

Catalan is considered a Romance language because it derives from Vulgar Latin. With regards to the place of Catalan inside the Romance world, Catalan is a western Romance language. Some scholars argue that Catalan belongs to the Ibero-Romantic group, since Catalan phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical features are common to Aragonese, Castilian, Galician, and Portuguese. Other linguists believe that Catalan belongs to the Gallo-Romantic group because it is closer to French and, especially, Occitan, which is a language spoken in the south of France and in certain areas of Spain (Vall d’Aran) and Italy (Gàrdia) (Lledó-Guillem, *The Making of Catalan* 3). In fact, on several occasions, Catalan has been placed in the so-called Occitano-Romance group, which highlights the similarities between these two languages. In any case, there is common agreement that Catalan is an independent language in the Romance world.

As far as the name of the language is concerned, “Catalan” or *català* is the most common term and the one used in academic circles: universities, conferences, and publications. However, there are other names to refer to the language. Some examples are *valencià*, *mallorquí*, *menorquí*, and *eivissenc*. These alternative terms may be used for three reasons: first, to describe the Catalan variety used in a particular region. In this case, *valencià* would be the Catalan variety used in the Region of Valencia; *mallorquí* in the island of Mallorca; *menorquí* in the island of Minorca, and *eivissenc* in the island of Eivissa (see maps 6 and 7). *Valencià* has been the most common term to refer to the Catalan language in the Valencian Region, where “Catalan” is very rarely used, especially among older generations. Moreover, in chapter six of the Valencian Constitution or *Estatut d’Autonomia* (1983), the language of the Region receives the name of *valencià* (<https://www.cortsvalencianes.es/ca-va/composicionnormasest-autonomia/9925>). Second, the regional terms may be used to refer to the common language of all the Catalan-speaking territory, i.e., as a synonym of “Catalan” as the general language. In fact, some scholars from the Valencian Region refer to the common language as “Catalan-Valencian” (see map 7). Finally, these terms have been used occasionally to designate independent languages from Catalan. This has been the case particularly with the term *valencià*, especially in the twentieth century, but it is not the dominant trend. For the sake of clarity, the term “Catalan” or *català* will

be used in this introductory study to refer to the common language of all the Catalan-speaking lands.



(Map 1)



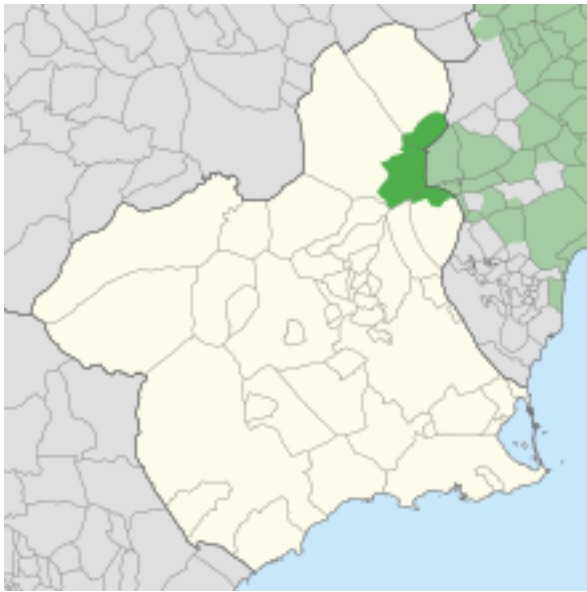
(Map 2)



(Map 3)

By Mutxamel - Treball propi, Domini públic,

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5672431>



El Carxe (Murcia)

(Map 4)

Catalan is spoken in four independent nation states: Spain, France, Andorra, and Italy (see maps 1 and 2). Catalan is the only official language in Andorra with approximately 61,000 speakers. In Spain Catalan is spoken in five Autonomous Regions but it is only co-official with Castilian in three of these Regions: Catalonia, with an approximate number of 6,155,000 speakers; the Region of Valencia, where we must distinguish a Catalan-speaking area from a Castilian-speaking area. The Catalan-speaking area constitutes 75% of the Valencian territory and 87% of its population, with approximately 2,895,000 Catalan speakers. As indicated above, *valencià* is the popular and legal term to designate the language in this Region. The Castilian-speaking territory occupies different areas in the interior, west, and southern end of the Valencian Region (see maps 1, 2, and 3). The Balearic Islands is the third Autonomous Region of Spain where Catalan is co-official with Castilian, with around 777,000 Catalan-speakers, distributed mainly in the islands of Mallorca, Minorca, Eivissa, and Formentera.

Despite being a spoken language, Catalan is not co-official with Castilian in two other Spanish Autonomous Regions: the eastern Counties of the Region of Aragón, known as *La Franja* (*La Litera*, *Bajo Cinca*, *Bajo Aragón-Caspe*, *Bajo Aragón*, *Matarraña*) with 42,000 Catalan-speakers, and the County of Carxe in the Region of Murcia with about 600 speakers (see maps 3 and 4).

Catalan is also the native language of a certain segment of the population in two other European nation-states: France and Italy. In both countries Catalan is not an official language. Catalan is spoken in an extensive area of the Department of the *Pyrénées-Orientales*, which includes the historical districts of *Rosselló* (Roussillon) and *Alta Cerdanya* (Conflent, Vallespir, Capcir and Cerdagne) in the southeast of France. In the Catalan-speaking lands this area is known as Northern Catalonia with an approximate number of 131,000 Catalan speakers. However, we must bear in mind that the Department of the *Pyrénées-Orientales* does not correspond exactly to Northern Catalonia, since the former includes the small Occitan-speaking area known as *Fenolleda* (Fenoillèdes) (https://www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/documents/regional_dossiers/catalan_in_france_2nd.pdf 5-6) (see maps 1, 2, and 3). Catalan is also spoken in the city of *l'Alguer* (Alghero), in the island of Sardinia (Italy), with around 24,000 Catalan-speakers. Overall, if we include second-language speakers, the approximate total number of Catalan speakers is slightly over 10,000,000 (https://www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/documents/regional_dossiers/catalan_in_france_2nd.pdf 6).

Contributor: Vicente Lledó-Guillem
Full Professor of Spanish
Hofstra University

Yasmine Beale-Rivaya
Project Director/Coordinator
yb10@txstate.edu

Introduction

It may be argued that Catalan cannot be considered a minority language because it has approximately 10,000,000 speakers and is either official or co-official in different territories. Moreover, Catalan is also associated with a middle-high class segment of the population. Nevertheless, Catalan is a minoritized language for several reasons and in different degrees depending on the areas where it is spoken. From a geopolitical institutional point of view, Catalan is clearly minoritized in the Autonomous Regions of Aragon and Murcia in Spain, as well as in the Department of the *Pyrénées-Orientales* in France and the city of *l'Alguer* in Sardinia (Italy). In these areas Catalan is not considered an official language, which implies that it is hardly used in administration, education, mass media, or cultural events. In other words, Catalan is in contact with other languages with a higher legal and political status, which leads to a diglossic situation in which Catalan is used exclusively in informal contexts, whereas Castilian, French, and Italian, depending on the area, will be used in formal contexts.

In France the ideology of one language-one nation, and the superiority of French over all the minority languages of the territory still prevails (Hawkey 2018, 100). While some laws have been approved in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to offer very limited instruction in the minority languages of France, there has not been a considerable change. The year 2001 potentially represented a big step when the Ministry of Education and Communication decided to promote the use and teaching of minority of languages. However, in practical terms, the teaching of Catalan in Northern Catalonia has been possible thanks to the support of the *Generalitat de Catalonia* (The Government of the Region of Catalonia), and the private sector (https://www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/documents/regional_dossiers/catalan_in_france_2nd.pdf 9).

With regards to the Sardinian city of *l'Alguer* in Italy (see maps 1 and 2), the use of Catalan as a spoken language is diminishing among younger generations. While at the beginning of the twentieth century most of the population had Catalan as the common language, nowadays the situation is different. The intergenerational transmission of the language has dropped since the middle of the twentieth century in favor of Italian and there is a danger of linguistic substitution (Veny and Massanell 206). The adoption of the Sardinian law of 1997 and the Italian law of 1999, which implied a recognition of the historical minority languages of Sardinia and Italy respectively, has not led to an increase in the use of Catalan as a common spoken language. Certainly, in *l'Alguer* Catalan appears in the names of streets and in restaurant menus (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/21/world/europe/catalan-italy-alghero.html>), but its use is not as spread as a century ago. Moreover, the Italian education system is quite centralized and the common and almost exclusive language of education is Italian. In fact, as in the case of Northern Catalonia, it is the Catalan Government and the private sector which are encouraging the teaching of Catalan in *l'Alguer*. This support has allowed the teaching of Catalan in Primary Schools and at the Universities of Sàsser and Càller.

In Spain there are two Autonomous Regions where Catalan is spoken but it is not an official language: Aragón and Murcia. In Aragon there have been several attempts to establish a law regarding the status and use of the different languages of Aragon, including Catalan. Among them the law of 2009 constituted an important step towards the support of Catalan. This law was modified in 2013 in the middle of intense political debates. In particular, the new Aragonese government decided to change the name of the Catalan language spoken in Aragon. The new term was *LAPAO* (*Lengua aragonesa propia del área oriental*) (common Aragonese language in the eastern area). However, in 2016, with a new Autonomous Government, “Catalan” was again used to refer legally to the language of the *Franja* of Aragon. The teaching of Catalan in this area depends on the decision of the municipalities to do so. As far the Region of Murcia is concerned, Catalan is spoken in *El Carxe*, in the northeastern part of the Region (see maps 3 and 4). Catalan has never been co-official in Murcia.

While Catalan is co-official with Castilian in the Region of Valencia, Catalan is still a minoritized language. In the Catalan-speaking area of the Region, described above, the number of speakers of Catalan as their first language decreased considerably in the last century, especially during the Franco Regime (1939-1975). During this period the use of Catalan was prohibited in government, administration, education, mass media, and any kind of formal use. Moreover, important segments of population from Castilian-speaking areas, such as Castile, Murcia, and Andalusia, migrated to the Catalan-speaking areas of the Valencian Region. As a result, in the two largest cities: Valencia, and, especially Alicante, Castilian is the dominant language. For a long time, Castilian was associated with economic and social improvement and many Catalan-speaking parents even used Catalan with their children. The situation of Catalan has improved since the approval of the *Estatut d'Autonomia de la Comunitat Valenciana* or Valencian Constitution in 1982, which, in chapter 6, establishes that Catalan, which receives the name of *valencià*, is the common or native language of the Valencian Region. It also indicates that Catalan is co-official with Castilian in the Region. Everybody has the right to know it, use it, and be taught in Catalan. Moreover, special attention should be paid to the protection, respect, and recovery of Catalan, as well as its use in administration and education. A difference will be made between the territories where Catalan has historically been the common language versus those areas in the Valencian Region where Catalan has not been historically the native language (<https://www.cortsvalencianes.es/ca-va/composicionnormasest-autonomia/9925>). Certainly, the *Estatut* has helped establish and normalize the use of Catalan in the Valencian Region and has even increased the knowledge and presence of the language in Valencian areas where Catalan was not historically the common language. The knowledge of Catalan has increased, especially among younger generations. From an educational point of view, the Council of Education, Culture, and Sports of the *Generalitat Valenciana* (Valencian Government) has established that at least 25% of the classes should be taught in Catalan, 25% in Castilian, and between 15% and 25% in a foreign language. The language(s) used for the remaining 25% will be decided by each school. However, the Council of Education, Culture, and Sports recommends that altogether 50% of the classes be taught in Catalan. While the degree of support and implementation of the use of Catalan in the Valencian Region has depended on the political part(ies) in power, Catalan is still a minoritized language *vis-à-vis* Castilian in the Valencian Region.

In the Balearic Islands the pressure and influence of Castilian was not as strong as in the Catalan-speaking territories of the Iberian Peninsula, at least until the second half of the twentieth century. The contact with other languages, especially Castilian, increased considerably after 1940 with the immigration of civil servants and workers related mainly with the field of tourism. The use of Castilian by the immigrants added to the use of Castilian by the bourgeoisie, who had made Castilian a symbol of social differentiation (Veny and Massanell 186). Certainly, the social, political, and economic status of Catalan has increased since the end of the Franco Regime in 1976, especially after the approval of the *Estatut d'Autonomia de les Illes Balears* or Constitution of the Balearic Islands in 1983 and the Law of Linguistic Normalization of 1986, which supported the use of Catalan in every social context. Chapter 4 of the *Estatut* establishes that Catalan is the native language of the Region and is co-official with Castilian (<http://web.parlamentib.es/RecursosWeb/DOCS/EstatutAutonomiaIB.pdf> 15). Moreover, the Law of Linguistic Normalization (1986) supported the use of Catalan in every social context to help diminish the diglossic situation of Catalan in relation to Castilian. Since then, Catalan has been used in the government, administration, mass media, and education. In fact, The *Conselleria d'Educació i Formació Professional* (Council of Education and Professional Development), establishes that at least 50% of classes should be taught in Catalan. While article 5 of the *Estatut* encourages the communication with all the Catalan-speaking lands, there have been some political attempts to deny the unity of the language and abolish the Linguistic Normalization Law of 1986. These attempts were particularly strong between 2011 and 2015 when the *Partido Popular* (PP) was in power (Aguiló-Mora and Lynch).

Catalonia is the Catalan-speaking Autonomous Region where the Catalan language has received the strongest support and where it may be argued that it is less of a minority language. Article 6 of the *Estatut d'Autonomia de Catalunya*, approved in 1979 and reformed in 2006 and 2010, established that Catalan is the native language of Catalonia and is co-official with Castilian (<https://www.parlament.cat/document/cataleg/48089.pdf>). In Catalonia Catalan is the preferred language in government, administration, and education. In fact, Catalan has been the dominant language of education for more than three decades. Castilian is taught in the classes of Castilian

language and literature. This system has been criticized recently. The *Generalitat de Catalunya* or Catalan Government has also supported the use of Catalan in mass media with the creation in the 80s of a TV channel completely in Catalan, *TV3*, and *Catalunya Ràdio*. Catalan has traditionally been the language of the Catalan bourgeoisie and, especially in Catalonia, Catalan is associated with the middle and high classes. Knowledge of Catalan is also a requirement for, among others, administrative and government positions. For all these reasons, it could be argued that Catalan is not really a minoritized language in Catalonia. However, we must bear in mind that Castilian is still the dominant language in mass media in Catalonia and in big cities, such as Barcelona. Even if Catalan is the dominant language in education and the government, Castilian is present everywhere. In fact, due to immigration, the number of Catalan native speakers in Catalonia is lower than Castilian native speakers. However, in the last decades many Catalans whose parents migrated to Catalonia and who learned Catalan at school consider Catalan their own native language (Woolard 257-304).

In any case, even if Catalan is co-official in Catalonia, The Balearic Islands, and the Valencian Region, Catalan will always be a minoritized languages in comparison with Castilian, since there is only one official language for the whole Spanish-state: Castilian. It could be argued that this is not the case of Catalan in Andorra. In the independent state and Principality of Andorra, Catalan is the only official language. According to recent studies, the use of Catalan is particularly strong in the education system, where more than 60% of students use it as the normal language of communication. The percentage is lower in the job environment and much lower in the shopping centers (<https://www.elperiodic.ad/noticia/52605/andorra-es-lunic-territori-on-el-catala-guanya-nous-parlants>). Even if the number of speakers may be increasing, the contact with French, and especially Castilian is constant. Therefore, the support of the Andorran Government is needed to normalize the use of Catalan in Andorra.

History

Traditionally, the origin of the Catalan language has been placed in a part of *La Marca Hispànica* (Hispanic March), which has also received the name of *Catalunya la Vella* (Old Catalonia) (see map 5). This area consisted of a set of districts that served as a buffer between Muslim Spain and the Carolingian Empire. In current geographical terms, *Catalunya la Vella* included Northern Catalonia in the French State, Andorra, and the north of the Autonomous Region of Catalonia in the Spanish State. It has been argued that there was already a conscious differentiation between Latin and the Romance language spoken in this area around the 9th century, due to the Carolingian Reform (Ferrando Francés and Nicolàs Amorós 43).



(Map 5) (ca. 806)

While it is possible to distinguish words and sentences in Catalan starting in the 9th century, we need to wait until the 12th and 13th centuries to find the earliest texts in Catalan, which were mainly judicial and religious. A Catalan version of the *Liber iudiciorum* (Book of the Judges)

was written around 1150 in the western counties of *Catalunya la Vella*, whereas another version of the same text was written in the eastern counties around 1180-1190. The earliest known literary text written in Catalan is religious: the *Homilies d'Organyà* (Homilies from Organyà) (ca. 1204) (Ferrando Francés and Nicolàs Amorós 88).

The year 1213 is an important chapter in the history of the Catalan language, as it represents the beginning of the official ideological and political separation of the Catalan and the Occitan languages. In 1213 the king of the Crown of Aragon, Peter the II of Aragon (r. 1196-1213) was defeated and killed in the Battle of Muret (1213), which was part of the Albigensian Crusade launched by Pope Innocence III (1198-1216) and Philip II of France (r. 1180-1223) against the Catalan-Aragonese King. With this defeat, the Crown of Aragon abandoned its aspirations in the south of France and focused on the Iberian territories and the Mediterranean. As a result, Catalan, which was one of the languages of the Catalan-Aragonese monarchy, underwent a process of differentiation *vis-à-vis* Occitan, the language of the south of France, especially in the writing system. The first recorded testimony of the use a specific name to refer to the Catalan language: *catalanesch*, as opposed to Occitan, appeared in Jofré de Foixà's *Regles de trobar* (Rules for lyric poetry) (1291) (Lledó-Guillem, *The Making of Catalan* 32). The similarities between the two languages have always been remarkable, especially in the Middle Ages. In fact, in the Catalan-speaking lands Catalan was used for prose, whereas Occitan was used for courtly lyric poetry until the Valencian poet Ausiàs March (1400-1459) started using Catalan in this genre.

As far as Catalan prose is concerned, two factors played a crucial role. First, the *Cancelleria reial* (Royal Chancellery) associated with the monarchy, and second, the work of the Franciscan monk Ramon Llull (1232-1316). The *Cancelleria reial* was founded by King James I (r. 1213-1276) in 1218 and lasted until 1494. It was a royal administrative body in charge of writing the official documents in three main languages: Latin, Catalan, and Aragonese. Until the end of the thirteenth century most of the documents were written in Latin, but with King James II (r. 1291-1327) the use of Aragonese and, especially Catalan, increased considerably. Soon after, Catalan became the most important language of the Chancellery to such an extent that with the reign of

King Peter IV of Aragon (r. 1336-1387), Catalan became one of the most uniform languages in the Romance world with regards to the writing system, thanks to the so-called *Orders of the Palace* (1344). The influence of the Chancellery can be noticed in the writing of the *Four Great Catalan Chronicles*, by King James I (second half of the thirteen century), Bernat Desclot (ca. 1288), Ramon Muntaner (ca. 1328), and, particularly, in the chronicle written by King Peter IV (1375). Ramon Llull wrote an impressive body of mainly religious and philosophical literary works with a surprising level of syntactic and lexical sophistication. Finally, with the Mediterranean expansion of the Crown of Aragon, Catalan became the first Iberian international language. One example is the Sardinian city of *l'Alguer*. The island of Sardinia was occupied by Prince Alfons, future King Alfons the Benign (r. 1327-1336) in 1323. The city of *l'Alguer* revolted several times with the help of Pisa and Genova. This is why Catalan is still spoken nowadays in *l'Alguer*. Peter the IV (r. 1336-1387) took possession of the city in 1354 but, since the revolts did not stop, in 1372 the King banished all the population of the city and repopulated it exclusively with Catalan-speakers (Veny and Massanell 205). This is why Catalan is still spoken nowadays in *l'Alguer*.

In the fifteenth century there was a change of dynasty in the Crown of Aragon. In 1412 with the *Compromís de Casp* (Agreement of Casp) Ferdinand I (r. 1412-1416) became the first Catalan-Aragonese king from the Castilian House of Trastámara. Until then the kings of the Crown of Aragon had belonged to the House of Barcelona-Aragon. With the new Dynasty the sociolinguistic status of the language did not change, although Castilian became the usual private language of the Trastámara monarchs. With the reign of Alfonso the Magnanimous (r. 1416-1458), the Kingdom of Valencia becomes the economic, demographic, and cultural center of the Crown of Aragon. Some of the best-known literary works in Catalan were written in the 15th century by Valencian authors: Ausiàs March (1400-1459), Isabel de Villena (1430-1490), Joan Roís de Corella (1435-1497), *Tirant lo Blanc* (1490) by Joanot Martorell and Martí Joan de Galba. During the Catalan Civil War (1462-1472) between the *Generalitat de Catalunya* and King John II (r. 1458-1479) the Royal Chancellery lost part of its linguistic influence.



(Ausiàs March (1400-1459))



(Queen Isabella of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragon)

With the union of the Crown of Castile and the Crown of Aragon in 1479, Queen Isabella of Castile (r. 1474-1504) and Ferdinand of Aragon (r. 1479-1516) established their court in Castile. In 1494 the *Cancellaria reial* (Royal Chancellery of the Crown of Aragon) was replaced by the Council of Aragon as a Hispanic administrative body. Thus, at the end of the 15th century Catalan was not a court language any longer. Catalan continued to be the administrative and judicial language of the Catalan-speaking lands during the 16th and 17th centuries, but it did not undergo the process of grammaticalization of other Romance languages such as Castilian, French, Portuguese, and Italian. However, the written formal language maintained a certain degree of uniformity based on the Valencian *scripta* until at least the middle of the seventeenth century. Two events played an important role in the history of the Catalan language in the 17th century: first, the Revolt of the Principality of Catalonia against Philip IV of Spain (r. 1621-1665). This conflict weakened the relationship of the dominant social ranks of Catalonia and the rest of the Catalan-speaking lands, especially the Kingdom of Valencia, which led to an increase in linguistic divergence at least in written texts (Ferrando Francés 232-233). Second, in 1659 by the Treaty of the Pyrenees Northern Catalonia became part of the French monarchy, which started a process of substitution of the Catalan language by French mainly in formal contexts.

The death of Charles II of Spain (r. 1661-1700) without any descendants, led to the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1715), which became a European conflict. Philip V (r. 1700-1745), Louis XIV of France's grandson, was victorious and became the first king of Spain from the House of Bourbon. Having supported the other candidate, the Archduke Charles of Austria, to the Spanish throne, the Crown of Aragon, with its Catalan-speaking lands, lost its identity and privileges as part of a more centralized Spain. Thus, by the Royal Decree for Valencia and Aragón (1707) and by the Decree of *Nueva Planta* for Mallorca, Eivissa, and Catalonia (1715-1716), Catalan was no longer an administrative or judicial language in the Catalan-speaking lands. Paradoxically, the 18th century marks the beginning of an economic growth in the Catalan-speaking lands, especially in the Principality of Catalonia, which would have linguistic consequences in the following centuries.

In 1859, *Jocs Florals* or poetic contests and celebrations were organized in Barcelona and Valencia to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of the death of the Valencian poet Ausiàs March (1400-1459). This date may be considered the official beginning of the *Renaixença*: the recovery of the feeling of cultural and linguistic community by certain sectors of the cultured bourgeoisie in the Catalan-speaking lands (Ferrando Francés 243). The main objective of this movement was the search for a united literary language, with special emphasis on a common orthography. However, the process of codification of the language needed political support, which appeared mainly in Catalonia at the beginning of the twentieth century. Catalonia played a special role in the Catalan-speaking lands because it had been the most industrialized part of Spain in the 19th century. As a result, a nationalist feeling emerged from middle class intellectuals, politicians, and industrialists who were unhappy about their lack of influence on Spanish politics. Language became a common element that could unite the whole Catalan society. Catalonia played a leading role in the codification of the language in comparison to the rest of the Catalan-speaking lands.

In 1906 the first International Congress of the Catalan language was held in Barcelona. One year later, the nationalist group *Solidaritat Catalana* (Catalan Solidarity) won the elections in Catalonia. The same year the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans (IEC)* was founded as a cultural organization. In 1911 a Philological Section inside the *Institut* was established, which was equivalent to an Academy of the Catalan language. In 1913 the Philological Section approved the *Catalan orthography*, followed by the *Catalan grammar* (1918) and the *General Dictionary of the Catalan language* (1932). These three works represented the codification of the Catalan language and were based on the work of the Catalan linguist Pompeu Fabra (1868-1948). In the field of Romance Philology, this codification reinforced the acknowledgement of the separate identity of the Catalan language, which had already been supported by the publication of *Das Katalanisches* (1925) by the Swiss linguist Wilhelm Meyer-Lübke. Meyer-Lübke's book gave rise to the debate about the classification of Catalan among the Romance languages (Lledó-Guillem, "Cataluña pide la entrada" 4-6) that was mentioned above.



(Pompeu Fabra (1868-1948))

In 1932 Fabra's codification of the Catalan language was accepted by the most influential members of the cultural elite in the Catalan-speaking lands: in Catalonia, *l'Acadèmia de Bones Lletres* (Academy of Good Letters), and the *Jocs Florals* (Poetic Contests) followed the norms approved by the *IEC*. In the Balearic Islands, after the death of Antoni Maria Alcover (1862-1932), the codification of the *IEC* was accepted. Moreover, with the *Normes de Castelló* (Rules from Castelló) (1932), most Valencian cultural entities and writers accepted Fabra's codification (Ferrando Francés 279-333). While Fabra's codification has been questioned on several occasions, it is considered compositional since all the varieties were considered. Certainly, the dominant variety that was selected for the codification was the so-called central Catalan due to the cultural, demographic, economic, and political influence of the city of Barcelona. However, Fabra also selected traits from other varieties based on historical tradition, geographical extension, and literary prestige (Veny and Massanell 77). The selection, codification, and acceptance were part of the standardization of Catalan. Another important process of the standardization process was the functional elaboration of the language, so that Catalan could be used in every context: literature, science, mass media, etc.

The process of functional elaboration as well as the social use of the language was hindered and practically stopped during Franco Dictatorship (1939-1975). However, after the approval of the Spanish Constitution in 1978, Spain became *de facto* a Constitutional Monarchy. The Spanish Constitution opened the door to the decentralization of the Spanish state with the establishment of seventeen Autonomous Regions and two Autonomous Cities. Three of these Autonomous Regions established in their *Estatut d'Autonomia* or territorial Constitutions that Catalan was co-official with Castilian in their respective territories: *Estatut d'Autonomia de Catalunya* (1979, 2006, and 2010), *Estatut d'Autonomia de la Comunitat Valenciana* (1982), and *Estatut d'Autonomia de Les Illes Balears* (1983). In the *Estatut d'Autonomia de la Comunitat Valenciana* the term *valencià* is used to refer to the Catalan language.

In 2006 a new *Estatut d'Autonomia* for Catalonia was approved by both the Catalan and Spanish Governments. However, in 2010, after a period of ideological and political disagreements, and in the middle of a global economic crisis, the Spanish Constitutional Court requested that some changes be made in the text, which led to anger and tension in Catalonia. The Conservative Party, *Partido Popular (PP)* was in power in the Central Government at that moment. Two referenda for the independence of Catalonia were held on November 9, 2014, and on October 1, 2017. The results of the first referendum were considered invalid but in the second referendum, the Spanish National Police intervened to stop the vote, which led to violent confrontations in different voting locations. Soon after, on October 27, 2017, the Catalan Government declared the independence of Catalonia. As a result, the Spanish Government applied article 155 of the Spanish Constitution and temporarily removed the autonomy of Catalonia. During the two referenda, the issue of language played an important role. It was observed that while Catalan still played an important role in the support of Catalan independence and identity, the movement was also supported by non-Catalan speakers who considered themselves first and foremost Catalan.

Language features

The periphrastic preterite

Catalan has some distinctive linguistics features. Probably the most remarkable is the use of the periphrastic preterite. Thus, we find expressions such as *ahir (jo) vaig comprar el llibre* (yesterday I bought the book). One may think that *vaig comprar* may mean (I am going to buy), due to the structural resemblance to other Romance languages. However, that is not the case. The Catalan periphrastic preterit is formed with an auxiliar form that is very similar to the conjugation of the present tense indicative of *anar* (to go), but not exactly the same, since the forms of the first- and second-persons plural (“we” and “you all”) are different. The auxiliar verb is followed by the infinitive of the main verb.

Preterite of the verb *llegir* (to read)

Jo vaig escriure (I wrote)

Tu vas escriure (You wrote)

Ell, ella, vostè (or vosté) va escriure (He, she, you (formal) wrote)

*Nosaltres **vam** escriure.* (We wrote)

*Vosaltres **vau** escriure* (You all wrote)

Ells, ells, vostès (or vostés) van escriure (They, you all (formal) wrote)

Present indicative of the verb *anar* (to go)

Jo vaig (I go)

Tu vas (You go)

Ell, ella, vostè (or vosté) va (He, she, you (formal) goes)

*Nosaltres **anem*** (We go)

Vosaltres aneu. (You all go)

Ells, elles, vostès (or *vostés*) *van.* (They, you all (formal) go)

Certainly, Catalan uses a similar expression for the periphrastic future: *jo vaig a escriure* (I am going to write), which is quite similar to the periphrastic preterite (*jo vaig escriure* (I wrote)). However, while it may be used, Catalan speakers tend to avoid this periphrastic future and prefer the simple future form: *Jo escriuré* (I will write). We must also bear in mind that the simple preterite does exist in Catalan:

Jo escriví / escriguí

Tu escrivires / escrigueres

El, ella, vostè (or *vosté*) *escriví / escrigué*

Nosaltres escrivírem / escriguérem

Vosaltres escrivíreu / escriguéreu

Ells, ells, vostès (or *vostés*) *escriviren / escrigueren*

In most of the Catalan-speaking area, the simple preterite is mainly a literary form, except in the subvariety of Central Valencia that includes the cities of Valencia, Sagunt, Alzira, and Llíria. It is also common in Eivissa, except for the first-person singular *jo* with which the periphrastic form is used: *jo vaig escriure*.

The weak pronouns

One striking linguistic feature of the Catalan language is the use of the *pronoms febles* or weak pronouns. While these unstressed pronouns exist in the other Romance languages, Catalan is remarkable because of the number of weak pronouns that it has as well as their variation. Thus, an important number of the weak pronouns in Catalan have four different forms: *plena*, *reduïda*, *reforçada*, and *elidida* (full, reduced, reinforced, and with the final vowel dropped).

Here are some examples. The weak pronoun *me* may function as a first-person singular masculine or feminine direct or indirect object. Here are some of the possible forms that this weak pronoun may adopt:

Plena: vull comprar-me una taula (I want to buy myself a table)

Reduïda: compra'm la taula demà si pots (Buy me the table tomorrow, if you can)

Reforçada: em compraré una taula aviat (I will buy myself a table soon)

Elidida: m'has comprat una taula massa gran (You bought me a table that is too big)

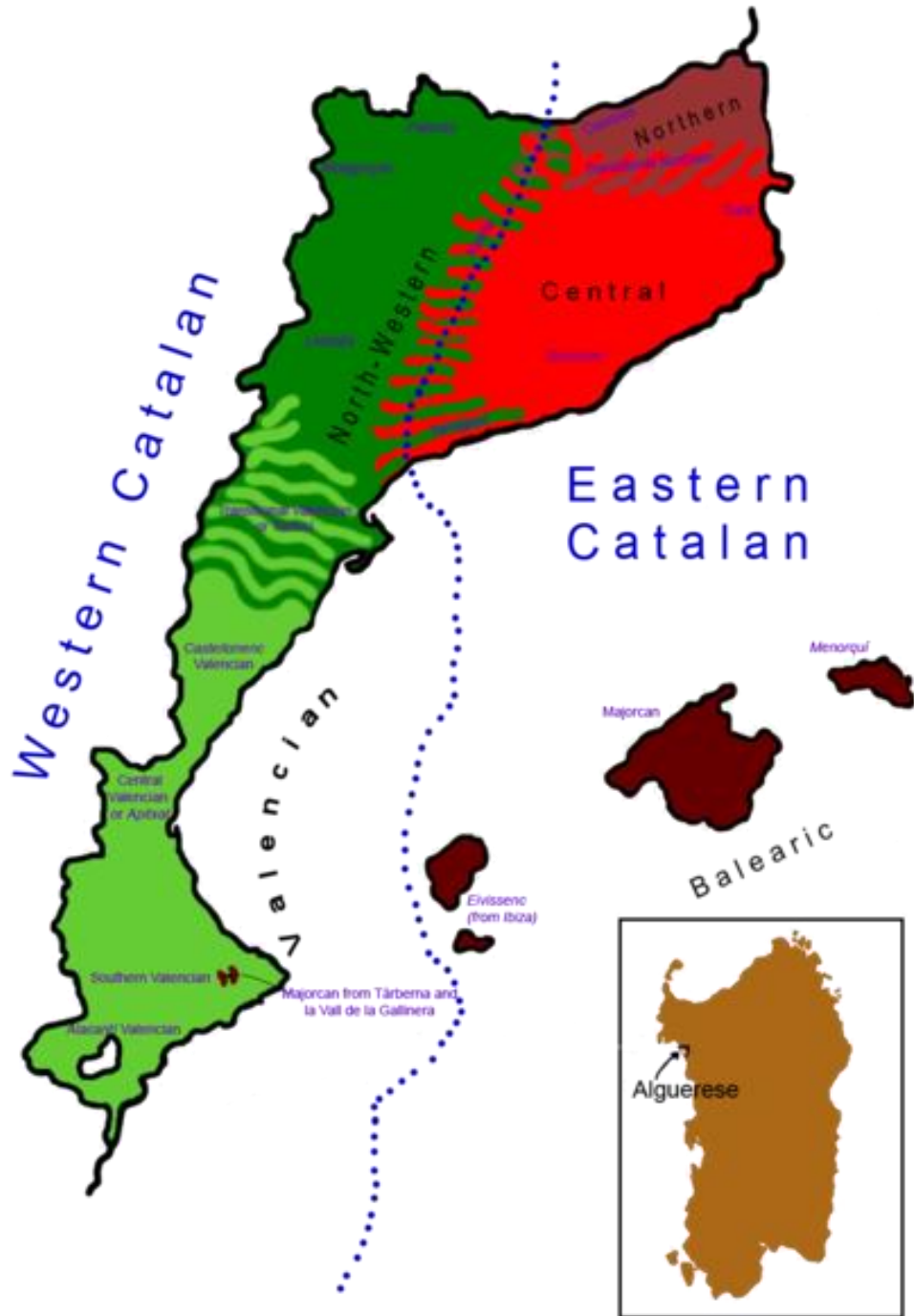
Among the weak pronouns, Catalan uses *ho* for the neuter direct object pronoun. This pronoun derives from the Latin demonstrative neuter pronoun *hoc* and constitutes an exception in the Romance World.

T'ho vaig dir (I told you so)

Use of the personal article

In Catalan is quite common to use a personal article before singular personal names in informal contexts. This use is not considered vulgar. The personal articles are: *el, la, l', en, na, n'*. For example: *el Joan, la Neus, l'Elena, en Pere, na Maria, n'Amparo, na Isabel*. These articles, and the definite articles in general, are transformed into *l'* or *n'* before a word that starts with vowel or “h”, except when the feminine articles *la* and *na* appear before a word that starts with unstressed *i, u, hi, or hu*. For example: *na Isabel*. Personal articles are used mainly in the Balearic Islands and Catalonia, except for Tortosa. It is less frequently used in the other Catalan-speaking areas.

Varieties of Catalan



(Map 6)



(Map 7)

Catalan has two main varieties: the eastern and the western. There are about fifteen differences between them (Veny and Massanell 97) but traditionally two phonetic traits have been considered as the main criteria to distinguish them. First, the western variety distinguishes between unstressed *e* and *a*: *Pere* (Peter) vs *pera* (pear): [ˈpere] vs [ˈpera]. However, the eastern variety does not differentiate them and pronounces them as [ə], which means that the name “Peter” and the fruit “pear” are pronounced the same: [ˈperə]. Second, the western variety distinguishes between unstressed *o* and *u*: *posar* (to put) is pronounced as [poˈzar] or [poˈza] in the western variety versus [puˈza] in the eastern variety. The western variety is used in Andorra, the western part of Catalonia, and all the Catalan-speaking area of the Region of Valencia. The eastern variety is typical of Northern Catalonia, eastern Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, and the city of *l’Alguer*. Western Catalan may be divided into two subgroups: Northwestern and Valencian. Eastern Catalan may be divided into Northern Catalan, Central Catalan, Balearic, and *alguerès*.

Current circumstances and future challenges and opportunities

Nowadays Catalan is taught and studied in many European and North American Universities. The field of Catalan sociolinguistics is especially strong in a moment in which language contact, globalization, and language ideologies play an important role in society and academia. The study of Catalan in Spanish universities outside the Catalan-speaking area is still deficient. In fact, one of the future challenges should be the increase in the teaching of Catalan all over the Spanish State at all levels so that monolingual Castilian speakers could become more familiarized with the multilingual situation of Spain.

Catalan scholars and speakers must invest time and energy making sure that Catalan is considered an anonymous language that is not limited to mark the authenticity of native speakers. An anonymous language is ideologically considered the language of everybody and of nobody as it is considered mainly an instrument of communication. An authentic language underlines the separate identity of a certain group and it is not considered adequate to become a

global language (Woolard, 22-30). While the process has already started quite successfully, particularly in Catalonia, it is still important to emphasize that Catalan can be the language of everybody and nobody. This process implies using Catalan in every sector of society.

It is also important for the future of the language to increase the contact between the different Catalan-speaking regions, especially in mass media and cultural events. For example, recently there have been agreements between the Catalan and the Valencian Governments to broadcast their respective public TV channels in both Catalonia and Valencia. This move may help enhance the contact between the Philological Section of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*, founded in Barcelona in 1907 and the *Acadèmia Valenciana de la Llengua*, founded in Valencia between 1998 and 2001. Both institutions oversee the codification of the Catalan language.

Questions for further study

Questions for Undergraduate students

- A. Why is Catalan spoken in the *Carxe* and what variety do they use?
- B. It has been argued that Ausiàs March was the first poet who used Catalan for courtly lyric poetry? Give reasons to support or deny this statement
- C. What may the bilingualism in the Catalan-speaking lands be considered diglossia? Is the level of diglossia similar in all the Catalan-speaking lands?
- D. Describe and compare the importance of the work of Pompeu Fabra (1868-1948) and Antoni Maria Alcover (1862-1932) regarding the Catalan language.
- E. After describing five more differences between the eastern and western varieties of the Catalan language, explain the main differences between the northwestern and the Valencian varieties.

Questions for Graduate students

- F. Explain the linguistic and historical context that led to the foundation of the *Institut d'Estudis Catalans* and *La Acadèmia Valenciana de la Llengua*. Do you think that we can consider Catalan a pluricentric language?
- G. How did the publication of *Das Katalanisches* (1925) by Wilhem Meyer-Lübke relate to the discussion about the classification of Catalan among the Romance languages in the first half of the twentieth century?
- H. Analyze the context and the importance of the *Normes de Castelló* (Rules from Castelló) (1932).
- I. Explain the importance of the *Regles d'esquivar vocables o mots grossers o pagesívols* (How to avoid words that are either vulgar or used by peasants) (ca. 1492).
- J. It has been argued that the Catalan varieties of the Valencian Region and the Balearic Islands are more archaic than Central Catalan. Explain if you agree and support your conclusions with examples
- K. Analyze the linguistic ideological debate that took place when the Frankfurt Book Fair decided to feature Catalonia in 2007.

Works cited

“A Andorra és on el català té un poder d’atracció més important.” *El Periòdic*, 8 July, 2016, <https://www.parlament.cat/document/cataleg/48089.pdf>.

Aguiló-Mora, Francisca, and Andrew Lynch. (2017). “¿Hablas castellano? Do you speak English? o Xerres mallorquí? Ideologías y actitudes lingüísticas en Mallorca en una era de crisis económica.” *Studies in Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 189-223.

Catalan. The Catalan language in education in France. Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, https://www.mercator-research.eu/fileadmin/mercator/documents/regional_dossiers/catalan_in_france_2nd.pdf.
Estatut d’Autonomia de Catalunya. Edició 2016. (2016). Parlament de Catalunya, <https://www.parlament.cat/document/cataleg/48089.pdf>.

Estatut d’Autonomia de la Comunitat Valenciana. (1982). Corts Valencianes, <https://www.cortsvalencianes.es/ca-va/composicionnormasest-autonomia/9925>.

Estatut d’Autonomia de les Illes Balears. (1983), <http://web.parlamentib.es/RecursosWeb/DOCS/EstatutAutonomiaIB.pdf>.

Ferrando Francés, Antoni. *Fabra, Moll i Sanchis Guarner. La construcció d’una llengua moderna de cultura des de la diversitat*. Universitat de València, 2018.

Ferrando Francés, Antoni, and Miquel Nicolás Amorós. *Història de la llengua catalana. (Nova edició revisada i ampliada)*. UOC, 2011.

Hawkey, James. (2018). *Language Attitudes and Minority Rights. The Case of Catalan in France*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Lledó-Guillem, Vicente. “Cataluña pide la entrada en la Francofonía: el retorno a la subagrupación románica del catalán y el proyecto político-lingüístico del Estado español.” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, vol. 94, no. 1, 2010, pp. 1-18.

---. *The Making of Catalan Linguistic Identity in Medieval and Early Modern Times*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Minder, Raphael. "Italy's Last Bastion of Catalan Language Struggles to Keep It Alive." *The New York Times*, 21 Nov. 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/21/world/europe/catalan-italy-alghero.html>.

Veny, Joan & Mar Massanell. *Dialectologia catalana. Aproximació pràctica als parlars catalans*. Universitat de Barcelona, Universitat d'Alacant, Universitat de València, 2015.

Woolard, Kathryn A. *Singular and Plural. Ideologies of Linguistic Authority in 21st Century Catalonia*. Oxford UP, 2016.

Bibliography

Argenter, Joan A., and Jens Lüdtke, editors. *Manual of Catalan Linguistics*. De Gruyter, 2020. *Manuals of Romance Linguistics* 25.

Batlle, Mar, et al. *Gramàtica històrica de la llengua catalana*. Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2016. Biblioteca Abat Oliba 299.

Dols, Nicolau, and Richard Mansell. *Catalan. An Essential Grammar*. Routledge, 2017.

Ferrando Francés, Antoni. *Consciència idiomàtica i nacional dels valencians*. Universitat de València, Institut de Ciències de l'Educació, Institut de Filologia Valenciana, 1980.

---. *Fabra, Moll i Sanchis Guarner. La construcció d'una llengua moderna de cultura des de la diversitat*. Universitat de València, 2018.

Ferrando Francés, Antoni, and Miquel Nicolás Amorós. *Història de la llengua catalana. (Nova edició revisada i ampliada)*. UOC, 2011

Fuster, Joan. *Nosaltres els valencians*. Edicions 62, 1962.

Lledó-Guillem, Vicente. "Cataluña pide la entrada en la Francofonía: el retorno a la subagrupación románica del catalán y el proyecto político-lingüístico del Estado español." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, vol. 94, no. 1, 2017, pp. 1-18.

---. *The Making of Catalan Linguistic Identity in Medieval and Early Modern Times*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

- . "Revisiting Early Modern Spain: the *Manifiesto por una lengua común* of 2008 and its Ideological Precedents." *eHumanista*, vol. 17, 2011, pp. 254-70, https://www.ehumanista.ucsb.edu/sites/secure.lsit.ucsb.edu.span.d7_eh/files/sitefiles/ehumanista/volume17/10%20ehumanista17.lledo.pdf.
- Martí-Badia, Adrià. *La consciència lingüística dels valencians (1854-1906)*. Biblioteca Sanchis Guarnier, Institut Interuniversitari de Filologia Valenciana, Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2020.
- Mas i Forners, Antoni. *Llengua, terra, pàtria i nació. L'evolució de la consciència lingüística i etnocultural entre els cristians de l'illa de Mallorca. Segles XIV-XVII*. 2nd ed., Documenta Balear, 2020.
- Moll, Francesc de Borja. *Gramàtica històrica catalana*. Corrected and annotated edition. Universitat de València, 2006. Biblioteca lingüística catalana 31.
- Nadal, Josep M. & Modest Prats. *Història de la llengua catalana. Volum 1. Dels orígens al segle XV*. Edicions 62, 1982.
- . *Història de la llengua catalana. Volum 2. El segle XV*. Edicions 62, 1996.
- Pradilla Cardona, Miguel Àngel, ed. *Catalan Sociolinguistics. State of the art and future challenges*. John Benjamins, 2022.
- Rafanell, August. *La il·lusió occitana. La llengua dels catalans entre Espanya i França*. Quaderns Crema, 2006. Assaig 37. 2 vols.
- Veny, Joan & Mar Massanell. *Dialectologia catalana. Aproximació pràctica als parlars catalans*. Universitat de Barcelona, Universitat d'Alacant, Universitat de València, 2015.
- Wheeler, Max, et al. *Catalan: A Comprehensive Grammar*. Routledge, 1999.
- Woolard, Kathryn A. *Singular and Plural. Ideologies of Linguistic Authority in 21st Century Catalonia*. Oxford UP, 2016.

About the autor

Dr. Vicente Lledó-Guillem is Full Professor of Spanish at Hofstra University. He holds a PhD in Hispanic Languages and Literatures from the University of California at Berkeley (2005). He also holds a Master's Degree in Hispanic Literatures from the University of Miami, where he received the *Award of Academic Merit* in 2000. Professor Lledó-Guillem obtained his Bachelor's Degree in English Language and Literature from the Universitat d'Alacant (Spain) in 1997, during which he completed three semesters at the University of Ulster at Coleraine and Queen's University of Belfast in Northern Ireland.

Professor Lledó-Guillem's main area of research is the history of the Spanish and Catalan languages from ideological, political, and cultural perspectives. His publications have focused on the Middle Ages and, especially, on the Early Modern Period, with occasional incursions into the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Apart from his publications on language ideology and the history of Spanish and Catalan languages, he has also published on Catalan chronicles, Neoplatonism in literature, Mysticism, epic poetry, and queer theory. In addition, he is a specialist on the work of Bernardo de Aldrete (1565-1654). Dr. Lledó-Guillem is the author of two book monographs: *Literatura o imperio: La construcción de las lenguas castellana y catalana en la España renacentista* (Juan de la Cuesta, 2008) and *The Making of Catalan Linguistic Identity in Medieval and Early Modern Times* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-72080-7>. This second monograph, in which the history of Catalan is told *vis-à-vis* its relationship with Occitan, was later published in Spanish as *La formación de la identidad lingüística catalana (siglos XIII-XVII)* (Marcial Pons, 2019) <https://www.marcialpons.es/libros/la-formacion-de-la-identidad-linguistica-catalana-siglos-xiii-xvii/9788416662890/>.

Professor Lledó-Guillem has been named the **Marià Villangómez Visiting Chair of Catalan Studies at Leipzig University** in Germany. He was already the Chair from November 2020 to January 2021 and he has an open invitation to travel to Leipzig University to teach and organize events to promote Catalan language and culture abroad. The Marià Villangómez Visiting Chair of Catalan Studies was established at Leipzig by the *Institut Ramon Llull* to raise the visibility and prestige of studies and research into Catalan language and culture.

<https://news.hofstra.edu/2020/11/10/professor-named-visiting-chair-of-catalan-studies-at-leipzig-university-germany>

Because of his wide range of academic interests, Professor Lledó-Guillem teaches Medieval and Early Modern Hispanic Literature and Hispanic Linguistics at Hofstra University. You can check his CV at <https://hofstra.academia.edu/VicenteLled%C3%B3Guillem/CurriculumVitae>. Some of the links to his work are:

Lledó-Guillem, Vicente. “Ramon Muntaner, *Crònica* (Catalonia, ca. 1330) on the Catalan vengeance (English .doc) (1305-1307).” *Open Iberia/América Teaching Anthology*, edited by David Wacks, 2019, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17613/gzva-cn05>.

Lledó-Guillem, Vicente. “Ramon Muntaner, *Crònica* (Catalonia, ca. 1330) on the Catalan vengeance (Spanish .doc) (1305-1307).” *Open Iberia/América Teaching Anthology*, edited by David Wacks, 2019, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17613/x9w3-3t91>.

Lledó-Guillem, Vicente. “Jorge de Montemayor traduce a Ausiàs March: la creación de un mito barroco.” *Escribir y persistir. Estudios sobre la literatura en catalán desde la Edad Media a la Renaixença*, edited by Josep Vicent Escartí, vol. 2, Argus-a, 2013, pp. 68-92, <http://doczz.es/doc/4976199/escribir-ypersistir---argus-a>.

Lledó-Guillem, Vicente. “Revisiting Early Modern Spain: the *Manifiesto por una lengua común* of 2008 and its Ideological Precedents.” *eHumanista* 17, 2011, pp. 254-70, https://www.ehumanista.ucsb.edu/sites/secure.lsit.ucsb.edu.span.d7_eh/files/sitefiles/ehumanista/volume17/10%20ehumanista17.lledo.pdf.