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

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**1. Introduction**

The Balearic Islands are an archipelago in the western Mediterranean Sea, consisting of four main islands: Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza, and Formentera. They are situated near the eastern coast of the Iberian Peninsula and are one of the seventeen Autonomous Communities of Spain. The Balearic Islands have a population of over 1.2 million inhabitants, with just under 40% of them living in Palma, the capital city (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2024). Additionally, there are two official languages in the Balearic Islands: Catalan and Spanish. Historically, the archipelago has been part of the Catalan linguistic domain along with other territories in Spain, mainly Catalonia and the Valencian community. However, since the introduction of Spanish in the 16th century, both languages have coexisted despite efforts by former governments to reduce the presence of Catalan, such as Franco’s dictatorship from 1939 to 1975.

Nowadays, forty years after the approval of a legal framework that aimed to recognize both Catalan and Spanish as the official languages and normalize and promote Catalan after decades of being proscribed under Franco’s regime, the linguistic situation of the Balearic Islands is completely different. General knowledge of Catalan among the Balearic population has increased considerably (Vanrell & Melià, 2017) and the presence of the language in society has become much more noticeable and evident (e.g., the use of signs, indicators and signposts in Catalan throughout the territory, the use of Catalan by default in all official communications of the Government of the Balearic Islands, the Parliament, the island councils, the local public administration, and the public corporations and institutions dependent on the autonomous community, and the establishment of a public radio and television entity in 2005 whose language of communication is Catalan). The establishment of this legal framework, however, and the consequent implementation of certain language policies by previous and current local governments, have been accompanied by a process of polarization in the Balearic society in terms of language attitudes, particularly in Palma (Aguiló-Mora & Lynch, 2017; Calafat Vila & Calero-Pons, 2019; Castell et al., 2023; Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014; Tudela Isanta, 2021). This is not surprising, given the close relationship between language policy and language attitudes (Bertolotti & Coll, 2020; Errihani, 2008; Kester, 2020; Marley, 2004; Mukhuba, 2005). In fact, according to O’Rourke & Hogan‐Brun (2012), language policy and planning can or should be intended to change language attitudes Likewise, in recent years these language attitudes have become associated with certain political orientations, to the point that the linguistic situation in the Balearic Islands is part of ongoing political debate (Amorós, 2017; Colmenero, 2018; Colom, 2023; Crespí, 2023; Galvín, 2017; Garau, 2023; Gentili, 2013; Manresa, 2015; Mateos, 2023; Olaizola, 2013; Pellicer, 2023; Sánchez, 2023).

Consequently, the present study delves deeper into the relationship between political orientation and language attitudes in the Balearic Islands by focusing on the particular case of Palma, the capital city. Specifically, the present study examines whether political orientation is a significant predictor of the language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in Palma and, if so, to explore what the relationship is between different political orientations and language attitudes toward both languages. To this end, this study analyzes questionnaire data on the language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish from a total of 99 participants (67 females) aged between 18 and 71 years old (mean = 37) from Palma. In doing so, the present study not only expands our knowledge of the role of different social factors in the formation of language attitudes towards Catalan and Spanish in the Balearic Islands, but also contributes to our broader understanding of the critical relationships between language policy, language attitudes, and political orientation.

**2. Background**

In order to contextualize the study of language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in the Balearic Islands, it is necessary to briefly present the legal framework surrounding both languages and their status there. Accordingly, three main documents constitute the legal framework concerning the two official languages of the Balearic Islands. The first one is the *Spanish Constitution* (1978), which impacted the configuration of the linguistic reality of the Balearic Islands in three different ways. First, it recognized, for the first time in forty years, not only the existence of languages other than Spanish in the nation, but also their officiality in the territories where they were spoken (Art. 3.2). Likewise, it was also declared that these languages constituted a cultural heritage to be respected and protected, which granted legal protection for the Catalan language after forty years of repression, as stated in (Article 3.3)[[1]](#footnote-1). Finally, the Constitution gave the Autonomous Communities jurisdiction in the teaching of their co-official languages (Art. 148.1.17). This was of particular relevance, since it gave the government of the Balearic Islands the capacity to implement the teaching of Catalan, impacting not only the linguistic panorama of the islands, but also the perceived status that the language had had until then among the Balearic society as a language not worth being taught. Consequently, education became one of the most important tools in ending the situation of diglossia and linguistic substitution in the archipelago.

The second document is *Statute of Autonomy of the Balearic Islands* (1983), which led to the establishment of a system of self-government in the region. One of the most important aspects of this document in terms of language was the recognition of Catalan as the archipelago’s own language and its status as co-official with Spanish (Art. 4.1). Importantly, it also declared that every citizen had the right to use the language and prohibited discrimination on linguistic grounds (Art. 4.2). However, of special relevance was the Article 4.3, in which the government committed to taking all the necessary steps to reach equality between both languages in all domains, but especially to ensure that every citizen in the Balearic Islands had knowledge of both languages. This implied a complete renovation of the educational system. In addition to the teaching of Catalan, the government undertook the task of fostering the normalization of the language, that is, promoting the use of the language in all contexts (public administration, education, and the media) in order to encourage the Balearic society to become accustomed to using Catalan after forty years of being forbidden under Franco’s regime.

The third document, the *Linguistic Normalization of the Balearic Islands Act* (1986), was passed in response to the aforementioned goal of promoting the use of Catalan across domains. The main objectives of this regulation were to (1) make effective the progressive and normal use of the Catalan language in the official and administrative domain, (2) ensure the knowledge and progressive use of Catalan as the main language of education, (3) promote the use of the Catalan language in all means of social communication, and (4) create social awareness of the importance of the knowledge and use of the Catalan language by all citizens (Art. 1.2). Accordingly, Catalan was made the preferred language of both local and autonomous institutions, official documents started to be available in both Catalan and Spanish, and citizens were granted the right to choose the language of their preference in both administrative and legal proceedings. Catalan was also made the main language and medium of instruction in all levels of education, and a required training in Catalan among teachers and other professionals in the education domain was established, in order to promote bilingual education in Catalan and Spanish. Additionally, Catalan was established as the default language of the radio, television, and other media owned by the government administration, and the production and exhibition of movies, plays and other cultural manifestations in Catalan was encouraged.

The *Linguistic Normalization Act* led to a series of minor decrees and regulations that aimed at expanding certain aspects of the law. The most important ones were the Decree 92/1997, by which Catalan was established as the primary language of education (except for higher education) and at least 50% of the subjects had to be taught in this language; Decree 100/1990, by which the usual language of the Administration had to be Catalan; and Decree 25/2001 which established knowledge of Catalan as a requirement to work in the civil service (Aguiló-Mora & Lynch, 2017). Particularly relevant to this study, however, is the *Linguistic Normalization Regulation of the City Council of Palma* (1987). This regulation states that Catalan is Palma’s own language and both Catalan and Spanish are the official languages of the City Council. It also states that citizens have the right to communicate with the City Council in any of the two languages and prohibits discrimination on linguistic grounds. In addition, it states that all communications from the City Council should be in Catalan by default, as well as any documents or certificates issued, and that the City Council is committed to promoting linguistic awareness and the use of Catalan.

Decades after the approval of this legal framework, it is clear that many of the objectives proposed at the time have been achieved. For example, general knowledge of Catalan among the Balearic population has increased considerably (Vanrell & Melià, 2017) and the presence of the language in society has become much more noticeable and evident (e.g., the use of signs, indicators and signposts in Catalan throughout the territory, the use of Catalan by default in all official communications of the Government of the Balearic Islands, the Parliament, the island councils, the local public administration, and the public corporations and institutions dependent on the autonomous community, and the establishment of a public radio and television entity in 2005 whose language of communication is Catalan). 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 (Aguiló-Mora & Lynch, 2017; Calafat Vila & Calero-Pons, 2019; Castell et al., 2023; Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014; Tudela Isanta, 2021). This is not surprising given the close relationship between language policy and language attitudes. In fact, there is a common assumption that much policy and planning can or should be intended to change language attitudes (O’Rourke & Hogan‐Brun, 2012).

Accordingly, previous work has examined this relationship in many different social contexts, in order to determine how policy can affect language attitudes (Marley, 2004) and vice versa (Errihani, 2008; Mukhuba, 2005). With regard to the former, Bertolotti & Coll (2020) studied the language attitudes toward Portuguese in Uruguay during the Luo-Brazilian military occupation in the 19th century through the analysis of legislative documents, documents found in judicial or government archives, pieces published in the press, and literary writings. The analysis revealed two types of attitudes: negative and neutral. Negative attitudes were found in Montevideo, as a result of the language policy promoted by the government in its effort to build a nation-state that was perceived as threatened by the presence of Portuguese. Neutral attitudes, on the other hand, were present at the border area, far from the capital city.

Conversely, language attitudes can also exert an influence on language policy. For example, Kester (2020) studied the patterns of language use, language attitudes, and identity in Curaçao among people of different age groups and with different parental birth places and found that Papiamentu, aside from its widespread use, is considered an essential part of Curaçao’s identity and the attitudes toward it are predominantly positive. As a result, the authors contend that these findings could significantly contribute to language policy and planning initiatives in the Dutch Caribbean. The frequent use of Papiamentu, its importance in education and the job market, coupled with its role as a marker of local identity, strongly advocate for an expanded role of the language within the education system. Both studies, therefore, highlight the close relationship between language policy and language attitudes.

This relationship has also been explored in regions where Catalan and Spanish coexist from many different perspectives, such as education (Díaz-Torrent et al., 2017; Huguet, 2001; Huguet & Biscarri Gassió, 1995; Huguet & Suïls, 1997; Janés et al., 2008; Lapresta Rey et al., 2010), immigration and ethnic origin (Estors Sastre, 2014; Iglésias, 2010; Querol & Huguet, 2010), age (Joan i Marí, 2010; Ubalde, 2013), and family (Huguet, 2005), among others. Overall, these studies find that the language policies implemented in Catalan-Spanish bilingual regions has had a positive impact on the attitudes toward both languages and, in particular, toward Catalan. This trend can especially be seen in the case of the school-age immigrant population, who perceive Catalan as the key to social and professional integration (Estors Sastre, 2014; Lapresta Rey et al., 2010). The vast majority of these studies, however, have been carried out in Catalonia, with only a few exceptions in other Catalan and Spanish-speaking regions (Aguiló-Mora & Lynch, 2017; Calafat Vila & Calero-Pons, 2019; Castell et al., 2023; Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014; Tudela Isanta, 2021).

In the case of the Balearic Islands, a number of findings related to language attitudes can be reported. First, place of residence has been found to play a role in the formation of language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in Mallorca. According to the responses to a language skills and attitudes survey of 33 students enrolled in a Catalan Language and its Didactics course in the University of the Balearic Islands, Calafat Vila & Calero-Pons (2019) argue that the attitudes of those who live in areas with lower social contact with Catalan, such as Palma, tend to be less positive toward this language and more positive toward Spanish, as opposed to the attitudes of those who live outside of Palma, where the presence of Catalan is greater and, therefore, the attitudes toward it tend to be more positive. Second, mother tongue (the first language someone has been exposed to from birth) has also been to be related to the formation of language attitudes in the Balearic Islands. According to the data from a total of 316 surveys and 20 personal interviews, Aguiló-Mora & Lynch (2017) state that those who have Catalan as their first language (L1) show more positive attitudes toward Catalan, whereas those who have Spanish as their L1 show more positive attitudes toward Spanish. With regard to education, Calafat Vila and Calero-Pons (2019) found that L1 Catalan speakers prefer it as the medium of instruction, L2 Catalan speakers are indifferent, and L3 Catalan speakers are either indifferent or against it. Similarly, in a study with four focus groups organized by mother tongue and career goals, Ibáñez Ferreté (2014) found that L1 Catalan speakers who are learning towards careers in the private sector are in favor of bilingual and even trilingual education. Contrarily, L1 Spanish speakers leaning towards careers in the private sector tend to favor reducing the presence of Catalan in education. Interestingly, L1 Spanish speakers leaning towards careers in the public sector see Catalan as a tool for social integration and employment. Contrary, in a study with several focus groups with college students from Palma, Tudela Isanta (2021) found that even L1 Spanish speakers agree that having Catalan as the main medium of instruction is positive, since it allows every student to learn both languages and promote bilingualism in society.

Likewise, age has also been found to be a significant predictor in the formation of language attitudes in the Balearic Islands. Accordingly, young people, including students, show more positive attitudes toward Catalan, and older people and retirees tend to show more positive attitudes toward Spanish (Aguiló-Mora & Lynch, 2017). Similarly, in a report by Castell, Cremades and Vanrell (2023) about the perception of the youth toward the unity of the language, regional variation, and usage norms, with data collected using both quantitative and qualitative (individual interviews, focus groups, and language use surveys) methods, it was found that young people tend to consider Catalan as the authentic language of the archipelago, while Spanish is considered a language used for communication without a specific value In fact, many studies have found a general consensus that Catalan is the ‘authentic language’ of the Balearic Islands, in Gal and Woolard’s terms (2001), and an essential component of its identity, whereas Spanish tends to be perceived as a mere language of communication (Calafat Vila & Calero-Pons, 2019; Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014; Tudela Isanta, 2021). Related to identity, Ibáñez Ferreté (2014) classified speakers into two identity groups in Mallorca: the “Mallorcans” and the “non-Mallorcans”. The former include people born in Mallorca to Mallorcan parents, who speak Catalan, and identify with the island’s culture and traditions. The latter, on the other hand, are people from or born to people from mainland Spain, who speak Spanish, and whose culture has been imported from outside of the island. Moreover, the “Mallorcans” tend to be perceived as nationalists by those outside of this identity group because of their willingness to defend the island’s own language and culture, while the “non-Mallorcans” tend to show a more passive or indifferent attitude toward Catalan culture and language (Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014).

Finally, another predictor found to be play a role in the formation of language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in the Balearic Islands is political orientation. Accordingly, studies have found that people who identify as progressive show more positive attitudes toward Catalan and to the presence of the language in all domains. Conversely, those who identify as politically conservative show more positive attitudes toward Spanish and to the presence of the language in all domain (Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014). Likewise, preference for one language or the other as a function of political orientation has come to be associated with two specific urban ‘tribes’: *cayetanos* and *indepes* (Castell et al., 2023). The first ones are known for their linkage to right or extreme right political ideologies, as well as to *Spanishism*, that is, a political movement that seeks to reaffirm Spain’s national identity, including the language. Consequently, they tend to display favorable attitudes toward Spanish. The second ones, on the other hand, are individuals linked to left or extreme left ideologies, as well as to *Catalanism*, a political movement oriented to the exaltation of the Catalan language and culture. Consequently, they tend to display favorable attitudes toward Catalan. Therefore, and according to Aguiló-Mora and Lynch (2017) there seems to be a lack of ideological unity within the Mallorcan society in terms of language attitudes.

Altogether, the linguistic situation in the Balearic Islands in terms of language attitudes is complex. In general, the society is divided into two main sectors: those who show more favorable attitudes toward Catalan, and those who show more favorable attitudes toward Spanish. In recent years, this polarization in the Balearic society in terms of language attitudes has intensified parallel to the implementation of a series of language policies by prior and current local governments catering to the ideologies of their respective political parties. For instance, the conservative government of the Popular Party (*Partit Popular*) implemented, from 2013 to 2015, a series of measures affecting the linguistic normalization of Catalan. One of these measures was the *Tractament Integrat de Llengües* or TIL ‘Comprehensive Treatment of Languages’, which mandated that schools teach a third of their curriculum in Spanish, another third in Catalan, and another third in English. The stated the aim was to promote linguistic immersion in English, although many saw it as an attack on Catalan (Gentili, 2013; Manresa, 2015; Olaizola, 2013). In 2018, the progressive government of the Socialist Party of the Balearic Islands (PSIB-PSOE) and More for Mallorca (*Més per Mallorca*) passed Decree 8/2018 which mandated healthcare personnel be proficient in Catalan to work in the public healthcare system of the Balearic Islands. While the aim was to promote the normalization of Catalan, many people, including an important sector of the healthcare personnel, saw it as an imposition that prevented them from practicing because they were not proficient in the language (Amorós, 2017; Colmenero, 2018; Colom, 2023; Galvín, 2017). Consequently, the association between language attitudes and political orientation seems to have strengthen over the past decade, 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).

This study delves deeper into this phenomenon by focusing on the specific case of Palma, the capital of the Balearic Islands. This city is particularly interesting for several reasons. First, just under 40% of the archipelago’s population (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2024) resides in Palma, making it the largest city. Second, it is the most diverse city in the Balearic Islands, being home to a third of the foreign residents of the Balearic Islands (IBESTAT, 2022). According to Blas–Arroyo, this situation makes the Palma “a melting pot of people from different geographic, economic and cultural origins” (2007, p. 80), making a significant impact on the linguistic situation of the city. Finally, previous work has shown that the language attitudes of people who live in areas with lower social contact with Catalan, such as Palma, tend to be less positive toward this language and more positive toward Spanish (Calafat Vila & Calero-Pons, 2019).

Accordingly, my research questions and hypotheses are as follows:

1. Is political orientation a significant predictor of language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in Palma de Mallorca?
2. What is the relationship between different political orientations and language attitudes of the population of Palma de Mallorca toward Catalan and Spanish?

With regard to research question one, based on previous literature (Castell et al., 2023; Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014) and the current political debate regarding the linguistic situation in the Balearic Islands (Crespí, 2023; Garau, 2023; Mateos, 2023; Pellicer, 2023; Sánchez, 2023), I hypothesize that political orientation will be a significant predictor of language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in Palma. With regard to research question two, and also based on previous literature (Aguiló-Mora & Lynch, 2017; Castell et al., 2023; Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014) and past reactions of the population of the Balearic Islands to certain language policies by prior governments (Amorós, 2017; Colmenero, 2018; Colom, 2023; Galvín, 2017; Gentili, 2013; Manresa, 2015; Olaizola, 2013), I hypothesize that people who identify as progressive will have more positive attitudes toward Catalan than toward Spanish, and that people who identify as conservative will have more positive attitudes toward Spanish than toward Catalan.

**3. Methodology**



*3.1. Materials*

Data were collected using an online survey hosted on Qualtrics that consisted of three parts. The first part, a demographic questionnaire, collected information regarding participant gender, age, country of birth, autonomous community of birth, ethnic origin, neighborhood of residence in Palma, level of education, employment situation, household income, national identity, and political orientation. The survey was available in three languages: Catalan, Spanish, and English.

The second portion of the survey, a language use questionnaire, was designed to collect information regarding participants’ self-reported knowledge and usage of Catalan and Spanish. Specifically, this section included questions about native language or languages, proficiency in Catalan and Spanish (understanding, reading, speaking, and writing), languages studied other than Catalan and Spanish, use of Catalan and Spanish with different social groups (parents, children, siblings, grandparents, friends, neighbors, partners, relatives, professors, classmates, coworkers, and immigrants), and use of Catalan and Spanish in different contexts (administration, school, workplace, financial institutions, local commerce, department stores, social networks, etc.).

The third part collected data on the language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in two sections. The first section consisted of series incomplete of statements such as ‘the official language of the Balearic Islands should be\_\_\_\_\_\_’ or ‘the medium of instruction in public education should be X’ followed by three possible answers: Catalan, Spanish, or both. The second section included a series of 60 evaluative statements regarding Catalan and Spanish such as ‘I like it when people use Spanish, ‘Catalan is worth learning’, ‘Catalan is part of the identity of the Balearic Islands’, followed by a 100-point draggable sliding scale to indicate level of agreement or disagreement with the content of the statement, where 0 was “totally disagree” and 100 was “totally agree”. The present study analyzes the data from this final section, focusing on the relationship between these attitudes and participants’ reported political orientation.

*3.2. Procedure*

Participants self-identified for this study. Recruitment materials in Catalan and Spanish with information about the study, the requirements to participate and a link to the consent form and the survey were posted on different social networks and online communication channels, such as WhatsApp and Instagram. Participants who were interested and wanted to participate clicked on the link and read the consent form. Those who agreed with the terms clicked on the ‘I agree’ button and began the survey. Participants completed the survey on their own electronic devices and at their own pace without being observed. On average, the survey took approximately 15 minutes to be completed. In accordance with the IRB-approved protocol (Pro2023001730), participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the survey at any time without being penalized as well as their right to request the elimination of their data after survey completion. All participants who completed the survey received 10 EUR of monetary compensation for their time.

*3.3. Participants*

A total of 127 responses to the questionnaire were collected. Of these, 28 responses were incomplete and were therefore discarded. Data are drawn from a total of 99 participants (67 females) aged between 18 and 71 years old (mean = 37) from Palma de Mallorca who were recruited during a ten-day period during the Fall 2023 semester. In order to be eligible to take part in the study, participants had to meet the following three requirements: to be over 18 years of age, to live or have lived in Palma for at least five years, and to be proficient in both Catalan and Spanish. Figure 1 shows the distribution of proficiency levels in both languages.

**Table 1.** Number of participants by gender and average age.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | Count | Avg. Age | Std. Deviation |
| Male | 32 | 34.7 | 12.1 |
| Female | 67 | 38 | 14.6 |
| Total | 99 | 36.9 | 13.9 |

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**Figure 1.** Distribution of proficiency levels in Catalan and Spanish.

Since this study focuses on the relationship between political orientation and language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in Palma, participants were also asked to indicate their political orientation in the questionnaire. Participants had seven options to choose from: far-left, left, center-left, center, center-right, right, and far-right. Interestingly, no participant selected far-right and, therefore, only the first six political orientations will be considered for this study. Figure 2 shows the distribution of political orientation among participants, and Figure 3 shows distribution of mother tongues by political orientation. For the purposes of this analysis, ‘far left’, ‘left’, and ‘center left’ are classified as progressive, whereas ‘center’, ‘center-right’, and ‘right’, are classified as conservative.

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**Figure 2**. Distribution of political orientation among participants

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**Figure 3.** Distribution of mother tongues by political orientation

*3.4. Data analysis*

Data were analyzed in R (R Core Team, 2023). First, I performed a descriptive analysis that consisted in creating a series of plots and tables to summarize and describe the features of the dataset and to identify potential trends. After that, I performed inferential statistical analysis. For each of the 60 evaluative statements, I created a series of hierarchically nested linear regression models using the *lme4* package (Bates et al., 2015) with attitudinal sliding scale responses as the dependent variable, and political orientation as a potential predictor. To determine the best fit model for each statement, I used the *anova()* function (Fox & Weisberg, 2019).

**4. Results**

The statistical analysis revealed a significant association of political orientation (p < .05) on the language attitudes of the population of Palma de Mallorca toward Catalan and Spanish for 39/60 evaluative statements. In what follows, I explore the results for some of the most relevant statements organized in six different categories: language preference, language difficulty and enjoyment, language importance and usefulness, language policy and integration, cultural and identity aspects, and popular trends. These categories are based on the different domains in which language attitudes toward both languages are present in the Balearic Islands.

*4.1. Language preference*

Several of the statements that participants evaluated related to language preference. These statements are shown in the Appendix. In what follows, I detail the relationship between participant responses to each of these statements and political orientation.



Participant responses to the statements ‘I like that people use Spanish’ and ‘I like that people use Catalan’ showed interesting differences. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed favorable responses to this statement (mean = 77.36) indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘I like that people use Catalan’, those who identified as progressive (far left, left, and center-left) showed a greater level of agreement with it. Conversely, those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right), showed significantly lower levels of agreement with it, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘I like that people use Catalan’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 100.000 | 8.359 | 11.963 | < 2e-16 |
| Left | -7.667 | 8.948 | -0.857 | 0.39373 |
| Center-Left | -8.250 | 9.7120 | 0.849 | 0.3978 |
| Center | -35.600 | 12.949 | -2.749 | 0.00718 |
| Center-Right | -25.833 | 10.518 | -2.456 | 0.01590 |
| Right | -28.286 | 11.821 | -2.393 | 0.01873 |

Interestingly, people who identified themselves ideologically as centrist were the ones who showed the greatest degree of disagreement with the statement, even greater than that indicated by those who identified themselves ideologically as center-right and right-wing. It is possible that this is due to the fact that the participants who identified their political ideology as center, in reality, were closer to more conservative and right-wing positions. Additionally, Figure 4 illustrates that there was more consensus among progressive people around this statement, as indicated smaller range of responses on the numerical scale. In this and the following plots, the diamond represents the mean level of agreement with the statement out of 100, and the error bars represent the variability of the data.

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**Figure 4.** Participant responses to the statement ‘I like that people use Catalan’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘I like listening to Spanish’ and ‘I like listening to Catalan’ showed interesting differences as well. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed favorable responses to this statement (mean = 81.84), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘I like listening to Catalan’, those who identified as progressive (far left, left, and center-left) showed a greater level of agreement with it as opposed to those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right), who showed significantly lower levels of agreement with it, as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘I like listening to Catalan’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 100.000 | 8.821 | 11.336 | < 2e-16 |
| Left | -6.979 | 9.442 | -0.739 | 0.46169 |
| Center-Left | -8.650 | 10.249 | -0.844 | 0.40085 |
| Center | -36.600 | 13.666 | -2.678 | 0.00875 |
| Center-Right | -23.417 | 11.100 | -2.110 | 0.03757 |
| Right | -37.000 | 12.475 | -2.966 | 0.00383 |

Once again, those who identified themselves as centrist showed significantly lower levels of agreement with this statement than those who identified their political orientation as center-right, showing very similar results to those who indicated having a right-leaning political orientation. This indicates an emerging trend in which self-identified centrists actually more closely align with right-wing ideologies, or at times even exceed the far right. Additionally, the analysis also revealed considerably more consensus among participants with a more progressive ideology, as opposed to those with a more conservative ideology, as shown by the much wider range of responses in Figure 5.

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Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 5.** Participant responses to the statement ‘I like listening to Catalan’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘I like to use Spanish’ and ‘I like to use Catalan’ also showed opposite trends. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed favorable responses to this statement (mean = 79.48), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘I like to use Catalan’, those who identified as progressive (far left, left, and center-left) showed a significantly greater level of agreement with this statement as opposed to those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right), who showed a significantly lower level of agreement, as presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘I like to use Catalan’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 100.000 | 11.07 | 9.035 | 2.25e-14 |
| Left | -11.15 | 11.85 | -0.941 | 0.349273 |
| Center-Left | -19.350 | 12.860 | -1.505 | 0.13580 |
| Center | -43.60 | 17.15 | -2.543 | 0.012651 |
| Center-Right | -42.33 | 13.93 | -3.040 | 0.003076 |
| Right | -55.71 | 15.65 | -3.559 | 0.000588 |

As was the case with the two previous statements, those who identified themselves as centrist showed a lower level of agreement with this statement than those who identified their political orientation as center-right, reinforcing the emerging trend proposed previously. Additionally, the analysis also revealed considerably more consensus among participants with a more progressive ideology, as opposed to those with a more conservative ideology, as shown by the much wider range of responses in Figure 6.

A graph showing the different colored rhombuses

Description automatically generated **Figure 6.** Participant responses to the statement ‘I like to use Catalan’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘Sometimes I feel compelled to use Catalan’ and ‘Sometimes I feel compelled to use Spanish’ also diverged notably. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed unfavorable responses to this statement (mean = 23.76), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when participants were presented with the statement ‘Sometimes I feel compelled to use Spanish’, those who identified as progressive (far left, left, and center-left) showed a significantly greater level of agreement with this statement as opposed to those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right), who showed a significantly lower level of agreement, as presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**. Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘Sometimes I feel compelled to use Spanish’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 82.57 | 13.00 | 6.351 | 7.77e-09 |
| Left | -19.11 | 13.92 | -1.373 | 0.17293 |
| Center-Left | -31.971 | 15.11 | -2.117 | 0.03697 |
| Center | -54.17 | 20.14 | -2.690 | 0.00848 |
| Center-Right | -74.07 | 16.36 | -4.528 | 1.76e-05 |
| Right | -60.86 | 18.39 | -3.310 | 0.00133 |

Interestingly, those who self-identified as centrists did not show a lower level of agreement with this statement than those who identified themselves as center-right or right-wing. However, those who self-identified as center-right showed a significantly lower level of agreement with this statement than those who self-identified as right wing. Additionally, the analysis also revealed more consensus among conservative participants, as opposed to those with a more progressive political ideology, as shown by the much wider range of responses in Figure 7.

A graph of political orientation

Description automatically generated

**Figure 7.** Participant responses to the statement ‘Sometimes I feel compelled to use Spanish’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘I try to use Catalan whenever I can’ and ‘I try to use Spanish whenever I can’ also showed opposite trends. Analysis of both statements revealed statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. When participants were presented with the statement ‘I try to use Catalan whenever I can’, participants who identified as progressive (far left, left, and center-left) expressed a greater level agreement than those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right), who showed a significantly lower level of agreement, as presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘I try to use Catalan whenever I can’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 94.29 | 12.46 | 7.568 | 2.67e-11 |
| Left | -12.76 | 13.34 | -0.957 | 0.34093 |
| Center-Left | -16.19 | 14.47 | -1.118 | 0.26636 |
| Center | -48.89 | 19.30 | -2.533 | 0.01298 |
| Center-Right | -47.70 | 15.68 | -3.043 | 0.00304 |
| Right | -50.86 | 17.62 | -2.887 | 0.00484 |

Once again, those who self-identified as centrist showed lower levels of agreement with this statement than those who self-identified as center-right, showing very similar results to those who indicated having a right-leaning political orientation. Figure 8 illustrates show the responses of those who self-identified as centrist closely resemble the responses of those who self-identified ideologically as center-right or right.

A graph of different colored rhombuses

Description automatically generated

**Figure 8.** Participant responses to the statement ‘I try to use Catalan whenever I can’.

Opposite trends were found, however, when participants were presented with the statement ‘I try to use Spanish whenever I can’. Those participants who identified as progressive (far left, left, and center-left) indicated a lower level of agreement with this statement. Conversely, those who identified as conservative (center-right and right) showed a significantly greater level of agreement with it, as presented in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘I try to use Spanish whenever I can’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 44.143 | 13.897 | 3.176 | 0.00202 |
| Left | 11.315 | 14.876 | 0.761 | 0.44878 |
| Center-Left | 12.3071 | 16.1467 | 0.762 | 0.44786 |
| Center | 6.857 | 21.529 | 0.319 | 0.75081 |
| Center-Right | 54.857 | 17.487 | 3.137 | 0.00229 |
| Right | 40.143 | 19.653 | 2.043 | 0.04393 |

Interestingly, the responses of those who identified themselves as centrist closely resembled the responses of those who identified themselves as progressive (far-left, left, and center-left). In fact, their level of agreement with this statement was even lower than that of those who identified as left and center-left. This could be due to the fact that 40% of those who self-identified as centrists, despite being able to manifest negative attitudes toward Catalan, have this language as their L1, and 20% have both Catalan and Spanish. This could offer an explanation as to why centrists do not feel the need to use Spanish whenever they can, as well as an indication that attitudes may be different than usage patterns. It is also important to note that people who self-identified as center-right showed a greater level of agreement with this statement than those who identified as right-wing. Additionally, the analysis also revealed a greater level of consensus among conservative participants than among progressive participants, especially among those who self-identified as left-wing, as shown by the much wider range of responses in Figure 9.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 9.** Participant responses to the statement ‘I try to use Spanish whenever I can’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘If I had children, I would like them to speak Spanish’ and ‘If I had children, I would like them to speak Catalan’ also varied significantly. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed favorable responses to this statement (mean = 84.77), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘If I had children, I would like them to speak Catalan’, participants with a more progressive political orientation (far left, left, and center-left) indicated a greater level of agreement with this statement than conservative participants (center-right and right), as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘If I had children, I would like them to speak Catalan’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 100.000 | 8.743 | 11.438 | <2e-16 |
| Left | -6.938 | 9.359 | -0.741 | 0.46039 |
| Center-Left | -14.000 | 10.158 | -1.378 | 0.1715 |
| Center | -6.000 | 13.544 | -0.443 | 0.65880 |
| Center-Right | -22.750 | 11.001 | -2.068 | 0.04142 |
| Right | -46.000 | 12.364 | -3.720 | 0.00034 |

Similar to what was seen with the statement ‘I try to use Spanish whenever I can’, the responses of those who identified themselves as centrist closely resembled the responses of those who identified themselves as progressive (far-left, left, and center-left). In fact, their level of agreement with this statement was even greater than that of those who identified as left and center-left. This could be due, once again, to a possible separation between language attitudes and linguistic uses in people whose political orientation is not sided. As previously mentioned, a significant percentage of those who identified as centrist have Catalan as their L1, and it is possible that they want the same for their children, so that they can exhibit the same patterns of language use seen in their families for decades.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 10**. Participant responses to the statement ‘If I had children, I would like them to speak Catalan’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘It is not good manners to answer in Spanish to someone who speaks to you in Catalan’ and ‘It is not good manners to answer in Catalan to someone who speaks to you in Spanish’ also revealed notable divergence. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed unfavorable responses to this statement (mean = 33.43), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘It is not good manners to answer in Catalan to someone who speaks to you in Spanish’, those who identified as progressive (far left, left, and center-left) indicated a lower level of agreement with it than those who identified as conservative (center-right and right), as presented in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘It is not good manners to answer in Catalan to someone who speaks to you in Spanish’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 16.714 | 14.598 | 1.145 | 0.25517 |
| Left | 5.452 | 15.627 | 0.349 | 0.72794 |
| Center-Left | 26.436 | 16.962 | 1.559 | 0.1225 |
| Center | 15.886 | 22.616 | 0.702 | 0.48417 |
| Center-Right | 51.952 | 18.369 | 2.828 | 0.00573 |
| Right | 47.143 | 20.645 | 2.283 | 0.02468 |

Similar to what was seen with the previous two statements, the responses of those who identified themselves as centrist closely resembled the responses of those who identified themselves as progressive (far-left, left, and center-left). In fact, their mean level of agreement with this statement was even lower than that of those who identified as center-left. This could be due, once again, to a possible separation between language attitudes and linguistic uses in people whose political orientation is not sided. As mentioned before, the majority of people who identified as centrist have Catalan as their L1 and, therefore, use it on a daily basis even in situations where the other person speaks in Spanish. This explanation would align with the results from the statement ‘I try to use Spanish whenever I can’, which showed that people who self-identify as centrist do not normally use Spanish whenever they can, similar to those who self-identify as progressive.

**A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence**

**Figure 11.** Participant responses to the statement ‘It is not good manners to answer in Catalan to someone who speaks to you in Spanish.

*4.2. Language difficulty and enjoyment*

Several of the statements that participants evaluated also related to language difficulty and enjoyment. These statements are shown in the Appendix. In what follows, I detail the relationship between participant responses to each of these statements and political orientation.



Analysis of participant responses to the statements ‘Catalan is a difficult language to learn’, ‘Spanish is a difficult language to learn’, ‘Catalan is a language that sounds bad’, and ‘Spanish is a language that sounds bad’ revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed unfavorable responses to these statements, indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data.

Participant responses to the statement ‘An outsider will find it less difficult to learn Spanish than Catalan’ also demonstrated noteworthy variations. Those participants who identified as progressive (far-left, left, and center-left) as well as those who identified as centrists showed a lower level of agreement with this statement than those who identified as conservative, specially than those who self-identified as center-right, as presented in Table 10.

**Table 10.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘An outsider will find it less difficult to learn Spanish than Catalan’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 22.29 | 14.47 | 1.540 | 0.1270 |
| Left | 12.42 | 15.49 | 0.802 | 0.4247 |
| Center-Left | 14.21 | 16.82 | 0.845 | 0.4001 |
| Center | 12.71 | 22.42 | 0.567 | 0.5721 |
| Center-Right | 38.71 | 18.21 | 2.126 | 0.0362 |
| Right | 23.71 | 20.47 | 1.159 | 0.2496 |

Similar to what was seen with the statement ‘It is not good manners to answer in Catalan to someone who speaks to you in Spanish’, those who self-identified as center-right showed a significantly greater level of agreement with this statement than those who self-identified as right-wing. This aligns with the previously-noted trend in which those who self-identify as center-right actually more closely align with right-wing ideologies. Equally interesting is the fact that the responses of those who identified themselves as centrist closely resembled the responses of those who identified themselves as progressive (far-left, left, and center-left). In fact, their level of agreement with this statement is even lower than that of those who identified as center-left (mean=35, centrists, and mean=36.5). Additionally, the analysis also revealed a greater level of consensus among participants in both extremes, far-left and right, as shown by the much wider range of responses in Figure 12.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 12.** Participant responses to the statement ‘An outsider will find it less difficult to learn Spanish than Catalan’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘It is unpleasant to learn Spanish’ and ‘It is unpleasant to learn Catalan’, also displayed compelling dissimilarities. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed unfavorable responses to this statement (mean = 8.79), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘It is unpleasant to learn Catalan’, participants with a more progressive political orientation (far left, left, and center-left) indicated a lower level of agreement with this statement than those participants who self-identified as conservative (center-right and right), as shown in Table 11.

**Table 11.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘It is unpleasant to learn Catalan’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 2.571 | 7.493 | 0.343 | 0.7322 |
| Left | 3.429 | 8.020 | 0.427 | 0.6700 |
| Center-Left | 9.879 | 8.706 | 1.135 | 0.2594 |
| Center | 6.829 | 11.608 | 0.588 | 0.5578 |
| Center-Right | 15.429 | 9.428 | 1.636 | 0.1051 |
| Right | 23.714 | 10.596 | 2.238 | 0.0276 |

Once again, the responses of those who self-identified as centrist closely resembled the responses of those who identified themselves as progressive (far-left, left, and center-left). In fact, their level of agreement with this statement is even lower than that of those who identified as center-left.

**A graph of political orientation

Description automatically generated**

**Figure 13.** Participant responses to the statement ‘It is unpleasant to learn Catalan’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘It is boring to learn Spanish’ and ‘It is boring to learn Catalan’, also showed interesting differences. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed unfavorable responses to this statement (mean = 14.67), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘It is boring to learn Catalan’, participants with a more progressive political orientation (far left and left) indicated a lower level of agreement with this statement than those participants who self-identified as conservative (center, center-right and right), and those who self-identified as center-left, as shown in Table 12.

**Table 12.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘It is boring to learn Catalan’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 1.857 | 9.638 | 0.193 | 0.8476 |
| Left | 8.685 | 10.317 | 0.842 | 0.4021 |
| Center-Left | 18.643 | 11.198 | 1.665 | 0.0993 |
| Center | 37.943 | 14.931 | 2.541 | 0.0127 |
| Center-Right | 28.143 | 12.127 | 2.321 | 0.0225 |
| Right | 21.286 | 13.630 | 1.562 | 0.1218 |

Interestingly, the responses of those who self-identified as centrist are more extreme than the responses of those who self-identified ideologically as center-right and right-wing. Centrists, therefore, are the ones who agree the most with the fact that Catalan is a boring language to learn. It seems, therefore, that the trend observed with previous statements by which participants who identified as centrists, in reality, are closer to more conservative and right-wing positions is seen again with this statement. This could be due to the fact that this statement is more related to language attitudes than to linguistic uses. Additionally, the analysis also revealed a greater level of consensus among more progressive participants (far-left and left), as shown by the generally wider range of responses among conservative participants as shown by the error bars in Figure 14.

A graph of political orientation

Description automatically generated

**Figure 14.** Participant responses to the statement ‘It is boring to learn Catalan’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘Spanish is a beautiful language’ and ‘Catalan is a beautiful language’, also presented engaging disparities. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed favorable responses to this statement (mean = 86.66), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘Catalan is a beautiful language’, participants with a more progressive political orientation (far left and left) indicated a greater level of agreement with this statement, whereas those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right) indicated a much lower level of agreement with it, as shown by the decreasing estimates presented in Table 13.

**Table 13.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘Catalan is a beautiful language’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 97.429 | 10.850 | 8.980 | 2.94e-14 |
| Left | -10.387 | 11.614 | -0.894 | 0.37344 |
| Center-Left | -8.179 | 12.606 | -0.649 | 0.51808 |
| Center | -35.829 | 16.808 | -2.132 | 0.03567 |
| Center-Right | -36.512 | 13.652 | -2.674 | 0.00884 |
| Right | -42.429 | 15.344 | -2.765 | 0.00686 |

Similar to the results observed with the previous statement, the responses of those who identified themselves as centrist closely resembled the responses of those who identified themselves as more conservative (center-right and right). These results, once again, seem to confirm the trend observed with previous statements by which participants who identified as centrists, in reality, are closer to more conservative and right-wing positions, at least in terms of language attitudes. Additionally, the analysis revealed greater consensus around this statement among progressive participants, as shown by as shown by the error bars in Figure 15.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 15.** Participant responses to the statement ‘Catalan is a beautiful language’.

*4.3. Language importance and usefulness*

Several of the statements that participants evaluated also related to language importance and usefulness. These statements are shown in the Appendix. In what follows, I detail the relationship between participant responses to each of these statements and political orientation.



Analysis of participant responses to the statements ‘Both languages are equally important’, ‘Learning Catalan will be useful to find a job in the future’, ‘Learning Spanish will be useful to find a job in the future’, ‘Catalan is used in some contexts and Spanish in some others’, and ‘Catalan is a rural language’ revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed similar responses to these statements, indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data.

Participant responses to the statements ‘Spanish can become an important language in the European context’ and ‘Catalan can become an important language in the European context’ revealed intriguing contrasts. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed favorable responses to this statement (mean = 79.45), that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘Catalan can become an important language in the European context’, participants with a more progressive political orientation indicated a greater level of agreement with this statement, whereas those who identified as conservative indicated a much lower level of agreement with it, as presented in Table 14.

**Table 14.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘Catalan can become an important language in the European context’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 79.00 | 13.44 | 5.879 | 6.41e-08 |
| Left | -18.46 | 14.38 | -1.283 | 0.2026 |
| Center-Left | -27.80 | 15.61 | -1.780 | 0.0783 |
| Center | -52.80 | 20.80 | -2.536 | 0.0129 |
| Center-Right | -50.83 | 16.91 | -3.006 | 0.0034 |
| Right | -49.14 | 19.00 | -2.586 | 0.0113 |

Once again,people who identified themselves ideologically as centrist were the ones who showed the greatest degree of disagreement with the statement, even greater than that indicated by those who identified themselves ideologically as center-right and right-wing. These results align to previously mentioned trend of centrists’ alignment with conservative attitudes.Also interesting is the fact that even among progressive participants there seems to be a certain caution when it comes to affirming that Catalan can become an important language at the European context, especially among those who define themselves as center-left. It is clear, however, that as political orientation moves closer to the center, as well as to more conservative positions, the degree of agreement with this statement decreases significantly.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 16.** Participant responses to the statement ‘Catalan can be important in the European context.

Participant responses to the statements ‘Catalan is as important as English’ and ‘Spanish is as important as English’ also showed significant differences. Analysis of both statements revealed statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. When presented with the statement ‘Catalan is as important as English’, participants with a more progressive political orientation (far-left and left) indicated a greater level of agreement with this statement, compared to those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right) and to those who said their political orientation was center-left, as presented in Table 15.

**Table 15.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘Catalan is as important as English’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 81.86 | 14.70 | 5.567 | 2.49e-07 |
| Left | -25.04 | 15.74 | -1.591 | 0.114941 |
| Center-Left | -61.21 | 17.08 | -3.583 | 0.000543 |
| Center | -48.26 | 22.78 | -2.119 | 0.036791 |
| Center-Right | -53.11 | 18.50 | -2.871 | 0.005074 |
| Right | -59.57 | 20.79 | -2.865 | 0.005156 |

Interestingly, those who expressed the lowest level of agreement with this statement are the ones who identified their political orientation as center-left. Their responses, therefore, resemble the ones of those who identified themselves as progressive (far-left, left, and center-left). This could be due to the role of English as an international language and its importance around the world. However, it is worth noting that those who showed a greater level of agreement with this statement are the ones who identified their political orientation as far-left and left. This demonstrates that very progressive people in the Balearic Islands, and in Palma, in particular have generally positive attitudes toward Catalan, to the point of putting it at a similar level of importance as English. Additionally, the analysis also revealed a greater level of consensus among participants in both extremes, far-left and right, as shown by the much wider range of responses in Figure 17.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 17**. Participant responses to the statement ‘Catalan is as important as English’.

Similar results were found when participants were presented with the statement ‘Spanish is as important as English’. Interestingly, participants of all political orientation, except for center-left, showed a similar level of agreement with this statement, as presented in Table 16.

**Table 16**. Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘Spanish is as important as English’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 81.857 | 12.257 | 6.678 | 1.74e-09 |
| Left | -6.961 | 13.121 | -0.531 | 0.5970 |
| Center-Left | -34.357 | 14.242 | -2.412 | 0.017810 |
| Center | -15.657 | 18.989 | -0.825 | 0.4117 |
| Center-Right | 9.643 | 15.424 | 0.625 | 0.5334 |
| Right | -9.143 | 17.335 | -0.527 | 0.5991 |

This, again, could be due to the perceived role of English as an international language and its importance around the world. One possible explanation, however, for why the lowest level of agreement with this statement is among those who define themselves as center-left, and centrists, more extreme political orientations, whether on the right or the left, are accompanied by more extreme language attitudes towards the languages of Spain. That is to say, the more left-wing or right-wing one’s political orientation is, the less neutral one’s linguistic attitudes are, always in favor of the language of preference. This could explain why people on the center-left, and to a lesser extent, people in the center, show a higher level of disagreement with the idea that Spanish is as important as English, because their language attitudes are more neutral.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 18.** Participant responses to the statement ‘Spanish is as important as English’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘It is worth learning Spanish’ and ‘It is worth learning Catalan’ also showed interesting differences. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed favorable responses to this statement (mean = 89.23). However, when presented with the statement ‘It is worth learning Catalan’, participants with a more progressive political orientation (far-left, left, and, to a lesser extent, center-left) indicated a greater level of agreement with this statement, whereas those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right) indicated a much lower level of agreement with it, as presented in Table 17.

**Table 17.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘It is worth learning Catalan’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 100.00 | 9.867 | 10.135 | <2e-16 |
| Left | -8.000 | 10.562 | -0.757 | 0.45069 |
| Center-Left | -20.200 | 11.464 | -1.762 | 0.08135 |
| Center | -43.600 | 15.285 | -2.852 | 0.00535 |
| Center-Right | -29.583 | 12.415 | -2.383 | 0.01921 |
| Right | -39.857 | 13.953 | -2.856 | 0.00528 |

Similar to what has been observed with other statements,people who identified themselves ideologically as centrist showed the greatest degree of disagreement with the statement. These results align to previously mentioned trend of centrists’ alignment with conservative attitudes. Also interesting are the responses from those who identified themselves ideologically as center-left, which showed a much lower level of agreement with this statement compared to the other two progressive ideologies. These results are in line with the idea mentioned before about an increase of neutrality in terms of language attitudes as political orientation moves toward the center. It is possible, therefore, that people who self-identify as center-left are comparing the potential benefits of learning Catalan for the future (economically, professionally, etc.) to the potential benefits or learning Spanish, or even English, from a more neutral perspective. Additionally, the analysis revealed greater consensus around this statement among participants self-identified as far-left-wing, as shown by the much wider range of responses among conservatives in Figure 19.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 19.** Participant responses to the statement ‘It is worth learning Catalan’.

*4.4. Language policy and integration*

Several of the statements that participants evaluated also related to language policy and integration. These statements are shown in the Appendix. In what follows, I detail the relationship between participant responses to each of these statements and political orientation.



Participant responses to the statements ‘It should be mandatory for all students in the Balearic Islands to take at least 50% of their subjects in Catalan’ and ‘It should be mandatory for all students in the Balearic Islands to take at least 50% of their subjects in Spanish’ diverged notably. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed similar responses to this statement (mean = 68.87), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘It should be mandatory for all students in the Balearic Islands to take at least 50% of their subjects in Spanish’, participants who identified as more progressive (far-left and left) expressed a much lower level of agreement with this statement compared to those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right), as shown by the increasing estimates in Table 18.

**Table 18.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘It should be mandatory for all students in the Balearic Islands to take at least 50% of their subjects in Spanish’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 11.71 | 14.45 | 0.811 | 0.419671 |
| Left | 25.26 | 15.47 | 1.633 | 0.105807 |
| Center-Left | 36.79 | 16.79 | 2.191 | 0.0310 |
| Center | 51.69 | 22.39 | 2.309 | 0.023181 |
| Center-Right | 63.12 | 18.18 | 3.471 | 0.000788 |
| Right | 59.71 | 20.44 | 2.922 | 0.004368 |

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 20.** Participant responses to the statement ‘It should be mandatory for all students in the Balearic Islands to take at least 50% of their subjects in Spanish’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘Catalan must be a requirement to hold a job in the public administration’ also exhibited intriguing distinctions. Participants who identified as more progressive (far-left and left) expressed a greater level of agreement with this statement compared to those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right), as presented in Table 19.

**Table 19**. Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘Catalan must be a requirement to hold a job in the public administration’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 100.00 | 13.67 | 7.314 | 8.93e-11 |
| Left | -27.15 | 14.63 | -1.855 | 0.066780 |
| Center-Left | -33.700 | 15.885 | -2.121 | 0.03654 |
| Center | -55.20 | 21.18 | -2.606 | 0.010662 |
| Center-Right | -74.17 | 17.20 | -4.311 | 4.03e-05 |
| Right | -73.57 | 19.33 | -3.805 | 0.000254 |

Similar to what has been observed with other statements, the responses from those who identified themselves ideologically as center-left were significantly different than that of the other two left positions. These results are in line with the idea mentioned before about an increase of neutrality in terms of language attitudes as political orientation moves toward the center. Additionally, the analysis revealed more consensus around this statement among those participants who indicated their political orientation was far-left, as shown by the much wider range of responses in Figure 21.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 21.** Participant responses to the statement ‘Catalan must be a requirement to hold a job in the public administration’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘For healthcare staff it is more important to know Spanish than Catalan’ and ‘For healthcare staff it is more important to know Catalan than Spanish’ also indicated noteworthy variations. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants showed similar responses to this statement (mean = 42.67), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘For healthcare staff it is more important to know Catalan than Spanish’, participants who identified as more progressive (far-left and left) expressed a much greater level of agreement with this statement compared to those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right), as presented in Table 20.

**Table 20**. Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘For healthcare staff it is more important to know Catalan than Spanish’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 60.29 | 11.52 | 5.235 | 1.02e-16 |
| Left | -29.60 | 12.33 | -2.401 | 0.01834 |
| Center-Left | -35.14 | 13.38 | -2.626 | 0.01011 |
| Center | -49.09 | 17.84 | -2.751 | 0.00714 |
| Center-Right | -47.37 | 14.49 | -3.269 | 0.00151 |
| Right | -38.14 | 16.29 | -2.342 | 0.02132 |

Similar to what has been observed with other statements,people who identified themselves ideologically as centrist showed the greatest degree of disagreement with the statement. These results align to previously mentioned trend of centrists’ alignment with conservative attitudes. Also interesting are the responses from those who identified themselves ideologically as center-left, which showed a much lower level of agreement with this statement compared to the other two progressive ideologies. These results are in line with the idea mentioned before about an increase of neutrality in terms of language attitudes as political orientation moves toward the center. In this case, it is possible that all political orientations are prioritizing the quality medical treatment and not the language used by the healthcare staff. Additionally, the analysis revealed more consensus around this statement among conservative participants, as shown by the much wider range of responses in Figure 22.

A graph of political orientation

Description automatically generated

**Figure 22.** Participant responses to the statement ‘For healthcare staff it is more important to know Catalan than Spanish’.

Participant responses to the statement ‘Since we all speak Spanish, it is not necessary for people who come from other Autonomous Communities or Spanish-speaking countries to learn Catalan’, also diverged notably. Participants who identified as progressive (far-left, left, and center-left) indicated a much lower level of agreement with this statement than those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right) as shown in Table 21.

**Table 21.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘Since we all speak Spanish, it is not necessary for people who come from other Autonomous Communities or Spanish-speaking countries to learn Catalan’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 7.2857 | 11.2065 | 0.650 | 0.51721 |
| Left | 10.9018 | 11.9959 | 0.909 | 0.36581 |
| Center-Left | 0.6643 | 13.0208 | 0.051 | 0.9595 |
| Center | 29.5143 | 17.3611 | 1.700 | 0.09247 |
| Center-Right | 37.6310 | 14.1013 | 2.740 | 0.00738 |
| Right | 28.486 | 15.8484 | 1.794 | 0.07610 |

It is worth noting that, despite showing greater agreement with this statement, the average score of the responses of the most conservative participants does not, in any case, exceed 50 points out of a maximum of 100. The highest mean corresponds to those who identified themselves as center-right (mean = 45.92). This indicates that there is a generalized consensus around the idea that, even for foreigners, Catalan is important in the Balearic context, regardless of political orientation. Additionally, the analysis revealed more consensus around this statement among progressive participants, especially among those who said their political orientation was far-left and center left, as shown by the much wider range of responses in Figure 23.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 23.** Participant responses to the statement ‘Since we all speak Spanish, it is not necessary for people who come from other Autonomous Communities or Spanish-speaking countries to learn Catalan’.

*4.5. Cultural and identity aspects*

Several of the statements that participants evaluated also related to aspects of culture and identity. These statements are shown in the Appendix. In what follows, I detail the relationship between participant responses to each of these statements and political orientation.



Participant responses to the statement ‘Catalan is an identity element of the Balearic Islands’ also revealed notable discrepancies. Participants who identified as progressive (far-left, left, and center-left) showed a greater level of agreement with this statement compared to those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right), as presented in Table 22.

**Table 22.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘Catalan is an identity element of the Balearic Islands’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 100.00 | 10.60 | 9.430 | 3.28e-15 |
| Left | -12.13 | 11.35 | -1.068 | 0.28819 |
| Center-Left | -13.800 | 12.321 | -1.1120 | 0.26557 |
| Center | -37.20 | 16.43 | -2.264 | 0.02587 |
| Center-Right | -41.58 | 13.34 | -3.116 | 0.00243 |
| Right | -33.86 | 15.00 | -2.258 | 0.02630 |

As was the case with previous statements, those who identified themselves as centrist showed a lower level of agreement with this statement than those who identified their political orientation as right-wing. It seems, therefore, that the trend observed with previous statements by which participants who identified as centrists, in reality, are closer to more conservative and right-wing positions is seen again with this statement. It is worth noting that, despite showing a lower agreement with this statement, the average score of the responses of the most conservative participants does not, in any case, fall below 50 points, from a range of 0 to 100. The lowest mean corresponds to those who identified themselves as center-right (mean = 58.42, as seen in Figure 24). This indicates, as with the previous statement, that there is overall recognition, albeit to varying degrees, of the importance of Catalan in the Balearic context.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 24**. Participant responses to the statement ‘Catalan is an identity element of the Balearic Islands’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘Spanish is the language that should predominate in the Balearic Islands’ and ‘Catalan is the language that should predominate in the Balearic Islands’ also showed interesting differences. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed similar responses to this statement (mean = 26.78), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘Catalan is the language that should predominate in the Balearic Islands’, those participants who identified as progressive (far-left, left, and center-left) showed a greater level of agreement with it. Conversely, those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right), showed significantly lower levels of agreement with it, as shown in Table 23.

**Table 23.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘Catalan is the language that should predominate in the Balearic Islands’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 94.29 | 12.67 | 7.439 | 4.95e-11 |
| Left | -22.45 | 13.57 | -1.655 | 0.101305 |
| Center-Left | -25.54 | 14.73 | -1.734 | 0.08622 |
| Center | -69.09 | 19.63 | -3.519 | 0.000673 |
| Center-Right | -66.95 | 15.95 | -4.198 | 6.15e-05 |
| Right | -68.29 | 17.92 | -3.810 | 0.000250 |

Similar to what has been observed with other statements,people who identified themselves ideologically as centrist showed the greatest degree of disagreement with the statement. These results align to previously mentioned trend of centrists’ alignment with conservative attitudes. Additionally, the analysis revealed a strong consensus among those who said their political orientation was far-left, as shown in Figure 25.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 25.** Participant responses to the statement ‘Catalan is the language that should predominate in the Balearic Islands’.

Participant responses to the statement ‘It is necessary to learn Catalan to fully integrate in the Balearic Islands’ also diverged notably. Participants who identified as more progressive (far-left and left) showed a greater level of agreement with this statement compared to those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right) as well as those who self-identified as center-left, as presented in Table 24.

**Table 24.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘It is necessary to learn Catalan to fully integrate in the Balearic Islands’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 94.86 | 13.53 | 7.011 | 3.72e-10 |
| Left | -21.25 | 14.48 | -1.467 | 0.14562 |
| Center-Left | -33.26 | 15.72 | -2.116 | 0.03705 |
| Center | -38.46 | 20.96 | -1.835 | 0.06974 |
| Center-Right | -49.69 | 17.02 | -2.919 | 0.00441 |
| Right | -46.71 | 19.13 | -2.441 | 0.01652 |

In this case, it is particularly interesting that the responses from those who identified themselves ideologically as center-left showed a much lower level of agreement with this statement compared to the other two progressive ideologies. In fact, their responses closely resemble the ones from those who identified as conservative. These results, however, are in line with the idea mentioned before about an increase of neutrality in terms of language attitudes as political orientation moves toward the center. It is possible, therefore, that people who self-identify as center-left recognize the strong presence of Spanish in the Balearic Islands and, particularly, in Palma. Consequently, while still acknowledging the importance of Catalan and its role as an identity element of the Balearic Islands, they also believe that it is not necessary to learn it to fully integrate in the society, given the widespread presence of Spanish. Additionally, the analysis revealed more consensus among those who identified as far-left, as shown in Figure 26.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 26.** Participant responses to the statement ‘It is necessary to learn Catalan to fully integrate in the Balearic Islands’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘I live in the Balearic Islands and, therefore, I need to know, use, and study Spanish’ and ‘I live in the Balearic Islands and, therefore, I need to know, use, and study Catalan’ also displayed noteworthy variations. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed favorable responses to this statement (mean = 64.58), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when presented with the statement ‘I live in the Balearic Islands and, therefore, I need to know, use, and study Catalan’, those participants who identified as progressive (far-left, left, and center-left) indicated a greater level of agreement with it. Conversely, those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right) showed a much lower level of agreement with this statement, as shown in Table 25.

**Table 25.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘I live in the Balearic Islands and therefore I need to know, use, and study Catalan’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 100.00 | 11.41 | 8.762 | 8.51e-14 |
| Left | -12.52 | 12.22 | -1.025 | 0.30810 |
| Center-Left | -13.700 | 13.261 | -1.033 | 0.3042 |
| Center | -42.80 | 17.68 | -2.421 | 0.01744 |
| Center-Right | -38.25 | 14.36 | -2.663 | 0.00912 |
| Right | -38.86 | 16.14 | -2.407 | 0.01804 |

As was the case with previous statements, people who identified themselves ideologically as centrist were the ones who showed the greatest degree of disagreement with the statement, even greater than that indicated by those who identified themselves ideologically as center-right and right-wing. These results support the trend observed with previous statements by which participants who identified as centrists, in reality, are closer to more conservative and right-wing positions is seen again with this statement. Additionally, the analysis revealed a strong consensus among those identified as progressive, as shown by the error bars in Figure 27.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 27.** Participant responses to the statement ‘I live in the Balearic Islands and therefore I need to know, use, and study Catalan’.

*4.6. Population trends*

Several of the statements that participants evaluated also related to population trends with regard to use of Catalan and Spanish. These statements are shown in the Appendix. In what follows, I detail the relationship between participant responses to each of these statements and political orientation.



Participant responses to the statements ‘Fewer and fewer people know Spanish’ and ‘Fewer and fewer people know Catalan’ diverged notably. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed unfavorable responses to this statement (mean = 11.84). However, when participants were presented with the statement “Fewer and fewer people know Catalan,” progressive participants (far-left, left, and center-left) expressed a greater agreement with it. Conversely, those participants who identified as more conservative (center, center-right, and right) showed a greater disagreement with this statement, as presented in Table 32.

**Table 26**. Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘Fewer and fewer people know Catalan’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 99.86 | 12.57 | 7.947 | 4.38e-12 |
| Left | -28.73 | 13.45 | -2.136 | 0.03530 |
| Center-Left | -19.257 | 14.600 | -1.319 | 0.19041 |
| Center | -72.26 | 19.47 | -3.712 | 0.00035 |
| Center-Right | -50.02 | 15.81 | -3.164 | 0.00210 |
| Right | -47.00 | 17.77 | -2.645 | 0.00960 |

Similar to what has been observed with other statements,people who identified themselves ideologically as centrist showed the greatest degree of disagreement with the statement. These results align to previously mentioned trend of centrists’ alignment with conservative attitudes. Additionally, the analysis revealed a strong consensus among those who self-identified ideologically as far-left, as shown in Figure 28.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 28.** Participant responses to the statement ‘Fewer and fewer people know Catalan’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘Spanish is in danger of disappearing in the Balearic Islands’ and ‘Catalan is in danger of disappearing in the Balearic Islands’ also revealed interesting differences. Analysis of the first statement revealed no statistically significant differences in responses with regard to political orientation. All participants, independent of political orientation, showed unfavorable responses to this statement (mean = 10.61), indicating that these particular attitudes are not connected to political orientation in these data. However, when participants were presented with the statement ‘Catalan is in danger of disappearing in the Balearic Islands’, progressive participants far-left, left, and center-left) showed a significantly greater agreement with this than those who identified as conservative (center, center-right, and right), as shown in Table 27.

**Table 27.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘Catalan is in danger of disappearing in the Balearic Islands’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 97.71 | 12.93 | 7.559 | 2.80e-11 |
| Left | -27.03 | 13.84 | -1.953 | 0.053815 |
| Center-Left | -25.164 | 15.020 | -1.675 | 0.09722 |
| Center | -84.51 | 20.03 | -4.220 | 5.68e-05 |
| Center-Right | -65.46 | 16.27 | -4.024 | 0.000116 |
| Right | -43.14 | 18.28 | -2.360 | 0.020373 |

Similar to what has been observed with other statements,people who identified themselves ideologically as centrist showed the greatest degree of disagreement with the statement. These results align to previously mentioned trend of centrists’ alignment with conservative attitudes. Additionally, the analysis revealed a strong consensus among those who self-identified ideologically as far-left, as shown in Figure 29.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 29.** Participant responses to the statement ‘Catalan is in danger of disappearing in the Balearic Islands’.

Participant responses to the statements ‘People should put more effort into using Catalan’ and ‘People should put more effort into using Spanish’ also revealed interesting differences. When people were presented with the statement ‘People should put more effort into using Catalan’, progressive participants showed a greater level of agreement with it than conservative participants, who showed a much lower level of agreement, as presented in Table 28.

**Table 28**. Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘People should put more effort into using Catalan’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 98.29 | 12.55 | 7.829 | 7.69e-12 |
| Left | -21.37 | 13.44 | -1.590 | 0.11518 |
| Center-Left | -23.786 | 14.586 | -1.631 | 0.1063 |
| Center | -62.09 | 19.45 | -3.192 | 0.00193 |
| Center-Right | -52.54 | 15.80 | -3.326 | 0.00126 |
| Right | -51.43 | 17.75 | -2.897 | 0.00470 |

Similar to what has been observed with other statements,people who identified themselves ideologically as centrist showed the greatest degree of disagreement with the statement. These results align to previously mentioned trend of centrists’ alignment with conservative attitudes. Additionally, the analysis revealed a strong consensus among those who self-identified ideologically as far-left, as shown by the error bars in Figure 30.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 30.** Participant responses to the statement ‘People should put more effort into using Catalan’.

Conversely, when participants were presented with the statement ‘People should put more effort into using Spanish’, progressive participants showed a much lower level of agreement with it than conservative participants, as presented in Table 29.

**Table 29.** Best fit linear regression model output for the statement ‘People should put more effort into using Spanish’.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Estimate | Std. Error | t-Value | Pr(>|t|) |
| *Intercept* | 21.000 | 12.542 | 1.674 | 0.0974 |
| Left | 3.563 | 13.426 | 0.265 | 0.7913 |
| Center-Left | 2.200 | 14.573 | 0.151 | 0.88033 |
| Center | 16.800 | 19.430 | 0.865 | 0.3895 |
| Center-Right | 33.833 | 15.782 | 2.144 | 0.0347 |
| Right | 32.000 | 17.737 | 1.804 | 0.0745 |

It is worth noting that, despite agreeing more with this statement, the mean score of the responses from conservative participants barely exceeds 50 points out of 100. The highest mean corresponds to those who self- identified as center-right (mean = 54.83). This indicates a general agreement that the presence of Spanish strong in the Balearic Islands and, therefore, the need for people to use is lower than the need to use more Catalan. Additionally, the analysis revealed a greater level of consensus among participants in both extremes, far-left and right, as shown by the much wider range of responses in Figure 31.

A graph of different colored squares

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Figure 31.** Participant responses to the statement ‘People should put more effort into using Spanish’.

**5. Discussion**

The current study was designed to ascertain whether political orientation is a significant predictor of the language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in Palma (RQ1) and, if so, to explore what the relationship is between different political orientations and attitudes toward both languages (RQ2). With respect to RQ1, results revealed a significant association between political orientation and the language attitudes of the population of Palma toward Catalan and Spanish. These results are in line with previous studies (Aguiló-Mora & Lynch, 2017; Castell et al., 2023; Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014) and help us understand (1) the political motivations for current language policy in the Balearic Islands, and (2) the views and reactions of the population toward these policies and their implementation. With respect to RQ2, results reveal three main findings regarding the association between political orientation and language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in Palma. With respect to the first finding, there seems to be a clear division between progressive and conservative participants in terms of language attitudes (Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014). Participants who self-identify as progressive exhibit positive language attitudes toward both Catalan and Spanish, with a stronger preference for Catalan, whereas participants who self-identify as conservative demonstrate very positive attitudes toward Spanish and comparatively less positive attitudes toward Catalan.

These findings reflect the current political debate in the Balearic Islands regarding the status and the presence that each language should have both at a societal and political level. Those initiatives and language policies aimed at promoting the normalization of Catalan and its presence in the Balearic society tend to be supported by progressive governments, progressive political parties, and the progressive sector of the society (Amorós, 2017; Colmenero, 2018; Colom, 2023; Galvín, 2017). On the other hand, those initiatives and language policies aimed at expanding the presence of Spanish tend to be supported by conservative governments, conservative parties, and the conservative sector of the society (Gentili, 2013; Manresa, 2015; Olaizola, 2013). For instance, the current conservative government of the Balearic Islands, Popular Party (PP), supported by the far-right political party Vox, is working to implement free choice of language in the schools of the Balearic Islands (Bohórquez, 2023; Calleja, 2023; Ribas, 2023). This new language policy would give parents the possibility to choose the language in which they would like their children to study, which would imply a segregation of students based on their parents’ language choice. Both the PP and Vox, as well as the more conservative sectors of the society, see in this measure an opportunity to put an end to the imposition of Catalan and to be free to choose the language of instruction. Conversely, the progressive political parties of the Balearic Islands, as well as the progressive sector of the society, argue that this measure will only lead to situations of linguistic discrimination and inequality of opportunities. Furthermore, they consider it an attack on the linguistic legal framework established in the Balearic Islands more than forty years ago. This situation serves as an example of how language policy and language attitudes can mutually influence each other.

This dynamic was also found in each of the six categories in which the statements on language attitudes were organized. For example, it was found that political orientation is associated with the language attitudes of Palma’s population in terms of language preference. Accordingly, it was found that progressive participants like to listen to and use both Catalan and Spanish and enjoy it when others use either language as well. They also believe that there is nothing wrong with passive bilingualism (i.e., a state where an individual has the ability to comprehend or understand two languages but may not necessarily actively use both languages for speaking or writing) and are happy with the idea of their children speaking both languages. Interestingly, however, they report feeling compelled to use Spanish in certain situations, but not Catalan. Conversely, conservative participants exhibit a preference for listening to and using Spanish over Catalan and seem to enjoy it more when others use Spanish and not Catalan. They also believe that passive bilingualism is not appropriate if someone starts a conversation in Spanish and the other person responds in Catalan, but they believe that it is appropriate when someone starts a conversation in Catalan and the other person responds in Spanish. Conservative participants also seem to express a preference for their children speaking Spanish over Catalan. Interestingly, conservative people do not seem compelled to use either Catalan or Spanish.

Results also revealed a significant association between political orientation and language attitudes in terms of language difficulty and enjoyment. Consequently, participants who self-identify as progressive consider that it is not unpleasant or boring to learn Catalan and Spanish and agree with the idea that both languages are beautiful. They also disagree with the idea that an outsider will find it less difficult to learn Spanish than Catalan. Opposingly, participants who self-identify as conservative agree more with the idea that it is unpleasant and boring to learn Catalan, but not Spanish. They also do not tend to consider the Catalan a beautiful language, but they do think that Spanish is. Likewise, conservative participants also tend to believe that that a foreigner will find it less difficult to learn Spanish than Catalan. Additionally, political orientation was also found to be associated with language attitudes in terms of language importance and usefulness. Essentially, it was found that participants who self-identify as progressive believe that both Catalan and Spanish can become important language in the European context. They also believe that both languages are as important as English and that it is worth learning both of them. Conversely, participants who self-identify as conservative believe that only Spanish can become an important language in the European context. Likewise, they also believe that only Spanish is as important as English, and they value learning it over Catalan.

Results also revealed a significant association between political orientation and language attitudes in terms of language policy and integration. It was found that participants who self-identify as progressive believe that at least 50% of the subjects taught in school should be in Catalan, but not in Spanish. They also agree with the idea that Catalan must be a requirement to hold a job in the public administration, especially in the healthcare field. Moreover, progressive participants believe that it is necessary for people coming from Spanish-speaking areas to learn Catalan to fully integrate in the Balearic Islands. Contrary, participants who self-identify as conservative believe that at least 50% of the subjects taught in school should be in Spanish. They also disagree with the idea that Catalan should be a requirement to hold a job in the public administration, especially in the healthcare field. Likewise, conservative participants believe that it is not necessary for people coming from Spanish-speaking areas to learn Catalan to fully integrate in the Balearic Islands.

Moreover, political orientation was also found to be associated with language attitudes in terms of cultural and identity aspects. Consequently, participants who self-identify as progressive strongly believe that Catalan is an identity element of the Balearic Islands and that, therefore, it is the language that should predominate in the archipelago. They also believe that it is necessary to learn Catalan to fully integrate in the Balearic society and that all residents need to know, use, and study both languages. Contrary, participants who self-identify as conservative express a much lower agreement with the idea that Catalan is an identity element of the Balearic Islands, and they do not consider that it is the language that should predominate in the archipelago. They also believe that it is not that necessary to learn Catalan to fully integrate in the Balearic society and that all resident need to know, use, and study Catalan.

Finally, results also revealed that political orientation is significantly associated with language attitudes in terms of population trends. Accordingly, participants who self-identify as progressive strongly believe that fewer and fewer people know Catalan, but not Spanish, and that, therefore, Catalan is in danger of disappearing in the archipelago. Likewise, they consider that people should put more effort into using Catalan and not Spanish. Conversely, participants who self-identify as conservative do not really believe that fewer and fewer people are using Catalan, and that this language is in danger of disappearing in the Balearic Islands. Additionally, they do not believe that people should put more effort into using Catalan, but they overall think that people should put more effort into using Spanish.

Altogether, these data seem to indicate that people who self-identify as progressive exhibit more positive attitudes toward bilingualism in the Balearic Islands than those people who self-identify as conservative. The analysis of the different statements in each category shows that even though progressive people have a preference for Catalan, in reality, they have positive attitudes towards both languages. Their preference for Catalan could be due to many reasons. One of them could be related to their mother tongue. It is important to note that the majority (53.3%) of people who identified as progressive had Catalan as their mother tongue, a factor shown in previous studies to be related to the formation of language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in the Balearic Islands. Accordingly, those who have Catalan as their L1 show more positive attitudes toward Catalan, whereas those who have Spanish as their L1 show more positive attitudes toward Spanish (Aguiló-Mora & Lynch, 2017; Calafat Vila & Calero-Pons, 2019; Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014; Tudela Isanta, 2021). Overall, the participants in these data show general preference for their own mother tongue, but those speakers of the socially minoritized language, in this case Catalan, show more favorable attitudes towards bilingualism.

Another potential explanation as to why progressive people exhibit a preference for Catalan could be related to identity. While the present study did not explore how identity is associated with the formation of language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in the Balearic Islands, previous studies have found that identity can be a significant predictor. In their study, Ibáñez Ferreté (2014) reported the existence of two identity groups in Mallorca, the “Mallorcans” and the “non-Mallorcans”. The former include people born in Mallorca to Mallorcan parents, who speak Catalan, and identify with the island’s culture. The latter, on the other hand, are people from or born to people from mainland Spain, who speak Spanish, and whose culture has been imported from outside of the island. One of the main findings in Ibáñez Ferreté’s (2014) study was that these two separate identity groups exhibited different language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish, the former exhibiting mainly positive attitudes toward Catalan, and the latter toward Spanish. This dichotomy in terms of language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish relates to the findings of the present study, and it could offer a potential explanation as to why progressive people tend to have more favorable attitudes toward Catalan and conservative people toward Spanish. In this sense, it could be that the “Mallorcans” see in a progressive political orientation, and consequently in progressive political parties, a way to safeguard and protect their own language and culture, in this case Catalan. On the other hand, the “non-Mallorcans” would see in a conservative political orientation, and consequently in conservative political parties, a way to safeguard and protect their own language and culture, in this case Spanish.

With respect to the second finding, results in this study follow the framework of ‘authentic’ versus ‘anonymous’ laid out by Woolard (2001). Within this framework emotional dimension. The association between political orientation and language attitudes in Palma is especially strong with regard to Catalan, while attitudes towards Spanish tend to be more neutral. These findings are in line with previous studies that have found a general consensus around the idea that Catalan is the authentic language of the Balearic Islands and an essential component of its identity, whereas Spanish tends to be perceived as a mere language of communication, with no specific value attached to it (Calafat Vila & Calero-Pons, 2019; Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014; Tudela Isanta, 2021). Therefore, in the specific case of the Balearic Islands, and based on current and previous findings, Catalan would be considered the authentic language, while Spanish, which was found to be positively viewed overall and deemed acceptable for public and private life, would be considered an anonymous language.

Finally, and with respect to the third finding, results also revealed two trends related to political orientation that have not been identified by prior studies on language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in the Balearic Islands. The first one has to do with the people who self-identified as centrists. The analysis of the responses to the different statements showed how the responses of this particular group aligned with different political orientation depending on the nature of the statement. Consequently, when the statement was more related to language attitudes, such as ‘It is boring to learn Catalan’, the responses of people who self-identified as centrist closely resembled the responses of those who identified themselves as more conservative (center-right and right). In fact, their level of agreement or disagreement with certain statements was even greater than that indicated by those who identified themselves ideologically as center-right and right-wing. Conversely, when the statement was more related to language use, such as ‘I try to use Spanish whenever I can’, the responses of people who self-identified as centrist closely resembled the responses of those who identified themselves as more progressive (far-left, left, and center-left). This pattern exhibited by centrists could be due to the fact that the majority of those who self-identified as centrists have Catalan as their L1 and, as previously mentioned, those who have Catalan as their first language (L1) show more positive attitudes toward this language (Aguiló-Mora & Lynch, 2017; Calafat Vila & Calero-Pons, 2019; Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014; Tudela Isanta, 2021). These results, therefore, could be indicating a need to distinguish more clearly between language attitudes and languages uses. Perhaps these two concepts are not as closely related as one might think, at least in cases of more centrist political orientation

The second trend observed has to do with people who identified themselves ideologically as center-left. The analysis of the different statements revealed how, on many occasions, the responses of this group closely resembled the responses of those who self-identified ideologically as centrist or more conservative (center-right and right-wing). One possible explanation for this pattern may have to do with neutrality, that is, as political orientation moves toward the center, language attitudes become more neutral and less extreme. Essentially, language attitudes become less tied to political orientation. Contrary, as political orientation becomes more extreme, either to the left or to the right, attitudes toward one’s own languages become more acute and no longer neutral. That is, the more left-wing or right-wing one’s political orientation is, the less neutral one’s linguistic attitudes are, always in favor of the language of preference. This would explain why people who self-identified ideologically as center-left showed a much lower level of agreement with statements such as ‘Spanish is more important than English’ or ‘It is worth learning Catalan’, compared to people who identified themselves ideologically as center-left or far-left. With respect to the first one, while there are multiple potential explanations for this apparent neutrality, it could be that those who self-identified as center-left took into account the role of English as an international language and its importance around the world from a more neutral stand-point, without letting their political orientation bias their attitudes. That is why they do not consider that Spanish is more important than English, contrary to what those who self-identified as more conservative for this study indicated. With respect to the second statement, it is possible that people who self-identify as center-left are comparing the potential benefits of learning Catalan for the future (economically, professionally, etc.) to the potential benefits or learning Spanish, or even English, from a more neutral perspective. And that could explain why their level of agreement with this statement is much lower compared to that indicated by those who self-identified ideologically as left and far-left. It is worth noting that this increment of neutrality in the language attitudes of those who self-identify ideologically as center-left goes in both directions, that is, it affects both Catalan and Spanish.

Taken together, the results of the present study highlight the significant association between political orientation and language attitudes. Accordingly, political orientation can be considered a significant predictor of the language attitudes of a given society (Calafat Vila & Calero-Pons, 2019; Castell et al., 2023; Ibáñez Ferreté, 2014; Tudela Isanta, 2021), and it can motivate a process of polarization with respect to how people in this society perceive their languages (Aguiló-Mora & Lynch, 2017). Additionally, the association between political orientation and language attitudes can have a significant impact on the promotion and implementation of certain language policies, as seen in contexts other than the one explored in the present study (Errihani, 2008; Marley, 2004; Mukhuba, 2005; O’Rourke & Hogan‐Brun, 2012). Finally, it is important to note that languages play different roles in society, and these roles can influence the way people perceive these languages. Some languages will be perceived as more neutral than others, and some languages will be perceived as more authentic than others (Gal et al., 2001; Woolard, 2001). However, the way people perceive languages will always be conditioned by individual factors, and these perceptions will condition the future of these languages.

**6. Conclusions**

The present study has sought to examine whether political orientation is a significant predictor of the language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in Palma de Mallorca and, if so, to explore what the relationship is between different political orientations and language attitudes toward both languages. An important contribution of this analysis is that political orientation has been found to be inextricably linked to the language attitudes of the population of Palma de Mallorca toward the two co-official languages of the Balearic Islands: Catalan and Spanish. This finding can help us understand why previous and current local governments, both progressive and conservative, have implemented certain language policies over the past decades, as well as the reaction of the Balearic society to the implementation of these policies. Consequently, this study contributes to previous literature examining the relationship between language policy and language attitudes and supports the idea that they mutually influence each other.

Additionally, the present study expands on the previous knowledge on the dynamic of the relationship between political orientation and language attitudes in the Balearic context in general, and in the city of Palma in particular. First, a clear division has been found between progressive and conservative people in terms of language attitudes. That is, people who self-identify as progressive exhibit positive language attitudes toward both Catalan and Spanish, with a stronger preference for Catalan, whereas people who self-identify as conservative exhibit very positive attitudes toward Spanish and not so positive attitudes toward Catalan. Second, it was also found that people who self-identify as progressive exhibit more positive attitudes toward bilingualism Catalan-Spanish in the Balearic Islands than people who self-identify as conservative. Third, results also revealed two trends related to political orientation that have not been identified by prior studies. The first one has to do with the people who self-identified as centrists. It was found that the responses of this particular group aligned with different political orientation, more progressive or more conservative, depending on the nature of the statement: language attitudes or language use. The second one has to do with people who identified themselves ideologically as center-left. It was found that as political orientation moves toward the center, language attitudes become more neutral and less sided, that is, they become less influenced by political orientation. Conversely, as political orientation becomes more extreme, either to the left or to the right, attitudes toward one’s own languages become more acute and no longer neutral.

While this study provides interesting and relevant findings on the role of political orientation in the formation of language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in Palma, it is important to further explore the role of other factors that previous studies have identified as significant in the context of the Balearic Islands and that the present study has not identified in the context of Palma. These factors include, but are not limited to, place of residence, mother tongue, age, and identity. Additionally, future studies focused on uncovering new factors related to the formation of language attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish in Palma, such as socioeconomic status, ethnic origin, and language use, are also needed. All in all, it is evident that the linguistic situation in the Balearic Islands in terms of language attitudes is complex, even forty years after the implementation of a legal framework that aimed at regulating the role of Catalan and Spanish in the archipelago.

**References**

1. Despite the importance of these articles, it should be noted that the specific names of the co-official languages (Catalan, Basque, and Galician) are not mentioned (Joan i Marí, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)