

## **The situation of ‘vernacular languages’ in the Francoist primary education. Pressures, claims and debates on the inclusion of these languages in the General Education Law of the Spanish State (1970).**

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classes homogènes. *Paedagogica Historica* XXXI: 1,125-150; Terrón, A., Comelles, J. M y Perdiguero, E. (2017), Schools and Health Education during the Dictatorship of General Franco (1939-1975), *History of Education Review* (Monographic Issue Schools and Management of Public Health); Terron, A. y Álvarez, J.A (coords) (2019) *La educación en Asturias. Estudios históricos*. Oviedo, RIDEA. She is currently developing, with medical historians and anthropologists, research projects on health education and outreach in Franco's Spain.

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## **The situation of ‘vernacular languages’ in the Francoist primary education. Pressures, claims and debates on the inclusion of these languages in the General Education Law of the Spanish State (1970).**

The General Education Law was approved half a century ago. It was designed by the Francoism to reform the Educational System, adjusting itself to the liberal-developmental approach that Franco’s regime followed in its last few decades. The oppression that the so-called “vernacular languages” were subject to during the former years of the Francoism made their learning recognition to stand out amidst the rest of the changes and developments that this law provided. The aim of this paper is to review the concepts and measures that structured the Francoist educational politics in regards to languages. Special attention will be paid to the causes, foreseen in the *Libro Blanco* (Spanish for “White Book”), that fostered the change established in the 1970 Law. We present the idea that the incorporation of the regional languages to the new policies happened to fulfil the idiomatic regulations requested by the UNESCO and the Catholic Church; and to meet the need to cope with the popular currents of linguistic demand emerging in the scenario of socio-labour conflict that characterised the final years of the dictatorship. A moment that was determined by the tensions generated within a system reluctant to change its traditional values, although it was forced to resolve the external and internal pressures that urged it to recognise the multilingual reality of the Spanish State at schools.

Keywords: francoism, General Education Law, minority languages, bilingualism, Spain.

### **Introduction**

The aim of this paper is to examine the events and socio-political debates unfolding in Spain during the late Francoist period. These events resulted in the acceptance of the vernacular languages in the 1970 General Education Law (LGE, Spanish acronym for *Ley General de Educación*).

Spain constitutes a multilingual territory in which, besides Spanish, several regional languages are spoken. This article focuses on Catalan, Basque and Galician. Historically, a diglossic order<sup>1</sup> has prevailed in the bilingual regions that only tried to be structurally repaired during the second republican period<sup>2</sup> and the democratic restoration. For centuries, Spanish has worked as a politically and socially prestigious language, dominating communicative situations in both, formal and public spheres (education, administration, information, legitimate culture...), while regional languages have maintained, in general, a lowered social status: restricted to family and folkloric contexts.

The language policy of the Francoism was characterized by the enforcement of linguistic homogeneity, based on the Spanish language. Conversi states that between 1914 and 1945 Europe experienced the peak of cultural homogenisation and ethnic cleansing policies<sup>3</sup>. According to Molina Aparicio, it is in this context, and in

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<sup>1</sup> Francisco Moreno Fernández. *Historia social de las lenguas de España*. (Barcelona: Ariel, 2005). Please, consult, for a brief description on the historical process of social recession of non-Spanish languages. For a definition of the sociolinguistic term 'diglossia', see Joshua Fishman. *Sociología del lenguaje*. (Madrid: Cátedra, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> The Second Republic constituted the democracy that existed in Spain between 14 April 1931 and 1 April 1939. The approval of the Constitution in December 1931 supposed the end of the Provisional Government and the beginning of the first biennium (1931-1933). The Republican-Socialist coalition leading the country during that period undertook extensive modernising reforms. The second biennium (1933-1935) was governed by the right-wing coalition, which tried to change the policies of the previous two-year period. The Popular Front, a grouping of left-wing parties, won the 1936 elections. On 18 July 1936, the military coup against the government triggered the Civil War. On 1 April 1939, the triumph of the rebel side put an end to the Second Republic and consolidated the Franco dictatorship.

<sup>3</sup> Daniele Conversi. "Nación, estado y cultura: por una historia política y social de la homogeneización cultural". *Historia contemporánea* 45 (2012).

conjunction with the spread of such dynamics, that the action of standardisation carried out by the Spanish dictatorship<sup>4</sup> takes place. It is thus possible to connect the linguistic repression carried out by Franco's regime with that practised in other scenarios subjected to fascist totalitarianism<sup>5</sup>, such as that of Mussolini's Italy<sup>6</sup>. Likewise, connections can be traced with what happened in different Latin American territories which, after the establishment of dictatorial regimes, were hampered in the development of educational experiences in indigenous languages that had been implemented since the first decades of the 20th century<sup>7</sup>.

Two phases can be distinguished with regard to the conception and application of the homogenising action perpetrated by Franco's regime. The first phase (1936-1953) was characterized by the country's isolation, a consequence of the role played during World War II by a Spain that, despite not participating actively in the conflict, supported the Axis powers. The Regime established autarky and showed immunity towards any kind of international influence, also in the educational and cultural fields. On the other hand, despite the announcement of the end of the Spanish civil war by Franco on April 1, 1939, the state of war continued until 1948. Throughout this period, which may

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<sup>4</sup> Fernando Molina Aparicio. “‘La reconstrucción de la nación’. Homogeneización cultural y nacionalización de masas en la España franquista (1936-1959)”. *Historia y Política* 38 (2017)

<sup>5</sup> Francisco Morente Valero. “Los fascismos europeos y la política educativa del franquismo”, *Historia de la Educación* 24 (2005).

<sup>6</sup> Gabriella Klein. “Language policy during the fascist period: the case of language education”, in *Languaje, power and ideology*, ed. Ruth Wodak (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> Luís Enrique López & Wolfgang Küper. “La educación intercultural bilingüe en America Latina: balance y perspectivas”. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación* 20 (1999).

continue until 1952, the winning side implemented a brutal political cleansing operation against those elements considered contrary to their National-Catholic ideology<sup>8</sup>.

Prosecution and repression of non-Spanish languages spoken in public and semi-public spaces was the coercive measure to enforce the language policy. A trend that turned specifically intense during the extension period of the state of war, being specifically obvious in those territories whose languages had been socially and politically standardised during the Second Spanish Republic. These languages were now observed as direct descendants of the *rojo-separatista*<sup>9</sup> threat. Such a policy was not promoted by any general law establishing the official nature of the Spanish language as the one and only language, outlawing the remaining ones. Instead, the tool to promote this was the use of an authoritative and omnipresent force that would dictate a state of permanent suspicion, terror and coerciveness among the population; and the enactment of certain sectarian rules that imposed Castilian Spanish, penalising the use of regional languages in the spheres they referred to<sup>10</sup>.

In this first phase, the Circular to the Inspection of First Education and National, Municipal and Private Teachers of National Spain of March 5, 1938, and the Law of July 17, 1945 on Primary Education, covered the regulation of elementary education. In 1953, the National Questionnaires for Primary Education were also published, detailing

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<sup>8</sup> Jorge Marco, “Rethinking the postwar period in Spain: violence and irregular Civil War, 1939-52” *Journal of Contemporary History* 55, 3 (2020)

<sup>9</sup> *Rojo-separatismo* was the Francoist term to refer to the enemies of the national integrity of the Spanish State. The expression alluded to the left-leaning ideologies and peripheral nationalisms.

<sup>10</sup> Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas, “La región y lo local en el primer franquismo”, in *Imaginarios y representaciones de España durante el franquismo*, coords. Stéphane Michonneau & Núñez Seixas (Madrid: Casa Velázquez, 2014).

and expanding on this law. These arrangements turned the schools into spaces of “worship to God and the Motherland”, as stated in the mentioned Circular, imposing Spanish as the only teaching language.

The second stage (1953-1975) is our focus of interest. Once the state of war was over, the totalitarianism from the first phase of Franco's regime led to authoritarianism, and repressive attitudes showed signs of relaxation. The military agreements signed in 1953 between the Regime<sup>11</sup> and the United States interrupt the situation of isolation, prevailing to that day. Spain joins international organizations, and from 1957 on a technocratic approach aimed at openness and economic development is implemented. Pressure against the regional languages decreases, finding new means of diffusion among the growing network of popular associations initiated at the beginning of the sixties, leading the social mobilizations that ultimately undermine the Regime. The educational order will be progressively adapted to the new economic, productive and social demands, while trying to preserve the founding principles of Francoism. Upon the enactment of a first legislative bill to continue the ideas of the first period, represented by Law 169/1965, December 21, 1965, on the reform of Primary Education, a process of organic reform of the school system<sup>12</sup> will start in 1968. This process began with the publication of the *Libro Blanco* in 1969, a document that laid the foundations for the educational reform, and reached its peak with the discussion and approval of the General Education Law of 1970.

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<sup>11</sup> Hereafter, the term “the Regime” will be used in this paper to address Franco’s dictatorship in Spain.

<sup>12</sup> Antonio Viñao. *Escuela para todos*. (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2004).

### **The educational language policy in the first years of the Francoism (1936-1953)**

The first attack on the standardisation of regional languages happened due to the destruction of the republican legal system. Once the 1931 Constitution was overridden, the autonomous states, and the co-official position of the Catalan, Galician and Basque languages got eliminated, together with its right to be taught. The rest of non-recognised languages by the Republic would suffer the same condition during the Francoism. The use of such a language in public would suffer the same constraining logic as the three aforementioned ones.

In this connection, the educational policy adjusted itself to the strategy of the Regime towards language homogeneity and repression. In July 1940 the civil governor of Barcelona, Wenceslao Gonzalez Oliveros, issued “the exclusive use of the Spanish language for public services.”<sup>13</sup> The order enforced a diglossia that was characterised by the language policy of the dictatorship, accepting the use of regional languages exclusively in private and domestic circles. “The misuse and displacement of the official language” that the republican policies had generalised in a public sphere should be eradicated<sup>14</sup>. The text established the automatic destitution of all public officials that, while at work, would speak in any other language different to Spanish. This criterion was specifically applied for those who were teachers of the State. When speaking about private teachers, any transgressor would be personally disqualified from teaching<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Wenceslao González Oliveros, “El uso del idioma nacional en todos los servicios públicos”, *La vanguardia*, 30 July 1940, 3. All quotations on this paper have been specifically translated from Spanish to English for this essay, unless the work cited is an English original source.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*



The homogenizing nature of schools under the dictatorship period according to their ‘Spanish-centered’ precepts got reflected on the Law of July 17, 1945 on Primary Education<sup>16</sup>. The law turned into the main programme of the Francoism in regards to education until 1970. In its preface, the rule was presented to have the goal of repairing the radical subversion of values of the republicans, according to the fascist government. They accused the republicans of “uprooting the Christian feeling from the education” and of “awaking materialistic and denationalising influences”<sup>17</sup>. To fight this, schools got devoted to the *Movimiento Nacional*<sup>18</sup>, declaring an essentially Catholic and Spanish type of education. The legislation conceived education in the new Spanish State as a tool “to achieve a strong national sentiment and to install national pride and joy in the souls of the future generations”<sup>19</sup>, similarly declaring that “the Spanish language, a crucial link for the Hispanic community, will be obligatory and specially cultivated amongst all National Primary Education.”<sup>20</sup>

Aside from the production of the new regulatory framework, another element that functioned in practice as an instrument of linguistic homogenization must be taken into account: the dramatic purge of republican teachers. The teaching and intellectual body represented the sworn enemy of the rebels, and they were considered the main spreading intermediary of the republican ideals in favour of democracy, progress and

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<sup>16</sup> “Ley de 17 de julio de 1945 sobre Educación Primaria”, *BOE*, 18 July 1945, n. 199.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Spanish for “National Movement”. Name by which the government institution was recognized in times of the dictatorship. It was composed for the sole legal party, the single union trade, all civil servants and the different official social organizations (Female Section, Youth Front, Social Aid...). It was also known as *El Movimiento*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* art. 6

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* art. 7

pluralism<sup>21</sup>. The teaching body purge happened almost immediately following the Decree of 8 November 1936, finalising with one quarter of the total teaching staff being sanctioned<sup>22</sup>. Accusations against suspected “denationalising” teaching activities were popular in the Galicia, the Basque Country and Catalonia. Charges against a big part of the teaching staff referred to militant nationalist activities and to the implementation of “unacceptable teaching techniques” that, among other aspects, were related to teaching their own languages<sup>23</sup>. This cleansing finished in Catalonia with a purge of 27% of the teaching staff, whilst in Pontevedra and Vizcaya, 25% and 30% of the teaching body was penalised respectively. Special attention should be drawn towards the cases that were punished with compulsory relocation to another province: 10.30% in Catalonia; 15.22% in Pontevedra, and 15.21% in Vizcaya. Morente Valero attributes such a reprisal to a punishment for teaching and speaking regional languages within the classroom<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup>The purge would gain large dimensions. It was called “a sacred mission” to eradicate the “poisoners of the popular soul, main responsables for the crimes and destructions that scare the world and have brought grief into most honest Spanish homes.” Comisión de Cultura y Enseñanza, “Circular a los Vocales de las Comisiones Depuradoras de Instrucción Pública”, *BOE*, 10 December 1936, n. 52.

<sup>22</sup> Morente Valero, *La escuela y el Estado Nuevo: la depuración del magisterio nacional (1936-1943)* (Valladolid: Ámbito, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* Deportation was the established punishment for teachers that “being professionally and morally flawless, have agreed with the nationalist parties of the Basque Country, Catalonia, Navarra, Galicia, etc., not having taken direct or indirect participation in the secessionist communistic subversion.” Comisión de Cultura y Enseñanza, “Circular Vocales Comisiones Depuradoras”.

The terrifying numbers of the purge can explain the extent to which the teaching body was harmed<sup>25</sup>. The repopulation happened by offering 4,000 teaching job opportunities to provisional sub-lieutenants of the army<sup>26</sup>. Around 2,200 teaching positions fell into the hands of former combatants, followers of *El Movimiento*<sup>27</sup>. The number was not enough to meet the teaching needs. Although, it was good to ensure the presence of an *army of instructors* in schools that were totally identified with the educational criteria of the Regime. They would not only be there to indoctrinate accordingly to the requirements of the new Spanish State, but also would monitor the behaviour and methods carried out by the other teachers. Apart from the results that, in quantitative terms, the purge could mean for the situation of regional languages at school due to the disablement or relocation of teachers that worried about the issue, we consider that the main result of this atrocious cleansing process was its own capacity to sow the seeds of fear amongst the Spanish teaching staff in that moment. They managed to coercively enforce every subversive urge about those predefined teaching guidelines, regarding languages or any other aspect.

Everything together: the repression against the language nurtured by the legal imperative of Castilian Spanish in primary education; the purge of dissident members of

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<sup>25</sup> As a result of the armed conflict, deaths or exile should also be added to those numbers.

<sup>26</sup> Jefatura del Estado, “Ley de 26 de enero de 1940 convocando un concurso para proveer cuatro mil plazas del Magisterio entre Oficiales Provisionales, de Complemento y Honoríficos del Ejército”, *BOE*, 7 February 1940, n. 38.

<sup>27</sup> Ministerio de Educación Nacional, “Orden por la que se nombran para los destinos que se indican a los Oficiales del Ejército que han sido admitidos en el Concurso de Magisterio Nacional”, *BOE*, 12 July 1940, n. 194; “Transcribiendo relación de Oficiales Provisionales, de Complemento y Honoríficos del Ejército, admitidos y excluidos, en principio, al concurso de ingreso en el Magisterio Nacional”, *BOE*, 1 November 1941, n. 305.

the teaching staff, which was then replaced by devotees of the Francoism; and the expansion of a controlling and constraining state towards teaching techniques and teachers, finalised with all regional languages being banished from schools. Basic education turned into a monolingual space dedicated to the Castilian language and its glorification. In 1968, the ex-falange<sup>28</sup> member, Dionisio Ridruejo described the resulting situation as follows:

“Every written or oral manifestation of regional languages was for years forbidden. Cultural Institutes were closed, the teaching of languages outlawed, the lettering in banners translated, and the cities and villages were replete of rude recommendations: ‘Speak Spanish’, ‘Speak the language of the Empire’, etc.”<sup>29</sup>

### **Francoist educational policy regarding languages during the developmentalist period (1953-1970): The General Education Law**

The intolerance of the Regime towards the use of non-Castilian languages in public spheres started bashfully loosening up, without losing their “diglossic premises”. Regional languages were allowed to be used in a controlled way in certain public spaces, and in certain folkloric or festive activities. But, the only one language to be officially used, and therefore accepted in formal or “significant” situations, was Castilian Spanish.

The lifting of the state of war in 1948 was a call to softening the measures taken all along the first years of the dictatorship against languages. This was an issue that was justified on the basis of the political nature and the secessionist threat that those languages allegedly represented. Once the fulfilment of the new Spanish State was

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<sup>28</sup> National Catholic party founded in 1933 by Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera. By Franco's decree, in 1937 Falange merged with the Traditionalist Communion to form the sole legal party of the Regimen.

<sup>29</sup> Dionisio Ridruejo, *Escrito en España* (Madrid: G. del Toro Editor, 1976), 222.

officially announced, together with the removal of its divergent element, all regional languages stopped being the focus of the belligerent rhetoric that was used against them in past circumstances. However, the agreements signed by the Regime and the U.S. government (1953), the integration of Spain into international entities (UNESCO, IMF, OECE) and the subsequent remodelling of the government whereby the technocrats of Opus Dei<sup>30</sup> were in charge of the Technical Secretariat of the Presidency (1957), provided the conditions to promote a business development plan based on the 1959 National Plan of Economic Stabilization<sup>31</sup>. This new model also required the softening of certain enforced oppressive policies in order to display the international image of a more modern and tolerant country. In this regard, regional languages gradually gained more public visibility.

In 1968, The Ministry of Education and Science (MEC, Spanish acronym for *Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia*), led by Villar Palasí, started a comprehensive overhaul of the educational system to replace the outdated Moyano Law (1857), adapting the system to the demands of the new developmental model. Amongst all proposals that the Ministry presented for its political and social consideration, obviously

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<sup>30</sup> Institution of the Catholic Church originally established in Spain. *Opus Dei* is Latin for “Work of God”.

<sup>31</sup> The Plan defined two approaches: to stabilize the country's accumulated foreign deficit, and to liberalise it. This approach implied the acceptance of liberal capitalism without any setbacks, and proposed a series of measures to: internationally expand the Spanish economy; introduce competition; and substitute intervention for market. Albert Carreras & Xavier Tafunell. *Entre el imperio y la globalización*. (Barcelona: Crítica, 2018). This plan, and its subsequent detailed planning, included a series of guidelines designed to harmonize the educational system in line with the demands of the new economic paradigm, mainly based on tourism and industrialization See Gabriela Ossenbach & Alberto Martínez Boom. “Itineraries of the discourses on development and education in Spain and Latin America (circa 1950-1970)” *Paedagogica Historica*, 47, 5 (2011).

according to the organic and strict allowed methods, there was one that stood out. As pointed out by Villar Palasí:

*“El Libro Blanco and the bill that the government submitted to Spanish Courts (...) does not only recognise the vernacular languages, when considering the joyful reality of its existence, but also praises them, considering them a linguistic expression of rich cultural heritage of Spain.”*<sup>32</sup>

The so-called *Libro Blanco* was a singular document resulting from the critical examination of the Spanish educational system conceived as a guideline to be followed by the reform. It identified the “respect and fostering of regional values that enrich Spanish homogeneity”<sup>33</sup> as the principles that should regulate the new educational system. Accordingly, the proposed programme for Primary Education considered the acquisition of “the national language and the introduction to a foreign language” as essential aspects of the language area, and “in bilingual regions, language studies will be able to be completed with the study of their own vernacular language.”<sup>34</sup> This way, the bill recognised the language diversity of Spain inside schools. Actually, it did so in a vague and inaccurate manner, since it did not clearly affirm the incorporation of regional languages for teaching, but rather the possibility of considering their acceptance under unspecified circumstances, always subjugating regional peculiarities to the common national heritage.

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<sup>32</sup> “La enseñanza del catalán”, *La Vanguardia*, 28 January 1970, 1. The Spanish Courts was an institution of the Franco dictatorship created in 1942. It operated as an organic pseudo-parliament, charged with drafting and discussing laws. However, the legislative power was exclusively reserved to the figure of Franco.

<sup>33</sup> MEC, *La educación en España. Bases para una política educativa*, 1969, p. 206.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

But, after three decades of strong Castilian Spanish enforcement at school, the new guidelines started a new interesting perspective. What specific aspects prompted the regime to introduce these changes in school language policy when the the Primary Education Reform Law of 1965 did not change a single comma in the linguistic aspect with respect to the provisions of the 1945 Law?<sup>35</sup>

The Education and Science Commission of the Spanish Courts that was responsible for studying and debating the new bill for a General Education Law held intensive debates in spring 1970. The aspects that were mentioned during the debates threw some light regarding a change of strategy. Based on the arguments outlined by the Galician representative Antonio Rosón in his speech on 17 April, we can conclude the key aspects that impelled the fascist regime to consider regional languages in the new law: (1) the necessity to adapt the UNESCO's requirements about equity in education; (2) the psychologically and educationally vigorous tendencies that promoted the most familiar language to students as the one to be chosen to start their education with; (3) the language modifications promoted by the Catholic Church, and (4) the necessity to cope with the irrefutable sociocultural multilingual reality that should be naturalised within the educational system<sup>36</sup>.

Thereupon, the language question on basic education was an answer to a pressure game coming from an internal and an external context. It coerced the Francoism to push a set of changes that would adapt the educational model to the

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<sup>35</sup>See MEC, "Decreto 193/1967, de 2 de febrero, por el que se aprueba el texto refundido de la Ley de Enseñanza Primaria", *BOE*, 13 February 1967, n. 37, art. 7.

<sup>36</sup> Cortes Españolas, "Comisión de Educación y Ciencia", *Diario de Sesión de Comisiones*, 17 April 1970, n. 30, pp. 4-5.

requirements of the new period. A teaching model that, in parallel, looked forward to being as faithful as possible to its founding principles.

### *External pressures*

Rosón's speech rightfully abridged the set of values that urged the regime to modify its linguistic perspective on education. The UNESCO General Conference (1960) strengthened the importance to ensure equal education, remarking the flagrant breach of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that any kind of discrimination threatening this principle would be. As a result, the Conference issued a Commission to fight against any discrimination in terms of education. The term 'discrimination' includes:

“Any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education.”<sup>37</sup>

This is the reason why the State parties had to commit to recognise “the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools and, depending on the educational policy of each State, the use or the teaching of their own language.”<sup>38</sup>

In 1969, Spain adheres to the Commission<sup>39</sup>, having to internationally commit to recognise those linguistic rights in the educational system. This is the way Rosón remembered it at the Education Commission:

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<sup>37</sup>UNESCO, *Convention against Discrimination in Education*, 1960.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibíd.*, Art. 5.1.

<sup>39</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Convention dealing with the battle against educational discrimination, established on 14 December 1960 at the General Conference of the United



“The use of the mother tongue for teaching represents a universal and up-to-date pedagogical principle, all the way up to the highest level of education. It is steadily preached by UNESCO; and when joining UNESCO, Spain has undoubtedly accepted, as well as the other members, the validity of such a pedagogical principle.”<sup>40</sup>

In line with this, the new law should be consistent and should consider the incorporation of non-Castilian languages in elementary education. Not only did Rosón accept this fact but also Manuel Escudero Rueda<sup>41</sup> and Joaquín Viola<sup>42</sup>, who took active roles in upholding regional languages in that Commission. However, while the UNESCO Convention represented a frequently used argument by those endorsing the vernacular languages recognition in education, it did not seem to be decisive for a regime that had shown a complete disregard for Human Rights, despite being a member of the UN from 1955 on.

On the other hand, the psychopedagogical principle that endorsed the convenience of schooling children using their mother tongue was equally supported by the provisions of the UNESCO. The educational institution of the UN gathered a group of experts in November 1951 to deal with the questions regarding vernacular languages in education. This came to happen in a overall context that Ignasi Vila described as a moment characterised, among other factors, by the crisis affecting hegemonic nationalist ideologies and the several decolonising proceedings starting after World War

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Nacions Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization” *BOE*, 1 November 1969, n. 262.

<sup>40</sup> CE, “Comisión Educación”, 17 April 1970, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* art. 9

<sup>42</sup> Cortes Españolas, “Comisión de Educación y Ciencia”, *Diario de Sesión de Comisiones*, 2 April 1970, n. 20 p. 20.

II.<sup>43</sup> This shaped “a different mosaic on foreign relations, appraising those languages and cultures that so far had been oppressed.”<sup>44</sup> The report that the group of experts came up with established this unquestionable principle:

“that the best medium for teaching is the mother language of the pupil. (...) Yet all languages, even the so-called primitive ones, are capable of becoming media of school teaching; some perhaps merely as a bridge to a second language, while others may be used at all levels of education.”<sup>45</sup>

The UNESCO’s provision, especially in its most absorptionist version, was taken as axiomatic principle in the years coming after the publication of the report. It reached its zenith in the 60s when bilingual programmes of transitional aspect started proliferating, something specifically aimed at linguistic minorities<sup>46</sup>. The home language was used as an adaptive measure for the first years of schooling, and as a useful tool for the right acquisition of the dominant language that was progressively introduced in the next years of school until it completely monopolised the education<sup>47</sup>. The influence of this trend of thought came into effect in the speeches of most deputies that agreed on the incorporation of vernacular languages into the new educational law:

“In bilingual countries, education must be started on the basis of the mother tongue. In other words, Spanish children coming from bilingual regions should start with the development of the language in their mother tongue, due to even psychological reasons (...). Moreover, it is because we must respect the spiritual and expressive nature of children to make that starting from it [the mother tongue],

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<sup>43</sup> Ignasi Vila, “Reflexiones en torno al bilingüismo y la enseñanza bilingüe” *Infancia y Aprendizaje* 21 (1983)

<sup>44</sup> *Ibíd.*, p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> UNESCO, *The Use of vernacular languages in education*, 1953, pp. I-II

<sup>46</sup> Ángel Hugueta, *Lengua y rendimiento escolar*. (Oviedo: ALLA, 2003).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibíd.*

and not against it, they learn, and they learn good that what we all Spaniards should correctly learn; Castilian Spanish.”<sup>48</sup>

Another international agreement regarding the Church also put pressure on the francoist ideology towards language diversity recognition in the Spanish State. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was aimed to transform the Catholic Church, both structurally and doctrinally, based on the principles of peace, freedom, justice and human rights<sup>49</sup>. The course of these conciliar act and its subsequent decisions were closely followed by the Francoist government. As Feliciano Montero notes, "the weakening and criticism of the Regime arose from many ideological and political fronts (...), the irruption of the Second Vatican and its new doctrine on religious freedom and the social and political problems of the contemporary world became one of the most effective factors in the weakening process"<sup>50</sup>. In 1963, Paul VI enacted the *Sacrosanctum Concilium, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. The text expresses the desire of the Catholic Church to “respect and foster the genius and talents of various races and peoples”<sup>51</sup>, granting vernacular languages with a greater presence in liturgical ceremonies<sup>52</sup>. Thereupon, on November 1969, the missals in Catalan, Basque and Galician were approved by the competent authorities<sup>53</sup>. At this point, It seemed inconsistent that, having an educational system as extremely devoted to the Catholic

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<sup>48</sup> CE, “Comisión Educación”, 17 April 1970, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Hilari Ragner. *Requiem por la cristiandad*. (Barcelona: Península, 2006)

<sup>50</sup> Feliciano Montero. *La Iglesia: de la colaboración a la disidencia (1956-1975)*. (Madrid: Encuentro, 2009).

<sup>51</sup> Paul VI. “*Sacrosanctum Concilium*” *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 1963, Art. 37.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 36.

<sup>53</sup> “Aprobada la misa en catalán, vasco y gallego”. *Madrid*, 11 November 1969, 8.

dogma as the Francoism was<sup>54</sup>, those same languages that the Church had already officially admitted were still not recognised as teaching languages. The new religious scenario offered some theoretical basis to the governmental sectors that supported reformist ideas<sup>55</sup>, such as the linguistic issue. The Catalan deputy Rogelio Mir Martí argued at the Educational Commission that there should not be any “inconvenience for vernacular languages to get well established by the Educational Law”<sup>56</sup>, since “the Church itself was setting the example, considering that all religious acts could be said in vernacular language.”<sup>57</sup> Even further, the Episcopal representation of the Commission was favourable to consider regional languages into the law, as it was expressed by Cantero Cuadrado<sup>58</sup>, the archbishop of Zaragoza, a delegate personally appointed by Franco. In this light, it seemed obvious that the regime was obligated to incorporate the non-Castilian languages into the educational curriculum if they wanted to keep faithful to its own logic. Escudero Rueda argued that this would contribute to education “in all those Spanish villages that constitute the different Spains (...) to preserve something that God wanted to be preserved.”<sup>59</sup>

### ***Internal pressures***

As mentioned before, there were different factors that urged the Regime to make changes on their language policy. Although, it was clear that the restoration of domestic

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<sup>54</sup> The foundation for the new Educational Law established that “education will be inspired, at all levels, by the Christian concept of life that empowers all human values and the values of ‘El Movimiento Nacional’.” MEC, *Educación España Bases*, 206.

<sup>55</sup> Montero. *La Iglesia*

<sup>56</sup> CE, “Comisión Educación”, 2 April 1970, p. 25.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

regionalist/nationalist movements constituted the key element exerting pressure for the recognition of the linguistic diversity of the State. It should also be noted that the strengthening of this trend in Spain was linked to a phenomenon of continental scope: in the mid-1960s, regionalisms flourished throughout Europe, driven by the theory of internal colonialism<sup>60</sup>. These movements responded to the homogenizing policy developed by the centralizing States and sought the recovery and normalization of minority territorial cultures, promoting, among other measures, the schooling of their own languages<sup>61</sup>. Although, each one of the main regionalist/nationalist movements in the Spanish context could be considered separately, the focus here is on examining them collectively as a trend which, despite their particularities, constituted a force of convergent approaches and actions that forced the Regime to undertake change.

In the late sixties, the magnitude of the social trend in Galicia, Catalonia and the Basque Country that was fighting for language rights was so big that in February 1967, the *ABC* newspaper dedicated an opinion piece to the topic. Alfonso de la Serna, the general director of Cultural Relations at that time, signed a full-page leader assenting the vitality of the Basque and Catalan languages and recognising the civic-media debate surrounding the situation of the vernacular languages of those regions.<sup>62</sup>

“Let’s ask ourselves, Spaniards, if we are willing to not cope with the unavoidable fact that there are more languages than Castilian Spanish in our land. Willing to recognise the truth, without irritations, without being offended by other people speaking those languages in front of us: willing, in short, to give enough relevance respectively, to all facilities and means that nowadays education and language

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<sup>60</sup> Núñez Xeisas, “Nuevos y viejos nacionalistas”.

<sup>61</sup> Rune Dahl Fitjar. *The Rise of Regionalism* (London: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>62</sup> Alfonso de la Serna, “Lengua Vernácula”, *ABC*, 3 February 1967, 3.

training are provided with: schools, newspapers, books, radio, television, cinema, etc.”<sup>63</sup>

As indicated by Nuñez Seixas, informal social networks (cultural associations, neighbourhood groups, sports groups...) played a decisive role for the conservation and recreation of cultural and linguistic regional contents, specially from the sixties on.<sup>64</sup> Not only was this important due to the (partially or totally) everyday use of their own language as communication vehicle for their activities, expanding their public use, but also because they found a deep-rooted symbolic element of union and resistance, of “awareness of secrecy within the community”, against the suppressive francoist force<sup>65</sup>. The pretext of the civic-cultural associationism was the spot for language awareness to find leeway for its expansion and enhancement. The regional language claim together with the demand for its legal recognition forcefully arose in the Basque Country and Catalonia. It found its way into the set of socio-political proclamations exposed in a context of conflicts that were pestering the fascist regime. The narrow scope that regional languages had had so far was pushed back: the schooling requests moved from the associationism area to semi-clandestine language academies and, finally, to provincial and municipal institutions. As much as Francoism wanted, the acceptance of the existence of linguistic diversity was not able to be delayed any longer.

On 15th November 1966, the Academy of the Basque Language sent to the Ministry of Education, Lora-Tamayo, a letter to complain about the situation of the Basque language. Basque, a deep-rooted living language could not find itself “well reflected within the precepts and dispositions of statutory or regulatory order that related

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Nuñez Xeisas, “Nuevos y viejos nacionalistas”

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

to education; and a large portion of the population wished so.”<sup>66</sup> This desire had already appeared in the *Diario Vasco*<sup>67</sup> newspaper when, benefiting from Franco’s visit to San Sebastián in September 1966, turned itself into the “voice of public opinion in Guipuzcoa and San Sebastian” to show the chief of the Spanish State the main social concerns of the Region: “the official establishment of the Basque in education” was one of them<sup>68</sup>. The Academy endorsed the idea of the civilian society and requested the integration of extracurricular voluntary lessons of the Basque language in Basque and Navarren schools, as well as the arrangement of a trial programme of Basque-Castilian bilingual education<sup>69</sup>. This petition of the Academy was subsequently seconded by the provincial council of Guipuzcoa<sup>70</sup> and Vizcaya<sup>71</sup>. In Navarra, the collection of 500 signatures of university students<sup>72</sup> convinced the provincial council to approve the Conservation and Fostering of the Basque language Provision in January 1967. Accordingly, a daily half an hour of voluntary Basque lessons was established in some primary public schools<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> On “Promoción del vascuence. La Academia de la Lengua vasca solicita medidas por parte del Ministerio de Educación Nacional”, *La Vanguardia*, 29 December 1966, 12.

<sup>67</sup> Regional newspaper of the Basque Country.

<sup>68</sup> “Guipúzcoa expone sus aspiraciones al jefe del Estado”, *ABC*, 2 September 1966, 19.

<sup>69</sup> “Promoción del vascuence”, *La Vanguardia*, 29 de diciembre de 1966; “La Academia de la Lengua vasca” *ABC*, 18 January 1967, 53.

<sup>70</sup> “No es cierto que disminuya el número de maestros. Declaraciones del director general de Enseñanza Primaria”, *ABC*, 31 August 1967, 25.

<sup>71</sup> “Vizcaya, en el camino de la nueva educación” *ABC*, 8 October 1969, 47.

<sup>72</sup> Iban Iza, *El movimiento de las Ikastolas. Un pueblo en marcha* (Bilbao: Euskatzandia, 2011), 38.

<sup>73</sup> “Pamplona: media hora diaria de vascuence en las escuelas de enseñanza primaria”, *La Vanguardia*, 3 March 1967, 11; “Sobre la enseñanza del vascuence”, *ABC*, 1 de febrero de 1967, 52. See also Irene López-Goñi, “La ‘Sección de fomento de Vascuence’ de la Diputación de Navarra (1957-1972): Génesis y actuación” *Gerónimo de Uztariz* 19 (2003);

Following the steps of the Academy of the Basque Language, on 30 November 1966, the presidents of the Catalonian Academies of the Belle Lettres, Medicine and Arts gathered at the Institute of Catalan Studies to prepare a document to claim the inclusion of Catalan in official education, in order to fulfil the social demand expressed in regional newspapers<sup>74</sup>. It was in fact a spark that had already been ignited among the Catalan society in 1963 when 7,000 signatures were collected in favour of the study of their own language at school<sup>75</sup>. The document they prepared perceived the social and literary dynamism of Catalan by concluding that “it would be unfathomable that teaching this language, contributing to the cultural heritage of Spain, was not included in the different levels of education within the limits of the Catalan territory.”<sup>76</sup>

The enterprise that was now started by the different academies and the Institute was rapidly followed by several provincial councils and town halls in Catalonia. In January 1967, the Barcelona Provincial Council approved the launch of an experimental teaching program of the Catalan<sup>77</sup>. They would start by adding two weekly hours of

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Juan Cruz Alli Aranguren, “Perfiles institucionales de la lengua vasca en la Comunidad Foral de Navarra” *Euskera* 46, 2 (2001).

<sup>74</sup>“Se hace pública la solicitud en favor de la enseñanza del catalán en los centros estatales” *ABC*, 30 May 1967, 89. The Academy of Science and Arts, the Academy of Jurisprudence and Legislation, the Academy of Economics and Finance Sciences and the Academy of Pharmacy adhered afterwards.

<sup>75</sup> “Don Joaquín Ventalló en la Escuela Normal”, *La Vanguardia*, 3 May 1968, 21.

<sup>76</sup> “Se hace pública la solicitud”, *ABC*, 30 May 1967, 89.

<sup>77</sup> “Gestiones para poner en marcha una primera etapa experimental sobre enseñanza y promoción de la lengua vernácula”, *La Vanguardia*, 1 February 1967, 21; “Moción de la Diputación barcelonesa para promover la enseñanza del catalán en etapa experimental”, *ABC*, 1 February 1976, 47.



Catalan in seven different schools<sup>78</sup>. It was around the same time when the Provincial Council of Gerona informed about the approval of a similar project<sup>79</sup>. In December 1966, right after the gathering of the members of the Institute and the different Academies, the Mayor of Barcelona, José María de Porcioles, confirmed “the existence of a problem with the Catalan language (...). Actually, it is a living reality that must be recognised and attended.”<sup>80</sup> Under the condition of obtaining the right administrative consent, in June 1967, the town hall of Barcelona announced the inclusion of the Catalan language teaching in ten different municipally-owned primary schools at the start of the new school year. Once the school day was over all students whose families requested this education would be able to get an hour of the subject for free<sup>81</sup>.

At the beginning of 1967, the Galician Academy joined this trend, in response to the letters of interest and the petitions published in the local press. It was through a notification sent to the Ministry that they requested the inclusion of Galician in education<sup>82</sup>, by stating that:

“it would be roundly helpful for both Galician and Spanish culture in general that the State would irrevocably recognise the North-western Hispanic language (...) by giving it, at the very least, the attention that is paid to foreign languages in middle schools. It can only be explained through outdated historical preconceptions, and it seems unfair that Galician students can and must learn French, English or any other

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<sup>78</sup> “Catalán en las escuelas”, *La Vanguardia*, 14 September 1967, 21; “La enseñanza del catalán en la provincia”, *La Vanguardia*, 14 September 1967, 22.

<sup>79</sup> “El presidente de la Diputación recibió a los informadores”, *Los Sitios*, 22 September 1967, 3.

<sup>80</sup> “La enseñanza del catalán”, *La Vanguardia*, 20 December 1966, 1.

<sup>81</sup> “Catalán en las escuelas”, *La Vanguardia*, 10 June 1967, 31; “En octubre enseñanza del catalán en diez escuelas municipales”, *La Vanguardia española*, 12 September 1967, 20.

<sup>82</sup> “A lingua galega en todos os niveles do insino” *Grial: revista galega de cultura* 19 (1967): 254.

language, but they are not able to officially study the language of their own country.”<sup>83</sup>

In a short period of time, several inquiries were sent to the Ministry of Education requesting permission to teach regional languages at school. They could also notice how some administrative bodies started to take action in this regard.

The demands supporting the inclusion of vernacular languages got developed in an action-and-reaction-and-action fashion. The requests of the academies, collected in many occasions by provincial or municipal corporations about the popular dynamic vindication, unleashed a new social wave of complaints. A necessary pressure to fight against the stagnation of the Government; an expert on debilitating those demands throughout their bureaucratic labyrinth. The three academic reports received a diligent answer on behalf of the Ministry of Education: a short message to acknowledge their receipt, and to inform about the issue being under examination by the designated Commission<sup>84</sup>. By mid September 1967, newspapers informed about the forthcoming release of an official authorization for vernacular languages to be taught. It was only dependent on the Ministry to solve “some technical difficulties that they were expecting to successfully figure out thanks to everybody’s good intentions and willingness to cooperate.”<sup>85</sup> Regardless of such flattering news, the truth is that there is no evidence of the existence of the aforementioned commission, and whether it ever issued any report with an approval. Due to the Ministry’s apathy, many newspapers, that had already shown their agreement with the previous requests in the interest of regional language

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> “Sobre la enseñanza del vascuence”, *ABC*, 1 February 1967; “Se hace pública la solicitud”, *ABC*, 30 May 1967, 89-90.

<sup>85</sup> “Lora Tamayo estudia la introducción en las escuelas de las lenguas gallega, vasca y catalana”, *El Pueblo Gallego*, 16 September 1967, 1.

education, openly joined the complaints. At the same time, new signature campaigns arose.

In the spring of 1968, from Galicia, a document got sent to the Ministry. It was supported by 3,700 people and societies that were favourable to the formalisation of Galician language education<sup>86</sup>. Coinciding with the centenary of Pompeu Fabra, the Ómnium Cultural association launched the *Català a l'Escola* (Catalan into schools) campaign on that same year. This developed a number of informational activities at schools, and 15,000 stickers with the same slogan were printed<sup>87</sup>. The action got completed with a second round of civic pressure which unfolded while the aforementioned General Education Law was in process of elaboration and discussion. It revolved around the collection of signatures in support of Catalan education in all education levels. By October 1970, this campaign had already gathered more than 2,500 signatures<sup>88</sup>. Meanwhile, in The Basque country, the Euskerazaleak Association asked the Ministry for the promotion of the Basque language, conforming to the Basque Academy's request, through a document signed by 50,000 people<sup>89</sup>. The association highlighted in their document the urge to legalise all activities performed in favour of the local language and therefore not in a "clandestine or embarrassing way, but openly and clear instead."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> "Petición para incorporar el gallego a la enseñanza oficial", *La Vanguardia*, 30 April 1968, 10.

<sup>87</sup> "Barcelonés acusado de impresos clandestinos", *La Vanguardia*, 30 April 1969, 10.

<sup>88</sup> "La enseñanza de la lengua catalana", *La Vanguardia*, 14 December 1969, 29; "El Ómnium Cultural y la enseñanza del catalán", *La Vanguardia*, 10 October 1970, 24.

<sup>89</sup> "En favor de una promoción oficial del idioma vasco", *ABC*, 31 November 1968, 67.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

The collective recounted a fundamental aspect to understanding of the process. The limited statistical data available to us confirms the existence of substantial social demand in favour of the schooling of Catalan, Basque and Galician; specifically towards the first two languages<sup>91</sup>. Consequently, and facing the impossibility of following any legal path, this demand looked for its own way to be developed within the gray areas of Franco's legislation. The clandestine linguistic education of these languages was an evident reality and an increasing trend.

The *ikastolas*<sup>92</sup> teaching model was supported by family associations and cultural collectives. Its pursuit was the development of an alternative and renewing educational model in Basque language that, on the other hand, was democratic, pluralistic and linked to its sociocultural environment. In short: an academic space opposed and resistant to the dictatorship<sup>93</sup>. The significant social acceptance of the *ikastolas*' movement can be observed through the exponential growth experienced by their organization besides their difficult circumstances: the number of existing *ikastolas* went from three in 1960 to a hundred in 1970; and the student's number grew from 596 in the school year of 1964-1965, to 8,247 in 1969-1970<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> See FOESSA, *Informe sociológico sobre la situación de España*. (Madrid: Editorial Euramérica, 1970); "En octubre enseñanza del catalán". *La Vanguardia*, 12 September 1967.

<sup>92</sup> *Ikastola* is a type of education in which students are predominantly taught in Basque language, either totally or partially.

<sup>93</sup> Iza, *Movimiento Ikastolas*; López-Goñi, "Sección fomento Vasqueña"; Iñaki Zabaleta, Joxe Garmendia & Hilario Murua Cartón, "Movimiento popular y escuela en el franquismo: las ikastolas en Guipuzkoa", *Historia de la Educación* 34 (2015).

<sup>94</sup> José Carlos Herreras, "Lenguas y autonomías en España", *Contextos* 23-24 (1994).

Following the same reactive nature of the oppressive francoist educational model, privately-owned school initiatives will increase in Catalonia in the sixties. They were oriented towards the development of a renewed education that was also connected to their native language and culture. The spread of clandestinely started Catalan schools will be the breeding ground for the appearance of the Rosa Sensat's Institute in 1965. This institute set an example for a teaching alternative, and for the creation and consideration of theoretical and didactic materials related to bilingualism<sup>95</sup>. On the other hand, the *Delegació d'Ensenyament del Català* (The Catalan Teaching Delegation), founded by the Ómnium Cultural in 1968, put an effort into their teacher training, considering the possibility of a future official vernacular language education. Almost clandestinely, it also organised Catalan language training in different primary schools. By 1977 there were already 224,000 enrolled students<sup>96</sup>.

By the early sixties, different cultural groups closely related to the anti-Franco opposition emerged in the main Galician University environments. Their goal was to promote different initiatives around their native language<sup>97</sup>. In August 1966, the Cultural Association of Vigo conducted a Didactic Seminar of Galician language focused on the unification of contents and training methods, and on the creation of didactic materials. Its target was the future widespread insertion of Galician language in

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<sup>95</sup> Josep González-Agàpito, “Dos formas de construir España: educación e identidad nacional. Una visión desde la cultura catalana”, *Historia de la Educación* 27 (2008): 207.

<sup>96</sup> Miquel Strubell i Trueta, “La normalización lingüística en el sistema escolar de Cataluña y el entorno social” *Revista de educación* 268 (1981): 33.

<sup>97</sup> María Carmen Parada, “A las clases de gallego de Vigo asisten muchas personas que no son de la región”, *El Pueblo Gallego*, 17 March 1966, 7; Sergio Vilar, “La musicalidad del gallego y la magia de su literatura”, *La Vanguardia*, 3 December 1966, 53.

primary education<sup>98</sup>. Towards the end of the decade, certain semi-clandestine language teaching experiences were implemented in a few primary schools, and the social awareness campaigns *Falemos Galego* (Let's Speak Galician) and *Galego na Escola* (Galician into schools) were launched<sup>99</sup>.

Vernacular language education in the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia was strongly developing in clandestine environments and within a specific teaching model. A teaching model that linked the study of languages and its specific features with renewing educational trends and democratic opposition. This fact set off some alarm bells inside *El Movimiento*. The deputy of Guipuzcoa, Araluce Villar, recognised at the Education Commission that:

“whether incorporated in the law or not, the necessity to provide the already-known-by-the-student language education is a reality with a certain extremely important variability: if it is not incorporated in the law and there are no schools that can provide guarantees (schools covered by the law), surely children's education will happen outside of those schools, and therefore lacking the guarantees and responsibility of those schools that the law does cover.”<sup>100</sup>

Part of the Regime seemed to understand the urge to legally mediate on the incorporation of non-Castilian languages at schools. And due to the impossibility to avoid its training, they realised it should, at least, be controlled within their own schools. By officially facilitating vernacular language education, they could avoid families to keep making use of alternative ways that deeply bothered *El Movimiento*.

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<sup>98</sup> “Terminó sus sesiones el Seminario Didáctico de la Lengua Gallega”, *El Pueblo Gallego*, 27 August 1966, 5.

<sup>99</sup> Antón Costa Rico. Aínda non raiaba o día. Educación e sociedade galega nun tempo agrisallado (1961-1977). *Sarmiento: Revista Galego-Portuguesa de Historia da Educación* 16 (2012).

<sup>100</sup> CE, “Comisión Educación”, 17 April 1970, p. 14.

This way, by making it seem like bilingualism at schools was accepted and naturalised, the Regime could take away the main symbol of repression of the dictatorship that democratic opposition parties had used as proof and symbol of clandestine resistance. The apprehension generated by an increasing amount of social conflicts and by the power of the linguistic demand in some bilingual regions became more obvious thanks to some Education Commission members' interventions. The Catalan representative, Bosch Estivil, could not hide his worries about "certain political groups, more or less politicised, and perhaps due to the lack of better argumentations to express their opposition to the system in bilingual regions, revolting against the Regime, probably using the lack of attention given to languages as political manipulation."<sup>101</sup> As concluded by the deputy, this was why it was important to consider the promotion of vernacular languages to be part in the drafting of the new educational law: "to satisfy the eagerness of those groups and to disarm the enemies of the system."<sup>102</sup> Following the same trend of thought, the representative of Madrid, Fanjul Torres, stated the importance of the consideration of regional languages and its particularities in the law to allow "closing (...) the mouths of all those who (...), using vernacular pretences as a political excuses, could damage the State and the system. (...) We will shut the mouths of the evil men, and we will give hope to regionally patriotic and good Spaniards."<sup>103</sup>

No doubts the Regimen felt the annoyance of the opposition that obligated them to relinquish their traditional attitude. They needed to shift their discourse to show a more realistic and conciliatory approach regarding the legal situation of non-Castilian languages, without forgetting to claim their essence. This is the way the deputies

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<sup>101</sup> CE, "Comisión Educación", 2 April 1970, p. 25.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 19.

expressed their idea at the Education Commission, showing a more sensitive attitude towards cultural regionalism. Following the words of Antonio Rosón:

“As a man of the 18 of July (...), I understand and feel, as many other Spaniards do, that bilingualism is no abnormality in the year 1970. The non-recognition of bilingualism is an abnormality instead. Bilingualism is fortune or, in more correct terms, an asset; and a General Education Law cannot ignore this reality, this charming and beautiful reality.”<sup>104</sup>

But not all delegates showed their agreement with the new language strategy that was getting shaped during the debates. The deputy Alfonso Muñoz Alonso, veteran member of the Falange, openly stated his mistrust and objection: “We must grant their language and everything else to the people securing the Spanish unity; but let’s not do a favour to those thinking on using it against that same political unity.”<sup>105</sup> Joaquín Viola answered the opposing opinion by stating that, apart from neglecting “the political and social problem” of Catalonia, it was themselves who, holding on to traditionalist approaches, were “reinforcing the enemies of the Spanish unity.” The only legitimate solution was to place “the vernacular language on the frontispiece (...) of the new Educational Law.”<sup>106</sup>

But the most powerful response to the inactive tendency was not given by the Commission. Muñoz Alonso pronounced a sentence that made it into the newspapers of

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<sup>104</sup> CE, “Comisión Educación”, 17 April 1970, p. 5. 18 July is the date of the so-called “national uprising”. The name that Franco's dictatorship called the coup that took place on 17 and 18 July 1936. The same fact that started the Spanish Civil War. It was considered the starting point of the Regime and the *Movimiento Nacional*. This historical moment was normally referred to by the supporters of the dictatorship as a synonym of the deepest essence of Francoism.

<sup>105</sup> CE, “Comisión Educación”, 2 April 1970, p. 26.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.



the following day, creating turmoil amongst the Catalan opinion: “Be careful when thinking that a language is simply a vehicle for humans to communicate, because it is also through this vehicle that someone’s soul is filtered and, sometimes, even the viruses of the soul.”<sup>107</sup> Deeply involved in the *Català a l’escola* campaign, *Ómnium Cultural* managed to influence José María Pemán to publish a leader on the *ABC*’s third page, on 19 April 1970. Pemán, who had been head of the purge of teachers, was academic of the Spanish language and one of the most recognized intellectuals by the Francoism, disapproved in his article the words of the Falangist representative. He ensured that “Speaking or reading or learning Catalan is a very simple fact. It is like drinking a glass of crystal clear water.”<sup>108</sup> Ironically, Muñoz Alonso’s remarks served to show the strength of language organizations and the solitude of the supporters of the repression against regional languages. The final decision about regional language inclusion in the new educational law seemed to go without saying.

### **In conclusion**

Spanish technocracy has been frequently characterised by its capacity to conceal its political issues, turning them into purely technical problems. In other words, something that is solvable through the use of management and legal tools. As indicated by Puelle Benítez<sup>109</sup>, the *LGE* represented an attempt to refresh the outdated Spanish educational system, which also meant a new step forward for a regime that was failing. And it was through an educational reform that they tried to solve some of the requirements of the

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> José María Pemán, “El catalán: un vaso de agua clara” *ABC*, 19 April 1970, 3. See also Josep Andreu i Abelló, “1970: la campaña en defensa del catalán”, *El País*, 16 June 1976.

<sup>109</sup> Manuel Puelles Benítez, “Tecnocracia y política en la reforma educativa de 1970”, *Revista de educación* n. extraordinario (1992).

increasingly extended and coordinated political unrest. Franco's dictatorship finally recognised the inclusion of regional languages in schools through a new educational law<sup>110</sup>. The motive of such a decision was the external and internal pressures pushing the Regime to give in some of their educational principles. Externally, they tried to adjust themselves to the new idiomatic and equity requirements stipulated by the UNESCO, as well as to the language modifications of the Catholic Church. Internally, they tried to diminish the level reached by the popular movement, which emphatically and decisively claimed the right to freely use and teach their own languages at school. Moreover, and besides the compromises achieved by a francoist educational law, this popular movement required doing so within a context of a pluralistic democratic system. With their convergent action-reaction-action dynamics, these movements succeeded in pressuring the local and provincial administrations with their protest campaigns and in setting up clandestine school structures that increasingly enjoyed social acceptance, forcing the central government to withdraw its position and to respond defensively. Such activity must be seen in the context of the upsurge of European regionalisms, with similarities also to the flourishing Latin American indigenous movements of the last third of the 20th century, which are currently under development<sup>111</sup>.

The aforementioned reasons explain the restrictive conception of the teaching of regional languages during the last years of Franco's Spain. Besides its presence on the discussions made by the Educational Commission, the mainly transitional approach for

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<sup>110</sup> MEC, "Ley 14/1970 General de Educación y Financiamiento de la Reforma Educativa". *BOE*, 6 August 1970, n. 182, arts. 3.1, 14.1 y 17.

<sup>111</sup> World Bank. *Latinoamérica Indígena en el Siglo XXI*. (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2015); López & Küper. "Educación intercultural bilingüe".

the treatment of vernacular languages at school reconfirm its force in the *New pedagogical directions*, a document developed in 1971 by the Ministry in order to activate the legislative text<sup>112</sup>. It seems clear now that the addition of non-Castilian languages into the law was not due to the enhancement of language diversity in the Regime. It did not answer to the Regime's awareness of the cultural richness that should be promoted and normalised, but to the defensive approach it was forced to assume due to the growing social unrest. In some territories, the vernacular language was not only a campaigning element but also a domestic symbol of subversive identification. And as a consequence of the defensive nature of the recognition of the schooling of non-Spanish languages, this was to be conceived within restrictive parameters.

In conclusion, it should be noted that vernacular language consideration by the *LGE* meant the acknowledgment of the lack of real effectiveness, in times of the Francoist extension. The conducted legislative specifications of the documents on pedagogical orientations did not give this education any guidelines regarding timing or its way of being taught<sup>113</sup>. The second indicative newsletter initiated the possibility for school boards, "prior to the report of the technical inspection, to organise experimental vernacular language teaching"<sup>114</sup>. This did not result in the general development of the subject but rather the emergence of initiatives of isolated nature. Even in February 1975,

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<sup>112</sup> Following the document, vernacular language teaching had a "keen interest" in "preschool and the first year of basic general education, when no prior schooling has been granted", because "for those kids that cannot speak Spanish, it is recommended to start with their own native tongue so that this can help them learning to read and write in the national language." MEC, "Segunda etapa de Educación General Básica. Nuevas orientaciones pedagógicas", *Vida escolar* 128-130 (1971): 18.

<sup>113</sup> MEC, "Educación General Básica: Nueva orientación pedagógica", *Vida escolar* 124-126 (1971); MEC, "Segunda etapa Educación General Básica".

<sup>114</sup> MEC, "Segunda etapa Educación General Básica", 19.

the Catalan representatives Escudero Rueda and Botans were obliged to question the Minister of Education, Martínez Esteruelas, about the disregard for vernacular languages in education, only to find evasive answers from the minister<sup>115</sup> instead. Ultimately, there was no general rule to regulate the inclusion of regional languages in school until the passing of the Decree 1433/1975 that regulates the inclusion of native languages in Preschool and general basic education. Hereto, their inclusion in schools remained in a state of suspension until the beginning of the democratic transition.

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<sup>115</sup> “Hoy se reúne la Comisión permanente del Consejo Nacional del Movimiento” *ABC*, 11 February 1975, 22.