balearic Islands (Spain), where Catalan and Spanish coexist as the two official languages.

Following the restoration of Spanish democracy in the 1970s, the institutions of the Balearic Islands crafted a legal framework for both languages. This framework not only recognizes Catalan and Spanish as official languages in the region but also strives for the normalization and promotion of Catalan as a minority and historic language of the archipelago. However, the establishment of this legal framework and the consequent implementation of certain language policies has been accompanied by a process of polarization in the Balearic society in terms of language attitudes, particularly in Palma, the capital city (Bertolotti & Coll, 2020; Kester, 2020). Likewise, it seems that in recent years these linguistic attitudes have become associated with certain political orientations, to the point of turning the linguistic situation in the Balearic Islands into a constant political debate (Crespí, 2023; Garau, 2023; Mateos, 2023; Pellicer, 2023; Sánchez, 2023).

Consequently, this study explores the relationship between political orientation and the language attitudes of the population of Palma de Mallorca toward Catalan and Spanish. Data from 127 participants aged 18 to 71 were collected through an online questionnaire organized in three sections. The first section collected demographic information (e.g., gender, age, ethnic origin, SES, and political orientation). The second section collected information on their proficiency in Catalan and Spanish and their usage in certain contexts and with different social groups (e.g., parents, siblings, neighbors, etc.). The third section collected data on the language attitudes toward both languages through open-ended questions (e.g., ‘the official language of the Balearic Islands should be...’), and questions that involved expressing the degree of agreement or disagreement with specific statements (e.g., ‘Catalan is worth learning’) on a sliding scale. Here, I think it would be good to add 1-2 sentences about data analysis, some as simple “Data were analyzed using linear regression in R (R Core Team 2023).” You could also add a sentence about how each question was the dependent variable, but it’s not totally necessary here.

Results revealed a significant association of political orientation on the language attitudes of the population of Palma toward Catalan and Spanish. First, participants who identified as progressive showed significantly more positive attitudes toward Catalan than those participants who identified as conservative. Second, it was found that Spanish is perceived as a neutral language by both progressive and conservative participants. Third, progressive participants were more in favor of bilingualism overall, as opposed to conservative participants. Finally, there seems to be more consensus among progressive participants in terms of language attitudes than among conservative participants. Together, these results indicate that political orientation and language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in Palma de Mallorca are inextricably linked.

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