**Literature review**

The Balearic Islands are an archipelago in the western Mediterranean Sea, consisting of four main islands (Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza, and Formentera) and more than a hundred small islands and islets, all of which are situated near the eastern coast of the Iberian Peninsula. The archipelago is a province and is one of the seventeen Autonomous Communities of Spain. The Balearic Islands have a population of approximately 1.8 million inhabitants, with 80% of the population residing in Mallorca. Fifty percent of Mallorca’s population lives within Palma, the island’s capital and largest city (IBESTAT, 2023). Moreover, 46% of the population of the archipelago was born abroad, both in other Autonomous Communities and other countries. Of those born abroad, 74% reside in Mallorca, with half being in Palma (IBESTAT, 2023).

According to Blas–Arroyo, this situation makes the Balearic Islands “a melting pot of people from different geographic, economic and cultural origins” (2007, p. 80), which has had a significant impact on the linguistic situation. This phenomenon is particularly interesting in Palma, where all these linguistic and cultural backgrounds share the space with the two official languages of the Balearic Islands: Catalan and Spanish. Historically, the Balearic Islands have been part of the Catalan linguistic domain along with other territories in the east of the Iberian Peninsula, essentially Catalonia and the Valencian Community. For centuries, Catalan was the main language of communication and the archipelago’s own language, despite the introduction of Spanish later on (16th century). During Franco’s dictatorship, Catalan was forbidden and removed from the public domain, which generated a situation of diglossia and, eventually, a process of language substitution. Consequently, Catalan was relegated to the family and personal domain (Joan i Marí, 2005). At the same time, Spanish became the language of administration and education as well as the prestigious language used for official communications. However, Catalan continued to be the language used by the majority of the population, which prevented its disappearance. Forty years later, with the restoration of Spanish democracy, a process of linguistic normalization of Catalan began, and it became the official language of the Balearic Islands together with Spanish. Since then, a legal framework has been developed for both languages, although especially focused on Catalan, which has had a lasting impact on the linguistic reality of the islands.

**Legal framework**

The legal framework concerning the two official languages of the Balearic Islands has developed in the form of various laws, decrees, and regulations. However, three legal documents in particular constitute the bedrock of this framework: the *Constitución Española* (‘Spanish Constitution’) (1978), the *Estatut d’Autonomia de les Illes Balears* (‘Statute of Autonomy of the Balearic Islands’) (1983), and the *Llei de Normalització Lingüística a les Illes Balears* ‘(Linguistic Normalization of the Balearic Islands Act’) (1986).

The first of these documents, the Spanish Constitution, 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, as stated in Article 3.2: “The other Spanish languages will also be official in their respective Autonomous Communities in accordance with their Statutes”. 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: “The richness of the different linguistic modalities of Spain is a cultural heritage that will be the object of special respect and protection”.[[1]](#footnote-1) Finally, the Constitution gave the Autonomous Communities the jurisdiction in the teaching of their co-official languages, as stated in Article 148.1.17: “The Autonomous Communities may assume competences in the following areas: [...] The promotion of culture, research and, where appropriate, the teaching of the language of the Autonomous Community”. The latter was of particular relevance, since it gave the future 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 status that this language had up to that point. Consequently, education became one of the most important tools in ending the situation of diglossia and linguistic substitution in the archipelago.

The second document, the Statute of Autonomy of the Balearic Islands, was passed five years after the approval of the Spanish Constitution and 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, as stated in Article 4.1. Importantly, it also declared that every citizen had the right to use the language and prohibited discrimination on linguistic grounds (Article 4.2). However, of special relevance was the Article 4.3, which stated that:

The institutions of the Balearic Islands will guarantee the normal and official use of the two languages, will take the necessary measures to ensure their knowledge and will create the conditions to achieve full equality in the two languages in terms of the rights of the citizens of the Balearic Islands (Article 4.3)

In this paragraph, 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. Importantly this implied a complete renovation of the educational system. To do so, the Government granted itself exclusive jurisdiction for the teaching of Catalan, as stated in Article 35:

The Autonomous Community has exclusive competence for the teaching of the Catalan language, the own language of the Balearic Islands, in accordance with the autochthonous literary tradition. To normalize it will be an objective of the public authorities of the Autonomous Community. The insular modalities of the Catalan of Mallorca, Menorca, Eivissa and Formentera will be the object of study and protection, without prejudice to the unity of the language.

In addition to the teaching of Catalan, the Government undertook the challenging task of fostering the normalization of the language. It is worth noting that, within this context, the term “normalization” carries two distinct connotations. On the one hand, it can pertain to the establishment of linguistic “norms” or rules, encompassing aspects such as grammar and orthography. In this regard, we need to keep three aspects in mind. First, Catalan’s last process of normalization had taken place between 1913 and 1930, which means that its grammar and orthography needed to be modernized. Second, the teaching and learning of Catalan had been forbidden for four decades under Franco’s dictatorship, hindering formal education in the language. Finally, due to Catalan’s subordinate status during this period, it had been significantly influenced by Spanish. On the other hand, the word “normalization” also referred to the process of normalizing and promoting the use of the language in all contexts, including the public administration, education, and the media. The idea was to encourage the Balearic society to become accustomed to using Catalan in places where only Spanish had been allowed to be used, which can also be seen in the Article 14.3:

The citizens of the Balearic Islands shall have the right to address the Administration of the Autonomous Community in any of its two official languages and to receive a reply in the same language used.

This need for a process of linguistic normalization drove the passing of the Linguistic Normalization of the Balearic Islands Act in 1986. The main goal of this new regulation was to further develop the Article 3 of the Statute of Autonomy of the Balearic Islands with regards to the normalization of Catalan as the islands’ own language and to ensure the use of both Catalan and Spanish as the two official languages. Accordingly, the specific objectives of this law were stated in Article 1.2:

a) To make effective the progressive and normal use of the Catalan language in the official and administrative domain.

b) To ensure the knowledge and progressive use of Catalan as the main language of education.

c) To promote the use of the Catalan language in all means of social communication.

d) To create social awareness of the importance of the knowledge and use of the Catalan language by all citizens.

These goals were used to structure the Linguistic Normalization Act in four main sections. The first section (Articles 6-16), on the official use of the language and administrative domain, stated that Catalan is the preferred language of both local and autonomic institutions and that all regulations and official documents need to be published in both Catalan and Spanish. Additionally, it stated that all citizens of the Balearic Islands had the right to choose the language of their preference in both administrative and legal proceedings. Consequently, it urged the promotion of training in Catalan among public workers and the consideration of knowledge of both languages in the entrance exams for public employment. According to Segura i Ginard (2005), this required public administration workers to adopt certain linguistic behaviors aimed at achieving a normal and preferential use of Catalan in all proceedings. The second section (articles 17-26), on education and the use of Catalan and Spanish in the schools of the Balearic Islands, stated that Catalan is the main language and medium of instruction in all levels of education. In addition, mandatory teaching of Catalan language and literature was established at all educational levels, with equal time devoted to Spanish language and literature. Likewise, required training in Catalan among teachers and other professionals in the education domain. The ultimate goal was to promote bilingual education and to ensure that all students were able to use both languages as established by normalization standards at the end of compulsory schooling.

The third section (articles 27-32) is aimed at strengthening the presence and use of Catalan in both the media and the culture of the Balearic Islands. Essentially, it was established that Catalan should be the usual language of the radio, television, and other media owned by the Administration and that all citizens have the right to be informed both in Catalan and Spanish. Moreover, the production and exhibition of movies, plays and other cultural manifestations in Catalan are encouraged. Finally, the last section (articles 33-40) focuses on promoting the knowledge and use of Catalan in various domains and activities, such as the Administration, advertising, and signage. Finally, it is stated that the government is responsible for the normalization of the Catalan language, the presentation of annual reports to the parliament, the creation of an awareness plan, and the realization of surveys and sociolinguistic maps to evaluate the knowledge and use of Catalan in the Balearic Islands.

The Linguistic Normalization Act led to a series of minor decrees and regulations that aimed at expanding certain aspects of the law. According to Aguiló-Mora and Lynch (2017) the most important ones were the *Decret de Mínims* (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; the Decree 100/1990, by which the usual language of the Administration had to be Catalan; and the Decree 25/2001 which established the obligation to accredit knowledge of Catalan in order to work in the civil service. Particularly relevant for this study, however, is the *Reglament de Normalització Lingüística de l'Ajuntament de Palma* (1987) [Linguistic Normalization Regulation of the City Council of Palma]. This regulation, passed in 1987 and modified in 1990, 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 no one can be discriminated against on linguistic grounds. Likewise, it established that the toponyms of the city as well as the services and the municipal dependencies would have only Catalan official names. In addition, all of communications from the City Council would in Catalan by default, as well as any documents or certificates issued. On the other hand, the City Council committed to ensuring that all staff know both languages and to promoting linguistic awareness and the use of Catalan.

Overall, we can see that Catalan has gained considerable institutional recognition, protection, and promotion over the last decades. In this sense, one might think that the implementation of pro-language policies is enough to change the linguistic reality of a given society. However, this is not entirely true. The fact that Catalan is being promoted institutionally, especially in the educational domain, and that knowledge of the language has increased considerably over the last decades, both the use of the language and attitudes towards it seem to have taken a different direction (Calafat Vila & Calero-Pons, 2019; Tudela Isanta, 2021). This is due to the fact that, in reality, the use that a society can make of its languages, in this case Catalan and Spanish, depends not only on the policies that are promoted from the institutional domain, but also on what happens at the societal level (Aguiló-Mora & Lynch, 2017). Specifically, and according to Tudela Isanta (2021), it depends on language attitudes.

**Language attitudes**

In general, an attitude can be defined as a psychological tendency that is expressed from the evaluation of a particular entity with a certain degree of preference or aversion (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). According to the authors, these entities are called “attitudinal objects” and can be anything that the individual can discriminate, including languages. As Baker (1992) argues, languages are objects that can be viewed favorably or unfavorably. Consequently, language attitudes can be defined as psychological constructs, evaluations, reactions and tendencies towards languages or language varieties (Dragojevic, 2017; Garrett, 2007). Language attitudes are generally formed throughout history (Joan i Marí, 2021), and are learned through human socialization (Garrett, 2007), i.e., they depend on the social situation of the language and not so much on the specific will of each individual. In this sense, most people do not question why they follow a certain linguistic pattern but do so in order to adapt to the society (Joan i Marí, 2021).

Attitudes are typically understood as consisting of three fundamental elements: cognitive aspects, which encompass beliefs and stereotypes; affective elements, involving evaluations; and behavioral components (Garret, 2007). Additionally, language attitudes are learned from previous experience, and they are not momentary but relatively enduring (Agheyisi & Fishman, 1970), especially those acquired early in life (Sears, 1983). In fact, Joan i Marí (2021) argues that language attitudes are forged in three main environments, ordered from least to most proximity to the individual. The first one is the household. Everything that children see their parents, siblings, and other relatives do constitutes the basis for their own actions. The second is the academic and professional environment. A language policy that favors the use of one or more languages, language availability or the language used in education will result in one linguistic attitude or another. Finally, in the institutional domain, any government body generates language attitudes through the language policies it promotes.

The relationship between language attitudes and language policy has been examined in many different social contexts. For instance, Bertolotti and Coll (2020) studied attitudes toward border Portuguese and the language in general in the Uruguayan territory during the Luo-Brazilian military occupation in the 19th century. After carefully analyzing several types of written texts, including legislative documents, documents found in judicial or government archives, pieces published in the press, and literary writings, the found two types of attitudes toward Portuguese in the 19th century: neutral and negative attitudes. Neutral attitudes were present at the border area, where Portuguese was seen as neutral both by locals and those groups that consented the Luso-Brazilian invasion. Negative attitudes, on the other hand, were developed in the south, especially in Montevideo, where the nation’s ruling classes and the political power, in their efforts to build the nation-state, faced the challenge posed by the presence of Portuguese.

Relatedly, Zajícová (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. The research encompassed the analysis of 471 questionnaires, revealing a relatively homogeneous linguistic landscape in Curaçao. Papiamentu, the primary mother tongue of the majority of the population, enjoys widespread use, and attitudes toward both the language and Curaçaoan identity were predominantly positive. Furthermore, the study found a positive correlation between the use of Papiamentu by individuals with foreign-born parents and their attitudes toward the language and Curaçaoan identity. 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, particularly its importance in education and the job market, coupled with its role as a marker of local identity among individuals of diverse backgrounds, strongly advocate for an expanded role of the language within the education system.

The study of language attitudes towards Catalan and Spanish in regions where both languages coexist is not recent and it has approached from many different perspectives, such as education (Díaz-Torrent et al., 2014; Huguet, 2001; Huguet & Biscarri Gassió, 1995; Huguet & Sulis, 1997; Janés et al., 2008; Lapresta Rey et al., 2010), immigration and ethnic origin (Estors Sastre, 2014; Iglesias, 2010; Larrea Mendizabal, 2017; Querol & Huguet, 2010), age (Joan i Marí, 2010; Ubalde, 2013) and family (Huguet, 2005), among others. However, the vast majority of these studies have been carried out in Catalonia, with only a few exceptions in other Catalan and Spanish-speaking regions.

With respect to the Balearic Islands, research that has explored these issues has done so from a variety of perspectives. For example, Castell, Cremades and Vanrell (2023) elaborated a report to explore the linguistic uses of and attitudes towards Catalan and Spanish among young people through individual interviews, focus groups, and language use questionnaire. With respect to the use of both languages, the study found that young people whose initial language was Catalan were much more likely to adopt Spanish as their habitual language, compared to those whose initial language was Spanish, who, in general, kept it. Furthermore, it was found that living in an area with a higher density of Catalan promoted the maintenance of the language, as well as its adoption by those whose initial language is Spanish. However, in areas with a lower density of Catalan, such as Palma, the opposite effect was found. The authors also reported that people between ages 15 and 29 were less prone to adopt Catalan as their habitual language as opposed to people between ages 30 and 44. The authors found that, overall, young people tend to prefer the use of Spanish in the media, social networks and videogames, reading and listening to music. Regarding patterns of language use in communicative interaction, the authors found that 66% of people who initiate a conversation in Catalan tend to switch to Spanish if the interlocutor responds in Spanish. On the other hand, 71% of people who initiate a conversation in Spanish tend to switch to Catalan when the interlocutor responds in this language. However, the percentage of young people who maintain Spanish if spoken to in Catalan is 25.5%, while the percentage of young people who maintain Catalan if spoken to in Spanish is 5.6%.

With respect to the linguistic attitudes and ideologies, the authors found an important political component. Essentially, they found that people who tend to display favorable attitudes towards Spanish are seen as *cayetanos*, a high class social group characterized for their snob style and linkage to the right or extreme right ideologies and *Spanishism*. On the other hand, people who display favorable attitudes towards Catalan are *indepes*, a term used to refer to people linked to the left ideology who almost exclusively use Catalan, who defend *Catalanism*, and the independence of the Catalan-speaking regions from Spain. On the other hand, it was found that young people tended to consider Catalan as the authentic language of the islands, while Spanish is considered a language used for communication without a specific value. In addition, the authors found that young people with an initial language other than Catalan tend to have difficulties in appropriating this language, due to not belonging to the linguistic endogroup and the feeling of linguistic shame for being perceived as foreigners or for not having sufficient knowledge. Finally, the authors found a general consensus among young people regarding the use of Catalan as a tool for social cohesion.

Different studies have also explored the linguistic uses and attitudes towards Catalan and Spanish among college students. Ibáñez Ferreté (2014) investigated this issue among social science students enrolled in the University of the Balearic Islands a year after the 2011 Autonomic Elections[[2]](#footnote-2). Participants in this study were divided into four focus groups based on their family language (Catalan or Spanish) and the type of studies they were pursuing, oriented towards professional opportunities in the public or private sector. One of the major findings in this study was the existence of two identity groups: the “Mallorcans” (people born in Mallorca who speak Catalan and identify with the island’s culture), and the “non-Mallorcans” (people from mainland Spain or born to people from mainland Spain, who speak Spanish, and whose culture was imported from outside the island). The Mallorcans tend to be seen as nationalists, because of their defense of the island’s own language and culture, while the non-Mallorcans tend to show a more passive or indifferent attitude. Another finding was that those whose initial language was Catalan and were leaning towards careers in the private sector defended both languages and were in favor of bilingual and even trilingual education (Catalan, Spanish and English). They believed in Catalan as an identity element but not as a useful language. On the other hand, those whose initial language was Spanish and were leaning towards careers in the private sector were in favor of reducing the presence of Catalan, including in education. This view was not shared by those whose initial language was Spanish and were leaning towards careers in the public sector, who saw Catalan as a tool for social integration and employment. Finally, the author also reported a strong linkage between political orientation and language. Accordingly, those who identified themselves as leftists were more in favor of Catalan and the presence of the language in all domains.

In addition to political orientation, language attitudes also seem to be influenced by both age of acquisition and place of residence. With this in mind, Calafat Vila and Calero-Pons (2019) explored the linguistic uses and attitudes of 40 students of the subject of Catalan Language and its Didactics of the first year of the Degree in Elementary Education. To do so, they grouped the students in six categories based on the age and order of acquisition of Catalan (L1, L2, and L3) and their place of residence (Palma and rest of Mallorca). With regard to language attitudes, it was found that positive attitudes towards the use of Catalan increase with greater social contact with the language, being more favorable among the inhabitants of the rest of Mallorca than in those of Palma. With regard to education, those who had Catalan as their L1 were in favor of it being the main medium of instruction. Those who had Catalan as their L2 were indifferent, whereas the majority of those who had it as their L3 were either indifferent or against it. The study also found that, whereas those who have Catalan as their L1 see the language as a tool for social cohesion, those who have it as their L2 or L3 prefer Spanish, especially if their place of residence is Palma. These two groups also showed negative attitudes towards the use of Catalan in the media and cultural products. In fact, all six groups stated that they consume more cultural products in Spanish than in Catalan, although those with Catalan as L1 also indicated a higher consumption of cultural products in other languages, showing a greater disposition to multilingualism.

In their focus-group based study investigating differences in attitudes toward Catalan and Spanish among college students from Barcelona and Palma, Tudela Isanta (2021) found that the majority of the participants in Palma, including those who had Spanish as their L1, agreed 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, there was consensus among the participants when considering Spanish as a mere language of communication in the Balearic Islands, with no identity value. Among other things, participants pointed to a preference for using Spanish with strangers and argued that it is the most convenient language for newcomers to learn. On the other hand, participants agreed in considering Catalan as the authentic language, as it is an essential component of the Mallorcan identity.

As of today, there is only one study that has explored the language attitudes and ideologies of the entire Mallorcan population toward Catalan and Spanish. This study, by Aguiló-Mora and Lynch (2017), was carried out between 2011 and 2012, in the midst of the beginning of the controversial language reforms of the PP government. Relying on qualitative and quantitative data from surveys and interviews, the authors found four main positions as a response to the government’s ideological discourse: (1) Catalan nationalist sentiment intensified; (2) strengthen of Spanish centralism; (3) secessionist positions toward Catalan in Catalonia increased in favor of considering Mallorcan as the natural language of the Balearic Islands; and (4) languages began to be perceived as financial resources in the face of the economic crisis. In addition, it was found that those who showed a position contrary to that of the government and, therefore, defended a pro-Catalanist stance were students and teachers, young people, those who had Catalan as their first language, those with better skills in Catalan, those who consumed more cultural products in Catalan, and those with a higher level of education. On the contrary, those social sectors that aligned more with the ideology of the government and showed a pro-Spanish stance were the elderly, the retired, those who had Spanish as L1 and those born outside the Balearic Islands. Consequently, a lack of ideological unity was found within the Mallorcan society.

Overall, it can be seen that the situation with respect to the linguistic uses and attitudes towards Catalan and Spanish in the Balearic Islands is complex. The society seems to be divided into two main sectors: those who show more favorable attitudes towards Catalan, and those who show more favorable attitudes towards Spanish. However, there seems to be a general consensus in both groups towards the benefits of bi-/multilingualism. Several factors such age, level of education, first language, place of residence, and political orientation, among others, seem to influence both the usage and the attitudes towards Catalan and Spanish. It should be noted, however, that the studies included in this literary review either provide data collected more than 10 years ago or from very specific groups of participants (college students, young people, etc.). In addition, none of these studies explored the specific case of Palma, the capital of the Balearic Islands and probably the region in the whole archipelago with the most linguistic variety. Consequently, the present study aims at being the first to explore the language attitudes and uses of the population of Palma towards Catalan and Spanish in order to identify the values attributed to each language as well as to determine which social variables have the most significant influence on the formation of linguistic attitudes.

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)
2. At that time, the conservative government of the Popular Party (PP) began to promote the first regressive measures regarding the linguistic normalization of Catalan. One of these measures was the Tractament Integrat de Llengües or TIL (Comprehensive Treatment of Languages, in English) was a decree promoted by the Government of the Balearic Islands between 2013 and 2015 that forced schools to teach one third of the subjects in Spanish, another third in Catalan, and another third in English. The Government stated that its aim was to promote linguistic immersion in English, although many saw it as an attack on the Catalan language. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)