

LANGUAGE AND TEACHING IN CATALONIA (1714-1931): A CRITICAL REVIEW OF AN IGNORED HISTORICAL DEMAND*

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Abstract

The article shines critical light on the legal regulation of language use in Catalonia's classrooms during the period between 1714 and 1931. Our analysis of regulatory provisions, from the New Regime Decree (Decret de nova planta) to the rise of the Second Republic, is enriched by a political review that considers the sociopolitical context of the time and the arguments put forward during parliamentary debates, which ultimately contributed to a number of political initiatives of influence in this domain. By examining regulatory history and past political debates, we can verify that the presence, teaching and use of Catalan in the classrooms of the Principality of Catalonia were no less than a milestone reached after centuries of regulatory imposition of Spanish as the sole language of instruction and learning. Given such a past, the political demand for full normalisation of Catalan in teaching would go on to become a recurring element in a number of political initiatives put forth in recent centuries. In fact, this demand has underlain every debate held to attain recognition and autonomy for Catalonia. As it would seem, it would become a central element of linguistic policies devised, in one way or another, to influence the regulation of language use in the Principality.

Key words: Catalonia; linguistic rights; language; teaching.

LLENGUA I ENSENYAMENT A CATALUNYA (1714-1931): REVISIÓ CRÍTICA D'UNA REIVINDICACIÓ HISTÒRICA DESATESA**Resum**

L'article revisa críticament la regulació jurídica dels usos lingüístics en l'ensenyament a Catalunya en el període històric comprès entre 1714 i 1931. L'anàlisi de les disposicions normatives, des del Decret de Nova Planta fins a l'adveniment de la II República, es completa amb una revisió més politològica, centrada a prendre en consideració el context sociopolític del moment i el sentit dels arguments esgrimits en els debats parlamentaris que varen propiciar diverses iniciatives polítiques d'incidència en la matèria. Resseguint aquests antecedents normatius i debats polítics, es constata que la presència, l'ensenyament i l'ús de la llengua catalana a les aules de les escoles del Principat constitueix una fita assolida després de segles d'imposició normativa de la llengua castellana com a única llengua docent i d'aprenentatge. En aquest escenari, la reivindicació política d'una plena normalització de la llengua catalana a l'ensenyament esdevindrà una reclamació recurrent a diverses iniciatives polítiques defensades els darrers segles. Constitueix, de fet, una reivindicació latent sempre que s'han debatut projectes de reivindicació d'un marc de reconeixement i autonomia per a Catalunya, bo i esdevenint, semblantment, un element central en les diferents mesures de política lingüística que, en un sentit o altre, han estat concebudes amb l'objectiu d'intervenir en la regulació dels usos lingüístics al Principat.

Paraules clau: Catalunya; dret lingüístic; llengua; ensenyament.

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Summary

1 Chronicle of a historical demand: Catalan language in the classroom

2 The cultural Renaissance and political Catalanism: proposals for regulatory change

3 Strengthening Catalan in education under the auspices of the Mancomunitat of Catalonia

Bibliographic references

1 Chronicle of a historical demand: Catalan language in the classroom

Seen from the hindsight of history, the presence, teaching and use of Catalan in the schools of the Principality of Catalonia are a milestone reached after centuries of regulatory imposition of Spanish as the sole language of instruction and learning. Authors such as Francesc Ferrer i Gironès¹ and Alexandre Galí² commented on this background, noting that, from the time of the New Regime Decree (in Catalan, *Decret de nova planta*) to well into the 20th century, the imposition of Spanish as the sole official language in schools responded to the belief that the political unity of the State could be achieved by restricting linguistic diversity.³ This is a thesis that has been widely followed by other multilingual states close to Catalonia where, historically, the imposed use of the dominant languages in schools was also considered to be a necessary strategy for consolidating the unitary nation state.⁴ In Spain, this objective was implemented through the enactment of an extremely wide number of regulatory provisions conceived primarily with the objective of ignoring, restricting or directly prohibiting the presence, teaching and use of languages other than Spanish within the education system.

In the case of Catalonia, these circumstances explain why political demands for full normalisation of Catalan in teaching would go on to become a recurring element in a number of political initiatives put forth in recent centuries. In fact, this demand has underlain every debate held to attain recognition and autonomy for Catalonia and, from the New Regime Decree to the present day, seems to have become a central element of linguistic policies devised, in one way or another, to influence the regulation of language use in the Principality.⁵

These historical circumstances are set out in the preamble to Law 7/1983 of 18 April on linguistic normalisation in Catalonia. This preamble notes that the New Regime Decree of 16 January 1716 ushered in a new historical period for the Principality, marked by the prohibition of Catalan in public affairs and the imposition of Spanish as the sole official language. This policy of linguistic normalisation was conceived as a means of streamlining the operation of State apparatus and strengthening national unity. Even though only one mention was made of linguistic matters in Article 4, limited to specifying that “proceedings before the Spanish royal appellate court shall be conducted in Spanish”, at the same time, and by means of motions passed through the *corregidores*, administrative and judicial officials appointed by the king, it was decided to make “every effort to introduce the Spanish language (using) the most moderate and unnoticeable measures, to achieve the effect without drawing attention to the efforts”. This linguistic policy finally produced a progressive expansion of the Spanish language in different public spheres of the Principality where hitherto Catalan had been used and protected, including, and particularly, in the area of teaching.⁶ All in all, this must be evaluated while taking into consideration that it was at that time, over the course of the 18th century and into the 19th century, when most European states saw the birth of schools as social institutions. The mechanisms and content of teaching began to be regulated, with attention also paid to the language that was taught and used to impart knowledge. In this context, the language of schools was usually the national language traditionally used by the powers of State. Focusing on the case of Spain, Spanish became the only formal language for teaching and learning in Catalonia, a situation which, certain short historical periods aside, continued until the end of the 20th century.

1 See Ferrer Gironès (1986).

2 See Galí (1979: 97-132).

3 An especially illustrative example is the intervention of Ramon Llätzer de Dou i de Bassols, first president of the Cortes of Cádiz, the Spanish legislative body, when he proclaimed that “in any state, it must be ensured that there be a dominant language in the country for education, the issuance of orders and for all matters pertaining to public law, as having such a dominant language brings many benefits to any nation. The first is that it greatly favours domestic trade [...]. The second is that the use throughout the kingdom of a single language nurtures in the souls of all a certain manner of fondness and love that cannot easily be found among those who speak different languages, a fact which is corroborated by those who see themselves as if they were in some way from a different kingdom, despite forming part of one and the same. The third is that it allows the knowledge of advances attained in a specific place to be communicated to others, producing some of the advantages that have been noted of the Latin language”. Translation of text from Boix-Fuster (2004: 197).

4 As regards the role of language in forming projects to achieve unitary nation states, see Linz (2008: 76).

5 Ortega (2016).

6 It is worth noting that academic opinion shows that the use of Catalan as a language of culture fell into a period of certain decline as of the 16th and 17th centuries. See Galí (1979: 103) and Sobrequés (1978: 85-91).

In any case, the previously mentioned New Regime Decree, the regulatory source of this policy of linguistic homogenisation, was a law that was subject to long debate by the Council of Castile. The content of the debates held around the execution of the Decree, set out in the reports and documents of the Council, reveal the express wish to push the Catalan language out of education. Among other initiatives, these debates included a proposal to decree that “in all of the Elementary Schools, and Grammar Schools, books published in the Catalan language be prohibited: Catalan should not be written or spoken inside of Schools; and, most importantly, Christian Doctrine should be taught in our language; and by means of these and other gentle measures, it shall become common in the Principality”.⁷ Even though this linguistic policy was eventually implemented, it met with certain resistance, as can be seen in works such as that of the priest from the Empordà area, Baldiri Reixac, entitled *Instruccions per a l'ensenyança dels minyons* (instructions for the teaching of children). Written in Catalan and published for the first time in 1749, it is a manual addressed to rural school masters, conceived primarily with the objective of giving them tools for improving the teaching of children. It explicitly recommends that early education should be taught in the child's mother tongue, even though it cautions that “of all the languages, that in which children must excel, the most is the language of their Nation”.⁸

In any case, in terms of the regulatory sphere, this imposition of Spanish in schools was consolidated some years later with the Royal Order of Aranjuez of 23 June 1768, enacted under the reign of Charles III of Spain. It is especially relevant as academic opinion considers it to be the first positive law to specifically prohibit the teaching of Catalan in elementary schools. Among other provisions with a bearing on linguistic matters, this decree ordered that “Elementary Education, Latin and Rhetoric be generally taught in Spanish, wherever this is as yet not practised, with the respective Courts and Tribunals ensuring compliance, with my Council also entrusting the Diocesans, Universities and Regular Superiors to ensure precise observance and diligence in extending the general language of the Nation for its greater harmony and reciprocal connection”.⁹ It should be mentioned that this regulatory provision prohibited the use of Catalan not only in the field of education but also in other areas such as the courts (high, lower and privileged courts) and the episcopal curiae.¹⁰

In this way, the regulatory foundations were laid for a linguistic policy that, over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, eventually consolidated Spanish as the language of education. It was implemented through the enactment of a number of regulatory provisions that consolidated the expulsion of the Catalan language from classrooms.¹¹ This objective was strengthened through the adoption of initiatives such as prohibiting books from being published in Catalan,¹² a policy that was bolstered during the reign of Ferdinand VII. By a decree of 16 February 1825, it was agreed to enact the “Plan and Regulation for Elementary Schools”, the first article of which establishes that the regulation of elementary education should be uniform across all schools throughout the peninsula, while articles 14 and 15 stipulate that grammar and orthography must

7 For further information on the execution, content and scope of the Decree, see Ferrer Gironès (1986: 9-33).

8 Reixach (1749).

9 In certain spheres, this measure was implemented immediately. A good example of this is the circular issued by the Provincial Superior of Catalonia to all the schools governed by the Piarists, notifying that “a Royal Order of 1768 orders, in chapter 7 thereof, that elementary education, Latin and rhetoric must henceforth be taught in the Spanish language [...]. In compliance therewith, from 15 September 1768, our schools shall teach the abc in the Spanish language”. See Ferrer Gironès (1986: 48).

10 Documents issued by the Council of Castile regarding the basis and objectives of this decree state that “for this reason it should also be recommended to the Diocesan Ordinaries that in their Curiae matters be dealt with precisely in the Spanish language, ceasing to use Latin or Catalan, for the purpose of bringing as far as possible the legal practice of the Ecclesiastic Courts into accordance with the Secular Courts”. It continues that “for this purpose it shall also be necessary that the teaching of Elementary Education, Latin and Rhetoric be conducted in the Spanish Language, for to the contrary it may not become generalised, as is advisable for the greater union of all the Provinces of the Monarchy, which is an essential point on which all Governments should work, so that all provincial spirit may be replaced by the laudable spirit of Homeland or Nation”. Documentary sources cited in Ferrer Gironès (1986: 40), work cited in previous footnote.

11 See, for instance, Royal Decree of 26 November 1838 which approved the “Regulation for the Elementary State Schools of the Realm”, published in the *Colección de Decretos referentes a Instrucción Pública* (collection of decrees regarding state schools) (1891).

12 See Royal Order of 23 June 1718 in virtue of which the University of Cervera is granted “the Perpetual and Exclusive Privilege of a Printing House for the Printing of all the Books and Papers that favour the common education”, which academic legal opinion considers to be an instrument for exercising political control over the publishing of books used for teaching. It should be mentioned that in rulings dated 21 February 1721 and 28 July 1730, the Council of Castile gave the University of Cervera the exclusive right to publish a limited list of books in Catalan.

be taught in Spanish.¹³ Similarly, the reign of Isabella II saw the enactment of the Royal Decree of 15 May 1849, under the title of “Regulation for the State Schools of the Realm” which, like other regulations that preceded it, also took into consideration teaching in Spanish and Catalan. More specifically, article 7 of this decree explicitly ordered the teaching of “orthography, in accordance with the rules of the Spanish Academy” and “the rudiments of Spanish Grammar”.

As is noted in the preamble to Law 7/1983 of 18 April on linguistic normalisation in Catalonia, the introduction of compulsory education in the mid-19th century “led to Catalan being expelled from schools in Catalonia, where until 1978, except for a few short periods, it was mandatory to teach only Spanish and in Spanish”. In this process, the approval on 7 September 1857 of the Public Teaching Act, known as the Moyano Act, played a decisive role.¹⁴ Inspired by Enlightenment thought, this legal provision was the first to regulate study plans and establish the compulsory nature of primary education, while laying the foundations for a modern educational system in Spain. As regards the purposes that concern us here, its article 88 regulates linguistic provisions by establishing that “the Grammar and Orthography of the Spanish Academy shall be the exclusive and compulsory text for these subjects in State education”.

2 The cultural Renaissance and political Catalanism: proposals for regulatory change

It was towards the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century, within the context of the cultural Renaissance and particularly in the discourse of the political Catalanism movement, when a number of initiatives were undertaken with the aim of changing the Principality’s linguistic regulations, including in the field of education. Figures such as Francesc Flos i Calcat, Valentí Almirall, Antoni Rovira i Virgili and Enric Prat de la Riba rose up to become notable spokesmen for the historical demand to learn and use the Catalan language in schools.¹⁵ An example is the proclamation of the distinguished Rovira i Virgili published in 1913 in his article titled “Republicans of Africa”, where he specifically asserted that “we want Catalan to be the language used for teaching all subjects in Catalonia”.¹⁶ The growing awareness around this issue and the spirit of the demands that arose from the Principality’s political and social debate are revealing. For his part, Valentí Almirall had begun decrying the situation of Catalan in State education decades previously. A particularly illustrative example is the article published in the magazine *Avenç* in 1882 under the title of “An Important Question”, which spoke of the “anomalous situation that is highly detrimental to the country’s cultural advancement”, consisting of the fact that in schools “we are not taught to read in Catalan”. In these critical reflections, Almirall defends the need to introduce Catalan “into schools, systematising and expanding it”.¹⁷

It should be noted that this demand was already present in a number of particularly significant initiatives carried out toward the end of the 19th century within the context of broader demands for statutory provisions to place Catalan as an official language. A good example of this is the well-known *Missatge a la reina*

13 For further information, see De la Nieva (1826: 53).

14 *Gaceta de Madrid* of 10 September 1857. Similarly, article 2, which defines the basis of elementary primary education, only establishes the obligation to teach Spanish grammar. See *Colección legislativa de España* (1857).

15 As concerns Valentí Almirall’s stance regarding language, a particularly illustrative source is the prologue to the Spanish edition of his work *Lo Catalanisme* (Catalanism), published in 1902, where he notes that “as regards the spoken and written use of our Catalan language, we have always held the same opinion and point of view. In the name of dignity, of justice, we demand within our region and before the powers or authorities that represent and govern it, that Catalan and the general language of Spain be co-official or have equal rights, without opposition between them, and that an identical policy is adopted in those other regions of Spain that have a particular language”. See Almirall (2011: 629). It is worth noting that underlying these demands there was always a consideration of the political dimension of language in forging collective identities and its key role in defining the concept of nationality. For more detailed information, see for example the talk by Enric Prat de la Riba published in the periodical *La Renaixença*, issue 1714 of 11 February 1897, p. 852-858; of 12 February, p. 872-876 and 13 February, p. 896-898. Similarly, by the same author, “La llengua dins el concepte de nacionalitat” (language within the concept of nationality) in Prat de la Riba (1974: 26-40) and Prat de la Riba (1978: 134-143).

16 And all because, in the words of Rovira i Virgili published in the periodical *El Poble Català* on 30 January 1910, “the imposition of an official language and the pushing aside of a country’s distinctive language are tools of absolute unitarianism, for which there is no mitigating circumstance when they are applied to peoples with their own personality and full awareness of this personality, as is the case of Catalonia” (see Rovira i Virgili, 1910). For further information on how the linguistic question is dealt with in his work, see Ginebra (2006). Also see Rovira i Virgili (1982: 97). It is worth remembering that for Rovira i Virgili “the content of autonomy includes the freedom and official status of the Catalan language in our land”. See Rovira i Virgili (24 March 1911).

17 For a more detailed explanation of the content of the article, see Galí (1979: 109-110).

regent (message to the Queen Regnant) of 1888, which sets out a long list of linguistic criticisms, including particularly the complaint that in Madrid “the selection is performed of the men who [...] are those destined to teach in our classrooms, even though they often neither understand the language nor know anything of those with whom they must deal, and some of whom are ignorant of our venerable laws, or being aware of them find them odious”, stressing the demand “that the Catalan language be the official language of Catalonia for all manifestations of the affairs of this people: That education in Catalonia be imparted in the Catalan language [...]. That the officials of the Catalan nation be appointed by the Catalans themselves, ensuring that political, judicial, administrative and teaching positions are held by Catalans”.¹⁸ Some years prior to this, in 1885, these positions had already been defended in the well-known *Memorial de greuges* (report of complaints), considered to be an early, eloquent expression of modern political Catalanism.¹⁹ As regards schools, the *Memorial* decries the fact that “at the commencement of the constitutional period [...] the regional languages subsisted in public contracts, in many official and government documents, in the church and even in education, and without there ever having been passed a general law that prohibits their use, they have been expelled from all areas by means of complementary provisions, included as it were surreptitiously in laws and regulations pertaining to particular matters”.²⁰

At the same time, in strict relation to teaching, several monographs were published that dealt with the matter in depth from different viewpoints. Many of these works were both written by and addressed to teachers and included reflections that denounced the linguistic problem existing in Catalan schools while proposing solutions. Good examples are works such as those of Odó Fonoll, director of the Escola Normal de Barcelona, titled *Método práctico para la enseñanza de la lengua en Cataluña* (practical method for teaching the Catalan language) published around the year 1836; the work of Ramon Torelló *Método racional para aprender sin gran esfuerzo el idioma castellano en las escuelas de Cataluña* (rational method for learning the Spanish language without great effort in the schools of Catalonia), published in 1870; and that of Marià Brossa i Arnó (1882), titled *Guía del Instructor catalán o método práctico de gramática castellana para el uso de las escuelas de Cataluña* (Catalan teacher’s guide or practical method of Spanish grammar for use in the schools of Catalonia). These works defended the principle of using Catalan for learning Spanish, opening the way to the bilingual system defended years later by authors such as Salvador Genís, the author of works that were widely read among teachers in the Principality, such as *El auxiliar del maestro catalán* (guide for Catalan teachers) or *Lectura bilingüe* (bilingual reading). Amongst all of these academic works, those of the author Agustí Rius i Borrell are particularly noteworthy, including his *Tratado de educación escolar* (treatise on school education) published in 1888. Amongst other considerations, the author dedicated a chapter to “The non-official language in the non-Castilian provinces”, in which he decries the absurdity of teaching children in a language with which they are unfamiliar, while defending the logic of teaching Catalan and using this language in the classroom.²¹

A few years later saw the proposal of what is considered to be the first parliamentary motion within the context of the Bourbon Restoration aimed at initiating an incipient normalisation of the so-called “regional dialects” within school education. This motion was forwarded on 14 August 1896 in the Congress of Deputies by the member of parliament for Valencia, Manuel Polo y Peyrolón. It requested authorisation of the use of these languages in schools and, furthermore, the regulatory obligation for teachers working in regions with a language other than Spanish to speak the local language for the purpose of communicating with their students.²² The content of the parliamentary debates that led to this motion revealed, once again,

18 See González Casanova (1974: 519-535).

19 See Arbós (2001).

20 The full text of *Memorial* can be found in González Casanova (1974: 498). For further information on the content and scope of the document, see Nadal, De Riquer, Olivé et al. (1986).

21 To quote from the work, “in light of which I shall say, to summarise, that nobody should be spoken to in a language that they do not know, and if in the world of teaching it is considered absurd to address children in the language of men, it is even more absurd to use a language they have never heard; for which reason a girl should be taught in her mother tongue, which does not exclude her being taught another, quite the contrary, as the comparative study of the two languages is another powerful teaching resource”. Taking it into consideration, Agustí Rius i Borrell defended the position that “in the schools of the non-Castilian provinces, the autochthonous language should be used, with all that was mentioned on Reading and Grammar in the previous chapter and in the present being applied to said language, and with one lesson per day dedicated to the Spanish language”. For further discussion of the work and ideas of Agustí Rius i Borrell, see Galí (1979: 118-120).

22 To quote from the motion: “As such, I believe that the most effective path would be to allow boys and girls to be taught in the

the irreconcilable stances taken with regard to linguistic diversity. For some, that teachers should have knowledge of the language was a necessary condition for their exercising the profession, and an improvement in pedagogical terms. Others saw the motion as an unacceptable concession to exacerbated regionalism and a risk to the unity of the nation, a recurring political argument.²³ Even though it was not passed, it shows that the issue of language in the area of education was beginning to generate interesting debates in the parliamentary chambers and a growing awareness of the need to embark on processes for regulatory reform.

In any case, when these linguistic complaints were made, Catalan had been pushed aside from the public sphere, especially from the field of education. It was in this historical period, within a context of great instability, that different political agreements and projects with varying contents and scopes advocated for the acknowledgement and protection of the country's linguistic richness and, by extension, acknowledgement and regulatory protection of the Catalan language, as a bulwark of the Principality's identity and the most eloquent expression of its unique character.²⁴ Clothed in different terminologies, many of these motions and speeches, most of which in the context of the political Catalanism movement, placed a special focus on the question of language, including in the area of education.²⁵ Although most of these were of little practical importance, others crystallised into commendable initiatives that marked a certain turning point. One particularly significant initiative was the creation of the Association for the Protection of Catalan Teaching, which under the leadership of the teacher and pedagogue Francesc Flos i Calcat promoted education in Catalan, the publishing of textbooks and the opening of schools. This association is of interest due to the fact that, from the moment it was created until the year 1939, it made a decisive contribution to promoting Catalan culture.²⁶ In fact, it was the first Catalan educational organisation founded with the aim of promoting

regional language and require of teachers the condition *sine qua non* that they have knowledge of the regional dialect, for which purpose I believe a Royal Order from the Ministry of Public Works and Education would be sufficient. This measure would bring beneficial results; but more could still be achieved, by establishing in the Normal Schools of these regions the teaching of Valencian in Valencia, of Catalan in Barcelona, of Basque in San Sebastián, Bilbao, Vitoria and Pamplona, etc. In this manner, every school master would know both Spanish and the regional language, using the latter to teach the former and vice versa. He added: "My plea before the Minister of Public Works and Education is simply that he issue a royal order, demanding as an essential requirement for correctly teaching in a school for boys and girls where there is a special dialect, knowledge of the language of the country; that those who do not speak such dialect or language not be accepted for the official competitive examinations for teachers; and that in the respective Normal Schools there be classes not only of Spanish grammar but also of the grammar of the regional dialect". See *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes: Congreso de los Diputados* (minutes of the sessions of the Cortes. Congress of Deputies), issues 78 and 81, 1896, p. 2343 and 2451.

23 For instance, see the contribution of the Minister of Public Works and Education, Aureliano Linares Rivas in the *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes: Congreso de los Diputados*, issue 81, 1896, p. 2458. In the words of the Minister, in response to the request of Polo y Peyrolón: "Your Honour, in all honesty, what you wish is that the current situation in relation to language in some provinces in which there is a regional language be maintained, in such a way that said language might be so absolute and so predominant that it excludes the language of the nation, and as such Your Honour must admit that there are provinces of Spain in which the Spanish language is as unknown as Greek, Russian or German". He adds that "I believe it is a great wrong for the Nation, and that it is a serious danger, to encounter a region or part of the land in which the inhabitants are unable to communicate with the authorities and with the rest of the country". He concludes by warning that "what I cannot consent to as a Minister, and even less as a Spaniard, is that these dialects should be so exclusive that they displace the Spanish language". Regarding the meaning of this political argument, it is especially illustrative to look at the speech by the Minister of the Interior Eduardo Dato before Congress a few years later, which was as follows: "It is clear that not all Spaniards speak the national language; but it is an undeniable fact in regards of which it is necessary to do no more than implement constant propaganda aimed at spreading knowledge of the official language, avoiding the teaching of languages other than Spanish in State Schools, disallowing texts written in any dialects, such as textbooks, and having the authorities adopt the measures that have been adopted for this purpose, and which this Government shall apply, as all the previous Governments of Spain have done". See *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes: Senado*, issue 111, 1900, p. 2046.

24 For example, authors such as Valentí Almirall gave the Catalan language a decisive role in forging what, through different formulas, they defined as the specific character of the Catalan people. To quote from his noteworthy work *Lo Catalanisme* (Catalanism), published in 1886, "the use of our language is the most eloquent expression of our character", adding that "as long as the Catalan language survives, any act of unification carried out in any region shall be a veritable act of tyranny". See Almirall (1978: 89; 1985: 90).

25 A good example can be found in the Principles for the Regional Catalan Constitution, commonly known as the *Bases de Manresa*, approved by the Catalanist Union in 1892. The third of these Principles proposed guaranteeing that "the Catalan language shall officially be the only one that may be used in Catalonia and in the relations of this region with the Central Authorities". This project's interest lies in its desire to use the postulates of political Catalanism regarding language to lay the foundations of a constitution. It should be noted that other proposals, such as the Principles for the Federal Constitution of the Spanish Nation and for the State of Catalonia, of 1868, the Project for a Federal Constitution for the Spanish Republic, of 1873, the Project for a Constitution for the Catalan State, approved by the Regional Federal Congress on 2 May 1883 and, in the same year, the Federal Constitution Project of Pi i Margall, contained no provisions relating to the question of language, even though some of these projects shared a common denominator with the postulates of political Catalanism.

26 It is worth remembering that, for example, authors such as Pompeu Fabra, Rosa Sensat, Alexandre Galí and Vicenç Vives

education in Catalan at all levels, through the creation of Catalan schools, financial support, publication and dissemination of Catalan-language textbooks and, in general, the promotion and dissemination of Catalan and Catalan culture in schools and the dissemination of Catalan language, literature, history, geography and law. And it was Flos i Calcat who, in 1898, founded the first school to teach Catalan language and content, the Col·legi Sant Jordi in Barcelona. He also penned what has been considered by authors such as Alexandre Galí to be Catalanism's first defence of the creation of Catalan schools, in the various works he published in the latter decades of the 19th century.²⁷ Over the years, the Association for the Protection of Catalan Teaching began to consolidate itself with support from the Mancomunitat of Catalonia (the Commonwealth of Catalonia), and from Catalan town and city councils.²⁸

However, it was at the beginning of the 20th century when the presence and teaching of the Catalan language began to spread through the education system and organisations and initiatives were established that played a particularly decisive role in defending and normalising the language within a clearly adverse political and regulatory context. Good examples of this are the creation in 1907 of the Institute of Catalan Studies, an academic institution with linguistic authority, and the publication in 1913 of the *Normes Ortogràfiques* (orthographical rules) by Pompeu Fabra. The following year, Enric Prat de la Riba took over as president of the Mancomunitat of Catalonia, under the auspices of which several initiatives were undertaken to spread the knowledge and use of the country's own language, discussed in more detail below.

In any case, it is worth remembering that many of these developments in the presence and use of the Catalan language gave rise to heated political and parliamentary debates. An encompassing example is the debates generated from the practice of teaching the Catechism in Catalan, which was prohibited by law as it was considered a threat to the unity of the State. It is particularly illustrative to look at the preamble to the Royal Decree of 23 November 1902, which obliged teachers to impart the Catechism in Spanish and which expressly stated that “it would be unwise to believe that if we fail to educate today's generation by teaching them the fundamental principles of religion in Spanish, in the language of Cervantes, in that which we used in the New World to expand our faith and our civilisation, the citizens of tomorrow might be united by fraternity, lovers of the shared Nation, capable of serving it and honouring it”, going on to warn that ignorance of Spanish, the national language, would cause “great harm to the highest interests of the Nation, for which the language is the most treasured bond that unifies all the provinces of the Realm”. Needless to say, this legal provision gave rise to protests in Catalonia, while also generating heated social debates that transcended the parliamentary sphere.²⁹

This scenario and the political dimension of the issue of language must be taken into account when evaluating the historical demands for the presence, use and teaching of Catalan in the schools of the Principality. Furthermore, this divisiveness and the political dimension of the demands meant that the language used in the field of education also became an express or indirect consideration when it came to debating the different

published some of their works thanks to this Association.

27 The first, entitled *Les Escoles Catalanes* (Catalan schools), received an award from the Centre Catalanista Provençalenc. The second, entitled *L'ensenyança en les escoles catalanes* (teaching in Catalan schools) was published by the Centre Escolar Catalanista. For further discussion on the content of both publications and their significance within this historical context, see especially Galí (1979: 111).

28 For further information, see Navarro (1979). The author details information such as that, thanks to the support of the Mancomunitat and the councils, in 1930 the Association had five thousand members and “thanks to this, in the period 1923-1930, in the throes of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, it was able to create and maintain a Catalan class in each and every Normal School, to subsidise many Catalan schools (32 in 1930), to organise summer camps, fund 14 foreign study grants, publish two dozen textbooks in Catalan, send representatives to four international congresses and regularly publish a newsletter, the first of which dates from 1917”.

29 A good example is the debate that took place in the Congress of Deputies on 24 November 1902. In this parliamentary session, the Catalan member of parliament Joan Ferrer Vidal questioned the minister regarding this provision. The minister justified it by claiming that “it has been approved after thoughtful consideration of the situation that Your Honour refers to; it has been approved based on the belief that the danger lay precisely in not approving it, in the Government remaining impassive with its arms folded before a situation as serious as that which I have described to the Congress; because it is no longer merely a case of the Spanish language being in disuse in the mountain villages; as Your Honour says; rather the elementary education inspectors have assured me that the Christian doctrine was already being taught in Catalan, even in Barcelona itself; and a time had to come when a stop was put to this wrong, and in my opinion, the time has come”. See *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes: Congreso de los Diputados*, issue 55, 1902, p. 1404.

proposals for political autonomy for Catalonia during the first third of the century, as is discussed in detail below.³⁰

3 Strengthening Catalan in education under the auspices of the Mancomunitat of Catalonia

The victory of the coalition *Solidaritat Catalana* in the 1907 elections helped to give the linguistic demands voiced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries a suitable stage for critical reflection and consideration. Similarly, it also paved the way to the creation in 1914 of the Mancomunitat of Catalonia. Considered to be the Principality's first modern foray into self-governance, the Mancomunitat became a benchmark as it took on a decisive role in pushing forward demands for statutory provisions for the Catalan language. In fact, under the auspices of the Mancomunitat a wide-reaching process was undertaken for the normalisation of Catalan which, as is described on the following pages, also encompassed education, even though its extent was limited in this field.

Linguistic normalisation came to be one of the priority areas of action of the government of the Mancomunitat. In his inaugural address as president on 6 April 1914, Enric Prat de la Riba expressed the will to "give our language free reign over all aspects of our lives".³¹ It is worth noting that in 1917 a contemporary author, the writer Lluís Nicolau d'Olwer, published an article on the occasion of the death of Prat de la Riba, in which he specifically highlighted that thanks to the president's commitment "Catalan and no other language was always used in the preparatory work and operation of the Mancomunitat of Catalonia".³² And it is certainly true that the Mancomunitat worked from the outset almost exclusively in Catalan, which was used in the sessions of its governmental bodies, to draft the minutes of its sessions and in the ordinary work of its offices, technical services and the thirty or so schools that it established or managed. The habitual use of Catalan spread through internal and external areas such as correspondence, press announcements and signage on buildings, highlighting the militant commitment to normalising the use of a language which had hitherto been pushed aside from the public sphere.³³

Seemingly, most of its administrative documents were written in Catalan, as well as the documents generated by many of its departments and offices, including, for the purposes that interest us here, the Educational Council and the Department of Technical Instruction.³⁴ Apart from its internal activity, it managed the

30 See Pla Boix (2005: 179).

31 See Balcells and Ainaud de Lasarte (2000: 763). Similarly, a good example is the message of the Permanent Council of Catalonia addressed to the president of the Council of Ministers in 1916 in defence of the rights of the Catalan language, which stated that "in all the realms where there exists a plurality of languages, an intense, ardent struggle is fought for the autochthonous language: citizens do not judge full political freedom or civil equality to have been attained unless to the rights and freedoms decreed in the first phase of the democratic movements the freedom and equality of the different national languages are added, as long as there is one privileged language and other ignored languages and unless all the national languages obtain precisely the same rights". The message concludes by stressing the need to grant "our language all of its rights, an equal condition to other Spanish languages and, especially, official status in all the internal public affairs of Catalonia, as well as in local community organisations and in all the centres and offices of the State located within Catalan territory. This will of Catalonia [...] has recently been ratified by unanimous vote of the Assembly of the Mancomunitat; and in compliance with this agreement, we bring before the Parliament and the Government the petition that the official nature of the Catalan language be decreed in all the internal affairs of Catalonia, as the only way to guarantee full respect of the right of Catalan citizens in all that concerns the use of their language".

32 Nicolau d'Olwer (1917: 12).

33 Especially noteworthy, due to its symbolic value, was the use of Catalan in the loan issued by the Mancomunitat in 1915. In 1917 debt securities written in Catalan were accepted by the Spanish stock exchanges and the Bank of Spain thanks to the efforts of the regionalist minister of Finance Joan Ventosa i Calvell. For further information, see "El gobierno y la lengua catalana. Anacronismos curiosos" (The government and the Catalan language. Curious anachronisms). *La Publicidad*, 10 July 1918.

34 For further discussion on this internal use of language, see particularly Grau (2015: 86-101). The research carried out includes reference to a particularly interesting internal survey for establishing the levels of language use, conducted by the secretariat of the Permanent Council of the Mancomunitat of Catalonia in December 1921, in which twelve of the body's departments and offices gave information on the language or languages used in their daily work. The survey shows that the Office for Legal Studies, the Health Department and the Archive of the Mancomunitat wrote all their documents in Catalan. The Steward's Department kept its accounts in Spanish. The Architecture Department only used Spanish in the specifications for certain works. The Board of the Industrial University, which comprised all of the Mancomunitat's Technical Schools, reported that it used Spanish in "purely official" documentation. The other departments and bodies that took part in the survey (General Affairs Department, Finance Department, Roads, Highways and Bridges, Technical Agricultural Departments, Educational Council and Department of Technical Instruction, and the Mancomunitat's correspondence learning school) used Spanish in two types of document: statements of accounts and documents addressed to the State Administration. The conclusions drawn from the survey included, in the words of the research carried out by Josep Grau, that "communications addressed to the central government and documents that might be checked by the

publication of a large number of works, which up to 1923 numbered a total of two hundred, almost all of which were written in Catalan, from general texts to scientific monographs and periodical publications.³⁵ Significant examples within this last group include the *Quaderns d'Estudi* (study notebooks) and the *Bulleti dels Mestres* (teachers' bulletin) (handed out for free to a large part of the state school teachers in Catalonia) as well as reports and explanatory leaflets regarding the schools of the Mancomunitat.³⁶ These publications included interesting studies and reflections on the situation of language in schools. A good example is the early research by Alexandre Galí into the teaching of language and grammar, written in Catalan and with a modern outlook, published in the *Bulleti dels Mestres* in 1922.³⁷ These publications represented a historical milestone in the world of Catalan publishing as well as a very significant push forward for scientific and cultural dissemination. Noteworthy examples are the fifty volumes of the “Col·lecció Minerva de coneixements fonamentals” (Minerva collection of basic knowledge) and the forty or so textbooks published by the Department of Technical Instruction.³⁸ Also in relation to linguistic normalisation, it can be seen that the official competitive exams of the Mancomunitat included considerations in regard to Catalan, either as an additional merit or as a requirement, depending on each case.³⁹

In this way, under the auspices of the Mancomunitat of Catalonia, the Catalan language came to hold a pseudo-official or *de facto* official status which also extended to the area of education. As witness to this, Francesc Culi i Verdager in an article titled “La llengua catalana a l'escola” (the Catalan language in schools) published in the magazine *Nostra Parla* in 1918, stated, quote, “without having obtained any declaration from the State and with the disagreement of the latter, the Mancomunitat has quietly managed to establish Catalan as the official language in all its departments”.⁴⁰ During its mandate, the Mancomunitat of Catalonia came to manage as many as thirty-two schools, in thirteen of which classes were given in Catalan. In certain areas of research, criticism has been voiced regarding a certain negligence on the part of the Mancomunitat as regards teaching in Catalan in the schools for which it was responsible.⁴¹ Despite this, it did not completely overlook this aspect, especially if we consider that until 1923 the Mancomunitat subsidised the Association for the Protection of Catalan Teaching, a pre-eminent organisation in the area of education, which came to manage a total of thirty-two schools around the Principality. These were schools in which Catalan was the language used for teaching in the classroom and where not only Catalan language and literature, but also Catalan history, were taught.⁴² During the same period, the demand for legal changes to guarantee the right to teach and use languages other than Spanish in schools continued to generate significant controversy which, from time to time, was reflected in heated debates in the Spanish parliament.⁴³

state finance department still had to be written in Spanish; all other documents could be written in Catalan, because there was no obstacle to prevent this”.

35 See Buxó-Dulce de Voltes (1967: 1-18).

36 It should be noted that the educational magazine *Quaderns d'Estudi* was launched with an initial print run of 4,000 copies, 3,000 of which were handed out for free and the rest offered for sale. The author Josep Grau concludes that “in December 1918 some 2,500 state schoolteachers in Catalonia received a free copy of this magazine”. As regards the *Bulleti dels Mestres*, first published in 1922, it was also given free of charge to primary school teachers in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands and, later on, was sent to teachers and schools in the region of Valencia. Incidentally, the subscription price for both publications was cheaper for subscribers in Catalan-speaking areas. For further information, see Grau (2006: 335-336).

37 For example, see the article by Ferran M. Palmés published in *Quaderns d'Estudi* titled “El bilingüisme de l'escola primària” (bilingualism in primary schools). See *Quaderns d'Estudi* XV, p. 213. It analyses the experimental work on bilingualism conducted in Wales, applying for the first time in this research the methods of experimental psychology.

38 A few years later, Alexandre Galí referred to these publications as “the most considerable series of technical books in Catalan until 1936”. See Galí (1986: 217). For a wider scope, also see Mancomunitat de Catalunya (1923: 55).

39 As regards the schools of the Mancomunitat (School of Agriculture, School of Librarianship, School of Directors of Mechanical Industries and School of Nursing), the students had to be able to write in Catalan as a prerequisite for enrolment.

40 Culi (1918: 18).

41 The criticisms expressed by Alexandre Galí, who held the position of secretary of the Educational Council of the Mancomunitat of Catalonia from 1916 to 1923, are particularly significant. To quote Galí, the Mancomunitat “had the custom of neglecting Catalan classes or keeping them to the bare minimum when they were indispensable”. The author also complains that “the men of the League proceeded in the matter of language teaching like perfect representatives of the most general type of voter. They did not believe it necessary to teach Catalan to Catalans because they already spoke it. They were unaware, or we were unaware, because the author of this book also played a part with the best intentions, that the only science that holds strong in the world is that which is built on a refined foundation of culture made up of humanities, including the humanities of one's own language”. For further information, see Galí (1986: 128-129).

42 For further information, see particularly Duran (1997: 49).

43 See, for example, the speech given by Amós Salvador at this session of the Senate held on 31 May 1916, where he affirmed that:

The acknowledgement, presence and use of Catalan in schools was not limited solely to those schools that reported to or were backed by the Mancomunitat de Catalunya, as has been discussed above; rather, it also extended to others controlled by bodies such as Barcelona Provincial Council and Barcelona City Council.⁴⁴ In both cases, a range of initiatives were adopted with the aim of normalising the use of the vernacular language, even though the scope was undoubtedly more limited than the normalisation implemented via the Mancomunitat. Thus, for example, in February 1913 the Institute of Catalan Studies, created a few years previously by Barcelona Provincial Council, approved the new orthographical rules for the Catalan language established by the distinguished Pompeu Fabra. The impact of Fabra's *Normes ortogràfiques* widely exceeded strictly philological interests to become a turning point in the normalisation of the use of the language in different areas where its presence had hitherto been more limited. As regards education, during this period in history Catalan became the normal language used in the technical schools of Barcelona Provincial Council, and it was in fact the School of Agriculture that, in 1910, became the first to impart classes in Catalan.⁴⁵ Three years later, this spread to the Escola del Treball (school of trades) and to other educational centres. In the words of Alexandre Galí, with the example given by the normal use of the vernacular language in the Escola del Treball, it spread "in the most natural way in the world, without the slightest force", and as such, "henceforth, Catalan became the working language in all the schools of Barcelona Provincial Council and the Mancomunitat".⁴⁶

The Educational Research Council, created in 1913 and attached to the Provincial Council, also used Catalan as the standard language in its everyday activities. Similarly, the primary schools created by this Council and the other activities organised under its auspices, such as the Summer School for teachers, the Montessori courses, the Monographic courses and the Exchange courses, were also given principally in Catalan. During this period, the public schools run by Barcelona City Council also taught their students in Catalan.⁴⁷

As can be seen, despite a clearly adverse regulatory framework, during the first third of the century, efforts were made on a practical level to promote the normalisation of the use and teaching of Catalan in part of the education system, something which did not go unnoticed but which, as previous works have shown, was more or less accepted.⁴⁸ In this historical context, Catalan went from being prohibited in schools to being subject to a new strategy of tacit consent, despite the strong criticism provoked by the new approach. A good example of the spirit of this criticism can be seen in the letter of complaint from the Royal Spanish Academy against the official use of languages other than Spanish which was published in January 1916 and

"The State should be the only party that teaches and educates children; it is the politically organised Nation that must provide this service, because it is the only party that is interested in producing first men, then citizens, then patriots and, lastly, in Spain, Spaniards; as such, it must be responsible for teaching in all regions, and in all regions, teaching must be imparted in Spanish". Other, similarly precise arguments were put forward in different parliamentary sessions, for example the debates in the Congress of Deputies on 8 June 1916, where Francesc Cambó demanded official legal status for the Catalan language, stressing that "the official status of the Catalan language for our internal affairs means the free use of Catalan within Catalonia, in teaching, in administrative affairs, in the Courts of Justice and in the execution of public deeds". See *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes: Congreso de los Diputados*, issue 23, 1916, p. 456. In this same parliamentary session, the member of parliament Giner de los Ríos stressed the fact that Catalan was used in schools managed by the Mancomunitat, driving home the point that "we must not wish this". In his understanding, the use of Catalan should only be guaranteed in nursery schools. See *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes: Congreso de los Diputados*, issue 24, 1916, p. 488.

44 During this period, the political party Lliga Regionalista (regionalist league) was responsible for running both institutions. In Barcelona Provincial Council, the Lliga was the option that received the most votes from 1907 to 1923, and similarly in Barcelona City Council from 1915 to 1923. See Grau (2015: 90).

45 For further information, see Folguera (1996: 192-193).

46 Galí (1986: 181).

47 These schools were the Escola de Cecs, Sordmuts i Deficients (school for the blind, deaf and mentally handicapped), Escola del Bosc (forest school), Escola del Patronat Domènech (Domènech Board School), Escola del Mar (school of the sea), Escola del Bosc del Guinardó (Guinardó forest school) and the two Montessori schools. Research has shown that in the Baixeras and La Farigola school groups, created in 1922 and managed jointly by the State and Barcelona City Council through the Barcelona School Board, most of the classes were also taught in Catalan. For further discussion on the state of affairs in relation to the work of the School Board, see, for instance, Domènech (1995: 267-349).

48 In the words of Josep Grau: "Nobody, neither inside nor outside of Catalonia, opposed the expansion of Catalan within the Mancomunitat. All the Catalan parties, even the dynastic parties and the Radical Party, defended or at least accepted the use of Catalan as the predominant language. For their part, neither did the Spanish Governments place any impediments on the linguistic policy of the Mancomunitat [...] and until 1923, the various Spanish Governments chose to adopt a prudent passive resistance in relation to Catalan. They gave up the direct attacks against the spaces occupied by Catalan, such as schools, the Church and the provincial and commonwealth administrations, and limited themselves to protecting the areas where Spanish was the most frequently used language, such as judicial affairs and universities". See Grau (2015: 94).

signed by the president of the Academy, Antonio Maura, and which decried, among other matters, the fact that “in many places in this Kingdom [...] it occurs that in a large number of schools the national language is prohibited or taught as if it were a foreign language”. In the plenary session of the Congress of Deputies held on 30 June 1916, Antonio Maura himself clarified that the purpose of this letter was to denounce the linguistic policy of the public and educational authorities of Catalonia.⁴⁹ This was a question that generated interesting disputes between the Permanent Council of the Mancomunitat and the State Government.⁵⁰

However, this series of measures should be taken into consideration within the political and parliamentary context of the time. As is well known, the fervour for defending self-governance for Catalonia developed into what has been called the “Catalan problem”, which was particularly heightened during the period between November 1918 and February 1919. So much so that some authors have highlighted how “for almost four months, Spain was affected by the Catalan problem perhaps as never before”, within a scenario where “the push for self-government had surpassed the context of legal and political questions and of interests”.⁵¹ In any case, for the purposes that interest us here, in response to this, in January 1919 two particularly interesting political initiatives were launched that provided different strategies for dealing with the demands for self-government, both of which were processed at the same time. Both of them included considerations regarding the issue of language and offered guarantees related to the language used in education, thus highlighting the political and symbolic importance of this matter. The first was the Project for Autonomy presented by the Spanish Government before the Congress of Deputies on 20 January 1919; the second, the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, approved by the Assembly of the Mancomunitat of Catalonia on 25 January of the same year.⁵²

As regards the governmental project, the preamble affirmed that it responded to the desire to, quote “satisfy the demands for autonomy, so that every body of the national apparatus regains and preserves its independent operation, thus achieving that unity which, in a context of variety, constitutes the basis for strong and effective harmony between the regions of Spain”. The text goes on, in section twenty-two, to include various provisions that expressly refer to the linguistic question as applied to different areas of public affairs and very specifically to the area of education. One of the provisions under article 10, regarding primary education in Catalonia, is that “the region may establish and maintain, at its own expense, however many schools it considers necessary, in which [...] it shall be compulsory to teach the Spanish language [...]. Aside that which is stipulated for regional primary schools, in the region’s educational centres the teachers and students shall both have the right to teach and reply, respectively, in Spanish and Catalan”.⁵³ It should be noted that this project took into account other linguistic provisions, applying them to areas such as language training for judicial staff,⁵⁴ the bilingual publication of the Statute of Regional Rights⁵⁵ and the use of language

49 *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes Congreso de los Diputados*, issue 40, 30 June 1916, p. 996-997.

50 For further discussion on the meaning of these requirements, see Grau (2006: 266). Within the context of this disagreement, the Count of Romanones, president of the Government and leader of the Liberal Party, pushed forward his government’s commitment to guarantee “the use in schools of regional languages or dialects that contribute to the many manifestations of Spanish life, forming, as declared by the Academy, the greatness of the nation”.

51 During this conflictive historical period, a number of different initiatives were implemented including a plebiscite organised by the School of Administrative Functionaries, which reported to the Mancomunitat, held by those councils within Catalonia that supported Catalan autonomy and which received a majority yes vote; as well as initiatives such as the *Mensaje y Bases per a l’Autonomia de Catalunya* (message and principles for the autonomy of Catalonia) from the Council of the Mancomunitat to the head of the Spanish Government García Prieto, which demanded the expansion of Catalonia’s autonomy. This project was rejected within a political context that worsened after the Government of García Prieto stepped down after failing to agree on the policies that should be adopted regarding these demands. For a more detailed discussion of the political context, see González (1974: 221).

52 The full text of both documents can be consulted in the clippings published in the annex to the work of González (1974).

53 As regards primary education in Catalonia, Article 10 of the State Government’s Project for Autonomy of 20 January 1919 envisaged that “the region may establish and maintain at its own expense, however many schools it considers necessary, in which [...] it shall be compulsory to teach the Spanish language [...]. Aside that which is stipulated for regional primary schools, in the region’s educational centres the teachers and students shall both have the right to teach and reply, respectively, in Spanish and Catalan”.

54 Article 14 of the Project set out the language training framework for judges, magistrates and functionaries of the Tax Ministry appointed by the Government of Catalonia. This article set out that “within the region of Catalonia, justice shall be administered in the name of the King by Judges and Magistrates who have the due qualities within the general hierarchy, and who have knowledge of the Catalan language, accrediting this requirement in the manner provided for by Royal Decree, which will also be demanded of functionaries of the Tax Ministry appointed for Catalonia by the Government”.

55 Article 13 of this Project for Autonomy provided for the bilingual publication of the Statute of Regional Rights in Spanish and Catalan, establishing that, in the event of discrepancy between the wording of the two texts, the Spanish text should prevail “for any

before different public bodies.⁵⁶ Seen in historical perspective, these linguistic provisions envisaged within the governmental project set out a particularly strong linguistic framework in terms of guaranteeing the presence and use of the Catalan language in the public sphere, where hitherto it had been prohibited. In a context of political conflict, the acknowledgement of a regulatory framework that was respectful towards the autochthonous language was offered as a concession and as a transaction aimed at favouring negotiation and the establishment of agreements.

Similarly, the articles of the second initiative, the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia approved by the Assembly of the Mancomunitat on 25 January 1919, also took into account linguistic provisions. More specifically, article 6.A.3 established the obligation to teach the Spanish language in all primary schools in Catalonia.⁵⁷ This illustrates the political will to promote normalisation of language in the Catalan education system and ensure that it was learnt by students. As is well known, these initiatives are of interest for illustrating the spirit of the political proposals being raised in parliament regarding language, although they were of little practical importance.⁵⁸ After being debated within a context of extreme political and social instability, on 13 September 1923 the conflict boiled over into a military coup by the Captain General of Catalonia, Miguel Primo de Rivera, with support from conservative groups. By Royal Order for the “Defence of National Unity” issued on 18 September 1923, with the aim of fighting against “the separatist sentiments, propaganda and actions on the part of audacious minorities”, a long list of measures was agreed to including the categorisation of offences for penalising the “dissemination of separatist ideas by means of teaching or the preaching of doctrines” and the prohibition of the Catalan language in official documents.⁵⁹ In the political sphere, this linguistic measure was swiftly adopted by the military council and remained in place from the beginning of the coup, even before the Provincial Councils were dissolved by Royal Decree of 12 January 1924 and prior to the dissolution of the Mancomunitat of Catalonia on 20 March 1925. This clearly illustrates the symbolic importance of the Catalan language and how the measures for conferring it with acknowledgement and protection were related to nationalist projects and demands for self-government in the Principality.

It was during this dictatorship that a wide array of regulatory provisions were enacted with the aim of regulating teaching within schools and banning the use of Catalan in different public spheres, particularly education. An example of this is the Royal Order of 13 October 1925 on antipatriotic and antisocial propaganda which, among other provisions, established that “in the visits they conduct, Primary Education Inspectors shall examine the textbooks in Schools and, if they are not written in Spanish or if they contain doctrines that undermine the unity of the Nation or the principles that underlie the social order, they shall be immediately removed from the hands of the students and a report shall be filed against the Teacher, who shall be suspended

differences in interpretation that may arise”. This provision stated that: “The special institutions of Civil Law that currently exist in areas of the region of Catalonia and differ in terms of common legislation shall be listed and ordered by the Provincial Council on the proposal of the Catalan Government and with a Statute strictly limited to such institutions, the publication of which as law the Government is authorised, with the possibility of bringing the matter before the Codes Committee if considered to be in accordance with this article, or otherwise submitting the solution to Parliament. In any case, the Statute of Regional Rights shall be published in the Official Gazette of Madrid and in the official periodical of the region, in Spanish and Catalan, with the former taking precedence in the event of differences in interpretation”.

56 Article 15 of condition twenty-two established that “either the Catalan or Spanish languages may be used in the oral deliberations of the Provincial Council, of the Town and City Councils or of any other Official Bodies organised by the region, as well as for judicial or governmental proceedings involving litigants, defendants, petitioners, experts and witnesses; furthermore, the minutes of sessions, the written execution of official orders, judgements and files, and any other official public documents of any source, nature and purpose, if they are written in Catalan must also contain a Spanish language version; in such a way that the signatures, signs, stamps and other marks of authentication guarantee and authorise both texts so that together they may be filed, communicated, notified or published. Catalan may be used before the Courts of Catalonia on agreement between the parties and their counsels”.

57 This provision stated, quote: “The teaching of the Spanish language shall be compulsory in all primary schools”.

58 As Cambó highlighted in his speech in the plenary session of the Congress of Deputies held on 7 February 1919, “if our problem was one of administrative regulation, we could examine the project, could reach an agreement; but it is a problem of status, and for a problem status, the project we are going to discuss has not been created [...] the will of the entire Catalan people is to have autonomy, not only different, but opposite, completely divergent from that of this Statute”. See *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso*, issue 120 of 7 February 1919.

59 In relation to language, article 2 *in fine* of the Royal Order for the “Defence of National Unity” of 18 September 1923 established that “as regards the use or writing of languages and dialects, songs, dances, customs and regional dress are not subject to any prohibition whatsoever; but in official national or international proceedings the persons invested with authority may not use any other language than Spanish, which is the official language of the Spanish State, although this prohibition shall not encompass the internal affairs of local or regional bodies, which shall, however, be obliged to keep their official books of records and proceedings in Spanish, even if notifications and communications not addressed to authorities have been written in the regional language”.

on half pay”.⁶⁰ The commendable efforts towards linguistic normalisation that had been undertaken under the patronage and guidance of the Mancomunitat de Catalunya were thus brought to an end.⁶¹ The interest in prohibiting the use of Catalan in schools can be clearly seen if we bear in mind that immediately after the military coup, the Directorate General of Education sent out a circular to all the Civil Governors of Catalonia with the purpose of promoting a shift towards the use of Spanish in education.⁶² However, this measure is seen to have had limited practical effect in certain areas. There was so little adherence to the initiative in Girona that at the beginning of the 1924-1925 academic year the province’s civil governor warned teachers that if they failed to teach Spanish, he would urge the Military Council to “remove the incorrigible teachers *en masse* and replace them with Spanish teachers”.⁶³ During this period of the dictatorship, the repression of dissident teachers was also implemented through other legal provisions. Of particular interest is the Royal Order of 11 June 1926 aimed at establishing, quote, “the penalties to be imposed on national Teachers who forbid, abandon or impede the teaching in their School of the official language in those regions where another native language continues to exist”.⁶⁴

By way of conclusion, it is worth mentioning, if only briefly, a final political initiative promoted during this period in history, with the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in full swing, which was of no practical significance but which is of interest for the purposes of theoretical analysis: the 1928 Project for a Provisional Constitution for the Catalan Republic, also known as the Havana Constitution. The political project laid out through this failed constitutional initiative envisaged a Catalonia that was independent from the Spanish State and had Catalan as its official language. For the purposes that interest us here, the text set out different linguistic provisions, some of which directly or indirectly related to the area of education.⁶⁵ More specifically, article 24 established that “only Catalans may hold public office in the areas of government, justice, defence, administration and teaching in Catalonia”, adding that “exception is made for languages and technical specialities, which may be taught by qualified foreigners”. For its part, article 26 envisaged that “to take possession of political rights, to vote or be voted, to carry out duties and hold public office, it shall be necessary to be of legal age and know how to read and write in Catalan”. Finally, for the purposes that interest us here, article 195 of this initiative considered that, quote, “the Organic Law on the Public Teaching of Fine Arts must establish and regulate the following services: [...] Compulsory primary education in Catalan from age six to age twelve; secondary education in Catalan of Spanish (compulsory), French, English and German language, with two of these optional and one compulsory”. Finally, article 196 envisaged the existence of an Academy of Catalan language. As can be seen, laid out the basis for a pro-independence political project with a unique approach to language that was unprecedented in political projects from earlier years. It generated fierce criticism that was voiced in interesting debates during the Constituent Assembly of 1931, held to approve what would be the Spanish Constitution of the Second Republic.

Overall, it must be evaluated bearing in mind that, after the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, institutions such as the Cultural Committee and the Barcelona City Council School Board were re-established. For the purposes that interest us here, under their auspices and shortly before the establishment of the Second Republic up to eleven different groups of schools were created with a total of 10,150 places.⁶⁶ Various works of research have shown that these groups of schools managed by the School Board were equipped

60 See Pagès i Sant (2015).

61 Ferrer (1986: 139-151).

62 To quote from the circular: “All Teachers shall teach Spanish language thoroughly and pedagogically from the first day that the child enters the School; in such a manner that in their third year of studies they shall be sufficiently prepared to learn the various teachings of the official programme in Spanish”. The second provision states that “from this moment onwards, Teachers shall always speak to children in Spanish” and the third that “in Schools, no other textbooks shall be allowed in the Catalan language than those of the Catechism of Christian Doctrine and those approved by the Government, with all others being prohibited”. For further discussion on the content of this circular, see *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Gerona* of 23 October 1923, published in Puigvert (1984: 257).

63 See “Crónica General” (1924: 7).

64 For a more detailed discussion of its content, see Ferrer i Gironès (1986: 147-149).

65 Articles 2, 24, 26, 195 and 196.

66 See Generalitat de Catalunya (1937). This was published for the purpose of participating in the *Congrès Internacional de l’Enseignement Primaire et de l’Éducation Populaire* held in Paris in July 1937. Page 12 of the book mentions that “in 1922, in the city of Barcelona, an agreement was entered into with the State that crystallised into the creation of a mixed board called the School Board. This initiative was suspended due to the military dictatorship but was resumed afterwards and eleven large school groups were established in Barcelona, such as that in the following photograph, with a total of 10,150 students”.

with resources, good teachers chosen from among national applicants, as well as teaching materials and support staff (nursery, art, music and physical education teachers), with the purpose of modernising primary education. In short, this illustrates the way in which initiatives were resumed aimed at regaining the ground lost during the military dictatorship, not only in relation to linguistic matters.⁶⁷

In any case, the advent of the Second Republic marked a turning point in the policy of promoting the official monolingual status of the Spanish language hitherto imposed by both the law and the constitution. This change was also reflected in the use of language within education. Even though the Spanish Civil War and subsequent dictatorship meant that it was not possible to consolidate the linguistic advances made during this period of history on a practical level, some forty years later the regulatory foundations for this linguistic model inspired article 3 of both the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia of 1979 and the Spanish Constitution of 1978.⁶⁸

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⁶⁷ See, for instance, Gay, Quillet & Pascual (1973).

⁶⁸ In fact, the content of the parliamentary debates held to discuss the third articles of the Statute of Autonomy of 1979 and the Constitution of 1978 reveals that several parties defended the republican model for the purpose of regulating the linguistic provisions of these two texts. For further information, see Pla Boix (2005).

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