

According to an announcement from the Formentera Council's heritage office, a project titled “Formentera's changing Catalan: a look at language as spoken by young people,” headed up by Dr Francesc Josep Torres Tamarit, Maria del Mar Joan i Marí and Dr Rob Jelier, has been awarded the Formentera Council's research grant for 2016.

Of fifteen applications received, thirteen met the requirements for entry. The projects were then reviewed by a committee based on scientific interest, coherence, methodology and the researchers' professional credentials. As heritage secretary Susana Labrador reported, “One project remained at the end of our review: *Aproximació al català de Formentera*”.

Roughly translated as “A study of locally-spoken Catalan,” the project will explore intergenerational variations in language. Labrador says the study's practitioners have set their sights on another milestone too: a web-based collection of their related data, accessible to anyone. In addition to responses taken from language questionnaires (including information about verbal morphology and Catalan's so-called “weak pronouns”), the data would also encompass childhood anecdotes recounted by respondents. Councillor Labrador described the study's potential audience as diverse, enfolding “the general public, linguists, dialect specialists, professors and even social sciences researchers”.

One of the study's pillars, a reflection on the sort of Catalan taught in Formentera schools, will include a proposal emphasising spoken Catalan in the instructional approach to weak pronouns. Researchers will study the need to teach the grammar of a language as it is actually used by its speakers. Traditionally, the brand of Catalan spoken on Formentera differs from the mainstream written form, and, the researchers say, the local blend of the language is currently undergoing a metamorphosis.

More grant money

Labrador reported on the 9 September launch of a new call for applications, the conditions of which were recently published on the Official Bulletin of the Balearic Islands (BOIB for its initials in Catalan). The Formentera Council's 2017 grant will provide €6,000 to whichever individual or group study holds up to competitive review.

As in the previous two years, applicants' areas of specialisation can include the arts, humanities and social sciences. Researchers will have twenty business days to present applications.

Projects must have a title, description, theoretical plan, research methodology, objectives, detailed plan for work and cost estimates.