

University of Szeged  
Doctoral School of Law and Political Sciences

**Synopsis for the doctoral (PhD) dissertation**

Írisz Kovács

**Minority language rights in Spain**

Supervisor:  
Dr. habil. Anikó Szalai

**Szeged  
2026.**

## **1. Background of the doctoral dissertation**

Spain is one of the most linguistically diverse regions in Europe, where, alongside the official Spanish (Castilian) language, several regional and minority languages – such as Catalan, Basque, Galician, Valencian, and Aranese – also play a significant role in social and political life. The country’s distinctive linguistic model, which assigns much of the regulation of language use to the competences of the autonomous communities, offers a unique example of how linguistic diversity can be managed within constitutional and legal frameworks in a multilingual state. At the same time, however, the practical implementation of language rights continues to present significant challenges.

The relevance of the research is justified by several factors. The issue of regional language use in Spain is not merely a cultural matter but is closely intertwined with aspirations for autonomy, identity politics, and questions of territorial integrity. This is particularly evident in the case of Catalonia, but debates surrounding language use have also intensified in other regions, such as the Basque Country and Valencia. The recognition and practical implementation of minority languages are of particular importance from the perspective of social cohesion. The topic is highly relevant because it examines a continuously evolving and conflict-laden field in which significant discrepancies can be observed between the theoretical framework and practical implementation.

In recent years, language policy has once again become a central issue in Spain. The Catalan independence movement of 2017, judicial decisions concerning the language of education in Catalonia, and the introduction of co-official languages in the Spanish Parliament in 2023 all demonstrate that the question of minority language use remains a constantly recurring issue on the political agenda.

This dissertation fills a gap in the literature because it undertakes a comparative institutional analysis rather than a mere descriptive presentation of the linguistic issue. Thus, through the synthesis of normative regulation and empirical experiences, the research attempts to explore the deeper interconnections of multilingual state operation.

The research may benefit language policy makers, international monitoring mechanisms, and inhabitants of multilingual regions, including potentially those living in the Carpathian Basin.

Readers interested in Spain will gain a comprehensive picture of the country's linguistic-legal structure. The research is also useful for language policy makers, as it identifies areas where linguistic regulation requires development. It highlights the areas where guaranteeing linguistic rights encounters obstacles and seeks to offer potential solutions. Civil society organizations can also draw from the research, as it reveals which institutional structures support or hinder multilingualism.

Although Spain's linguistic framework is sophisticated from a legal perspective, studies and reports consistently point to discrepancies between regulation and practice. This research precisely aims to map and interpret these structural deficiencies. As a student of International Studies, my goal is to conduct a complex examination of the issue using the tools of social science. Although the jurisprudential approach is dominant in researching linguistic rights, other areas of social science also receive significant emphasis, as only through this can a comprehensive picture of the examined phenomenon be obtained. The analysis of legal regulation alone does not always reflect the patterns of language use realized in practice, the experiences of minority groups, or the social dimensions of institutional operation. The interdisciplinary approach enables the joint examination of the legal framework and social reality.

The language policy and minority protection practices of neighboring countries provide an important frame of reference. Examining the linguistic aspects of Spain's foreign relations creates an opportunity to place national language policy in an international context, including its diplomatic and cultural impacts. Research on linguistic rights and language policy in the Hungarian-language academic literature primarily occurs at a theoretical or international legal level, while a deeper, case-study-based processing of the Spanish linguistic model is less common. The aim of this dissertation is to fill this gap.

## **2. Research objectives and research questions**

The aim of the dissertation is to provide a critical analysis of the legal and institutional framework of the Spanish multilingual model, with particular emphasis on the implementation of minority language rights at the intersection of domestic and international norms. The research seeks to determine how different political and social factors influence the practical application of language rights within Spain's autonomous communities and what lessons this experience offers for the international discourse on minority protection.

As a first step, the study presents a comprehensive and systematic overview of the Spanish system of language policy and minority language rights. This part of the research analyzes the Spanish Constitution, the statutes of the autonomous communities, and the relevant national and regional legislation in order to reveal how linguistic pluralism is reflected in the legal framework. Beyond examining the theoretical foundations, the research also identifies the factors influencing the effective implementation of language rights in three key domains: education, public administration, and the judiciary. Through case studies and regional comparative analyses, the study highlights potential discrepancies between legal guarantees and their practical application, as well as the structural obstacles that may hinder the integration of minority languages.

In parallel with the analysis of Spanish regulation, the dissertation evaluates the extent to which the Spanish language policy framework complies with international norms and recommendations. Particular emphasis is placed on documents and policy guidelines issued by the United Nations, the Council of Europe – especially the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages – and the European Union. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages serves as a reliable, objective, and stable benchmark: an external reference point that allows conclusions to be drawn about the strengths and weaknesses of the system. This is particularly important because internal debates are often politically polarized, whereas the Charter provides an external, professional framework for evaluation. International documents therefore offer objective points of reference for assessing the normative quality of Spanish language policy regulation as well as the effectiveness and shortcomings of its practical implementation. The analysis may prove valuable for policymakers, as it highlights areas where discrepancies exist between international commitments and their implementation in practice. It also contributes to academic research by complementing the predominantly political debates surrounding Spanish language policy with a normative and comparative analysis, enabling the Spanish model to be compared with other European examples, including those from the Central European region.

For Hungarian communities living beyond Hungary's borders as a result of the Treaty of Trianon, Spain's minority protection practices – characterized by the development of broad political and cultural autonomy – may offer valuable insights for the preservation of minority identity. The realization of autonomy requires an adequate economic and financial foundation, since self-governance cannot function without independent resources. At the same time, the different historical trajectories of Spain and the countries of the Carpathian Basin must not be

overlooked. In Spain, communities such as the Catalans and Basques have lived within the same state for centuries, whereas Hungarian communities beyond the borders became minorities as a result of the Treaty of Trianon. While autonomy in Spain is primarily territorial in nature, Hungarian minorities often rely on personal or cultural autonomy, which creates different opportunities for language use. In Spain, the Catalan, Basque, and Galician systems of autonomy emerged as a result of internal constitutional processes.

The research also examines the international dimension of Spanish language policy by assessing the role of minority language use in Spain's external relations. In this context, the study analyzes how language issues may influence diplomatic relations and interstate cooperation, particularly in relation to Andorra, Portugal, France, and Morocco. Examining the linguistic aspects of Spain's foreign relations is important because analyzing the language policy system within an international framework helps to clarify how internal linguistic tensions appear in foreign policy and how external influences shape domestic debates in Spain. Internal processes within a state often have external consequences – and vice versa. The researcher's motivation was significantly influenced by the Catalan crisis of 2017. This sequence of events demonstrated that demands for broader autonomy and language rights can transcend domestic political frameworks and provoke direct reactions from European institutions, neighboring states, and global actors alike. These experiences confirmed that Spanish language policy forms an integral part of the country's neighborhood policy, regional position, and overall foreign policy environment. The scientific novelty and practical value of the dissertation lie precisely in the inclusion of this interdisciplinary dimension, which reinterprets domestic language issues within the theoretical framework of international relations.

The aim of the research is therefore not merely descriptive but also critical and interpretative: it seeks to highlight potential contradictions between legal norms and institutional practices and to formulate recommendations for the more effective implementation of language rights not only in Spain but also within the broader framework of international minority protection discourse.

**The research questions are the following:**

1. How do language policy and language rights influence social change in Spain?

2. To what extent does Spanish minority language regulation comply with international norms and conventions?
3. How does the regulation of minority language rights affect Spain's international relations?

Within the framework of this research, the concept of "social change" specifically refers to processes related to language policy decisions and the practical implementation of language rights in Spain. This includes, on the one hand, how language practices in education and public administration influence the social participation of minority communities and their trust in public institutions, particularly in regions where minority languages can be used in public life. On the other hand, these changes also encompass the emergence of language as an instrument of identity politics in the discourse of political parties and civil society organizations, as well as the intensity of political conflicts surrounding language use and the appearance of linguistic cleavages in voting behavior – for example, in debates between Valencian blaverism and Fusterianism. When a minority language gains official status or becomes integrated into education or public administration, this in itself signals a form of social transformation: the role and prestige of the language change, and so do the everyday opportunities available to the communities that use it.

In the dissertation, the concept of politics also includes a foreign policy and diplomatic dimension. In the case of Morocco, for example, language issues – such as the status of Arabic and Berber languages in the context of Ceuta and Melilla – may indirectly influence diplomatic relations between the two countries. In this sense, language is not only a domestic political factor but can also function as an instrument of foreign and neighborhood policy, serving as a form of soft power in Spain's relations with neighboring countries.

### **3. Data collection**

The research is based on the analysis of the Spanish Constitution, the statutes of the autonomous communities, relevant laws and regulations, as well as international legal sources, particularly the reports related to the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and the minority rights statements issued by the United Nations and the European Union.

The methodological framework is complemented by the analysis of relevant Hungarian and international scholarly literature, which provides the theoretical foundation of the research and enables the examined phenomena to be placed within a broader context of minority protection and language policy. In Hungarian-language literature, the works of Gábor Kardos and Noémi Nagy provided an important basis for the systematic interpretation of minority rights and language policy theories. Among international authors, the conceptual framework was particularly influenced by the theories of Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten on linguistic justice and multiculturalism, as well as Tove Skutnabb-Kangas's research on linguistic human rights. The development of the chapter on Valencia was significantly supported by the work of Josep Ochoa Monzó, particularly his studies on language policy and public administration. In order to ensure the topicality of the research, numerous online sources were also consulted.

#### **4. Methods applied**

Methodologically, the research primarily relies on the tools of legal scholarship, complemented by the comparative perspective of political science. The analysis focuses on normative texts, including laws, statutes of autonomy, and constitutional court decisions. This includes the examination of norms from the perspective of constitutional review, the analysis of the distribution of competences, comparative legal analysis, and legal interpretation. The latter makes it possible, for example, to reveal how the Spanish system has developed an implicit recognition of collective language rights alongside a model formally based on individual rights.

In addition to descriptive and exploratory work, the dissertation employs the methods of analysis, inference, and critical evaluation. The study aims not only to describe but also to critically interpret the examined phenomena and to formulate recommendations regarding certain language policy issues. This critical-interpretative approach seeks to determine the extent to which legal norms ensure the effective realization of language rights, highlighting tensions between regulatory frameworks and the practice of legal implementation.

Alongside the analysis of international treaties, national legislation, statutes of autonomy, and judicial decisions, qualitative methods were also employed, including the analysis of case studies and the examination of legal cases. The purpose of these methods is to evaluate the practical effectiveness of regulation and its broader social context. The case studies focus on language practices within specific autonomous communities and on institutional arrangements in the fields

of education, public administration, and the judiciary. These case studies make it possible to identify discrepancies between legal regulation and institutional practice, as well as to interpret their structural, political, and social implications. One illustrative example is the analysis of the use of Catalan in education and the implementation of the court decision requiring that at least 25 percent of instruction be conducted in Spanish. This case reveals tensions between formal legal compliance and actual implementation. Judicial decisions are also presented and analyzed throughout the dissertation. For example, the study discusses in detail the judgment concerning the use of the Asturian language in the regional parliament and the lessons of the appeal against the 2013 law regulating language use in Aragón. In the case of the Valencian Community, several examples are presented, particularly decisions restricting or reinforcing the freedom of educational language choice, as well as debates surrounding the terminology used to designate the language (e.g., STC 75/1997).

The analysis relies on the evaluation criteria defined in Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, with particular focus on education (Article 8), public administration (Article 10), and the judiciary (Article 9). Although this section of the Charter also addresses other policy areas – such as media (Article 11), cultural activities and institutions (Article 12), economic and social life (Article 13), and transfrontier exchanges (Article 14) – their detailed analysis falls outside the scope of this dissertation due to space limitations. As a result, the study deliberately concentrates on the most institutionally and politically structured domains: education, public administration, and the judiciary. During the research process, a methodological choice had to be made between including a broader range of policy dimensions in a necessarily more superficial overview, or conducting a deeper and more detailed analysis of fewer areas. The latter approach was chosen.

This decision is further justified by the fact that the excluded areas – particularly media – would require a level of analysis that would exceed the formal and substantive scope of the present dissertation. In addition, the media environment has undergone significant transformation in recent years: the rise of social media and online content consumption has diminished the role of traditional media, especially print journalism and linear television and radio broadcasting. Although these media forms still feature prominently in the evaluation reports of the Council of Europe’s monitoring mechanisms under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, they no longer fully reflect the current realities of language use. Consequently, the

examination of traditional media would not only risk producing a partially anachronistic analysis but would also open up a complex and rapidly evolving field that could itself constitute the subject of an independent doctoral research project. For these reasons, the dissertation deliberately limits its focus and places emphasis on other domains of language use.

Although social and cultural dimensions do not constitute independent chapters of the analysis, their importance is not entirely neglected. They appear indirectly in Chapter VIII, which examines the international dimension of language policy. Within the remaining analytical scope, particular attention is devoted to Spain's foreign relations, its interactions with neighboring states, and the functioning of international monitoring mechanisms such as those of the Council of Europe. Cultural and identity-political factors become especially visible when examining the international embeddedness of languages. For example, the relationship of the Catalan language with France, Andorra, and the European Union clearly demonstrates that language use is not merely a legal or institutional matter but also carries broader cultural and political significance.

The guiding principle for the analysis of languages follows a geographical–regional logic, organizing the study according to Spain's linguistic map. Languages are presented on the basis of their territorial embeddedness. This geographical progression does not replace the other analytical dimensions but rather provides a structural framework for them. In the case of official languages, identical analytical dimensions are examined, particularly institutional presence, language policy decisions, legal regulation, and socio-political conflicts. The guiding framework is therefore spatial in nature, while the content of the analysis remains systematically comparable. Within each territorial block, the position of official languages is examined in the fields of education, public administration, and the judiciary, with particular attention to how language rights are implemented in everyday institutional practice. In the cases of Catalonia and the Basque Country, the analysis also extends to the functioning of law enforcement bodies. Across all three domains, the evaluation relies on case studies and institutional as well as regulatory characteristics, presenting differences, challenges, and best practices by region. The analysis of non-official languages follows a different logic, adapting to the specific social embeddedness and legal environment of each language.

The dissertation also employs comparative analysis to examine language policy practices in Spain and neighboring countries. Portugal and France, for example, represent approaches to minority language management that differ from the Spanish model. Comparative analysis also appears within Spain's domestic context. The autonomous communities enjoy considerable

freedom in many policy areas, including the regulation of language rights. As a result, the use of minority languages in institutions varies significantly across autonomous regions: language practices differ in education, public administration, and the judiciary.

## **5. Comprehensive overview of the dissertation**

The first chapter lays the foundations of the research. It introduces the topic, presents the rationale for the study, outlines the research objectives and research questions, and describes the methodological framework applied. This section also explains how the research is situated within both the international and Hungarian academic discourse.

The second chapter provides the conceptual foundation of the dissertation. It introduces and defines the key concepts used in the analysis – such as language policy, diglossia, language rights, and autonomy – and places them within their theoretical context. This section clarifies the conceptual framework necessary for interpreting the subsequent analyses. It also outlines the theoretical framework of the dissertation, focusing on the question of whether language rights can be considered human rights and, if so, under what conditions. The chapter presents the theoretical debates surrounding the individual or collective nature of language rights and their relationship to the legal and political aspects of minority protection. A separate subsection examines the theoretical approaches of Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten, which address the interpretation of immigrant language rights and the principles of justice applicable in multilingual societies. The chapter also discusses the international and European regulation of minority languages, particularly on the basis of documents issued by the European Union and the Council of Europe. In doing so, it establishes the international legal framework within which the Spanish regulatory system can be interpreted.

The third chapter provides the historical and political background. It reviews the historical development of Spain, the adoption of the 1978 Constitution, and the emergence of the system of autonomous communities. The chapter also offers insight into the current structure of Spanish society and presents the guiding principle of the linguistic analysis: the examination of languages along geographical units. The dissertation then addresses the political dimension by presenting Spain's decentralized state structure and the role of autonomous communities in shaping language policy. The political subsection focuses particularly on regions where language issues carry significant political importance and analyzes how language becomes an instrument of political

identity formation and interest representation. The chapter identifies both official and non-official minority languages and presents the institutional framework of minority language use. A table illustrates the number of speakers of minority languages within Spain's autonomous communities. Minority language use is also examined through the practice of law enforcement bodies. Treating law enforcement separately from public administration is justified by the fact that, in international comparison, it is relatively rare for regions associated with linguistic minorities to possess their own police forces. In Catalonia and the Basque Country, however, autonomous law enforcement bodies operate, which makes their examination particularly relevant.

The following chapters (IV–VII) analyze the minority languages of Spain following a geographical logic. Chapter IV examines the western linguistic region, focusing on the Galician and Portuguese languages. Chapter V analyzes the northern linguistic region, including Asturian, Basque, Aragonese, and Aranese. Chapter VI focuses on the eastern linguistic region, which includes Catalan and Valencian. Chapter VII examines the Caló language spoken by Roma communities in Spain, as well as the Arabic and Berber languages present in Ceuta and Melilla. This section is titled *Non-territorial and overseas languages*.

Chapter VIII analyzes Spain's foreign relations in the context of minority language use. Through the examples of four neighboring states – Portugal, Andorra, France, and Morocco – it examines how language policy appears in international relations and what role it may play in facilitating interstate cooperation or, conversely, in generating tensions.

Finally, the ninth and concluding chapter summarizes the new scientific findings of the research and their practical applicability. It answers the research questions, synthesizes the findings, and evaluates how language policy practices and legal regulations influence social cohesion, the functioning of the state, and international perception.

## **6. Conclusions**

### **6.1. How do language policy and language rights influence social change in Spain?**

The impact of language policy and language rights on social change constitutes one of the central areas of investigation in the dissertation. Language policy clearly shapes social cohesion, identity formation, and regional political relations. Language use in education and public administration influences linguistic prestige and the social participation of communities. In regions

where minority languages receive institutional support, identity-based community activity and social participation tend to be stronger, whereas the absence of language rights may lead to marginalization. Language policy therefore reorganizes social structures and power relations within Spain's autonomous communities.

Based on the empirical chapters of the dissertation, it can be concluded that language use in education and public administration significantly influences the social participation of minority language communities. This effect can be clearly observed through the institutional practices discussed in the study. In regions where minority languages form an integral part of education and public administration – such as Catalonia, the Basque Country, or Galicia – linguistic communities are more actively present in public life, their institutional participation is ensured, and the prestige of the language is higher. This is particularly evident in Catalonia, where the immersion model of Catalan-language education has become not only a tool for supporting bilingualism but also an instrument for strengthening regional identity, despite the social debates surrounding the model.

A similar dynamic can be observed in public administration. In regions where minority languages have co-official status and can be effectively used in administrative procedures, communities have a real opportunity to manage their affairs in their own language, which strengthens civic participation and trust in institutions. By contrast, in regions where minority languages do not enjoy such status, or where their use is recognized only in limited contexts – such as Asturias or Navarre – the visibility of these languages within institutional settings remains restricted.

The relationship between language and social participation is further reinforced by the political examples presented in the dissertation. The protection of the Catalan language, for instance, functions not only as a cultural objective but also as a political instrument of legitimacy within the independence discourse. Similarly, in Valencia, identity-political debates surrounding language – such as the conflict between Fusterianism and Blaverism – shape the region's political cleavages, which are organized around questions of language use.

The analysis of languages without official status also confirms this relationship. In the cases of Asturian and Caló, the weakness of the institutional framework and the absence of official recognition limit the social and political visibility of these communities. This form of institutional marginalization weakens the long-term social embeddedness of these communities and contributes to the peripheralization of their languages and cultures.

Overall, the dissertation clearly demonstrates that language policy influences not only the realization of language rights but also the social integration and participation of linguistic communities.

## **6.2. To what extent does Spanish minority language regulation comply with international norms and conventions?**

The commitments undertaken under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages are not fully implemented, even in the case of officially recognized minority languages. Compliance varies by language and by institution and cannot be considered comprehensive. The most significant shortcomings appear in the field of the judiciary.

In education, the situation of regional languages presents a mixed picture. In the Basque Country, Galicia, and Catalonia, language rights are largely fulfilled, meaning that the educational system effectively ensures the use of minority languages. In other areas – such as Valencia, the Balearic Islands, or Navarre – these goals are only partially achieved, typically due to shortcomings in teacher training or territorial differences among educational institutions. In the Aran Valley, Aranese-language education exists institutionally, but its implementation remains weaker due to the small number of speakers and insufficient support. The field of education clearly demonstrates that the preservation of languages and the future of their actual use largely depend on the commitment of both the state and regional authorities. A positive example is the Basque model, where an institutionalized and long-term language policy operates successfully.

The Spanish model illustrates that the implementation of language rights depends not merely on the legal framework but far more on political will and the consistency of institutional practice. The examples of Catalonia and the Basque Country show that strong support for regional languages can, over the long term, create realistic conditions for bilingualism, while the case of Galicia demonstrates that formal recognition alone is insufficient.

In the field of public administration, significant discrepancies can be observed between the legal recognition of minority languages and their actual use. The use of minority languages in administrative practice varies considerably across regions and institutions, and citizens' language rights often exist only formally, while in practice they are applied in a limited or inconsistent manner. Meaningful improvement would require comprehensive systemic reforms, stricter monitoring mechanisms, targeted language policy measures, and sustained political commitment.

Regarding the judiciary, the Spanish legal framework – comprising the Constitution, statutes of autonomy, and international commitments such as the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages – formally allows the use of minority languages in judicial proceedings. In practice, however, significant obstacles remain.

Although Spain has made notable progress in education and public administration with regard to several official minority languages, the judiciary consistently underperforms: in no region is full minority-language access to justice guaranteed. Consequently, the practical realization of language rights varies significantly by institution and region. The fulfillment of Charter commitments remains partial and selective rather than comprehensive. The problem is structural: despite legal obligations, there is no effective enforcement or sanctioning system. Violations of language rights rarely lead to consequences, and language training for public officials is not consistently provided. In addition, political will at the level of the central government is often lacking when it comes to ensuring the practical implementation of minority language rights.

### **6.3. How does the regulation of minority language rights influence Spain's international relations?**

The third aspect of the dissertation concerns Spain's foreign relations. The regulation of minority language rights influences Spain's international relations in an indirect yet perceptible way. In relations with Andorra and Portugal, the shared Catalan linguistic heritage strengthens cultural cooperation and contributes to political stability. In the case of France, language-related issues do not constitute an open diplomatic conflict; however, they contribute to the marginalization of Catalan and Basque communities living across the border. In relation to Morocco, the linguistic dimension implicitly forms part of postcolonial and territorial disputes, even if it is not explicitly articulated.

Spain's relations with its neighboring countries illustrate how the issue of minority languages appears in different political and legal contexts. In certain interstate relations, a shared linguistic heritage functions as a factor of integration, whereas in other cases linguistic and cultural differences may emerge as potential sources of tension, particularly where they are connected to historical or territorial disputes.

## **7. Summary of the scientific results of the dissertation**

The situation of non-official languages spoken in Spain highlights that the institutional protection of linguistic diversity is highly selective and asymmetrical. While certain institutional guarantees exist for officially recognized minority languages, such safeguards are largely absent – or exist only formally – in the case of non-official languages.

In the cases of Aragonese and Asturian, the most significant obstacle is the lack of official status and the uncertainty resulting from it, even though some progress has been made at the regional level. The situation of the Caló language, as well as the linguistic minorities of Ceuta and Melilla, demonstrates that Spanish language policy primarily recognizes the so-called "classical" historical minorities, while the language rights of territorially or culturally marginalized communities are not addressed in a coherent manner. The repeated recommendations of the Committee of Experts – calling for official recognition, the strengthening of educational and administrative presence, and the provision of targeted funding – clearly indicate that the Spanish state still has significant obligations toward communities speaking non-official languages. The effective realization of language rights is therefore not only a cultural issue but also a social and political one.

Future language policy reforms can only be effective if they are implemented with the active involvement of local communities and based on comprehensive strategic planning, rather than taking the form of merely symbolic gestures. The recognition and support of non-official languages do not weaken the unity of the state – on the contrary, they contribute to social cohesion and the advancement of linguistic equality.

The dissertation systematically analyzes the level and extent to which minority languages are present within different institutional subsystems. This section fills an important gap on several levels. Although there are case studies focusing on individual languages or regions, as well as general language policy analyses concerning Spain, there is no Hungarian or international language policy literature that examines in detail the realization of Spanish minority languages across different institutional subsystems. The connection between law enforcement institutions and the implementation of language rights also represents a novel contribution, as law enforcement – particularly within police structures – has often remained outside the main focus of language policy research as a domain of institutional language use.

The novelty of the dissertation is also reflected in the fact that it provides the first comprehensive analysis in Hungarian of the situation of languages spoken in Spain that do not possess co-official legal status. The systematic examination of the discrepancies between theoretical regulation and practical implementation rarely appears in the literature, especially in a way supported by empirical evidence such as judicial practice, complaint mechanisms, or international monitoring reports.

The examination of the international dimensions of language rights from a foreign policy perspective likewise represents a new approach. The analysis demonstrates that shared linguistic heritage – such as in the cases of Andorra or Portugal – can strengthen bilateral relations, while in other cases linguistic and cultural differences may become sources of political tension, particularly when they are connected to territorial disputes or postcolonial discourses. During the Catalan crisis, the language issue received significant international attention and partly influenced the perception of Spain’s rule-of-law standards. Language policy has therefore become, indirectly but significantly, a strategic factor within the sphere of foreign relations.

The institutional-level examination of the implementation of language rights is not only applicable to the Spanish case but can also be used in the study of other multilingual states. The methodology, which analyzes the practical realization of language rights by language and by institution, makes it possible to compare language-use practices both between countries and among regions within a single country. This approach may open new research directions in international minority studies.

A detailed examination of the Spanish model also offers a comparative perspective for the analysis of Hungarian minority rights and language use. The lessons drawn from minority-language education, administrative language use, and the judiciary may contribute to the evaluation of the situation of Hungarian communities both within Hungary and beyond its borders. The application of this methodology provides an opportunity to examine how the Hungarian language is used in education, public administration, or the judiciary in different countries, making it possible to compare the practices of states such as Romania, Slovakia, or Serbia.

At the same time, the adaptation of this approach has certain limitations. Hungarian communities live within different legal systems, whereas the Spanish model is fundamentally based on autonomy-oriented institutional frameworks. Consequently, the application of this

method requires careful consideration of regional specificities and may require certain modifications.

## **8. Possibilities for Application**

The dissertation contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Spanish minority language policy, and its findings can be applied both at theoretical and practical levels. At the theoretical level, the study offers new perspectives for examining the relationship between language rights, social participation, and institutional integration. If language is interpreted as an instrument of community visibility and participation, language rights extend beyond their purely communicative or cultural function and appear as social and collective rights.

From a practical perspective, the dissertation may contribute to the further development of Spanish language policy and minority language regulation, particularly in those institutional areas where the commitments undertaken under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages are only partially fulfilled. The research identifies specific shortcomings and therefore may provide useful guidance for language policy decision-makers in revising language use regulations within the autonomous communities and designing targeted reforms. At the international level, the research may also contribute to the work of various human rights monitoring mechanisms: the detailed analyses of the situation of individual languages support the findings of official reports and may serve as complementary background material.

The results of the dissertation may raise awareness among policymakers that the effective realization of language rights requires more than the existence of constitutional and legislative frameworks. It also requires regular monitoring of implementation, the establishment of the necessary institutional conditions, and the effective sanctioning of violations of language rights. The findings may also provide guidance for the coordination of regional language policies: the comparative analysis of the Basque model (mandatory language profiles and long-term language planning) and the Catalan model (language immersion) may help other autonomous communities to choose their language policy instruments more consciously. Based on the documented cases and international reports, the Spanish government may review the recruitment and training systems of the National Police and the Civil Guard and develop a more unified protocol for language use.

The research may also highlight certain shortcomings for the monitoring system of the Council of Europe's Language Charter. For example, the languages of immigrant communities do

not fall under the protection of the Charter; therefore, when formulating recommendations, it may be advisable to treat the support of immigrant languages with greater caution.

Finally, the methodology applied in the dissertation – which examines the situation of minority languages by language and by institution – can be adapted for comparative analyses in other multilingual countries. This approach offers a systemic perspective on how language rights are realized in practice and may open new directions for international minority studies.

## **9. List of publications on the subject of the dissertation**

1. Kovács Írisz (2022): Oktatáspolitiká Katalóniában: a nyelvi merítés modellje. In: Mező Ferenc (szerk.): Tanulás és társadalom. Miskolc: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Miskolci Akadémiai Bizottsága Pszichológiai Szakbizottsága, 145–159.
2. Kovács Írisz (2022): Catalan language rights from the perspective of education policy. In: Fehér Viktor; Kalmár Laura; Raffai Judit (szerk.): 16. Nemzetközi tudományos konferencia: Paradigmaváltás az oktatásban és a tudományban – Tanulmánygyűjtemény. Szabadka: Újvidéki Egyetem Magyar Tannyelvű Tanítóképző Kar, 85–92.
3. Kovács Írisz (2022): Oktatási modellek Spanyolország területén. *Lélektan és Hadviselés*, 4(2), 39–49.
4. Kovács Írisz (2023): Katalán nyelvi jogok, különös tekintettel az oktatáspolitikára. In: Bálint Béla; Vass Viktória; Vass Zóra (szerk.): Móra Akadémia Szakkollégiumi tanulmánykötet: A Móra Ferenc Szakkollégium évkönyve. Szeged: Szegedi Tudományegyetem Móra Ferenc Szakkollégium, 105–119.
5. Kovács Írisz (2023): Orosz információs háború a katalán függetlenségi törekvések tükrében. In: Bándi Gyula; Pogácsás Anett (szerk.): *Law in Times of Crisis – Jog válság idején: Selected doctoral studies – Válogatott doktorandusz tanulmányok*. Budapest: Pázmány Press, 459–474.
6. Kovács Írisz (2024): The Situation of the Portuguese Minority Language in Spain. *Oxipo: Interdiszciplináris E-folyóirat*, 6(4), 25–44.
7. Kovács Írisz (2025): Dilemmas over the Official Status of Asturian Language. *Pázmány Law Review*, 12(1), 239–253.

8. Kovács Írisz (2025): Kisebbségi nyelvvédelem a spanyol rendvédelmi szervek berkein belül, különös tekintettel Katalóniára. *Belügyi Szemle / Academic Journal of Internal Affairs*, 73(2), 273–287.
9. Kovács Írisz (2025): Minority language protection within the Spanish police with special reference to Catalonia. *Belügyi Szemle / Academic Journal of Internal Affairs*, 73(2), 441–454.
10. Kovács Írisz (2025): The maze of language policy: A study of minority languages in Aragón. *Lélektan és Hadviselés*, 7(1), 9–19.