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Language ideologies and sociolinguistic competence in Catalan:
the case for young speakers in the Balearic Islands

Introduction

There is a wide agreement amongst sociolinguists from various theoretical backgrounds about the importance of studying the young population, whether by examining their linguistic behaviors in diverse contexts or by analyzing the specific linguistic elements they employ, such as phonological, grammatical, and lexical aspects (Castell et al. 2023). This is especially relevant in the Balearic Islands, which can be considered, without a doubt, a linguistically and culturally diverse region of the Mediterranean. These islands are home to a complex tapestry of languages, with Catalan and Spanish being the predominant ones, but often complemented by other languages such as English, German, Arabic, Amazigh, Romanian,

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French, or Italian, due to the presence of international residents and tourists (Canyelles 2012).

This linguistic diversity is not merely an interesting facet of the islands' identity; it significantly influences the sociolinguistic dynamics that govern daily life. In fact, the coexistence of Catalan and Spanish, intertwined with the other languages spoken by the international community, residents, and visitors, can both enrich the cultural tapestry of the region and present unique challenges for communication and understanding. Thus, it seems undeniable that multilingualism and linguistic diversity have a profound impact on the sociolinguistic characteristics of the Balearic Islands. To this end, deepening the knowledge of the sociolinguistic dynamics at play and, in particular, of linguistic ideologies, is of paramount importance, especially concerning the younger generation of speakers (Castell et al. 2023). The youth of the Balearic Islands navigate a linguistic landscape where they are exposed to diverse languages, not only in their immediate community but also through media and global connectivity (Melià 2023). Education plays a crucial role in shaping their linguistic and cultural identities. It serves as a space where language ideologies, attitudes, and competencies are cultivated, and it is crucial to provide the youth with the tools to engage with their environment effectively. In this context, the concept of *sociolinguistic competence* becomes highly relevant. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the ability to understand and navigate the intricacies of language use in various sociocultural contexts (Canale 1983). In the Balearic Islands, this includes not only being proficient in the official languages, Catalan and Spanish, but also having (or, at least, developing) an awareness of the prejudices, cultural nuances, and expectations associated with each language. Moreover, it involves recognizing the diverse linguistic backgrounds of others, and the implications that the ideas associated with languages have.

This paper will therefore examine how the recent demographic changes, in addition to globalization and the increasing mobility of the population, have shaped the linguistic and sociolinguistic landscape of the Balearic society, and in particular how this situation relates to linguistic ideologies, attitudes, and behaviors of young people (Solivellas et al. 2023). It places special emphasis on the role of education, since it is a primary avenue for socialization, as well as for the transfer of cultural values and linguistic competencies (Flors–Mas 2017). Furthermore, it underscores

the importance of developing the so-called *sociolinguistic competence* as an indispensable skill for fostering harmonious coexistence and effective communication in this multifaceted context, and proposes several classroom activities that should help students achieve this competence.

In particular, the paper intends to provide an answer to the following questions: (1) What are the linguistic ideologies of young people in the Balearic Islands?, (2) What are the ideologies towards the languages of education?, and (3) What activities can be carried out in the classroom to promote multilingualism and make young people aware of their linguistic ideologies? These three research questions translate into three goals: (1) to analyze the main linguistic ideologies that are present among young people of the Balearic Islands; (2) to check how these ideologies can affect the learning of Catalan language, and (3) to develop a set of didactic strategies to work on ideologies and linguistic prejudices in class.

The research used to reach the goals of the paper is based on the project *Actituds i usos lingüístics de les Illes Balears* (henceforth AULIJOVIB), which followed a multimodal, innovative methodological approach to the analysis of the sociolinguistic situation of the Balearic Islands, since it combines exploitation of data extracted from surveys and previous large-scale studies with the analysis of qualitative data (see section 3). In addition, in the qualitative part of the project, the study is based on biographies, an approach that assumes that linguistic uses are linked to people's lives, taking into account both the context in which these people are born, their relationships and the activities that they carry out at different moments of their lives (Pujolar 2023). This approach allows researchers to analyze the linguistic uses declared through surveys, as well as contextualized longer explanations provided by informants. These explanations are important not only for their contents but also for the way in which they were provided (Pujolar 2023), which helped researchers infer attitudes but also conceptualizations about languages, speakers, and discursive practices.

The paper is organized in six sections. Section 1, which is the introduction, justifies the need for the study, the aims and the research questions; section 2 presents the conceptual framework, focusing on the concepts that are relevant for the analysis (such as linguistic ideologies and their role in education, the influence of Krashen's affective filter on language learning, communicative approaches to language learning or

sociolinguistic competence). Section 3 focuses on the methodology used for AULIJOVIB (the basis for this paper) and section 4 deals with the main results of the study – i.e. the main linguistic ideologies of young people in the Balearic islands regarding standard language and the relation between language and identity. Section 5 puts forward several proposals in order to help students achieve good sociolinguistic competence in the classroom, and, finally, section 6 draws some concluding remarks.

Conceptual framework
Language ideologies and their role in education

The perspective humans have on any aspect of reality invariably carries cultural connotations and a specific symbolic charge. In other words, what we call *perceived reality* is always dependent on what has socially – and culturally – been constructed around it. In this context, the term *ideology* appears, which can be defined as "conceptions of reality that reflect or respond to the interests and experiences of a specific social group" (Boix, Vila 1998: 156), meaning that one can assume that any human perspective on reality always has an ideological component, however insignificant.

Language, in this sense, does not escape ideological factors, which is why it is possible to talk about *linguistic ideologies*, understood as social representations of language, related to various factors such as identity, aesthetics, morality, epistemology, etc. (Woolard 1998: 3). These ideologies, moreover, can affect different areas related to language, depending on whether they refer to language in general, to a specific language, to the varieties of a language or even to some specific structures, etc. – for more information, see Woolard (1998). Likewise, Silverstein (1979: 193) considers that ideologies are often used to justify or rationalize a perceived reality. However, it is important to differentiate the ideologies that arise from the observation of a specific reality by a human group, on the one hand, from those that are induced, i.e. those that a specific group conveys to maintain or achieve a hegemonic position, on the other. On this topic, Woolard's (1998: 5–9) contributions on the different conceptions of the term *ideology* are interesting.

In short, linguistic ideologies are understood as social representations of reality that stem from a specific sociocultural – and political – perspective, hence they always have a specific symbolic charge, as Woolard

(2016: 7) explains, stating that "by language ideologies we mean socially, politically, and morally loaded cultural assumptions about the way that language works in social life and about the role of particular linguistic forms in a given society". It should also be noted that these social representations are disseminated through prejudice and beliefs that are circulated through socially shared discourses, which is why ideologies are considered to have a discursive character (Eagleton 1991: 194). It is also worth nothing that these representations can be hegemonic or contested (Woolard 2016: 7): the former are shared and accepted by a substantial part of society, that is, they generate a more or less shared agreement, while the latter have a reactionary component, so they are oriented to respond to the former.

Finally, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that linguistic ideologies play an important role in education, as evidenced by some works such as Comellas (2009), Liddicoat and Taylor–Leech (2015), or Fine et al. (2019). In this sense, prejudices or attitudes can be detected around geographical variation, accent, appropriate or transgressive use of the standard, etc. At the same time, these ideologies can also affect both the language teaching-learning process and its promotion and use. Thus, for example, if a student considers that English is a useful language for their future professional career, this can favor learning. On the contrary, if they consider it a waste of time, learning will be more difficult, to the extent that "beliefs about the relative value of certain languages influence both policy and practice but such beliefs also influence how certain groups are perceived in society" (Liddicoat, Taylor–Leech 2015: 4), an aspect that can especially affect minoritized languages like Catalan.

Attitudes, ideologies and learning: the Affective Filter Hypothesis

As stated in the previous section, learning is related to attitudes, emotions and perspectives on language. In that sense, the Affective Filter can influence how students face the process of language learning. The Affective Filter is related to Krashen's Monitor Theory, which was put forward in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Also known as the *Monitor Model*, this theory suggests that there are several interrelated hypotheses that explain how individuals acquire a second language, and emphasizes the role of input and comprehensible input in language learning. Even though critics have debated the empirical evidence for some of the specific claims within the

theory, authors such as Lichtman and VanPatten (2021) state that the theory remains influential in shaping language teaching methodologies and understanding the processes of second language acquisition.

The Monitor Theory consists of five main hypotheses (Krashen 2002): (1) the Input Hypothesis, which posits that language learners acquire language most effectively when exposed to language that is slightly beyond their current level of proficiency but still comprehensible; (2) the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, which makes a distinction between subconscious acquisition and conscious learning of languages; (3) the Natural Order Hypothesis, suggesting that language learners acquire grammatical structures in a predictable, natural order; (4) the Monitor Hypothesis, which proposes that the conscious mind can be used to edit or "monitor" language production, and (5) the Affective Filter Hypothesis, which states that various affective factors (motivation, anxiety, self-confidence) can act as a "filter" that influences language acquisition.

This paper focuses on the effects that the Affective Filter Hypothesis can have over language learning, as it can either facilitate or impede the process of language acquisition (Krashen 1982; Fehrenbach 2020). While this hypothesis has been influential in language education, it is important to note that the relationship between affective factors and language acquisition is complex, and the empirical evidence supporting the hypothesis has been a subject of debate.

The affective filter can be conditioned by several factors, such as motivation, anxiety, self-confidence, and emotional states. On the one hand, learners who are motivated to learn a language are more likely to have a low affective filter, meaning that they will probably engage more in the learning process and display a more positive emotional state, thus enhancing language acquisition. Moreover, a high level of self-confidence can lead to a lower affective filter, and learners might be more willing to take risks in using the language and less likely to be deterred by errors or challenges. On the other hand, anxiety – which includes language insecurity or the fear of making mistakes – can strengthen the affective filter, causing learners to be less open to language input and hindering their ability to absorb the language naturally (Bárkányi 2023). At the same time, emotional states such as frustration, boredom, or stress, can impact the affective filter. Negative emotions – which might be triggered by certain ideologies and attitudes –

can also influence the filter, making language acquisition more difficult (Cremades 2017; Fehrenbach 2020).

Many language educators continue to consider the affective filter when designing their teaching strategies and work to create an environment that supports effective language learning. The latter can be achieved by promoting a positive and motivating atmosphere, encouraging risk-taking and self-expression, but also reducing insecurity, prejudice, or negative attitudes towards the language. In that sense, activities that develop sociolinguistic competence, such as role-play, group discussions, and language games, can help lower the affective filter by creating a non-threatening and engaging environment.

Methodology

This paper is derived from the AULIJOVIB project, which employed a mixed-method methodology. However, the data we present was gathered using qualitative methods, i.e. those presented in this section. To know more about the quantitative data from AULIJOVIB see Amengual et al. (2023).

Data was gathered from 124 participants aged 15 to 29 – apart from three participants, who were 32, 33, and 41 years old. Of the sample, approximately 41.0 % of the participants had Catalan as their first language; 28.2 % had Spanish; 11.1 % had both Catalan and Spanish equally; and the remaining 19.7 % reported having another first language or other linguistic combinations. Twelve survey points were chosen corresponding to the four islands: Inca, Lloseta, Manacor, Palma and Ses Salines, in Mallorca; Ciutadella, Ferreries, and Maó, in Menorca; Eivissa, Santa Eulàlia, and Sant Joan, in Eivissa; and Sant Francesc, in Formentera. The intention was that in each island, both urban and rural nuclei be represented (Castell et al. 2023).

Three different methods were used: individual interviews, focus groups, and language use and leisure habit diaries. In addition, all participants had to fill out a language usage questionnaire to collect basic information from each one about their initial, habitual, and identification language, as well as about their most frequent leisure activities. Of the 124 participants, 43 were interviewed individually, 62 participated in one of the 17 focus groups that were organized, and the remaining 19 people

completed the diaries on linguistic uses and leisure habits.[4] The individual interviews were semi-structured and consisted of six sections: (1) introduction, (2) linguistic biography, (3) linguistic uses according to different fields, (4) migratory project, (5) language and positioning, and (6) cooling down. The focus groups were also semi-structured and consisted of six sections: (1) introduction; (2) linguistic uses in urban tribes; (3) life and linguistic trajectory; (4) perceptions of correctness, variation, and standard; (5) linguistic positioning, and (6) cooling down. Each group was made up of three to four participants: three participants born and resident at the survey point, who had Catalan as their L1; two participants born in a non-Catalan-speaking territory in Spain who were residents at the survey point, and two participants born abroad, also residents at the survey point. The linguistic usage and leisure habit diaries consisted of preparing a kind of diary for a week, in which the participants wrote down the activities they performed every day during their free time, as well as the language, or languages, in which they carried out those activities. All interviews and focus groups were transcribed verbatim and then were thematically analyzed using the qualitative analysis computer program NVivo.

Language ideologies in the Balearic Islands

The following section presents the main ideologies and prejudices observed among young people in the Balearic Islands using the data from AULIJOVIB project.[5] In this case, however, two key aspects are underlined: (1) the relationship established between language and identity and (2) the beliefs surrounding the standard language model and linguistic correctness. These are two axes that are related to how Catalan – and Spanish, in fact – is perceived among young people and, to some extent, how it can condition the teaching-learning process of Catalan as well as its use.

Regarding the first topic, which links language and identity, young people in the Balearic Islands tend to think that Catalan is exclusive for Catalan speakers, that is, for a specific community, while Spanish is the

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[4] These diaries, however, were not used for data gathering in this paper, which focuses on the results extracted from the individual interviews, on the one hand, and the focus groups, on the other.

[5] The AULIJOVIB project book (Castell et al. 2023) includes a specific chapter on the analysis of youth imaginaries about languages in the Balearic Islands and therefore includes some of the ideologies presented here (cf. Solivellas et al. 2023).

language of communication or the language that everyone knows and uses beyond the group to which they belong. This idea, which appears reflected in previous studies (Tudela–Isanta 2021, Solivellas et al. 2023: 131), is related to the ideologies of authenticity and anonymity (Gal, Woolard 2001), as the cited authors point out, so that Catalan is perceived as the language of Catalan speakers – often denominated by the corresponding glossonym (Majorcan, Menorcan, Ibizan or Formenteran) – the language of the in-group, as shown in example 1.

Example 1: Who speaks Catalan?

P20MA: No sé... Es que yo, en mi grupo de amigas, sí que tengo... No hablan catalán, hablan menorquín, pero sí, por ejemplo, tengo tres que hablan menorquín y a veces pues entre ellas hablan menorquín, pero con nosotras hablan castellano. [...]	P20MA: I don't know... It's just that in my group of friends, I do have... They don't speak Catalan, they speak Menorcan, but for example, I have three friends who speak Menorcan and sometimes they speak Menorcan among them but then they speak Spanish with us. […]
P20MA: Para mí las niñas que sus padres sean todos de aquí y por algo se junten y sí que hablan menorquín.	P20MA: I think that the girls whose parents are all from here [Minorca], and for some reason get together, do speak Menorcan.

In this sense, Solivellas et al. (2023: 131) observe that among young people in the Balearic Islands, Catalan singularizes, to the extent that it differentiates Catalan speakers from others. This does not happen with Spanish, as it is assumed that it is everyone's language or, in other words, that it is not the language of any specific group. It is not strange, therefore, that these young people resort to Catalan to claim their identity as Balearic Islanders, as seen in example 2 below:

Example 2: Using Catalan to claim Ibizan identity

G22SJ: [...] yo tengo dos mejores amigas, que en el instituto casi no me hablaba con ellas, pero luego después nos hicimos amigas y son ibicencas. Una es de San Carlos, otra es de San Lorenzo. Entonces como que entre ellas al principio, lo que te dije, hablaban castellano y luego dicen: "No sé por qué hablamos en castellano" y digo yo: "Es que no sé por qué habláis en castellano tampoco conmigo", sabes? Si hablan en catalán, en ibicenco, me hablaban a mí también y yo es como les contesto, y eso me gusta mucho. Y luego hay gente que voy por ahí y digo: "No, si soc eivissenca. […] Soc de Sant Miquel".	G22SJ: […] I have two best friends, who in high school almost didn't talk to me, but then we became friends, and they are from Ibiza. One is from San Carlos, the other is from San Lorenzo. So, at first, like I told you, they spoke Spanish among themselves and then they say: "I don't know why we speak Spanish" and I say: "It's like I don't know why you speak Spanish with me either", you know? If they speak in Catalan, in Ibizan, they spoke to me too and I answered them, and I really like that. And then there are people I meet, and I say [in Catalan]: "No, I'm from Ibiza. I'm from Sant Miquel."

This generates a sociolinguistic dynamic in which Catalan is reserved solely for Catalan speakers. As a result, only Spanish is practically used with strangers (Cremades, Crespí 2023) and newcomers interpret this behavior as a barrier when learning Catalan or even feel excluded (Solivellas et al. 2023: 138–139).

Example 3: An exclusion feeling

Entrevistadora: I això t'ha fet en qualque moment de la teva vida sentir-te exclosa?	Interviewer: And that has caused you to feel excluded sometimes?
G22SJ: Sí. […] en todos los cursos de mi instituto.	G22SJ: Yes. […] in all the courses in my high school.
Entrevistadora: O sigui el que et causava aquest sentiment d'exclusió era que et parlassin en castellà i no en català, o hi havia més coses?	Interviewer: So, what caused this exclusion feeling for you? Was it that they spoke to you in Spanish and not in Catalan, or were there other things?
G22SJ: Que tengan que cambiar la lengua por ti porque dicen: "Ay, es que no lo entiendes", que lo den por hecho, de que no lo entiendas. Y que digas: "Vale, muy bien", que, que puede ser que sea verdad, que algunas palabras, pero no, nadie te ha creado ese esfuerzo de: "Venga, yo te voy a ayudar a ti". Bueno, sí, hubo un alumno, la verdad que es un buen chico, que dice: "Venga, yo te enseño a hablar en ibicenco", siempre me hablaba en ibicenco. Eso, pues daba muchas gracias, porque dices: "Vale, me estás integrando en tu cultura", por así decirlo. Pero los otros, como: "No, yo te voy a hablar, porque tú eres extranjero, yo te voy a hablar en castellano". […] Entonces siempre te hacían así.	G22SJ: That they must change the language for you because they say: "Oh, you don't understand it", that they take it for granted that you don't understand it. And you say: "Okay, fine", which may be true for some words, but no one has made that effort to say: "Come on, I'll help you". Well, there was one student, a really good guy, who said: "Come on, I'll teach you how to speak in Ibizan", they always spoke to me in Ibizan. That was really nice because you say: "Okay, you're integrating me into your culture", so to speak. But the others, like: "No, I'm going to speak to you because you're a foreigner, I'm going to speak to you in Spanish". […] So, they always made you feel like that.

In summary, the link between language and identity is still present, to the extent that Catalan is conceived as an identifier that links speakers to the autochthonous community of each island, making them Majorcan, Menorcan, Ibizan or Formenteran. However, this is based on the ideologies of authenticity (Gal, Woolard 2001), to the extent that it is understood as the language of here, the language of a specific in-group, which allows establishing an *us* (identity) and a *them* (alterity). This dynamic has led to a rather fragmented perception of the Catalan language, so that the different geographical varieties are perceived as closed and well-differentiated compartments (Solivellas et al. 2023: 135), as we can see in example 4.

Example 4: Catalan vs. Menorcan

C23FER: Bastant bona. [?] lo que és es català estàndard, jo vaig a Barcelona i no canvii absolutament res des menorquí, és a dir, no m'agrada a part de que no sabem català com aquell que diu, no? Que per parlar-lo és una mica estrany, se me fa molt raro. Preferesc que me facin repetir es menorquí, no?, de: "Què has dit? No t'he entès", que canviar-ho en català. Es problema és que a vegades en ves de traduir-ho en es català, ho traduesc en es castellà, per exemple [...].	C23FER: Pretty good. [?] concerning standard Catalan, I go to Barcelona, and I don't change anything from Menorcan, that is, I don't like it apart from the fact that we don't know Catalan, you know? Speaking it [Catalan] is a bit strange, it feels very weird to me. I prefer that they make me repeat Menorcan, you know (like, "What did you say? I didn't understand you"), than switching into Catalan. The problem is that sometimes, instead of translating it into Catalan, I translate it into Spanish, for example […].
Entrevistadora: […] Acostumes a inserir frases o paraules en castellà quan parles en català? Ho fas molt?	Interviewer: [...] Do you usually insert phrases or words in Spanish when you speak in Catalan? Do you do it a lot?
C23FER: Molt no, però és com sa meva manera d'adaptar-me un poc perquè m'entenguin. És curiós. En ves de fer-ho en català, ho faig en castellà. […] En es final, el castellà, l'he xerrat, en es català estàndard mai. Vull dir xerr en català-menorquí, però no sé, se me fa molt raro xerrar en català.	C23FER: Not a lot, but it's my way of adapting a little so they understand me. It's curious. Instead of doing it in Catalan, I do it in Spanish. [...] In the end, I've spoken Spanish, I've never spoken in standard Catalan. I mean, I speak in Catalan-Menorcan, but I don't know, speaking in Catalan feels really strange to me.

This has led in the long run to a rather restrictive use of the term *Catalan*, which is exclusively reserved for the variety of the language spoken in Catalonia, which is why the use of glossonyms is often resorted to refer to the varieties, without this, however, implying to deny the unity of the language (Melià 2014: 261–262). In fact, data from EULIB (2014: 175 and following) show that, despite the main use of the glossonyms, practically all citizens of the Balearic Islands consider that the language of the Balearic Islands is also shared by Valencians, Catalans, Andorrans, etc., that is to say, the whole linguistic community.

Example 5: Learning Ibizan, not Catalan

A30EI: A mí personalmente me hubiera gustado que en el colegio me enseñaran ibicenco y no me enseñaran catalán. Sí que es verdad que, como la gente dice, no es un idioma el ibicenco, sino un dialecto del catalán, pero a mí, como isleña y como ibicenca, sí que me hubiera gustado aprender el ibicenco y no que me impusieran el catalán. Entonces, bueno, es mi opinión personal, que aparte, nos meten, o sea, ya el tema politiqueo, nos meten a las Islas Baleares como Cataluña y nosotros somos Baleares, no Cataluña, entonces, me hubiera gustado eso, que en el cole nos enseñaran el ibicenco.	A30EI: Personally, I would have liked to have been taught Ibizan at school and not Catalan. It is true that, as people say, Ibizan is not a language, but a dialect of Catalan, but as an islander and as an Ibizan I would have liked to learn Ibizan and not have Catalan imposed on me. So, well, it is my personal opinion, that apart from that, they put us, I mean the political issue, they put us in the Balearic Islands as Catalonia and we are Balearic not Catalonia, so I would have liked that, that in school they taught us Ibizan.

It is a logical outcome, therefore, that a recurrent idea among the informants has been the constant criticism against young people in the Balearic Islands who, when they move to Barcelona to study at university, adapt their dialect to what they consider *Catalan* (*standard*).

Example 6: Accommodation and register changing

P28SE: Jo no perquè és veritat que jo a s'hora de parlar amb algú que era de Catalunya o era de València, jo parlava i feia servir igual s'article salat i feia servir, vamos, com qui, com que estic parlant amb tu, i amb es meus castellanismes i tot. Però sí que és veritat que, per exemple, notava que, o sigui, un des meus amics feia com es canvi de registre a català estàndard. O, per exemple, es meu al·lot també quan parla amb gent que és d'allí, me n'he donat compte que també ho fa. A jo no me no me surt, me costa [?]	P28SE: Personally, I wouldn't change anything when speaking with someone from Catalonia or Valencia. I use the same *article salat** and use, like, just like I do when speaking with you, and using my Spanish borrowings and everything. But it is true that, for example, I noticed that one of my friends changes to standard Catalan. Or for example, my boyfriend also does it when he speaks with people from there, I have noticed that too. It doesn't come naturally to me, it's difficult [?]
Entrevistadora: D'acord i això, és a dir, què penses d'això, de quan la gent canvia de registre?	Interviewer: Okay, and what do you think about that, when people change their register?
P28SE: Jo, malament, de fet, me fa molta ràbia.	P28SE: Personally, it really annoys me.
Entrevistadora: Per què et fa ràbia?	Interviewer: Why does it annoy you?
P28SE: Perquè t'entendran igual al final no tens perquè adaptar [?], vull dir si hi ha algú que no ens entenen o lo que sigui, pues pots parlar més a poc a poc, perquè és veritat que moltes voltes que a lo millor amb es tema de s'article salat parlam molt de pressa. Però al final t'entendran igual i jo no vull canviar sa meva manera de parlar i que he parlat sempre [...]	P28SE: Because they will understand you anyway, you don't have to adapt. If there is someone who doesn't understand us or something, then you can speak more slowly, because it is true that sometimes with the *article salat* we speak very quickly. But in the end, they will understand you and I don't want to change my way of speaking, which is the way I have always spoken […]

* There are three different types of articles in Catalan. One is used only with personal names (*en, na*). The other two are derived from Latin, one from ***illu illa*** (***el, la***), known a*s article* literari, and the other one from ***ipsu ipsa*** (***es***, ***sa***), the so-called article salat. The main difference is that the former is the general solution in the most geographical areas, while the second is widely used in the Balearic Islands and less frequently used in some other areas of the linguistic domain.

Behind this behavior, however, there is a prejudice that goes beyond the defense of their own variety and that consists of contrasting what they consider "the traditional way of speaking" with correctness and standard language, as a model of neutral or formal language, as we can see in

example 7. The problem with this attitude is that it endangers the integrity of the linguistic system, as explained by Dols–Salas (2020: 10), because Catalan is perceived as a deficient language, constituted only by an (informal) register and a variety (the speaker's own one).

Example 7: Rejecting standard and correction

I24PAL: Clar, això és lo que a jo me fa ràbia, per això, en s'estàndard, no hi crec. Jo xerraré com xerr, si no t'agrada i no m'entens, te'n vas a Cuenca.	I24PAL: Of course, that's what makes me angry, that's why I don't believe in the standard. I will speak as I speak, if you don't like it and don't understand me, you can go to Cuenca [Spanish town].
R26PAL: Pero es una cosa que lo había dicho que podrías tener el estándar mallorquín, que al final es el estándar...	R26PAL: But it's something that had been said that you could have the Majorcan standard, which in the end is the standard...
I24PAL: Sí, sí, si también podría existir, pero es que al final también me parecería... És que no hi crec...	I24PAL: Yes, yes, it could also exist, but in the end, it would seem to me... I just don't believe in it...
Entrevistadora: Per tant, els d'IB3 no parlaven en estàndard mallorquí?	Interviewer: So, did the people from IB3 not speak in Majorcan standard?
B25PAL: És que aquí està un altre tema, aquesta penya, a part de no salar, aquesta gent és IB3...	B25PAL: Well, that's another issue here, this people, apart from not using the *article salat,* this people are IB3...
I24PAL: Estan catalanitzats.	I24PAL: They are Catalanized.

All this is due, in part, to the fact that there is a widespread ignorance of what standard language is, which generates a whole standard ideologies series (Milroy 2001). This produces the false idea that only one form can be admissible, even when there are several normative and standard forms. In fact, it is curious that, alongside this defense of "traditional speaking", which is often represented by the claim of the *article salat* (*es*, *sa*), verbal forms are often used that are not genuine for Majorca, for example, as occurs with the 1st / 3rd person singular subjunctive *garantesqui* (for *garanteixi*) or the 1st person singular *acab* (for *acabo*), among others.

In short, among young people in the Balearic Islands a restrictive attitude towards the Catalan language is observed, which makes them conceive the latter as the language only of a specific in-group (i.e., speakers

of Catalan), unlike Spanish which is understood as everyone's language. Because of this attitude the language is perceived as a kind of symbol reduced to the traditional way of expressing oneself – the so-called *traditional speaking* – linked to informal contexts and, therefore, denying other registers and uses, among which the standard language model.

Educational proposals: dealing with linguistic ideologies in the classroom

Bearing in mind youngsters' ideologies towards Catalan and other languages in the Balearic Island, this section presents six didactic activities that can be used in the classroom to help students develop their sociolinguistic competence and/or lower the affective filter. These suggestions can be adapted according to the age, level and main interests of each group.

Prejudices

Firstly, as it was pointed out above, a common finding among students' discourses are language prejudices, especially associated to Catalan. This includes ideas of what Catalan speakers look like or the fact that Spanish is understood by everyone and is useful for everything, while using Catalan can be limiting. To work on this, students can be presented with a number of situations, and explain how they would react and why. This would provide opportunities for students to reflect on behaviors that are often automatic and reflect on why they act like they do in these contexts. Students can then share their answers with their classmates to detect common reactions and justifications. The teacher can suggest alternatives or challenge some of the students' justifications. In Table 1 some scenarios are suggested for students to reflect on individually, followed by alternatives for the joint discussion.

Table 1. Scenarios and reflection points related to language prejudices

Possible situations	Reflection points and alternatives
1. You meet a person your own age for the first time in the library (we could show pictures of people with different physical characteristics). You need something (a book, a piece of paper, a pen, etc.) and you want to ask them for one. Which language would you use to talk to them?	Very often, we address people we don't know using Spanish, because we think it's more likely they will understand us. The language in which we start relationships is very important because changing it later on can be a challenge.
2. You are with a group of friends. Usually, you speak Catalan when you are together. Today, a friend of yours who usually speaks Spanish joins you. Which language would you use in this context?	Catalan speakers tend to switch to Spanish when we are in a group and there is one person who speaks Spanish. However, it is likely that this person understands the Catalan language. Each person can speak the language they are more comfortable with, as long as everyone understands each other.
3. A new classmate from Morocco has just started school and you want to welcome them. What would you tell them?	It is not fair to assume that someone who was born outside the Balearic Islands will not speak or understand Catalan. Besides, not using the Catalan language with them is depriving them of the opportunity to practice it, if they are learning it, and can make them excluded from the host society.
4. You go to a restaurant in Palma and you want to order lunch. What would you say? Would you act the same way if the restaurant was in Lloseta?	There is a common understanding that in Palma people tend to talk to strangers in Spanish, but Catalan is reserved for other parts of the island. However, data prove that Catalan is understood by most part of the population, and therefore assuming that people in Palma will not understand Catalan is a common mistake.

5. You have just bought a plant but don't know how to take care of it. You want to search for instructions on the Internet. Write some questions that you would ask. Which language did you use to write those inquiries?	It is true that Spanish is present in more websites than Catalan, but Catalan is between the 10th and 20th language with more websites and information, and Google, Youtube, ChatGPT or Wikipedia, for instance, have their Catalan version. You should be able to do your searches in Catalan if that is the language in which you feel more comfortable.

Linguistic biographies

The use of linguistic biographies in the classroom can help students think about linguistic repertoires, and the value associated with different language varieties. It is a highly flexible activity, highly to meet different learning goals. Educators can ask students to prepare their linguistic autobiography, which can be different according to the learner's age. With younger students, linguistic portraits can be used, which basically consist of painting and writing the languages that they know on a person's silhouette (see Figure 1), and it has been used in other contexts where Catalan is spoken (Llompart 2016). Once this has been done, students can try to justify the reasons for their choices in their portrait: why did they draw the languages in the different body parts? Where is the Catalan language and why? If Catalan does not appear, why is it so?
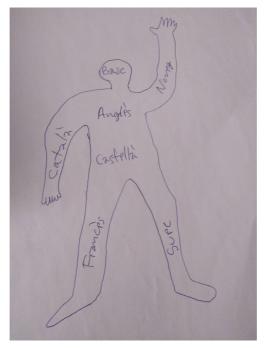
Figure 1. Sample of a linguistic portrait. Source: Authors

Older students could write their linguistic autobiography. In order to do so, students could begin by reading some examples and talk about them in the classroom. Then, in pairs or groups of three, students can discuss the following guiding questions:

1. Which languages and varieties can you speak?
2. How did you learn them and when?
3. Which emotions do you feel when using these languages?
4. In which contexts do you use or do not use them? How do you feel about this?
5. Where does Catalan fit in your life? How do you feel about this?

During this part of the activity, they should also take some notes that will help them write their final text. Being able to discuss these topics while interacting with other classmates will enable students to further reflect on the questions and their answers, as well as increasing their consciousness on the diversity of linguistic situations that exist in their surroundings.

Next, students should write their own text, either as a final written product or as a script for a podcast, for example.

Standard

To work on ideologies towards the standard variety and the disconnection some students display towards it, we could focus on two goals: making students aware of some differences between standard and colloquial Catalan, but also, comparing these variations to other global languages.

To start with, we could provide students with a survey where they could reply to questions such as what they consider that the concept *standard* means, and present them with some words (both functional and lexical) that might vary according to registers. Then, students could see, graphically, the results of the survey and discuss their choices. This could be followed by an in-class discussion based on the previous visualization and a reading of different texts and videos where different degrees of formality appear. Students should write down all the differences that they observe regarding the elements that somehow condition register (topic, degree of formality, channel, and intentionality), and also particularities of certain linguistic forms. This activity could take place in other languages that students know (at least Spanish and English which are compulsory in the education system), so as to draw patterns on the changes that might appear according to functional varieties. Drawing these patterns could make students more aware of the concept of *standard language* itself and, at the same time, they would be able to become aware that the standard model does not imply abandoning their own geolectal variety, but only modify the register according to the required degree of formality.

Linguistic landscapes

Linguistic landscapes are the ads, posters, signs, graffiti, etc., that can be found in the streets. Paying attention to these gives us information about how many languages are used, the rules that guide language use, how languages are mixed, the hierarchies among languages, etc. For this activity, we suggest asking students to focus on businesses, such as restaurants or shops, that are oriented to the public. The activity would be divided in different phases (1) a fieldwork in a particular neighborhood or street;

(2) a questionnaire promoting reflection on how linguistic landscapes reflect multilingualism and how Catalan is represented in them.

The focus of this activity (based on Martín Rojo et al. 2023) can be a commercial street or a neighborhood in order for students to have enough businesses to collect different sets of data. The project can be done to target some specific places (for instance, to compare areas with more tourism with those with less tourism, or bigger /vs/ smaller towns, etc.). Students can work in groups and each group could work with around 12–15 pictures, which can be provided or collected by the students themselves (business signs, posters advertising offers, menus at restaurants, etc.). Each group member should fill in the following information for 2–3 pictures, as seen in Table 2:

Table 2. Example of a complete worksheet

Source: Mos de cuina (Google Images)

Monolingual or multilingual	Multilingual
Main and secondary language(s)	Spanish (main), Catalan (secondary)
Where is the message from?	A food shop that sells empanadas

Format: ad, sign, painting…?	Sign
Message goal: informative, commercial, touristic?	The goal of the messages is informative and commercial. Spanish is used for all the messages except for the name of the business (Mos de cuina), that is in Catalan

After filling in the templates, each group could answer some reflection questions, such as: How many examples only use one or more languages? Which languages are used the most? Are different languages represented in the same size and color or is one language more visible? We suggest including specific questions about Catalan so that students can reflect about the presence of the minority language in linguistic landscapes, how often it is used, and in which cases it is more, or less, represented (in shop signs, more informal messages, menus, etc.). Once small groups have discussed this, they can share their findings with the rest of the class, to see whether the results are similar for each group or not, and teachers can ask them follow-up questions.

Multilingual stories or songs

Taking into account the growing presence of languages other than Catalan and Spanish in the Balearic Islands, it is likely that in our classrooms there are students who speak other languages. We must take into consideration that incorporating students' native language and cultural heritage into the classroom can increase motivation and create a sense of belonging, further lowering the affective filter mentioned in section 2.2. By lowering the affective filter, students are more open to input, allowing for more effective language acquisition.

A way to promote multilingualism is using stories or songs in classrooms in different languages. The elements from the tales around the world could be compared in order to see whether topics or characters, for instance, are recurrent in different tales. Also, thematic festivals could include songs and tales focusing on one topic (tolerance, love, friends, certain traditions, etc.) and should be told (or sung, in the case of songs) by students who speak other languages (or their family members).

Designing awareness campaigns

As a follow up of any of the previous activities, students could design an awareness-raising campaign focusing on one important element elicited in the discussions and conclusions. First, the focus of the campaign should be decided: stereotypes we have about how people who speak Catalan look like, always using Spanish with people we do not know, common misconceptions about the standard language, lack of representation of Catalan in linguistic landscapes, the multilingualism present in a class that is sometimes not visible, etc. We recommend that students take part in the decision making, since this should make them feel part of the activity, and can lower the affective filter.

Next, a decision on a timeline for the campaign and its potential addressees (students, all school members, families, neighborhood, etc.) should be taken; this is important because it will help with the next steps of the process. Students must choose an image and a message for the campaign, and also determine how the message and image will reach their intended audience: whether they want to use posters, create an exhibition in the school, use school media (social media or magazine, for instance), speak on a local radio, etc. Once this is agreed on, students can work in smaller groups to reach these goals: making posters, talking to people, writing texts, or undertaking similar activities. It is important that the teacher ensures coordination between subgroups to guarantee everyone is working in the same direction. An example of a similar activity addressed to adult learners of Catalan can be found in Monferrer–Palmer (2021).

Conclusions

This article has illustrated the complexities of the sociolinguistic situation among young people in the Balearic Islands. Bearing in mind the relevance of linguistic ideologies in shaping our ideas of the world, it is crucial to consider these in the education system. Accompanying students in their reflection of their own ideologies towards languages, and Catalan specifically, is crucial for their improving their sociolinguistic competence. Our analysis indicates that the use of the Catalan language is confined to Catalan-speakers and that youngsters do not identify with the standard model of Catalan. In a multilingual context such as the one of the Balearic Islands, it is especially relevant to develop sociolinguistic competence in schools.

However, preparing meaningful educational activities for students requires a profound understanding of the factors influencing their learning and language acquisition.

Throughout the paper we have shown the conceptions that young people in the Balearic Islands hold regarding both the relationship between language and identity and the beliefs surrounding the standard language model and linguistic correctness. In that sense, it has been shown that the ideologies of authenticity and anonymity are still relevant in the case of the Balearic Islands, as Woolard (2016) proposed for Catalonia. Catalan is thus perceived as an authentic language, while Spanish is the anonymous one, i.e., the language for everyone (Solivellas et al. 2023). The present work has also examined the prejudices which arise about who speaks Catalan (which is often reserved for people who are not perceived as foreigners), about language diversity, and about what standard language is — many young speakers consider it to be equivalent to a variety of Catalan that is external to the Balearic Islands (namely Central Catalan) and therefore something that they do not identify with.

With these ideologies, prejudices and misconceptions in mind, the paper proposes activities that aim to strengthen communicative and sociolinguistic competence but also seek to foster a deeper and more meaningful learning experience. These activities are evidence-based so as to address this competence in a significant way, integrating linguistic reality and considering the affective filter to create safe learning environments and minimize anxiety associated with learning or using a non-dominant language socially.

This research has focused on linguistic ideologies and attitudes, considering the importance of Krashen's affective filter in language learning, we suggest activities that aim at lowering the affective filter. The study has examined the linguistic ideologies of secondary school students, particularly their influence on the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence, and it has shown how there exists a complex interplay of ideologies. Understanding how students navigate and internalize these ideologies is crucial for effective sociolinguistic education.

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Abstract

Language ideologies can influence language choices and help us better understand the current sociolinguistic situation in the Balearic Islands, where youngsters have a high knowledge of Catalan that does not translate into its use. Specifically, this paper offers an analysis of prevalent language ideologies among speakers aged 15 to 29 through qualitative data obtained from individual interviews and focus groups as part of AULIJOVIB project. The findings highlight how language ideologies influence language choices and identity construction. Based on the analysis, the study also proposes pedagogical strategies for addressing language ideologies and linguistic prejudices in the classroom, considering the complex interplay between affective factors, language ideologies, and language learning, and offering insights and practical implications for language educators in multicultural contexts.

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