

Joan Costa-Carreras*, Miguel Vázquez-Sanchis,
Sandra Sabaté-Turon and Josep-Àngel Mas Castells

Dominant and non-dominant varieties in Catalan: past, present and future

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Abstract: This article attempts to answer the question “How did educated Catalan-speaking young people and adults from Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and the Valencian Country rate the central Catalan, north-western Catalan and Valencian standard modalities between 2015 and 2024?” The hypothesis was that speakers of central Catalan and those of Balearic, north-western Catalan and Valencian still considered central Catalan to be the dominant variety but did not hold any especially negative views of the other varieties. To check that hypothesis, we analysed the data from a sample of 197 educated speakers who answered a survey designed using the open-guise technique. Grouped by the components of status, solidarity and dynamism, the results were compared to those obtained from five previous works (2015–2023), so we now have a broad, diverse state of play in terms of methods and results that could prove useful for future studies. In accordance with the aim of the special issue, and after contextualising our results within previous literature and explaining the situation regarding the standardisation of Catalan (codification, implementation and functional elaboration), we compiled a considerable number of proposals for reducing the linguistic insecurity felt by non-central Catalan speakers. This feeling has undergone a long process since the beginning of the codification of Catalan (1913–1933), with a monocentric and only incipiently compositional and pluricentric codification. The Franco dictatorship (1939–1975), for the sole fact of prohibiting the use of Catalan, slowed down the development of compositionality and pluricentrism. With the recovery of the autonomy of the Catalan-speaking territories of the Spanish State (circa 1980), the Institute of Catalan Studies claims it carries out a monocentric codification of and the Valencian Academy of the Language a pluricentric one. The

***Corresponding author: Joan Costa-Carreras**, Translation and Language Sciences, Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain, Translation and Language Sciences, Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain, E-mail: joan.costa@upf.edu. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5955-824X>

Miguel Vázquez-Sanchis, Department of Catalan Philology, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1229-6676>

Sandra Sabaté-Turon, Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain

Josép-Àngel Mas Castells, Universitat Politècnica de València, Valencia, Valencian Community, Spain

challenge of a intralinguistic justice is now the pluricentric implementation and elaboration.

Keywords: Catalan; compositionality; intralinguistic justice; linguistic insecurity; pluricentrism

1 Introduction

Catalan is a minoritised language spoken in parts of Spain, France and Sardinia, and in Andorra, by around nine million people (see Massanell i Messalles 2020, for an overview of Catalan dialects). This article explores the conflict of “linguistic insecurity” experienced by Catalan speakers outside the central Catalan dialect area, particularly in their use of regional standard varieties, which is shaped, on the one hand, by Spanish-Catalan exodiglossia (with Spanish as the “high” language and Catalan as the “low” language; Gràcia 2023; Pradilla 2024, 268) and, on the other, by endodiglossia between central Catalan as the dominant variety (DV; see Casesnoves and Mas Castells 2015, 60) and other varieties as non-dominant varieties (NDVs; see Gràcia 2023; Pradilla 2024, 268).¹ Indeed, the standardisation of Catalan since 1913 (see Costa-Carreras and Yates 2009; Rafanell 2020a, 2020b) has exerted influence across other Catalan-speaking territories, where endonormative materials have been used to disseminate the standard. “Linguistic insecurity” (Carrera i Sabaté 2003; Baldaquí Escandell et al. 2010; see Labov 1972, 162–172, for an early operationalisation of the term) emerges when speakers, in contexts where synonymous variants coexist, become aware that the variant they use does not match the most prestigious one. This insecurity may lead to feelings of “self-hatred”, which is understood as “the attitude according to which a person feels uncomfortable and insecure, is ashamed of their identity and seeks to hide individual characteristics that do not fit the dominant social stereotypes” (TERMCAT 2020); one of these individual characteristics can be the language variety (Castellà Espuny 2006). This feeling is fostered by a set of political factors, such as Barcelona’s status as the capital, the predominance of the central dialect on autonomous Catalan television, the division of the Catalan language into various political and administrative entities, and the hostile policies of

1 The idea of hierarchical asymmetry in the relationship between the varieties of pluricentric languages can be found in the early papers of international pluricentrism, such as Clyne (1992), even though this scholar did not use the terms DV/NDV. In fact, it is present in most pluricentric studies and appears in all state-of-the-art works of this type of research nowadays, such as Dollinger (2025), Mas Castells and Amorós Negre (2025), Muhr (2025), although in some cases the dichotomy the terms DV/NDV may imply has been questioned; Norrby et al. (2020) suggest that the dichotomy may conceal other degrees or types of relationship between varieties of pluricentric languages worldwide.

most governments towards the Catalan language (see Sections 2, 5.1 and “Final observations”; for a review of the Index of Linguistic Insecurity, see Preston 2013).

Linguistic insecurity has been studied by Catalan sociolinguists as a result of contact between NDV speakers and DV speakers (Valls 2013) on the one hand, and as one of the side effects of the language standardisation process on the other, especially with the introduction of Catalan into both schools and the media (Baldaquí Escandell et al. 2010; Ulldemolins Subirats 2018; Carrera i Sabaté 2003; Gràcia 2023), which has exposed the population to standard models for at least the last century. Disentangling these two effects – the first resulting in a “spontaneous” levelling towards the DV, the second being a deliberate DV implementation – has not always been easy. Until the early 21st century official codification, diffusion and functional elaboration displayed a very marked asymmetry in their compositionality (i. e., “monocentric selection and codification from all dialects”) in favour of central Catalan. The *Gramàtica normativa valenciana* (Standard Valencian Grammar), published in 2006 by the *Acadèmia Valenciana de la Llengua* (AVL, Valencian Academy of Language), and the *Gramàtica de la llengua catalana* (Grammar of the Catalan Language), published in 2016 by the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* (IEC, Institute for Catalan Studies), have corrected this asymmetry. The current rationales and works of both academies advocate maximum compositionality.²

Despite the efforts made by both codification bodies to destigmatise as inadequate in formal usages a lot of variants, in a manifestation that Coupland (2014) calls “vernacularisation”, many of the agents responsible for diffusion of the codified norms in the whole territory (textbook authors, linguistic advisors, teachers, journalists, and similar gatekeepers), for more than 40 years have lagged behind and continued to favour the DV variants, in a manifestation of linguistic insecurity. The outcome is that such diglossia in favour of the DV is transmitted, on the one hand, by journalists to the general population (Dols 2022; Pradilla 2024, 266; Gràcia 2023, 35–36) and, on the other, by teaching staff to their students (Ulldemolins Subirats 2018; Sabaté-Turon 2023). As such, dominant variants are doubly reinforced by co-existent circuits. This situation is further complicated by the fact that Spanish variants, as features of the “high language” in many areas, also benefit from this double circuit. Added to this is the influence of English as an international language, often mediated through Spanish. Therefore, the interaction between these two forms of diglossia,

2 Except for the definition of “standard” in the *Diccionari de la llengua catalana* (DIEC2, Dictionary of the Catalan Language; our translation): “Linguistic variety that, by a spontaneous or directed process, has reached a high degree of levelling, codification, confluence and acceptance in which it tends to eliminate the dialectal differences as much as possible, which they normally use, in the various registers and levels, the members of a community. The establishment of the Catalan standard.” (IEC 2007).

operating at different levels of diffusion, generates a self-reinforcing spiral that is very difficult to reverse.

The general aim of this work is to help reduce, if not reverse, that spiral – or specifically, the insecurity due to endodiglossia. After outlining the rationale for the study and situating it within the context of Catalan standardisation (Section 2), the article goes on to describe an open guise test conducted in the context of the ESTANDAREV project (PID2021-124673NA-IOO), which takes as a basis the established situation of linguistic insecurity traditionally felt by speakers of Basque, Catalan, Galician and Spanish in Spain (Section 3). The results (Section 4) and discussion (Section 5) are followed by an analysis of proposals to reduce the dominance of the central Catalan variety (Section 6), and the article concludes with some final observations (Section 7).

2 Standardisation of Catalan

To understand the current situation of linguistic insecurity in Catalan, it is necessary to know the history of its standardisation since at least 1933, the year in which Catalan had for the first time an orthography, grammar and dictionary available in all territories. Nevertheless, historically speaking, a significant conflict in the standardisation of Catalan has happened: the territorial issue in the Valencian Country, which revolves around proposals for creating a different *ausbau* language. Costa-Carreras (2021, 190–191) tried to answer the question: “How can the official ‘bicentricity’ in the Catalan communicative space (i. e., the Institut d’Estudis Catalans in Barcelona [IEC] vs. Acadèmia Valenciana de la Llengua [AVL]) be described [in the 21st century] according to the two official agencies of standardisation?” This is done with the help of the terms *compositionality* (see the introduction), *pluricentricity* (“selection and codification from each dialect”) and *pluri-areality* (“the fact that dialect borders do not coincide systematically with the political ones”). Summarising this answer, both the IEC’s and the AVL’s texts are explicitly based on the “One Standard Axiom” (a unique standard for a language regardless of national or regional standards, according to Dollinger 2019, 14). Neither the IEC’s nor the AVL’s texts negate the legitimacy of non-dominant standard varieties. Although both the IEC and the AVL follow some pluri-arealist foundations (they respect dialect isoglosses even if they do not coincide with administrative or political borders), there is an asymmetrical bicentricity. On the one hand, the IEC’s “monocentric compositionality” addresses all the Catalan speakers and then provides a formal register for Valencian speakers (as for each of the other five dialectal communities). On the other

hand, the AVL's "convergent pluricentricity" addresses solely the Valencian citizens but also takes into account the forms of the non-Valencian speakers shared with Valencians. In most cases, the AVL's "convergent pluricentricity" is not incompatible with the IEC's "monocentric compositionality". This situation is reflected on the map in Figure 1, in which it can be seen how the IEC intends to standardise all the dialects whereas the AVL has as an official objective to standardise just the Valencian dialect:

A more complete view of the Catalan standardisation is provided by Costa-Carreras (2024, 7). He takes Haugen's sequence, with its four phases: (1) *selection* (i. e., norms are allocated); (2) *codification* (an orthography, a grammar and a dictionary are published); (c) *implementation* (norms' diffusion and acceptance); and (4) *functional elaboration* (new terminology and registers emerge). Costa-Carreras (2024) adapts it to the Catalan case:

According to Costa-Carreras (2025), implementation and elaboration must be done according to the sociolinguistic, cultural, historic, etc. context, a condition that is an axiom of applied linguistics – and therefore of standardology – because the latter is epistemologically part of the former. This is what both the IEC and the AVL intend schools and the media to do. But, as we shall see, complaints about the dominance of central Catalan are linked to not following this kind of implementation and elaboration. This perspective allows us to practice a historical standardology in this work, when necessary.



Figure 1: Areas of intervention of the two official Catalan academies.

2.1 Management of conflicts between standardisation centres

To properly assess the standardisation carried out by the IEC and the AVL, certain sociolinguistic factors, operational for more than a century (1913–2024), need to be taken into account. Baldaquí Escandell (2009, 73) judged these factors to be determinant for the high degree of linguistic insecurity existing in the Valencian country, as do the reflections made by Pradilla (2024, 202). Pradilla reflects that experiencing linguistic insecurity is a risk for all the regions, but less for central Catalan as it is the DV. For selection and codification purposes, it is worth noting the *General Action Protocol of the Institute for Catalan Studies, the Valencian Academy of Language and the University of the Balearic Islands* (IEC/AVL/UIB 2020). In terms of ensuring pluricentric implementation and elaboration, the “open academies” initiative launched by the IEC should be noted.

2.2 Implementation of codification and functional elaboration

As noted above, despite the codifications of the IEC and the AVL, central Catalan continues to be perceived as the “dominant” variety. This is also due to the behaviour of agents responsible for implementing codification and functional elaboration in other territories, who do not apply the pluri-standard elaboration foreseen by the IEC and the AVL (Table 1), thereby breaking the inertia and routines of recent years.

Table 1: The centres’ intervention in Catalan by standardization stage, from Costa-Carreras (2024).

	Form (policy planning)	Function (language cultivation)
Society (status planning)	1. Selection Overlap in the Valencian country: a) IEC’s compositional mono-standardicity b) AVL’s convergent pluri-standardicity	3. Implementation a) pluri-standard implementation of the IEC’s codification by CCMA (Catalan Broadcasting Corporation) and EPRIB (Broadcasting public entity of the Balearic Islands). b) Mono-standard implementation of the AVL’s codification by CVMC (Valencian Broadcasting Corporation).
Language (corpus planning)	2. Codification Overlap in the Valencian country: a) IEC’s compositional mono-standardicity b) AVL’s convergent pluri-standardicity	4. Elaboration a) pluri-standard elaboration by CCMA and EPRIB based on the IEC’s codification. b) Mono-standard elaboration by CVMC based on the AVL’s codification.

As for the behaviour of agents responsible for the implementation of codification in the education system, Castellà Espuny (2006),³ a north-western Catalan author from Tortosa area, formulated the hypothesis that the influence of school made students choose more prestigious forms and ventured to put this down to the generalisation of a monolithic standard based primarily on central Catalan and to an unawareness of the possibilities that the standard offered in terms of the linguistic forms particular to their vernaculars. That author also mentioned that such use of distinct forms in speaking and writing brought to mind a certain endodiglossia (Castellà Espuny 2006, 28). Ulldemolins Subirats (2019a, 7), an author from Tortosa, lamented that the IEC's western-planned model in its codification had not become more widespread among teachers. Ulldemolins Subirats (2019b, 375) highlighted the importance of teachers' linguistic awareness and their sensitivity towards teaching a language model that was closer to the user since, due either to a lack of knowledge of the *tortosí* standard or a feeling of inferiority, they had been teaching the central Catalan variants. Gràcia (2023), a north-western Catalan author from Lleida, denounced the fact that there had been ongoing disregard for north-western Catalan by academia, the media and schools. Furthermore, that author asserted that, from codification to implementation, north-western Catalan had fared pretty badly (Gràcia 2023, 35) and she wondered whether there were any shortcomings when it came to getting teachers to make students aware of all the forms compiled by the IEC (Gràcia 2023, 161). In the same year, Valls and Ulldemolins (2023) asserted that, despite the educational curriculum's provisions, the level of knowledge of dialectal variation was deficient. Sabaté-Turon (2023) noted that some teachers were unaware of *tortosí*'s own forms that were appropriate for a standard model and, for that reason, they chose to follow the model that textbooks proposed.

Regarding the behaviour of agents responsible for the functional elaboration in the case of *tortosí*, Ulldemolins Subirats (2018, 109) denounced the fact that Catalonia's school manuals only diffused the standard forms of central Catalan. Ulldemolins Subirats (2019b, 375) denounced that the validated central Catalan variants were now being taught in textbooks. Also referring to *tortosí*, Sabaté-Turon (2023) noted that 73 % of the 26 respondents to a survey asserted that a model of the highly monolithic eastern Catalan standard usually predominated in teaching materials. This drawback meant that, in some cases, students were unable to distinguish between the characteristics of the eastern and western Catalan models and therefore hyper-corrected and substituted the standard *tortosí* items.

As for the behaviour of agents responsible for the implementation of codification, there is a parallelism between teachers and journalists, as denounced by

3 Studies on north-western Catalan usually distinguish between the Lleida variety *lleidatà* (in the north) and the Tortosa variety *tortosí* (in the south).

Castellà Espuny (2006), Ulldemolins Subirats (2018 109 and 2019a), Dols (2022, 11) and Gràcia (2023).

Regarding the behaviour of agents responsible for functional elaboration in public service media, on the one hand Costa-Carreras (2024, 16) ended his review of the style proposals of the three Catalan television stations with “an example of a case that is codified, implemented and elaborated by all three centres [which] confirm that each center must make a pluricentric stylistic elaboration”, and monocentric according to its specific situation. On the other, Ulldemolins Subirats (2019b, 374) found that Catalan public service media style guides were dominated by the central Catalan variety and displayed a lack of positioning and little information on the sub-dialects of western Catalan.

3 Methods

We shall now present the open-guise survey conducted in the context of the ESTANDAREV project (Language standardization revisited: mediatization, vernacularization and language ideologies in contemporary Spain, ESTANDAREV PID2021-124673NA-IOO; 2022-2026) on the perceptions of the DV (central Catalan) and two NDVs (Valencian and north-western Catalan) by educated speakers, to find out whether prejudices relating to that character of dominance continued to exist. We employed an open guise technique (Deutschmann and Steinvall 2023; Liu 2019; Soukup 2013), a renewed version of the classic matched guise test (Lambert et al. 1960), as an indirect way to have people evaluate language and varieties to find out if they perceive that one or more of them are dominant. Six 30-second audio clips from Catalan and Valencian radio shows were used as the open-guise test stimuli. All the audio clips came from sociopolitical chat shows and did not contain controversial topics nor pieces of information that might explicitly lead to the identification of the speaker's geographical origin. Specifically, two audio clips had been broadcast on Valencian radio stations (those representing the Valencian variety), while the other four audio clips had been broadcast in Catalonia (those representing central and north-western Catalan, two per variety), and both male and female voices were used (two of six speakers were men and the other four were women).

Respondents rated the six audio clips on 20 evaluative adjectives according to Likert-type scales from 1 to 6. We selected qualities as variables (friendly, physically attractive, trustworthy, has a sense of humour, open, generous, loyal, self-confident, leading, hard-working, proud, practical, entrepreneurial, elegant, conservative, intelligent, cultivated, innovative, modern, rebellious), which have been applied more or less often in the course of studying linguistic attitudes using the matched-guise or other similar methods (Fernández-Mallat and Carey 2017; Fuertes et al. 2012; Grondelaers et al. 2011; Soukup 2011). Ghyselen et al. (2022) asserted that such

adjectival structures usually came under one of the following three evaluative dimensions (see Table 2):

- 1. Prestige or superiority – involving characteristics such as intelligence, correctness, civilization and neatness,
- 2. Dynamism, a type of modern prestige associated with media slickness, a yuppie lifestyle, and streetwise cool and
- 3. Solidarity, a dimension which triggers associations of kindness, reliability, trustworthiness, familiarity, warmth and intimacy (cf. Garrett 2010, 55–56; Grondelaers and Kristiansen 2013).

In our selection, on one hand, we chose adjective structures related to the dimensions of prestige, also known as *status*, and *dynamism* that are associated with DVs (physically attractive, self-confident, leading, hard-working, proud, practical, entrepreneurial, elegant, conservative, intelligent, cultivated, innovative, modern, and rebellious). On the other hand, we included adjective variables such as friendly, trustworthy, having a sense of humor, generous, open, and loyal, which are linked to the study of *solidarity* of NDVs, as speakers typically rate solidarity items higher when paired with NDVs (Hawkey 2020, 27–28).

We also collected sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents. Our survey was completed by 197 educated speakers from Catalonia ($n = 74$: 51 were central Catalan speakers and 21, north-western speakers), the Balearic Islands ($n = 39$) and the Valencian Country ($n = 84$). Our sample was slightly imbalanced in terms of gender and age but focused on specific demographics that defined educated speakers who could be familiarised with the use of standard Catalan in the media.

Table 2: Classification of variables by components.

Status	Solidarity	Dynamism
Leading	Friendly	Rebellious
Intelligent	Generous	Modern
Cultivated	Has a sense of humour	Innovative
Self-confident	Trustworthy	
Hard-working	Open	
Entrepreneurial	Loyal	
Elegant	Physically attractive	
Proud		
Practical		
Conservative		

Thus, most of our respondents had a university education and were interested in sociopolitical debates.

To evaluate the central Catalan standard's current position as a DV, two comparative perspectives needed to be taken into account. First, whether a speaker's diatopic variety was related to their perception of the central Catalan variety in the different attitude dimensions. To that end, it was necessary to check if there were any significant differences between the ratings that each group of respondents gave to each variety, and to verify whether the central Catalan variety – due to it being dominant – stood out as a general reference variety and enjoyed consensus among the groups, which was not reproduced in the perceptions of the NDVs. Such a comparison was performed by means of the Kruskal-Wallis test, the non-parametric alternative of a one-factor ANOVA. Second, it was necessary to analyse whether, within each group of respondents, there was a significant contrast between the scores given to their own variety (endovariety)⁴ and those given to each of the other varieties (exovarieties). For the case in hand, it was also important to check whether the DV speakers scored an exovariety more negatively than their own. Pairwise comparisons were sufficient for this second objective: each group's ratings of their endovariety needed to be compared first to one of the exovarieties and then to the other one. Consequently, we used the Wilcoxon signed-rank test (a non-parametric version of the paired-samples *t*-test) for significance testing.

4 Results: educated Catalan speakers' perceptions of three Catalan dialectal varieties

Table 2 shows the distribution of our 20 evaluative adjectives in the three components.⁵ We grouped the different adjectival structures into a single mean indicator by component and by variety (a mean for status in the Central Catalan audio clips, a mean for solidarity in the Central Catalan audio clips, a mean for status in the Valencian audio clips, etc.).

As previously stated, we applied the Kruskal-Wallis test in order to compare the ratings that each group of respondents (Balearic, central Catalan, north-western Catalan and Valencian speakers) assigned to each of the three attitude dimensions

⁴ When it is necessary to analyse the attitudes towards endovariety, we cannot include the Balearic informants because they have been excluded from the final analysis by general decision of the project.

⁵ The classification of each variable in one of the three components was based on previous works (e. g. Ghyselen et al. 2022) and confirmed in our case by applying a principal component analysis to our data, which mostly classified adjectives as we expected.

for each variety in the audio clips (we compared ratings for central Catalan on status, ratings for central Catalan on dynamism, ratings for north-western Catalan on status, etc.). In other words, for each dimension and audio clip variety, we checked if ratings by respondents (dependent variable) were significantly different depending on the variety they spoke (independent variable).

Firstly, ratings of central Catalan audio clips were not significantly different among speaker groups (see Figure 2). For example, the status component was rated very similarly by all groups ($H = 2.644$; $p = 0.45$; $\eta^2 \approx 0$).

Secondly, no significant differences were found from one respondent group to another regarding the ratings of north-western Catalan audio clips (see Figure 3). Following the previous example, the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test for the status component were $H = 5.504$; $p = 0.138$; $\eta^2 = 0.021$.

Thirdly, we came across the same situation in the case of Valencian audio clips; e.g., ratings of the status component did not contrast significantly ($H = 3.041$; $p = 0.385$; $\eta^2 \approx 0$). In summary, the results were uniform across all nine indicators: none of the comparisons showed any significant differences among groups of

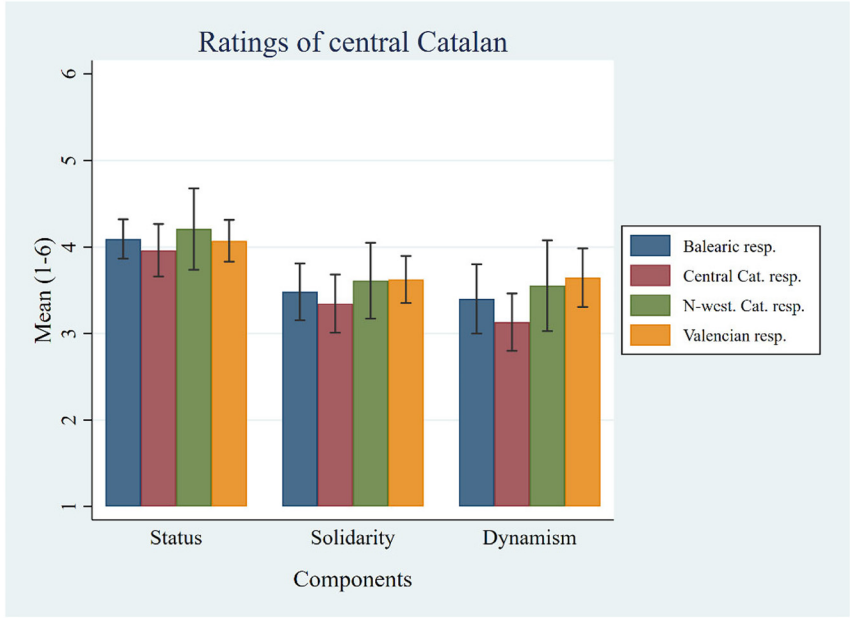


Figure 2: Ratings of the components for central Catalan by group of respondents.

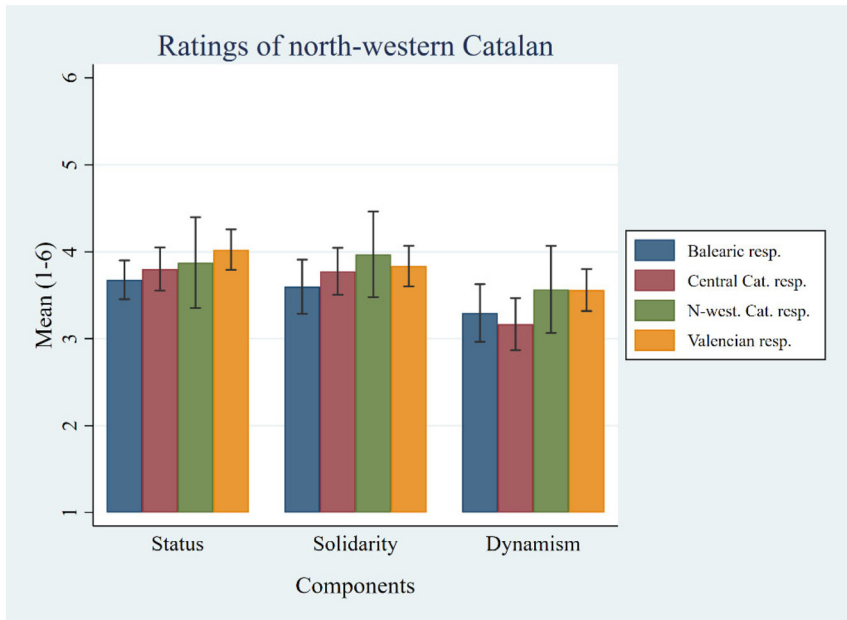


Figure 3: Ratings of the components for north-western Catalan by group of respondents.

respondents. Indeed, Figures 2, 3, and 4 illustrate such an absence of significance, with 95 % confidence intervals (black brackets) overlapping in every mean comparison (groups of four bars). Therefore, even if, for example, north-western Catalan respondents rate the dynamism of Valencian higher than the other groups, we cannot be 95 % confident that the observed difference is not due to chance.

By contrast, the Wilcoxon signed-rank tests identified significant differences in certain indicators between the ratings given to the endovariety of a group and those given to at least one of its exovarieties (see Figures 5–7).⁶ Most significant differences had a small effect size, with the exception of one η^2 value below -0.6 indicating a medium effect size.

⁶ As in this chart we are analysing the attitudes towards endovariety, we cannot include the Balearic informants because they have been excluded from the final analysis by general decision of the project.

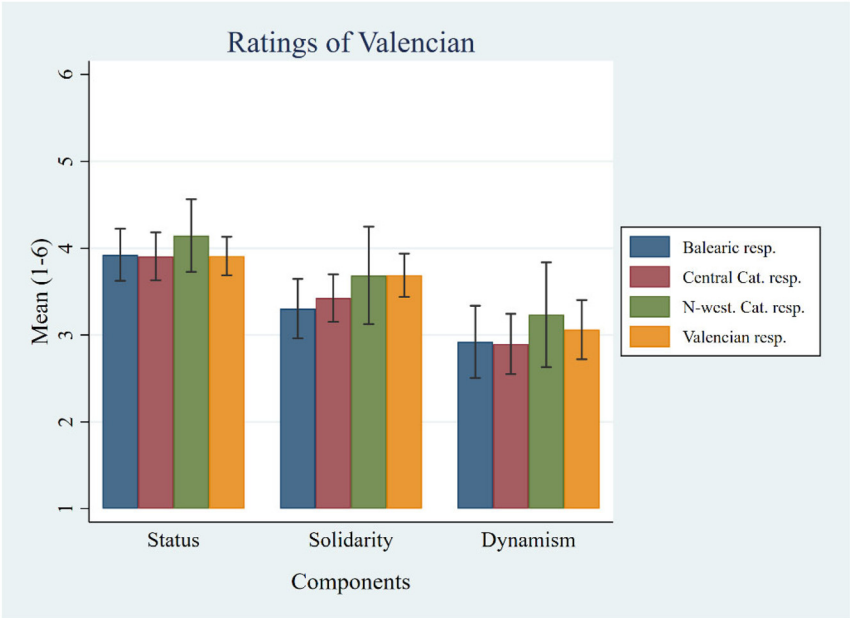


Figure 4: Ratings of the components for Valencian by group of respondents.

First of all, central Catalan respondents (Figure 5) rated their endovariety with a score that was significantly lower in solidarity than that given to north-western Catalan ($z = -3.446$; $p = 0.001$; $\eta^2 = -0.629$).

Regarding north-western Catalan speakers (Figure 6), the mean score obtained by their endovariety was significantly lower in status than that given to central Catalan ($z = -2.382$; $p = 0.017$; $\eta^2 = -0.476$) and to Valencian ($z = -2.19$; $p = 0.029$; $\eta^2 = -0.457$). Simultaneously, however, they rated their endovariety significantly higher than central Catalan in solidarity ($z = 2.5$; $p = 0.012$; $\eta^2 = 0.51$).

As for Valencian respondents (Figure 7), they rated their endovariety with a score that was significantly lower in dynamism than that given to central Catalan ($z = -2.809$; $p = 0.005$; $\eta^2 = -0.497$) and to north-western Catalan ($z = -3.089$; $p = 0.002$; $\eta^2 = -0.555$). In summary, north-western Catalan respondents displayed a degree of rejection towards their own variety in status (even compared to the other NDV, Valencian), whereas they rewarded it in solidarity. Central Catalan respondents coincided on the latter rating, since they gave a higher score to north-western Catalan than to their endovariety in solidarity. In contrast, Valencian respondents gave virtually equivalent scores to the endovariety and the exovarieties in status and solidarity, while they positively rated the dynamism of

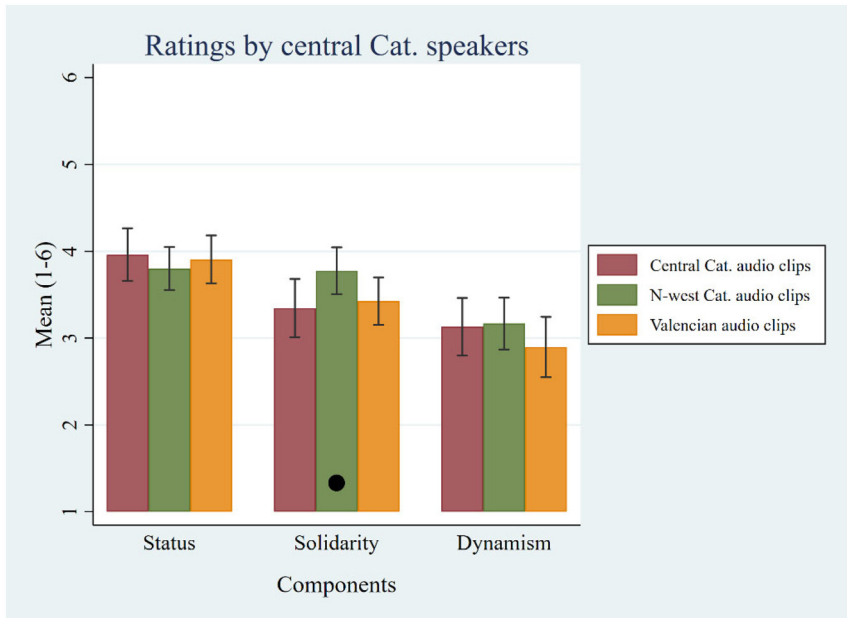


Figure 5: Central Catalan respondents: ratings of the components depending on the audio clips. Black dots indicate which exovarieties were rated significantly higher or lower than the endovariety in the same component.

varieties with a presence in Catalonia – in both cases more highly than their endovariety.

5 Discussion

As we have seen, grouping our participants by their respective diatopic varieties neither generates a mismatch between the perceptions of the DV respondents and those of the NDV respondents, nor were there scores that varied between groups depending on whether the rated variety was the same as, or different from, the respondent's endovariety. This general finding confirms the one made by Casesnoves and Mas Castells (2015), according to which central Catalan was well rated at roughly the same level as NDVs by 385 NDV respondents.

Even though we did not find any significant differences between each variety by the group of respondents rating them, we did indeed observe some differences in the scores that an individual group gave to the status, solidarity and dynamism components of the endovariety and the exovarieties.

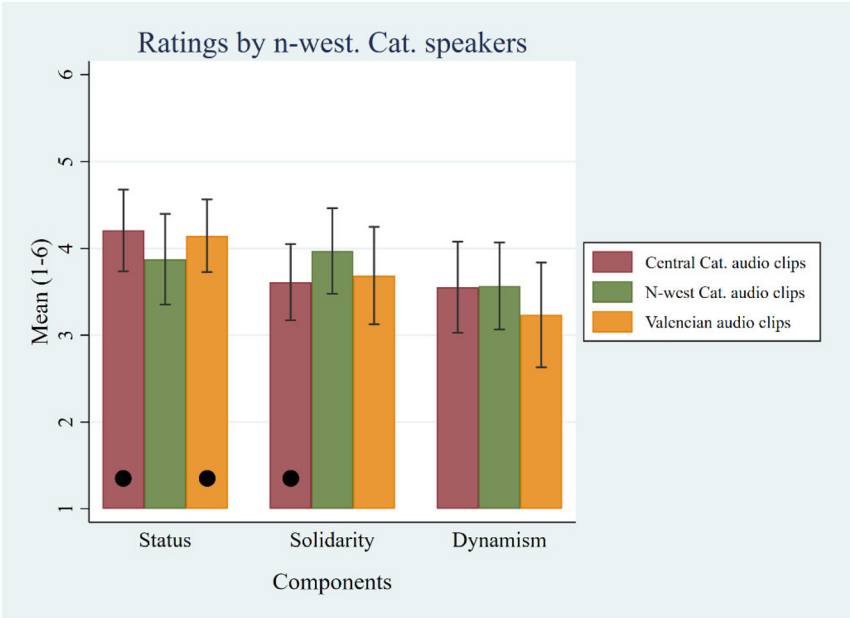


Figure 6: North-western respondents: ratings of the components depending on the audio clips. Black dots indicate which exovarieties were rated significantly higher or lower than the endovariety in the same component.

5.1 Central Catalan respondents’ attitudes

Central Catalan respondents rated their own variety, the DV, in the same way as north-western Catalan and Valencian (NDVs) in terms of prestige. These data contrast with results obtained by Casesnoves and Mas Castells (2015, 80), from which it was concluded that the link between Barcelona-based speakers and the endovariety, i. e., central Catalan, was combined with a degree of rejection towards the exovarieties. And, when asked whether there was a better dialect, 56 % of those surveyed by Valls and Ulldemolins (2023) placed it within central Catalan. From the novelty of our results, it could be deduced that respondents of the central Catalan subsample were more permissive towards the acceptance and appearance of linguistic forms from both north-western Catalan and Valencian in a standard register. Regarding the solidarity component, central Catalan respondents positively rated north-western Catalan with scores significantly higher than those given to their own variety or to Valencian. These results partially coincide with those obtained by Valls and Ulldemolins (2023). Their study found that while respondents rated north-

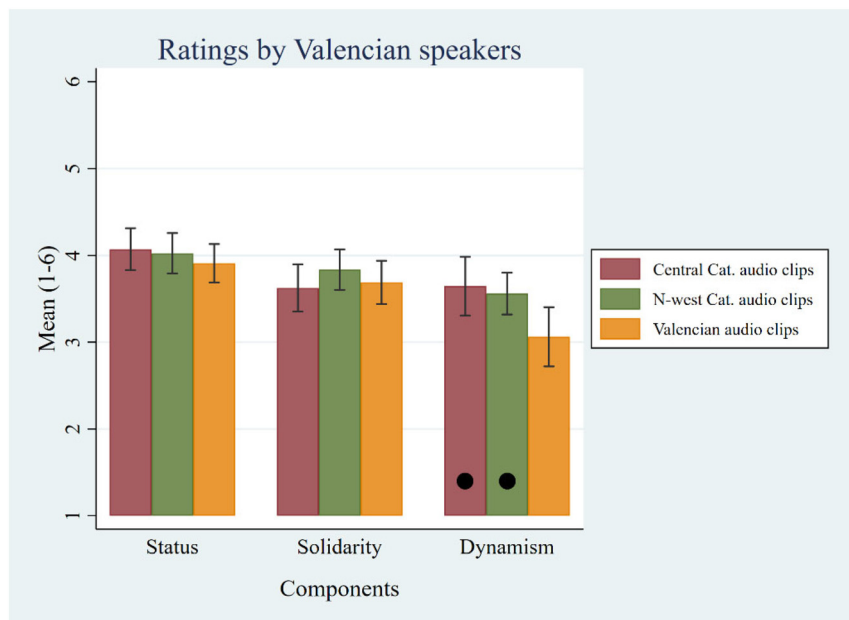


Figure 7: Valencian respondents: ratings of the components depending on the audio clips. Black dots indicate which exovarieties were rated significantly higher or lower than the endovariety in the same component.

western Catalan positively (in pleasant, pure and clear), these scores were lower than those for central Catalan. The authors suggested that the higher ratings for these varieties stemmed from the centre/periphery dynamic and their relevance to the speakers' immediate context – autonomous Catalonia (Valls and Ulldemolins 2023, 62).

5.2 North-western Catalan respondents' attitudes

North-western Catalan respondents gave scores with significant differences in two components: status and solidarity. In contrast, there were no significant differences in the values of the dynamism component between the ratings of the endovariety and the two exovarieties (central Catalan and Valencian). On the one hand, the north-western variety group rated the solidarity of its own variety with much higher scores than those given to the exovarieties. These results may be associated with the authenticity ("the genuine expression of a community or of a person's 'Self", according to Woolard (2016, 22), in contrast with the "nowhere" variety) and

individuality that the speakers of this variety felt towards their own subdialects, as is the case for *lleidatà* (Gràcia 2023), and with the need to distinguish them from other varieties of Catalan. The results obtained by Gràcia (2016) evidence that particular aspect; a sample of around 100 young people from Lleida felt that their dialectal variant was not an undistinguished Catalan in comparison to the other variants (78 %), or a round-the-home Catalan (84 %).

On the other hand, the status component offered complementary data. In this component, north-western Catalan respondents rated the endovariety significantly lower than the scores given to central Catalan and Valencian. However, if we take the previous studies into account, our data are not that surprising. Generally speaking, opinions on the status of north-western Catalan held by its speakers have a negative impact on the phenomena of de-dialectalisation (“the loss of dialectal features”) and endodiglossia (Gràcia 2023; Castellà Espuny 2006; Ulldemolins Subirats 2018), thereby favouring the DV model, as well as on linguistic insecurity, with uses of the variety in restricted areas, and on self-hatred towards their own variety. Moreover, these behaviours reinforce the linguistic hierarchies perceived by north-western Catalan speakers, in which they position the Girona and Barcelona subdialects of central Catalan at the top of the pyramid of prestige for Catalan varieties (Gràcia 2023). It would therefore seem that the majority of interviewees did not fully assume the vindication that the endovarieties’ presence in the standard should be on an equal footing with the other big diatopic varieties. In contrast, there was a rejection of the central Catalan standard because of a lack of authenticity, due to distance, among the 105 north-western Catalan speakers in Gràcia (2016). The author (Gràcia 2023) attributed the latter opinion to the feeling of self-hatred, which generates conflict, fuelled by the attitude of some central Catalan speakers. As for Valencian, north-western Catalan speakers may recognise it as a legitimate variety of the standard within a defined territorial entity, the Valencian Country, as opposed to their own variety, which cannot be associated with administrative borders. Institutional use of Valencian, the presence of this NDV in Valencian school and media and even the fact that speakers consistently use that name to refer to it (instead of different local or regional names, as is the case in north-western Catalan) may all contribute to the higher status position of Valencian in the eyes of north-western Catalan speakers.

5.3 Valencian respondents’ attitudes

Valencian respondents did not display any preference in the status or solidarity components. In contrast, they stood out for giving lower ratings to the endovariety in

the dynamism component. The previous studies on the interdialectal relationships of Catalan did not have a dynamism component, so this is the first time that this contrast has been empirically detected. Nevertheless, the specificity of the phenomenon should be highlighted, as it only occurs among Valencian speakers. Many of the respondents differentiated Valencian from Catalan, even when what they understood by Catalan is that it is a language spoken in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands.

Casesnoves and Mas Castells (2015) identified the generally positive attitudes of 606 Balearic, central Catalan and Valencian respondents towards the standard variety of central Catalan, combined with attitudes that were almost as positive towards the other varieties. But, all the previous works, published between 2015 and 2023, have shown that most of the 800 DV and NDV respondents rated central Catalan positively or very positively (sometimes even higher than the other varieties).

5.4 Balearic respondents' attitudes

Being a Balearic speaker did not have any significance when it came to rating the status of a variety, the solidarity felt for it, or its dynamism any differently. Casesnoves and Mas Castells (2015) identified the generally positive attitudes of Balearic respondents towards the standard variety of central Catalan, combined with attitudes that were almost as positive towards the other varieties. However, according to Solivellas et al. (2023), the rejection that a proportion of the 124 Balearic respondents felt towards the “standard” was paradoxically because they identified it with *barceloní* or central Catalan. It was also put down to a lack of authenticity, due to distance, often because of central Catalan speakers' attitudes of mockery and superiority. Lastly, they identified a neutral perception of the standard as a “nowhere” variety, which, according to Woolard (2016, 25), is “supposedly freed from the constraints of a socially specific perspective through rational discourse, allowing it to achieve what is taken to be a superior aperspectival form of objectivity” and it is linked to the concept of “anonymity” which means that, according to Woolard (2016, 25), the public “generates a common discourse that supposedly includes everyone, but it abstracts away from each person's private and interested individual characteristics to distil that common voice”, in contrast with the “authentic” variety (see Section 4) and, therefore, one without localisms or any specific traits of a particular vernacular. This explains why, in general, there was an individuation of the Valencian television model from the Catalan and Balearic ones in the majority of the focus groups (Woolard 2016, 137).

6 Analysis of the proposals to reduce the dominance of the central Catalan variety

We shall now summarise proposals that have been put forward to address harms of language attitudes in Catalan, and assess them in light of our findings. Pradilla (2024, 105) suggested the elaboration of non-unitary models aimed at the adoption of a dynamic communication framework for variation management. He warned of the danger of linguistic fragmentation by the Valencians (p. 255–256) and made general reference to the dangers of “excessive demarcation” in all minoritised languages (p. 295). That ties in with the epistemological “intervention” proposals providing the rationale for a work like ours: the social stakeholders must be kept in mind in standardisation analyses and in language planning. Therefore, according to Pradilla (2024), the study of stakeholders’ ideologies and language practices are fundamental when it comes to conducting research into the standardisation of minoritised languages. Pradilla (2024, 268) also asserted that new works along these lines were needed to shed light on the (de)cohesion of the linguistic community, a request that Dols (2022, 11) and Costa-Carreras (2024, 16) also supported. Melià (2023, 157) proposes overcoming persistent linguistic prejudices in regard to the spread of Catalan, the compatibility between the different linguistic varieties, the hierarchy between varieties or interpellations to unknowns, and the general raising of awareness of available resources of all kinds in Catalan. Melià (2023, 162) also asserted that overcoming such prejudices could not be overlooked by planning, and that among such prejudices were those affecting the hierarchy between varieties and the incompatibility of the standard. And he ended by saying that the comprehension of the functions corresponding to the different varieties of the language was much more effective when done by coherent practice in the use of those varieties within the relevant areas. All these proposals should take into account the historical sociolinguistic process described, e. g., by Costa-Carreras and Yates (2009) and Rafanell (2020a, 2020b).

Regarding specific measures to eliminate negative prejudices towards non-dominant varieties in the education system, from a general viewpoint, Pradilla (2024, 103–9) included a number of very interesting reflections on young people’s new relationship with the standard language and vernacular varieties based on the disconnect with tradition and the emergence of new forms of deterritorialised communication, as well as new speakers who only had contact with the language through school. That author also aimed to describe the communicative conditions of that fluid modernity, with some extremely complex sociolinguistic conditions (p. 202). Moving on to proposals related to specific issues, most of them were about modifying teachers’ attitudes and, secondarily, students’ attitudes (Gràcia 2023;

Melià 2023; Pradilla 2024; Valls and Ulldemolins 2023). Another series of proposals focused on the stages of codification, implementation and functional elaboration of the standard. Melià (2023) proposed training teachers in the new compositional codification and enabling them to carry out its pluricentric diffusion. Pradilla (2024) proposed correcting the deficient diffusion and implementation of polymorphism. Gràcia (2023) considered that academia, the media and schools should pay extra ongoing attention to north-western Catalan. The work by Valls (2013) suggested that the level of knowledge of dialectal variation should be increased.

As for specific measures to eliminate negative prejudices towards non-dominant varieties in public service media, from the problems exposed by Ulldemolins Subirats (2019b), it can be deduced that the style guide of Catalan public service media should display a “positioning” and more information on the western Catalan sub-dialects to bring them closer to the presence of the central Catalan variety. The insecurity among north-western Catalan presenters should also be reduced. Melià (2023) said that the solution for returning linguistic well-being to the population of the current NDVs firstly involved modifying the journalists’ diglossic attitude, and secondly training them in the new compositional codification and enabling them to carry out its pluricentric diffusion. From the description by Costa-Carreras (2024, 16) of the functional elaboration of the feminine possessive (*seva/seua*), it is expected to be pluricentric as long as the monocentric codification allows it to be done.

7 Final observations

We presented the sociolinguistic situation of generalised linguistic insecurity across the Catalan-speaking territory, as well as the conditions in which the codifications of the IEC and the AVL are being implemented, and how the functional elaborations of these codifications are being done, which basically comes from the inertia and routine of the agents of the dissemination and elaboration of the official codifications.⁷ We then presented the theoretical and methodological framework, a survey of 197 educated speakers from the entire territory on six central Catalan, north-western Catalan and Valencian audio clips, and the results of the ESTANDAREV survey.

From the comparison of our results to those of the previous works, three using direct methods and two using indirect ones, with a total of 959 respondents over ten

7 A proof of the current importance of the conflict is the publication of the report *From self-hatred to dialectal self-esteem: Western Catalan is vindicated*, published in the *Ara* newspaper on 6/9/2024 (https://www.ara.cat/llengua/l-autoodi-l-autoestima-dialectal-catala-occidental-reivindica_130_5054994.html).

years (2015–2024), the following findings in relation to the initial question can be highlighted:

1. As far as the diatopic groups of respondents are concerned, we found ourselves to be looking at fairly uniform attitudinal landscape across groups.
2. Regarding the central Catalan respondents' attitudes, it could be deduced that they were more permissive towards the acceptance and appearance of linguistic forms from both north-western Catalan and Valencian in a standard register than in previous research. But the idea of there being a better dialect still persisted, with respondents placing it within central Catalan. Valls and Ulldemolins (2023) argued that this was due to the effect of the centre/periphery axis and either belonging or not to the autonomous community of Catalonia. A proportion of the respondents from the Balearic Islands and Lleida denounced central Catalan speakers' attitudes of mockery and superiority. We consider that the high rating for the solidarity component of the north-western variety by these speakers might also be due to a degree of receptiveness towards discourses demanding a greater presence of north-western Catalan in the Catalan media.
3. Regarding the north-western Catalan respondents' attitudes, what stood out was the authenticity and individuality that the speakers of this variety felt towards their own subdialects, and the need to distinguish them from other varieties of Catalan. But, in the status component, they rated the endovariety significantly lower than the scores given to central Catalan and Valencian. Moreover, these behaviours reinforce the linguistic hierarchies perceived by north-western Catalan speakers, in which they position the subdialects of central Catalan at the top of the pyramid of prestige for Catalan varieties. A certain feeling of self-hatred emerged. On the other hand, they categorise the Valencian standard as such due to the administrative border and the use within the Valencian Country of this variety of standard.
4. The Valencian respondents' attitudes stood out for giving lower ratings to the endovariety in the dynamism component. Our study is the first to empirically detect this contrast. It is a matter of differentiation by Valencian speakers between the exclusive variety of the Valencian Country on the one hand, and the varieties with a presence in Catalonia on the other. Another factor that could help to explain this is the perception of Catalonia as a more "nonconformist" territory. It is worth remembering that our sample comprised educated Catalan speakers, a profile that, in the Valencian Country, is traditionally associated with political stances that are progressive and less reticent to cultural rapprochement with the rest of the language area (see Casesnoves and Mas Castells 2016, 114 and Gómez-Devis and Buzón 2020, 94). So this conception of Catalonia as a more nonconformist territory may explain the perception of the central and north-western varieties as being more dynamic.

5. Regarding the Balearic respondents' attitudes, we found that being a Balearic speaker did not have any significance when it came to rating the status of a variety, the solidarity felt for it, or its dynamism any differently. However, the rejection that a proportion of the 124 Balearic respondents felt towards the "standard" was paradoxical because they identified it with *barceloní* or central Catalan, i. e., the prestigious and dominant variety. It was also put down to a lack of authenticity, due to distance, often because of central Catalan speakers' attitudes of mockery and superiority (see Section 5.4).

Moving to the proposals made, the codifications of the IEC and the AVL, the former being compositional and the latter convergent pluricentric, as they define themselves, are not questioned by any of the works. Criticism is focused on implementation and functional elaboration. Regarding the former, the proposal to train teachers and journalists in order to raise their awareness of codification and enable them to produce discourse using their own variants and overcome acquired prejudices. However, implementation faces a very significant threat in the next years in the Balearic Islands and the Valencian Country: the autonomous governments' hostile attitude towards Catalan (not to mention the situation in northern Catalonia, Alghero, the Aragonese Strip and the Carxe). This statement could seem paradoxical, as the conservative party in these autonomous governments, the *Partido Popular*, claims itself to be the advocate of the endovarieties (Valencian and Majorcan) against a supposed imposition of the central Catalan variants, but, in fact, this is a sort of "compensatory idealisation" of the endovariants "to compensate their little formal use of any language other than Spanish" (Mas Castells 2020, 92).

Regarding elaboration, the proposals are centred around a more pluricentric drafting of teaching materials, but this runs into financial difficulties when it comes to publication; journalistic style guides are already quite pluricentric.

In evaluating these proposals within the education system, it should first be noted that they were all formulated approximately seven years after the publication in 2016 of the last official codification document the *Grammar of the Catalan Language* produced by the IEC in 2016, and well after the IEC began engaging regularly with teachers through its open academies. The clearest conclusion that can be drawn from this situation is the need to push for all of these proposals to be acted upon. At the same time, symbolic and attitudinal factors need to be managed tactfully, while fostering interrelationships between speakers of different varieties and increasing exposure to official codifications. As for the media, the IEC has already taken steps in this direction through its open academies for journalists. Alongside this, the presence of Catalan in the media and social media should be increased. However, as in the case of education, it is necessary to push for all of the proposals made to be acted upon.

Finally, the dissemination of findings and methodologies highlights the need for continued research into interdialectal relationships.

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