Comparative study of English Education Instruction in Spain and Finland

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## Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the comparative approaches to foreign language instruction in Finland and Spain, two countries that have for decades represented vastly different levels of achievement in foreign language acquisition, standing at opposite ends of the European Union’s initiatives aimed at improving the union’s competitive position in the international globalized economy. While Spain, a country with an imperial past, has not historically valued foreign language acquisition, though recent reforms are aimed at improving the country’s performance in this important educational area. Finland, on the other hand, is an innately multilingual country with two mother tongues and a welcoming attitude toward foreign language learning. This dissertation examines the fundamentally different approaches to foreign language instruction in the two countries, based on their historical orientations to education and divergent views as to the relative importance of language learning.

## Keywords

- Foreign Language Teaching
- Teacher Training
- Multilingualism
- English as a Foreign Language
List of abbreviations

CEFRL: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
EU: European Union
ESLC: European Survey on language competences
EPI: English Proficiency Index
ESP: European Skills Passport
CV: Curriculum Vitae
ELP: European Language Portfolio
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
CLIL: Content Language Integrated Learning
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
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1. Introduction

In recent years, the focus on learning a foreign language has increased and, according to Eurostat (2016), a second language is taught in nearly 100 percent of schools of EU Member States, with English being the most popular. Therefore, the need for English as a means of communication is growing precipitously.

This may be considered a great success, bearing in mind that the Barcelona European Council (“Presidency Conclusions”, 2002), recommended that two or more foreign languages should be taught to all students from a very early age. This has reached different degrees of implementation, especially when it comes to compulsory secondary education.

According to these results, the European Union has adopted different strategies to enhance multilingualism and achieve a multicultural and plurilingual Europe.

Furthermore, according to Eurostat 65,7 percent of Europeans in working-age affirm that they can speak at least one foreign language, in most cases English.

English is becoming a widespread tool for interculturalism and multilingualism, but Spain and Finland have had rather different results regarding their citizens' ability to speak a foreign language. In 2011, in Spain, 48,9 percent of citizens of working age could not speak a foreign language, which represents an increase when compared to 2007, when 46.6 percent of Spanish citizens of working age could not speak a foreign language. In Finland, only 16,1 percent of the population could not speak a foreign language in 2007, a number that decreased to 8,2 percent in 2011.

Finland and Spain, among many other countries, face the challenge of preserving their culture and language in the face of English-language dominance via the globalization process, which affects everyone. Finland and Spain are presented with the problem of acceding to the burgeoning influence of English as the new "lingua franca" and, thereby, acting in contravention
of EU policies concerning language education, or defending their cultures by resisting the influence of English as a linguistic, cultural and economic force (Caraker, 2016 p.23).

As it has in most of Europe, English has had a significant effect on the way Finns regard second language teaching. Indeed, it has affected the way Finns communicate. English words have increasingly found their way into common usage, sometimes being inserted in verbal and written Finnish language communications, which has produced something of a controversy, with many people seeing the incursion of English as a negative phenomenon, the sign of a potential undermining of the Finnish language and culture.

Over the past 20 years, several qualitative studies have been published concerning the position of English in various aspects of Finnish society, including education, business, the media and more. However, little quantitative research has been carried out regarding English skills among Finns, how they use English, or their attitudes vis a vis the English language. It should be noted that the presence of foreign language speakers is not unusual in Finland, a multilingual country in which Finnish and Swedish have held co-official language status since 1922 and in which 120 foreign languages are currently spoken, with Russian and Estonian comprising the most significant numbers of foreign speakers with English rapidly gaining ground.

However, others counter that the gradual spread of English in Finnish society is a positive development, heralding social and technological progress and personal empowerment necessary for Finns to establish a sustainable and robust presence with the outside world, which increasingly uses English to transact business and interact in the international scientific and technological realms.

Spanish attitudes toward the incursion of English into Spanish culture and education have gradually shifted over the past century, according to Chislet (2005). During the first half of the 20th century, there was a general resistance, even hostility, toward English and the phenomenon of Americanization. However, Chislet points to signs of "accommodation" and "acceptance" in the latter decades of the century. While there is limited evidence to support such claims, Phillipson (2006) notes that this trend in Spain may reflect an essentially tacit agreement within the EU that English should be the primary language of communication among its member
countries. Today, nearly 100 percent of EU members learn English, which makes it the most widely taught language among EU member states (European Commission, 2015).

These statistics are confirmed by the state of EU multilingual policies and student statistics within the Spanish educational system. Spanish students start learning English as one of the two required foreign languages at the age of 6, which means Spanish students begin learning English at an earlier stage than other EU countries. This has been the official policy within the Spanish educational system since 2002 (Caraker, 2016 p.25). The rapid spread of English in Spain has added to an already complicated second-language acquisition situation, attributable in part to Spain's rich cultural background.

There are communities throughout Spain in which Spanish exists as a de facto co-official language in conjunction with regional languages such as Galician, Catalan, Valencian or Basque. Both "co-official" languages are utilized in classrooms, along with as many as two foreign languages, including English (Caraker, 2016 p.27). Such a situation at an early age in students' education might be seen as diluting the primacy of Spanish culture in its own country.

A 2016 study among high school and university instructors in a large, central Spanish city revealed a substantial agreement on the need to learn English as a prerequisite for entering into the global economy. Significantly fewer (71 percent) of respondents indicated they believe that Spanish students are motivated to learn English, while 75 percent said they believed primary students are motivated to learn English, the number dropping to 64 percent concerning the motivation of secondary-level students (Caraker, 2016). Eighty-seven percent of respondents said they believe university students are motivated to learn English.

More than 90 percent thought employment opportunities were considerably improved by learning English, which enhances such opportunities abroad. Most respondents believed that English is essential for young Spaniards to participate in youth culture and mass media (i.e., movies, music, travel, etc.) (Caraker, 2016).

One of the most interesting findings was a general belief that most Spanish students have a low, even superficial, motivation for learning English believing it is unnecessary from a cultural
standpoint since books and movies are generally translated from English to Spanish. The presence of a rich, vibrant Spanish culture was another factor in this belief. One interpretation of these findings is that English is considered an educational necessity in a country that has been stricken by economic decline in recent decades. As such, English appears to be a means to an end among Spanish students, not unlike their Finnish counterparts, who see English language fluency as a necessity for Finland to succeed in the global economy and within the globalized scientific and business communities. Less than half of respondents in the Spanish research study believed that opportunities exist for exposure to English outside the classroom (Caraker, 2016 p.35). English may be regarded as necessary for professional success, but it is less of a cultural factor in Spain.

It is interesting to contemplate the possibility that the longstanding existence of a robust foreign language presence in Finland, as compared with Spain which despite its cultural variety has long been dominated by Spanish speakers (88 percent), may be a contributing factor to the success of language education in Finland. Indeed, the Finns are among the most successful of all European countries in foreign language acquisition: 69 percent of the population can speak more than one foreign language, while nearly 50 percent speak at least two languages, while 23 percent can speak three languages (Korhonen, 2006).

Many reasons have been given for the Finns' proficiency in language acquisition. Tuula Haatainen, Finland's minister of education, has said the country does a good job of training its teachers and instruction appears to be effective across all levels of society. Perhaps the best explanation for Finland's performance in language learning lies in the country's linguistic history, which has a long tradition of multilingualism. Exposure to multiple languages is an accepted fact. Swedish, which occupies the status of a "co-official" language, is compulsory in school but has been losing ground to English learners in recent years (Korhonen, 2006).

Though not a popular choice in schools, Russian maintains a presence among eastern Finns, many of whom have commercial ties to Russia, while Swedish has typically been the most popular second language choice in western Finland, at least until the emergence of English. The ministry of education has promoted French and German as second or third language choices in
an acknowledgment of the leading positions those two countries hold in the EU. Today, more than 90 percent of Finns consider Finnish to be their mother tongue (Korhonen, 2006).

English is the most commonly learned foreign language today with Swedish, despite its historic status, coming in a distant second and German the third-most popular. This trend is, in many ways, the product of a national language initiative enacted in the late ’70s, in which the Finnish government apportioned second- and third-language learning based on cultural politics and consequent linguistic needs (Korhonen, 2006). This program asserted that everyone should learn some Swedish and English; 30 percent of the populace would learn German and Russian; while it was determined that 15 percent should learn French. Furthermore, it was decided that upper secondary school students should learn two foreign languages in addition to knowing both Finnish and Swedish. At first glance, this may seem to have been a burdensome and excessive policy, but it was in keeping with the country's background as a culture particularly receptive to multilingualism.

It should be pointed out that in Finland, television shows that are broadcast in a foreign language can be subtitled in Finnish, allowing viewers to experience a foreign language aurally and visually. TV remotes allow viewers to select the language they want to be subtitled. This service was expanded in 2012 when networks MTV3, Nelonen, and SuomiTV added subtitling (Toriseva, 2012). Consequently, the population has access to foreign language programming that can be subtitled on an a la carte basis. This capability is bolstered by the fact that Finland has some of the best telecommunications facilities in Europe, with a digital fiber-optic fixed-line system and extensive mobile communications networks, so it is not surprising that Finland has one of the highest numbers of Internet connections and mobile phone users in the world. Finland's subtitling policy is aimed at protecting the "purity" of the Finnish language and culture as much as it was designed to expose Finns to other languages.

Despite Finland's long experience with and receptivity to foreign languages, and the popularity of English among students, Leppänen and Pahti (2012) note that there is a nascent concern among Finns for cultural and linguistic preservation. Many fear that enforced foreign language education on such a scale constitutes "a force threatening to tarnish the purity of not only the
Finnish language and culture but also that of the nation-state, national identity and even Finns' minds" Leppänen and Pahti, 2012, p. 2). While such concerns may simply be echoing similar worries about globalization in small countries the world over, they perhaps herald a grassroots shift in national feeling about the long-term effects of mandating foreign language education to the extent the Finnish state has done since the 1970s. It is within this context that projections for the continued success of Finnish second-language learners may lead to a reassessment of the country's foreign language education policy and the future of English teacher training.
2. Research questions

The research this study aims to answer stems from my interest in how foreign languages are learned in different countries. The ultimate goal of this study is to investigate the differences between foreign language learning and teaching, as well as teacher training, in Finland and Spain within the broader context of the two countries' performance in second- and third language acquisition.

The following research questions are presented as the result of a genuine personal interest in the topic based on my experience in both educational systems, and the belief that there is a need to analyze strengths and weaknesses regarding the different systems of teacher training that are present in the different European countries.

**Research question 1:** Why are language education results better in Finland than Spain? What are the main reasons? Are there any external, non-educational/cultural factors at play (e.g., the dubbing of English-language films in Spain vs. subtitling in Finland)?

**Research question 2:** What are the main differences in the curricula provided for by educational laws in Spain vs. Finland regarding foreign language teacher training?

**Research question 3:** How are language teachers trained in Spain vs. Finland, and how do they meet qualification requirements?

**Research question 4:** What has the European Union and its bodies done to improve and assure a high quality of foreign language learning in the EU? How well have the regional governments adopted these measures in Spain vs. Finland?
3. Research methods

This study has been conducted following the basis a qualitative research which according to Robson (2002, p.5) allows more flexibility enabling modifications throughout the entire research process. The methodology chosen for this research was a comparative study. It was used in order to showcase the differences between these two countries with regard to English education instruction and to provide answers as to why these differences exist.

A comparative study is a methodology that aims to set two case studies together to highlight their similarities, emphasise the differences between them and set their contrasting elements in juxtaposition. Therefore, as a methodology it proves to be the most fitting to find answers for the stated research questions (Chapter 2). Quoting Esser and Vliegenthart (2017, p.4): “Comparative research is a combination of substance (specific objects of investigation studied in different macro-level contexts) and method (identification of differences and similarities following established rules and using equivalent concepts)”.

As opposed to quantitative data, qualitative data enables an in-depth understanding of research phenomena and, as a consequence, allows for defining reasons that serve to explain the discussed status quo. It should also be taken into consideration that samples for quantitative data differ between countries and, often times, sets of quantitative data that derive from such samples cannot be compared with one another. Qualitative data research, on the other hand, allows for this kind of comparison, as the sample that it uses is much smaller and more specific. It provides the researcher with necessary flexibility in terms of data comparison and, in this particular case, generates a more holistic overview of both analysed cases.

The information gathered for the purpose of this research comprises mainly secondary data derived from journals, statistics, educational laws, narrative accounts, government reports, and EU-generated information, among others, as well as author’s personal experience. This
compilation of data was ultimately analysed in the context of three different aspects – the historical aspect, the competency aspect and, last but not least, the socio-cultural aspect.

Such a holistic overview has been utilized to develop a distinct comparison between the two countries, their traditional stances vis a vis foreign language instruction, orientations toward foreign cultures, and educational and training improvements made in response to EU policy initiatives. In the year 2005 a language policy was implemented in Andalusia. This policy included the use of English native speakers in order to teach 40% of the curriculum in English (Lorenzo, 2010). The experiences of native British English instructors in Spain and of foreign families living in Finland have been of particular help in this qualitative methodology thanks to the unique perspectives they provided on the state of foreign language instruction in those two countries.

The data was collected largely from case studies reflecting student achievement levels in Finland and Spain, with the aim of better understanding the difference between the two countries and how their starkly different approaches to foreign language instruction have contributed to their relative achievements in this particular area of educational pursuit. An analysis of the two countries’ investment in foreign language instruction and the preparation of language teachers (post-graduate level requirement in Finland, a recently upgraded language teaching requirement in Spain) has also proven instructive, as has their attitude toward the importance of teaching English as a second (or third) language. This qualitative approach helped establish a well-rounded comparison, in which both historical/cultural and contemporary/political factors could be incorporated.

The information reflected in this study was gathered and analyzed using a text analysis approach. Text analysis is a method in which information/data, statistics, words and phrases are examined to gain a more nuanced, in-depth understanding of various aspects of social phenomena. This research study relied heavily upon the context of information concerning foreign language instruction in Finland and Spain to draw inferences about the similarities and differences,
backgrounds and modifications, that have contributed to the wide variation in success that Spain and Finland have experienced in English/foreign language instruction.
4. Background Related to Methods in Foreign Language Teaching in Finland and Spain

4.1. Approaches and Methods in Foreign Language Teaching

Given the topic of this research, it is important to state the most common approaches and methods used by teachers in terms of Foreign Language Teaching in Spain and Finland. Therefore, according to Richards & Rodgers (1986), an approach is what defines the assumptions, beliefs, and theories regarding the nature of a language. Furthermore, a language can be acquired through three different approaches:

There are various communicative approaches to the teaching of foreign languages. Each of the approaches has in common a basic set of theories and beliefs about the nature of language, language learning and a set of principles for the teaching of a language. None of them, however, leads to a specific series of recipes and techniques that will be used in the teaching of a language. They are characterized by the variety of interpretations as to how the principles can be applied. (Richards and Rodgers, 2007, p.245).

**Structuralist approach**

Language is interpreted as a set of related elements of a structural form (phonological, grammatical, lexical or morphological).

The publication in 1916 of *Course de Linguistique Générale*, based on a series of lectures given by Ferdinand de Saussure, marked a turning point in language learning, a new way of thinking about language instruction in which emphasis was placed on learning the components of language as parts of a much greater whole instead of focusing on rote memorization and recitation (Irmawati and Hum, 2014). Structuralism identifies the language as a descriptive system and a syntagmatic and paradigmatic form of speech neatly arranged into morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. The linguist Zellig Harris saw language as a collection of
utterances made by speakers, with grammar being understood as "a set of mathematical formulae that structure the collection of utterances" (Mambrol, 2017, para 2). A practical example of this approach would be the oral approach to language teaching which emerged in Britain in the 1920s and spread to other countries in the 1950s. It includes systematic principles based on oral procedures for the selection, gradation, and presentation of the contents of a language teaching course. Structuralism has often been criticized as too technical, an approach in which overall meaning is given less weight than the minutiae of language.

Communicative approach

Language is used communicatively. It is based on a series of communicative functions that the student expresses. Language, therefore, is a set of specific contents and objectives aimed at imparting a set of pragmatic learning skills, a tool for communicating within a given social context. Its aim is not based on a linguistic analysis of the content but the student's specific learning needs (German, 1982). This approach received considerable attention in the 1970s when the Council for Cultural Co-operation met to discuss ways of facilitating European integration and population mobility throughout what has become the EU, and how to motivate adults to learn additional languages (German, 1982). The idea being that students would be more effective and willing learners if they can function effectively. Functionalism emerged in the 1920s, and a concept originated by anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, who posited a system in which situational context and social and emotive functions are central to communication (Ahmed, 2013). "This approach visualizes language as a tool that performs a number of essential functions or tasks in the community which uses it. The most outstanding among these tasks is the communicative function – serving the needs and wants of the mutual understanding of individual members of the given language community" (Ahmed, 2013, p. 92).

As the oral approach to language teaching become obsolete, linguists developed a new way to teach languages. One of the most popular methods that emerged was the communicative approach, which is an excellent way to exemplify the principles of the functional approach.
The Communicative approach is based on the idea that learning a language successfully comes from having to communicate real meaning. In the Communicative approach, the primary objective is to present a topic in context as natural as possible.

The communicative approach is also known as the communicative teaching of the language, such as the Notional-functional Approach or as a Functional Approach. From its name it is clear that with this didactic model it is intended to train the learner for real communication - not only in the oral aspect, but also in the written one - with other speakers of the English language; for this purpose, in the instructional process often texts, recordings and authentic materials are used and activities are carried out that try to imitate the reality outside the classroom faithfully. A communicative approach is one that's based on the notion that acquiring a language occurs by communicating real meaning; the primary aim is to put forth a topic in as natural a context as possible (Ontesol, 2018). Students learn to communicate in a language within the proper context and social situation. Learning activities are structured to integrate all four elements of language learning: speaking, listening, writing and reading (Ontesol, 2018). Key to the learner's success is constant interaction with the language, both linguistically and culturally, and the teacher's role is as a facilitator and guide, and there is a significant element of trial and error.

Interactive approach

The language is used to develop personal relationships and to carry out social exchanges. To provide an overview of what sort of approach would be used by interactionists, the task-based approach would serve as a good picture for this approach.

The task-based approach is the proposal of a language learning program whose units consist of activities of language use, and not in syntactic structures (as audio-lingual methods did) or in notions and functions (as did communicative programs). Its objective is to promote learning through the real use of language in the classroom and not only by manipulating units of its various levels of description; In this way, it is postulated that the learning processes will necessarily include communication processes. In countries where English is a compulsory
subject at the primary school level, the concentration on sentence structure, syntax and grammar, and the mechanics of language is an accepted practice. In Pakistan, for example, when school students reach the college level, they struggle to communicate verbally in English because they do not know how to use the language effectively, lacking the vocabulary and verbal communicative fluency that aren't taught in early school years. There's no procedure for testing or teaching speaking skills in a government-prescribed language program (Naheed, 2015). This is why task-based learning has grown in popularity among second language teachers. Students are taught to communicate effectively enough to visit the doctor or speak to someone over the phone. Rather than going through rote classroom drills, students are encouraged to interact spontaneously with each other. However, critics of task-based language teaching have charged that in many cases there aren't enough opportunities for students to interact in a classroom setting to accomplish what this strategy aims to achieve (Broady, 2006). Others claim that students have different levels of fluency, require more assistance and one-on-one attention and so are ill-equipped to engage in meaningful "interactions."

According to Zanón (1999), after corroborating the first definition given to this approach by Breen, Candlin & Nunan in the late ‘90s, other linguists developed a new definition for this approach and its chief aspects:

a) a task is an initiative for learning, b) which consists in the realization in the classroom of language use activities representative of those carried out outside of it c) and that has the following properties: i) It has a pedagogically adequate structure. ii) It is open, in its development and its results, to the active intervention and the personal contributions of the students iii) It requires, in its execution, priority attention to the content of the messages. iv) It facilitates at the same time occasion and moments of attention to the linguistic form.

Other popular methods in Foreign Language Teaching: After going through the most popular methods in Foreign Language Teaching, a selection of other methods I have experienced in foreign language teaching will be introduced to provide a broader overview of the different methods used by teachers worldwide.
**Grammar-Translation Method**

According to Melero (2000), the grammar-translation method bases the teaching of a second language on the detailed analysis of the grammatical rules and their exceptions and then applies the acquired knowledge to the translation of sentences and texts that is carried out from the target language to the student's own one and vice versa. The first language serves as a reference system in the acquisition of the second language.

In this method, the learning of grammar is deductive, that is, a rule is presented, explained and memorized and then practiced in translation exercises. Sentences are the basic units of teaching and linguistic practice. The language of instruction is the first language of the learner. The grammar-translation method approaches language as a set of rules and meanings to be taught using texts. Written language is the basis of classroom activities, while word lists are used to teach vocabulary with an emphasis on precise translations.

The teacher is the main protagonist of the teaching-learning process, the maximum authority. Its function is to provide linguistic knowledge and correct the errors produced by the learners. The student, on the other hand, has a little participatory role, is limited to following the instructions of the teacher, memorizing rules and lists of vocabulary, and reading and translating. The limitations of this approach gave rise to a current of criticism and opposition in Europe in the 19th century.

**Direct Method**

According to Sánchez (1997), the direct method is the most widespread among the so-called natural methods. Their approaches are based on the naturalistic assumptions of learning a language, that is, on the conviction that the process of learning a second language is similar to the process of acquiring the first language.
Nineteenth-century reforms came as a response to the direct method, supplanting it with more fundamental ideas about language learning. It incorporates a new orientation in the teaching of languages by giving absolute priority to oral language and advocating teaching in the target language.

Audio-lingual Method

The Audio-lingual Method makes a connection between comprehension and action by having students carry out exercises based on what they have read. In other words, the student learns by physically "practicing" a language with various exercises until recognition and habits become natural and speech is recognized spontaneously. Audio-lingual Method is predicated on the idea that learning a language should be about forming habits by correctly translating commands and dialogue. Thus, students intuit the basics of the language by acting it out. Dialogue repetition is an important part of this method and can be altered based on the student's needs and in the interest of learning as much vocabulary and grammar as possible. Drill and repetition are seen as essential, though other methods, like task-based learning, are more concerned with having students physically repeat actions rather than engage in grammatical drills. "The assumption is that, since language is habit formation, the structure of a language can be more effectively acquired through the habits that will develop in practice of patterns than through an appeal to the cognitive processes" (Hanchey, 1974, p. 19).

Thus, the audio-lingual method seeks to instill habits by pairing aural comprehension with physical responses that instill understanding through repetition. It is a parallel of the behavioral methodology because its proponents hold that a human being is able to learn by establishing a set process of reinforcement to retain what he or she has learned. Grammar is part of this method, but it is not atomized, not dissected and studied for its own sake. Instead, the instructor restricts the curriculum to speaking the language so students may learn it through listening and repeating until it is internalized (cite). Many immersive and communicative methods of teaching English adopt this approach of listening, assimilating, and repeating (cite). Reinforcing what the student has learned in this way aids the comprehension of vocabulary by making a more profound
impression through repetition and acting it out, thereby improving the likelihood that the student will use the language accurately and effectively in the future.

4.2. European Dimension and its contributions to Language Education.

The European Dimension, broadly defined as a principle designed to enhance perspective and context through by emphasizing intercultural understanding, closely parallels the ultimate aim of the European Union itself, encapsulated eloquently by Vaclav Havel, who said "Sooner or later the Europeans will have to perceive Europe as their homeland, though of a special kind. Alternatively, as a common homeland of their homelands" (Janik, 2007, p. 1). It is an original idea espoused by the EU and the Council of Europe, though it was never granted approval by the member states (Fernandez, 2018). An outcome of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, the European Dimension was intended to promote foreign language learning among member and candidate states: encourage student and teacher mobility; promote pan-European cooperation of education institutions; exchange information and experiences among educational establishments; and promote exchange programs among students and educators (Janik, 2007).

Ultimately the European Dimension seeks to incorporate intercultural aspects of language learning, including history; social and political dimensions; culture; arts; and traditions, as well as media fluency (i.e., Internet, text handling, etc.) into the spread of foreign language fluency. However, for a broad-based policy with such lofty ambitions, there have been problems integrating the concept from a practical standpoint in EU primary and secondary schools (Fernandez and Blanco, 2016). Janik (2007) points out that in the Czech Republic, in the primary and national school the European Dimension has not been "considered very much" (Janik, 2007, p. 6). However, in the Framework Educational Programmes for Primary Education, the curriculum seeks to incorporate the European Dimension as a priority in education, acknowledging as it does the importance of orienting educators and learners toward a "common future in Europe" (Janik, 2007, p. 6). In general, there has been little political will or unity behind the European Dimension, which has not been pushed aggressively as a new subject in curricula; however, Fernandez and Blanco (2016) notes that there is a decided need institute a
well-articulated policy for encouraging school exchanges and fostering mutual understanding across a multi-cultural landscape (Fernandez and Blanco, 2016). To date, a firmer commitment from EU member states in support of the European Dimension initiative has been sorely lacking. A combined promotion of language and cultural understanding could do much to counter the rising nationalism and xenophobia among EU member state populations with such a supranational program. Vez (2009) asserts that the European Dimension, as originally envisioned, has been stymied by globalization, EU policies, population movements, and the spread of global English, which have altered the cultures and languages of Europe. In light of these circumstances, the EU has been "too slow or too fast on (its) way towards European integration through multilingual education," depending on one's perspective (Vez, 2009, p. 9).

4.2.1. Council of Europe

As stated in the statute of the Council of Europe (2018)) its main aim is "to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realizing the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress." (para. 6).

Besides, the Council of Europe works towards a European identity by fostering diversity and cohesion. As a result, the Council of Europe has created a wide variety of activities to promote linguistic diversity and language learning in the field of education. Furthermore, according to Article 2 of the European Cultural Convention (1954), each member is expected to promote the teaching and learning of their respective languages involving, in addition to promoting the study of its languages, promoting its history and civilization by the active creation of grants and programs.

The Council of Europe's position on language instruction is rooted in a concept of citizenship as an educational matter that's concerned with the development of individual capacities, competencies, and attitudes among the peoples of Europe (Breidbach, 2003). This model emphasizes language instruction and is based on a broader view of politics and social inclusion as extending past the legislative and legal realms. As such, languages play a crucial role, a medium of reproduction that exists as a cultural right; in other words, to acquire a second
The Council of Europe's foundational documents frame Europe as an idea that lacks a precise identity but one that exists as a frame of thought that has yet to be filled. La Torre (1998) does not regard Europe as a viable category for political thought. "Concerning identity formation, a sense of belonging is dependent on the opportunity to participate in the social life of the polity in question" (Breidbach, 2003, p. 10). Ultimately, La Torre (1998) predicts that European citizenship will be the main problem involved with European identity because citizenship is that which frames one's membership and belonging to a polity (Breidbach, 2003). Thus, the Council of Europe promotes a view of citizenship rooted in the values and principles of pluralism, law and cultural enrichment. Within this broad-based category in which language and culture intertwine, the right to use, teach and learn a language must be regarded as a "cultural right," an outgrowth of human rights (Breidbach, 2003, p. 11). Where the Council of Europe is concerned, plurilingualism refers to the ability to take part as a citizen in politically relevant activity in multilingual environments (i.e., modern-day Europe). The importance of plurilingual competence lies in its ability to help citizens participate in political processes with other Europeans from different cultures, speaking different languages; and in its capacity for imparting a greater understanding of the plurilingual competencies of fellow citizens and a sign of respect for language instruction and linguistic diversity.

Breidbach (2003) makes an insightful point about the role of English language instruction within the Council of Europe's instructional paradigm in that the rapid growth and burgeoning dominance of English as a "lingua franca" threatens to undermine the Council's commitment to linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe through an emphasis on plurilingualism. "Language education policies for plurilingualism should include considerations about the role of English against the backdrop of Europe as a polity in which citizenship means both a multitude of (linguistic) identities and the capacity to enter public discourse on various levels of the communicative sphere" (Breidbach, 2003, p. 11). Despite its primacy as the dominant foreign language in most educational systems in Europe, and as a vehicle for global/international
communication, the Council of Europe does not see English as an ideal solution for facilitating communication in a linguistically diverse Europe. Linguistic homogenization is in contravention of the Council's stated objective of facilitating plurilingualism and diversity. Moreover, restricting the teaching of English in European classrooms would lead to a form of "covert linguicism" and is philosophically opposed to the Council's commitment to language diversity (Janssen, 1999).

The Council of Europe's view of the role language should play in citizenship accords with the European Union's model of good citizenship. The Council's position is that promoting plurilingualism is a socially active strategy for opposing ideologies that work against diversity; ideologies that threaten diversity with violence, racism, and aggressive nationalism (Starkey, 2002). Starkey (2002) asserts that teaching a foreign language is key to fostering a "positive culture of antiracism" (p. 12). It is recognized that language learning does not by itself abolish prejudice, but when acting in concert with complementary, well-conceived educational experiences, it can be a powerful asset for instituting human rights and equality (Starkey, 2002).

In conclusion, the Council of Europe education policies aim to promote plurilingualism, linguistic diversity, mutual understanding, democratic citizenship and social cohesion by the implementation of its policies.

4.2.2. European Union

In March 1957, the Treaty of Rome was signed by Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany. This Treaty established the European Economic Community. As stated in Article 314 of the treaty, only four languages were recognized as official languages: Dutch, French, German and Italian. This treaty was drawn up in a single original in Dutch, French, German, and Italian, all four texts being equally authentic.

In addition, the very first reference to a Europe-wide educational policy was stated in Article 128 of the Treaty of Rome: "The Council shall, acting on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee (...) lay down general principles for
implementing a common vocational training policy capable of contributing to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the common market. (Commission of the European Communities, 1957).

However, it was not until 1976 when the Council of the European Communities and the ministers of education drafted an action programme in the field of education. Those proposals were similar to what had been proposed two decades earlier.

The European Economic Community was the forerunner of what today is known as the European Union. It has experienced a successful expansion, from its starting point back in 1957 with only four members (France, the Benelux, Italy, and Germany). It has become a supranational system that comprises 27 nations and involves several dimensions (economic, political and cultural) with the ultimate aim of strengthening its citizenry's standards of living.

However, "Education issues have not played a central role within the European Union," (Fredriksson, 2003). Nonetheless, Arriarzu (2015) claims that such disinterest is borne out by the fact that the primary aim of the European Economic Community, and after the European Union, was to foster the economic development of European countries. Once economic growth and stability were achieved, the European Union began to create and implement education policies, with social cohesion and the creation of a European identity among its member countries a primary objective.

This introduction of policies in the field of education, especially in the promotion of foreign language learning, began in earnest in the early 1990s. The first document for this purpose was published in 1995 under the title "White Paper on Education and Training." (European Commission, 1995)

The Treaty of the European Union, also known as the Treaty of Maastricht, was a milestone because it brought real development to the field of educational policy.

This white paper came from conclusions reached at the Cannes European Council of June 1995, which states that: "Training and apprenticeship policies, which are fundamental for improving
employment and competitiveness, must be strengthened, especially continuing training." (European Commission, 1995, para. 3).

This document also draws up a plan of action at the European Level, envisioning the achievement of the following objectives by the year 1996: (a) encourage the acquisition of new knowledge; (b) bring school and the business sector closer together; (c) combat exclusion; - develop proficiency in three European languages; (d) treat capital investment and investment in training on an equal basis.

4.3. Multilingualism and plurilingualism

There is some controversy when it comes to defining concepts such as multilingualism and plurilingualism. Different definitions can be found even within official European organizations. For instance, the Council of Europe defines multilingualism as: "The presence in a geographical area, large or small, of more than one ‘variety of language,' i.e., the mode of speaking of a social group whether it is formally recognized as a language or not; in such an area individuals may be monolingual speaking" (Cenoz, 2013, p. 5).

Furthermore, the European Council Resolution of 21 November 2008, drafted the steps to follow on the new European Strategy for multilingualism considering that:

- linguistic and cultural diversity is part and parcel of the European identity; it is at once a shared heritage, a wealth, a challenge and an asset for Europe,

- multilingualism is a major cross-cutting theme encompassing the social, cultural, economic and therefore educational spheres,

- the promotion of less widely used European languages represents an important contribution to multilingualism,

- significant efforts should still be made to promote language learning and to value the cultural aspects of linguistic diversity at all levels of education and training, while also
improving information on the variety of European languages and their dissemination across the world,

- multilingualism is also of particular significance in promoting cultural diversity, inter alia in the field of media and content online, and intercultural dialogue within Europe and with the other regions of the world; translation, on account of the links it establishes between languages and cultures and the broad access it provides to works and ideas, plays a special role in this process,

- linguistic diversity within Europe constitutes an added value for the development of economic and cultural relations between the European Union and the rest of the world,

- multilingualism contributes to developing creativity by allowing access to other ways of thinking, interpreting the world and expressing the imagination.

Through this Resolution, the Council invites the member states and the commission within their respective shares of competence to:

1. Promote multilingualism focusing in strengthening social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and European construction.

2. Enhance lifelong language learning.


4. Promote the linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue by stepping up assistance for translation, encouraging the dissemination of works, and knowledge in Europe and across the world.

5. Promote EU languages worldwide.
4.4. European initiatives to foster foreign language learning and multiculturalism

The European Union communication titled “Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment” (2008) highlights the value of linguistic diversity in the European Union. In order to accomplish the “Barcelona objective” Europeans should be able to communicate in two languages in addition to their mother tongue.

Currently, the European Union claims to be very keen to promote language learning and linguistic diversity across Europe to improve basic language skills.

**Europass**

Europass is a set of five documents aimed at supporting European citizens by making skills and qualifications easily understandable all across Europe for job seekers, students, employers, teachers or trainers and/or higher education staff. Europass was created in 1998 by the European Commission and had as its primary goals to help citizens communicate skills and qualifications with third parties when seeking a job or training. In addition to helping employers, it called on education and training authorities to define skills and qualifications and to communicate contents.

- **Curriculum vitae** The first of five documents aims to support citizens through the presentation of skills and qualifications in a clear and compelling way. It is a tool for first job seekers to create a competitive CV based on standard guidelines. The CV comes with a supplementary document, the European Skills Passport (ESP), which aims to provide citizens with an electronic portfolio that provides possible employers or others with a comprehensive picture of one's skills and qualifications.
• **Language passport:** A self-assessment tool for citizens to provide a comprehensive list of language skills and qualifications based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL).

• **Europass mobility:** This document states acquired competencies and knowledge in another European country (outside the home country) through internships, work placements or voluntary work. This document does not consider age or level of education, and the partner organizations complete it.

• **Diploma supplement:** This document aims to provide additional information about official degrees, diplomas or transcripts, making them more understandable for employers or institutions.

• **Certificate supplement:** The certificate supplement describes knowledge and skills acquired by holders of vocational training certificates providing additional information to the original certificate and/or transcript.

This European initiative aims to support employment and provide solid records for experiences, skills, and knowledge acquired in a foreign European country, thereby emphasizing acquired language and soft-skills.

*The European Language Portfolio (ELP)* is a document created by the Language Policy Unit of the Council of Europe, which aims to provide its users the ability to record all progress in learning foreign languages and cultures, in addition to reflecting on the learning process. The European Language Portfolio consists of three documents:

- **Language Passport:** Consists of a grid where user updates describe the acquired competencies using common criteria accepted Europe-wide, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and serves as a complement to certificates and to illustrate linguistic and intercultural experiences.
- **Language biography:** Serves as a detailed journal describing the user's experiences in learning different languages and provides a guideline for planning and assessing progress.

- **Dossier:** This document keeps an illustrated description of personal work on a user's language competencies.

**Erasmus +:** This program was implemented for the first time in 1987. It is a program promoted by the European Commission in the field of education, training, youth, and sport. In 2014, it was reformed and is currently part of the 2020 Education and Training strategic framework. It pursues the promotion of formal and informal learning at all educational levels. It groups the old Lifelong Learning Programs that fostered bilateral or multilateral associations and supported the transnational mobility of citizens in order to promote innovation in the different fields and levels of training. Among the actions described, Erasmus + integrates various initiatives aimed at stimulating language learning and the development of intercultural knowledge. Key Action 1 includes the initiatives related to the mobility of people for learning reasons, and the Key Action 2, integrates the initiatives aimed at cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices. Considering the positive influence of this program in the lives of thousands of European students each year. According to the latest communication from the European Commission in May 2018, "the European Commission is proposing to double funding for Erasmus to €30 billion for the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027" (European Commission, 2018, para 6).

- **European language label:** Excellence and innovation in language learning and language teaching. It is a project promoted by the European Union that aims to reward innovative experiences in the field of teaching and learning languages, whether foreign or national, counting sign language. Each country receives this award annually in two modalities:
• **Category A.** European Seal for the best innovative activities in the teaching and learning of languages.

• **Category B.** European Seal for the language teacher who stands out for his dedication and professionalism in the teaching of languages.

- **European Shared Treasure:** consists of a European database which purpose is to collect good practices and experiences from the initiatives that emerged during the implementation of the various mobility and association programs promoted by the Erasmus + program.

### 4.5. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL)

To deal with, there is a European Center for Modern Languages in Graz, Austria, created by the Council of Europe, the European Union has designed a Web space that encourages multilingualism.

It is, in particular, an online Observatory of multilingualism: "Poliglotti 4" that presents and projects good practices in the field of teaching and learning languages, within spaces related to formal or informal learning.

The growing interest in multilingualism and multiculturalism, understood as "ability to use languages for communicative purposes and to participate in an intercultural relationship in which a person, as a social agent, dominates -with different degrees- several languages and has experience of various cultures "(Instituto Cervantes, 2002), has been reflected in various actions aimed at the conservation and promotion of regional and minority languages. These include the creation of the Mercator European Research Center on Multilingualism and Language Learning, an independent center recognized by policymakers and professionals in the field of multilingual education and language learning.

This research center is part of a network of research and documentation centers specializing in regional and minority languages, which also supports projects aimed at conservation and promotion of these languages (such as ADUM, a project of the European Union that offers
information on funding for regional languages, CRAMLAP aimed at the promotion of Celtic and minority languages or NPLD, (the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity), sign languages (Dicta-Sign and SignSpeak) and bilingual education through CLIL projects.

The European Union has focused much of its efforts on the promotion of language learning and intercultural development. Despite this, it seems necessary to promote more actions towards intercultural learning and raise the awareness of European citizens.

In this regard, it is worth highlighting the European project Elos, which is part of the Erasmus + projects. The main objective is to promote the European and international dimension in education. Among its functions, it has developed indicators that allow assessing the European competence of students between 12 and 19 years old, known as the Common Framework for European Competition, that follows the structure of the Reference Framework and is also based on the key competencies for permanent learning. It comprises six levels related to knowledge, skills, and attitudes about European institutions and their structure. The final version of this tool is designed to be used in the learning contexts of Superior Education, as well as to include it in the Europass.
5. Spanish Education in Context

5.1. Socio-educational context

As defined by the Constitution, education in Spain is a shared responsibility between the central Administration, regional and municipal administrations and schools.

The head of Education in Spain is the central government, which through the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, guarantees the right to education and ensures the unity of the state in education, promoting and coordinating the educational activities of the different regional administrations.

Spain is a decentralized country: The 1978 Spanish Constitution divided Spain into 17 autonomous communities, chief among them Catalonia and Andalusia, and the autonomous cities Ceuta and Melilla. Each autonomous community is comprised of one or more provinces. The Autonomous Community is the first-level political division established. They have wide legislative and executive autonomy and their own elected parliaments, governments, public administrations, budgets, and resources. Health and education systems, among others, are managed regionally. The autonomous communities are responsible for inspecting the various educational systems. The inspection function was established in 1979 to ensure that educational laws comply with constitutional principles and other laws concerning state education (Van Bruggen, 2009).

The Inspectorate of Education is the hands-on branch of the Ministry of Education in each autonomous community. Its function is to inspect schools, monitoring for quality of management, quality of individual teachers, the condition of buildings and infrastructure, and more. Inspector reports are submitted to individual authorities in each province of the autonomous community. They are usually provided to the school as well but are not a matter for the public interest. There are about 1,400 inspectors in Spain, most working in pairs, and have some experience as a teacher or head teacher. Schools have also conducted self-diagnostic evaluations since 2006, according to the Law of Education passed that year. These evaluations
are associated with tests given nationally at the end of grade four in primary school grade two in junior secondary schools. Each school has an evaluation team that leads the self-evaluation. The team prepares and implements a plan, which is also submitted to the inspectorate, which provides advice and "tools" aimed at helping the team succeed in its work. Inspectors also play a role in these evaluations (Van Bruggen, 2009). Their overall responsibilities include:

- Supervising the way schools function, monitoring their programs and their pedagogical performance.
- Supervising and working to improve teacher development and qualifications.
- Evaluating the individual educational system.
- Ensuring that schools comply with all educational laws and regulations.
- Advising the various sectors of the educational community of their rights and obligations (Van Bruggen, 2009).

Where teachers are concerned, inspectors pay particular attention to the contents, methodology, materials, and objectives of the syllabus; the role the teacher plays as an advisor and guide to their students, and to individual school programs. Inspectors do not produce a final judgment as to each school's performance, but rather prepare an improvement plan, the implementation of which is carefully monitored by the inspectorate (Van Bruggen, 2009). Assessments include the progress of students learning English as a foreign language in Spanish schools. Pupils are interviewed to determine their range of fluency and to learn about their classroom experience and their language experience beyond the classroom. Each interview is 30 minutes long and conducted anonymously with groups of students in a relaxed setting. Students were asked to speak in English about their experience in the bilingual program; discuss a book or a story they particularly enjoyed learning to read; discuss an aspect of science they found especially interesting; and to speak generally about their individual interests, activities and plans for the future (Dobson, Murillo and Johnstone, 2010). In a 2010 Ministry of Education report, students generally performed at a high level in listening comprehension, showing little difficulty understanding each interviewer and exhibited a high degree of confidence. Some groups showed
a capacity for helping each other, with the more fluent students sometimes correcting others’ grammar. The top-performing groups were able to cope with ease when it came to engaging in conversation, while students in the middle-performing groups showed a more variable ability to speak and understand. Even low-attaining students showed the ability to convey some information (Dobson, Murillo and Johnstone, 2010). The majority of students in the top- and middle-performing groups met the objectives of the English-language program in both the quality of their spoken English and their ability to cope with language-comprehension tasks. Perhaps the most telling result of these interviews was that the weakest students were "by no means inarticulate" (Dobson, Murillo and Johnstone, 2010). Many could understand what was being asked and some could communicate adequately. However, the evaluation team added that new ways of helping these students increase their fluency and accuracy would help significantly in enriching their experience.

Students were also assessed for their ability to communicate in writing, judging them based on legibility, understandability, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, word order, and more. Higher-performing students showed a high standard of writing in controlled conditions in a number of categories based on a story of some length they were asked to write. Middle-performing students were also effective though at a slightly lower rate regarding sustained accuracy and range of language. In general, these students appeared on pace for a good grade in English language performance (Dobson, Murillo and Johnstone, 2010).

Despite such reviews and the positive performance of many high-performing students, the traditional view of Spanish students and Spain, in general, is that English is a difficult language for Spaniards to acquire and speak well. Even though most Spanish people begin studying English in childhood, in preschool and beginning at age three or four in some cases, English remains a troublesome subject (Alonso, 2011-12). A 2006 Euro-barometer survey of European language skills showed that while about half of all Europeans can communicate in at least one language other than their native tongue, only 27 percent of Spaniards can speak a foreign language. In Finland, that figure is nearly 70 percent, while 89 percent of the Netherlands and 86 percent of the Danish are able to communicate in a foreign language (Korhonen, 2006). Only the
Czech, Bulgarian and Hungarian peoples speak English at a lower rate than the Spanish. This even though Spain has one of the highest numbers (98 percent) of students studying a foreign language in Europe. Moreover, there are more second language learners in Spain at the secondary level than in any other EU member state (Eurostar, 2008). There are many possible explanations for this:

In many school-based scenarios, English lessons take the form of a master class, in which students repeat grammatical forms or practice lessons from a workbook. Spanish is used extensively in the teaching of English forms, and there are few opportunities for practicing one's English in Spanish culture outside the classroom. Bilingual schools offer ample opportunity for exposure to English and plenty of opportunity to practice the language. Unfortunately, these schools are private, tend to be quite expensive and are unattainable for many in a country with chronic unemployment problems. Alonso (2012) points to a traditionally negative attitude toward English among Spanish students, who tend to see it as an undesirable necessity since they do not need English in their everyday lives or have occasion to speak it outside the classroom. Interestingly, many students complete their Bachillerato without achieving good grades in English or being able to engage in a basic English conversation, which would seem to indicate a deep-seated problem in the educational system's approach to English language learning.

A review of how English is taught in Spanish schools reveals certain insufficiencies. For example, the number of class hours per week (3 hours is compulsory) devoted to the subject is inadequate to the task of teaching and acquiring English, particularly when one considers the fundamental differences between English and Spanish. Combined with high student-to-teacher classroom ratios, and a wide variance in student language acquisition abilities, the situation becomes quite clear.

There is a trend of thought which argues that foreign language teachers have given too little attention to the importance of developing listening skills in foreign language acquisition. Rivers (1966) contends that "Speaking does not of itself constitute communication unless what is said is comprehended by another person. Teaching the comprehension of spoken speech is the primary importance of the communication aim is to be reached" (p. 196). The act of listening in itself is a
complicated process that involves much more than paying attention. It is a six-stage process involving hearing, attending, understanding, remembering, evaluating and responding (Nunan, 2001). This is especially important to take into consideration when teaching or to learn a foreign language because ultimately listening is a purposeful act. One listens to transact an exchange of information, or for interacting, such as making and maintaining social contact (Alonso, 2012). It is challenging to create an effective learning environment in which students can listen actively, incorporating a variety of situations and subject matter which can be used in everyday life when there are just 3 hours a week in which to do so. Proper language teaching and acquisition goes far beyond rote learning; it is a process of active, purposeful listening through which the student is able to learn nuances of meaning, inflection, and accent as well as grammatical forms.

To that end, Bueno, Madrid, and McLaren (2006) have developed a pattern in which foreign language teachers would be well-advised to follow when teaching students to listen actively. The first step, "pre-listening," has to do with establishing context, in which the instructor prepares students for what they are about to hear. The second step is listening, in which students perform given tasks and seek answers to questions. Post-listening is the third step, in which students check their answers and offer feedback, during which teachers may identify difficulties students are experiencing in the listening process.

The ministry is responsible for preparing, directing and executing the government's policy in matters of education, culture, and sport through its various higher bodies: the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Universities, the Ministry of Culture, the Superior Council of Sports and the undersecretary of Education, Culture and Sport. It also has various attached bodies and collegiate advisory and/or participatory bodies: the State School Board, the General Training Council.

5.2. Foreign Language Education in Spain

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, education and culture was a privilege only achievable for those members of the nobility and the clergy who were the only ones who knew
writing and reading, which in those times was not the case among the proletariat. Already in 1812, coinciding with the war of independence, Manuel José Quintana, produced the Quintana Report, which reflected the first definition of education in our country and found "education as an instrument of social reform and the means for evolution and progress of society." Despite this supposition, the King in those times, Fernando VII, prevented this report from becoming law by denying his entry into Parliament. Many years later in 1857, the first educational law in Spain was created, the Moyano Law to try to solve the serious problem of illiteracy that plagued our country. This law guaranteed compulsory education until the age of 12 and free education for those who could not afford it. The Moyano Law has been in force for more than 100 years, although it was repeatedly modified. You could say that, to date, this is the most important education law that has been created in our country and from my point of view even today is present in many aspects of our education system. Later, during the Second Republic, the different official languages were recognized in the Constitution, and they were placed in primary education as the undisputed center of Spanish education. Later during the Franco regime different laws entered like the Law of Public Instruction or the Law of Ordination of Secondary Education, in which it was emphasized that Education was "a right of the Family, the Church and the State" and was marked by the national-Catholicism promoted by the Francoism during the years of dictatorship, and because of this education had "a strong confessional, patriotic, social, intellectual, physical and professional, seeking a linguistic unification of the entire state, in addition to the separation of sexes during the educational process."

Spain has a long history of multi-ethnic cultures and was home to multiple languages for centuries. The first bilingual (Spanish-Latin) grammar was published in 1488, followed four years later by the first grammar of a vernacular (Castellana). Europe's first multilingual Bible was published in Spain circa 1515, as it was the very first Arab-Spanish dictionary (1505). In that same era, one of the earliest textbooks concerning the study of language and how to approach language teaching appeared in 1535, and the first grammar of an Amerindian language was published in 1547. It is no surprise that this should have happened in Spain, a country that was home to Moorish-Muslim, Christian and Jewish cultures, which lived together peacefully, harmoniously and collaboratively, creating a society in which the sound of various tongues and
dialects was commonplace and accommodated. Moreover, the grammarian Ambrosio de Salazar, who taught Spanish in France, was critical of the fact that foreign language instruction was a rare thing in Spain during his lifetime. Francisco de Villalobos, who wrote the Spanish preface to the "Dictionnaire en quatre langues," published in 1556, posed four questions aimed at encouraging Spaniards to engage in foreign language acquisition:

"Who has been able to make friends among the people of other nations using just their mother tongue?"

"Who has been able to manage their affairs just in their language, ignoring all others?"

"Who has ever been able to govern the republic using only their language?" (Lopez, 2018).

These are questions aimed at encouraging Spanish readers to consider the logic of learning other languages in a part of the world where so many people speaking so many different languages live in such proximity. Spain's lack of interest in foreign languages was commented on by Par, the noted Shakespeare scholar, in 1935: "(...) the Spanish showed not the slightest interest in learning the languages of others (...), and they saw no value in knowing authors other than classical ones, the writers of the Italian Renaissance and a small number of French writers" (Par, 1935, p. 61). Ambrosio de Salazar, writing in the 17th century, explained this remarkable phenomenon from a socio-cultural standpoint, noting that the Spanish were naturally withdrawn and serious-minded people, who believed that a grown man who pursues learning shames himself and deserves to be ridiculed (Lopez, 2018).

Of course, it must be remembered that Spain was Europe's only "superpower" from 1450 to 1750, a conquering people who had emerged from the Reconquista a hardened militaristic and devoutly Catholic country. With an empire that spanned two hemispheres, the Spanish followed the example of most empires in dismissing other nations, cultures, and languages as inferior to their own, subjects or people who could expect to be their subjects soon. Suarez Gomez (1961) sums it up nicely, pointing out that "our status as dominators, instilling a sense of arrogance and encouraging a convenient indifference, meant that we were little interested in the study of foreign languages" (p. 53). Indeed, one problem that the soldiers and explorers of imperial Spain
faced was a lack of interpreters, having been compelled to kidnap Indians during their conquest of Mesoamerica to act as interpreters, a practice used liberally by Columbus in his dealings with natives throughout the region (La Rosa, 1995).

The counter-reformation only reinforced Spain's disdain for mistrust of foreigners and foreign languages. King Philip II banned young Spaniards from attending foreign universities (Lopez, 2018). Spanish students of the era were overruled by an educational system dominated by the Catholic church, and Spain closed itself off from the outside world. In fact, merely reading a Hebrew text could arouse suspicion that the individual surreptitiously supported the Jewish faith, in contravention of church strictures (Lopez, 2018). Foreign modes of thinking, and any new ideas, regardless of the discipline (especially language), were prohibited to prevent science and philosophy from being placed above religion. A French grammar was published, though outside of Spain in the Spanish Netherlands, in 1565. Moreover, when Queen Elisabeth de Valois, daughter of the French King Henri II, married King Philip II of Spain, a court of hundreds attended her in Toledo - nobles who had to learn French to interact with Elizabeth's court (Lopez, 2018). After Elizabeth's death in 1568, interest in French went into decline and didn't resurface again for another 200 years.

### 5.3. FL Teacher Education in Spain

Recent years have seen some marked changes in the way teachers are prepared for teaching foreign languages. Legislation concerning teacher education concerns principles of teacher education and qualifications, and the role universities play in training kindergarten, primary and secondary classroom teachers as well as specialists (Vidal, 2006). The Law of University Reform (1987) made teacher education for kindergarten and primary school teachers the responsibility of the universities. University colleges, or the Ecole Normale, became part of university departments and all 5-year degrees changed to 4-year degrees, to the consternation of those who had hoped that reform would bring about an upgrade in primary school teaching (Vidal, 2006). Under the Law of University Reform, primary school teacher studies include theory as well as a
period of tutoring in primary schools. Prospective primary school teachers may choose general qualification or opt for specialization in foreign language teaching, arts, physical education, music, nursery school or special education (Vidal, 2006).

Secondary school teachers must earn a degree from a university in one specialized subject area. At that point, they may enter the public sector, where teachers become civil servants and must pass tenure examinations. Years of teaching experience can be used to substitute for the teacher training course, called "Certificado de Aptitud Pedagógica" (CAP) (Vidal, 2006). In autonomous communities that have bilingual programs, secondary school teachers must show a certificate of proficiency in the official autonomous language and be prepared to show a degree of proficiency (Vidal, 2006).

Initial training at the university level, organized within Modern Language University Departments, includes undergraduate classes within the foreign language department curriculum. These include "Methodology of Language Teaching," "Language Acquisition/Learning," "Curriculum Development," and "Applied Linguistics" (Vidal, 2006). This new curriculum is a reflection of a new appreciation among university teachers for what most of their students will be doing with their instruction, i.e., classroom teaching. It is also aimed at preparing teachers for classroom research and teacher training (Vidal, 2006, p.12).
6. Finnish Education in Context

6.1. Socio-educational Context

Finnish belongs to the Uralic language group and, according to the Institute for the Languages of Finland (2016), it is spoken by 5,5 million people around the world and shares the status of official national language along with Swedish, which is spoken by around 296,000 Finns. Finland also has several autochthonous languages that are spoken in specific regions, such as the Saami language.

According to Statistics Finland (2008), Finland's population at the end of September was 5,509,984, of which 244,499 were immigrants, representing 4,5% of the total population.

Finland is a parliamentary representative democratic republic and entered the European Union along with Sweden and Austria in 1995.

The Finnish educational model has long been considered one of the best around the world by several authors.

Finland is a Nordic country with close historical links with other Nordic states and maintains close relations with all including Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland. Finland belonged to the Kingdom of Sweden from the 11th century until 1809. Later, it became an autonomous Grand Duchy annexed to Russia in the wake of the Hamina peace treaty. In 1917, Finland finally became independent and, in 1919, promulgated its first Constitution.

Finland's Parliament is formed by a single chamber of 200 members elected every four years through a proportional electoral system. It was the first European country to introduce universal suffrage in parliamentary elections. Consequently, women have had the right to vote in national elections since 1906 and municipal elections since 1917. In 1907, 19 women were part of the Finnish Parliament. At present, one-third of the Eduskunta seats are occupied by women. In 1967, the right to vote was granted to all citizens over 18 years of age.
Traditionally, the biggest single party of the Eduskunta has been the Social Democrats. The largest right-wing parties are the Centrist Party (formerly known as the Agrarian Union) and the National Coalition Party. The post-war period was dominated by coalition governments, based mostly on the cooperation of the Social Democrats and Centrist Party. According to J. Kiander, political division has weakened the political left and induced Social Democrats to seek non-socialist allies. The welfare state has not developed as much as in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, countries in which the position and influence of the Social Democrats has been more significant.

In general terms, benefit levels and taxes are lower in Finland than in other Nordic countries. In 1991, the electorate set aside its traditional allegiances and a right-wing government came to power. The current government, formed after the national elections of March 1995, including the Social Democrats, the National Coalition Party, the Left Alliance, the Swedish People's Party and the Greens (represented in Parliament since 1983).

Both Finnish and Swedish are official languages. The predominant language is Finnish. Swedish is the mother tongue of approximately 6 percent of the population.

The egalitarian nature of the Finnish educational system dates to the 1850s when compulsory folk schools were launched alongside the nation’s private secondary school system. The folk schools were, in part, an attempt to bring education within reach of Finns lacking a wealthy family background or for whom Finnish was their native language.

Between 1856 and 1866, compulsory folk schools began to develop alongside the private secondary schools, established the break with the church’s monopoly. It also advanced the progress of Finnish-speakers. The creation of these folk schools allowed those without a wealthy background or with Finnish as a mother tongue access to education. At the time of independence in 1917, education was seen as a tool for maintaining the national identity, literacy, and political freedom. Differences in class and language (Swedish, Finnish and Russian) produced a somewhat disjointed educational system (Chung, 2009). Once a centralized system, things changed in the 1960s when a restructuring and a new localized educational system enacted by the Ministry of Education. The system continued to evolve during the 1970s with further
reforms, some of which reflected socio-cultural transitions in Finland. There were concerns that the country’s educational system was too biased toward the Swedish-speaking upper classes and was undeserving the Finnish people. Consequently, the government set out to make schools more comprehensive and egalitarian, responding to growing demands from the citizenry who sought a more even playing field in many aspects of Finnish life (Chung, 2009). Changes included standardizing schools in remote parts of the country, and vocational and general curricula were melded. When these reforms faced resistance, it was suggested that reforms be rolled out gradually, with areas seen as being educationally inadequate being emphasized, including the north, and culminating in the Helsinki area (Chung, 2009).

A period of decentralization took place during the ‘80s as the educational system assumed a market economy model. Schools gained autonomy and were given responsibility for ensuring satisfactory learning outcomes and for the performance of teachers. It is the government’s responsibility to provide aid to help schools meet their objectives (Chung, 2009).

The emergence of Finland’s knowledge-based economy took place in the late 1980s and was coincident with the opening of the country’s economy and deregulation of capital flow (Sahlberg, 2009). It marked a remarkable transformation from an economy rooted in machinery, forestry-based industries, and engineering and is one of the few examples in modern European history of a country rich in natural resources shifting from an industrial economy to an intense and concentrated emphasis on knowledge (Routti and Yla-Anttila, 2006). There are several features of note in the relationship between Finland’s educational system, its economy and sources of outside funding. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Finland invests 3.5 percent of its GDP in research and development, second-highest in the EU behind Sweden (OECD, 2008). Even economic recession in the 1990s did not deter the Finns from maintaining this level of investment; remarkably, private investment increased during this period (Castells and Himanen, 2002). Finland has established a high-performing, equity-based educational system that is heavily supported by public sources.

Since the 1980s, Finland has transformed its educational system from below average to an internationally recognized and admired model for high achievement, outstripping many
European systems that once dominated the educational landscape in the EU. Of particular note is the fact that Finland has recorded steady progress across four categories of educational achievement over the past 30 years, including:

- Increased levels of educational attainment among the adult population.
- Evidence of widespread equity in school performances and learning outcomes.
- A high level of student academic achievement (measured according to international assessments).
- Moderate overall spending and efficiency (Sahlberg, 2009).

Approximately 95 percent of the Finnish population continue in upper secondary schools upon graduation, while 90 percent of Finns who begin upper secondary school complete the track and receive certification, which provides access to tertiary education (Statistics Finland, 2008). Thus, it comes as little surprise that over half of Finland’s adult population takes part in adult education programs (Sahlberg, 2009). This reflects educational policy in Finland, in which about two-thirds of those leaving secondary school are encouraged to enroll in tertiary education (Sahlberg, 2009).

The spreading of educational opportunities and the achievement of high learning outcomes is evenly spread throughout the country, a radical shift from the status quo 1970s when educational performance in the country’s remote locations was decidedly inferior to that recorded in Helsinki. Finnish students appear to have benefited substantially from a radical change in curricular policy in the 1980s when learning expectations were made similar for all students. From a practical standpoint, this meant that all students studied foreign languages, sciences, and mathematics in the same classes, instead of the previous model in which students were divided into three curricular levels based on individual performance. The wisdom of this change became evident after the release of the OECD’s 2000 Programme for International Student Achievement survey, which showed that Finland had one of the lowest variations in student performance between schools in reading literacy among all OECD nations (Sahlberg, 2009). A similar trend began to appear in mathematics and science curricula a few short years later. OECD statistics
have continued to prove the effectiveness of Finland’s shift from streaming in the 1980s to the current model in which all students take the same courses. The 2000 PISA survey reflected a very minor variation in school performances and would seem to reinforce the fact that the leveling effect of the educational system’s curricular setup has also been effective at equalizing social inequities, which can present a barrier to educational equality (Sahlberg, 2009).

OECD survey statistics, which have gradually become a widely accepted standard among EU nation educational systems. In the 2006 survey, which included 57 countries, Finland scored the highest, outperforming highly industrialized and affluent nations like Japan, Canada, and the United States. This performance was particularly significant given its emphasis on students’ ability to use acquired knowledge and skills to cope with real-life situations, which reflects a shift toward assessing how well students are able to apply what they have learned rather than how well they have mastered content in specific curricula (OECD, 2007).

One of the most notable dimensions of Finland’s achievement is that it has been reached at a very manageable cost, particularly compared with other OECD nations that spend significantly more than Finland, yet whose educational systems are significantly lower performing. There appears to be little or no correlation between investment in education and learning outcomes. Finland’s accomplishment would seem to indicate that efficiency is key (Sahlberg, 2009). For example, Norway and the United States spend at the highest level among OECD countries; however, their student learning outcomes are the lowest. In comparison to a country like the United States, Finland’s philosophical approach to public education is remarkably enlightened. Rather than making upper secondary education compulsory and creating ancillary problems in so doing, the Finns have responded to an inordinately high number of secondary student dropouts by pooling the expertise and experience of administrators and policy-setters in seeking “meaningful education options” for all students (Sahlberg, 2009, p. 12).
6.2. Foreign Language Education in Finland

Finns are historically rooted in a bilingual tradition, Swedish and Finnish having been co-first languages since the country’s independence in 1917. That grounding has helped acclimate Finns to multilingualism. That basis gives Finns a predisposition to foreign language learning, an orientation that has helped make the country receptive to foreign language learning, which has become something of an educational tradition, an inherent educational right of all Finns. As citizens of an EU member state, Finns have adopted a common sense approach to language learning, acknowledging that Finnish and Swedish are not widely learned or spoken languages in the EU and responding by actively seeking to learn other languages, such as Russian, German, French, and English (Nuolijärvi, 2011).

Finland’s Basic Education Act stipulates that a basic education syllabus include “mother tongue” and literature, the second national language (Finnish or Swedish), and foreign languages among science, mathematics, history and social studies classes. Instruction in the second national language or a foreign language generally begins in the third grade (comprehensive school), though it is not unusual for some students to begin foreign language learning in first or second grade, which means students are between 7 and nine years of age when the study of languages begins in school. As of 2010, English was the most commonly learned foreign language in grades one through six (Nuolijärvi, 2011). Nearly 70 percent of students up through grade six studied English as an optional or compulsory foreign language while students studying another foreign language stayed at about 5 percent or lower. More than 15,000 students studied Swedish as an optional or compulsory language.

Upper secondary school syllabi must include a mother tongue and literature (Finnish or Swedish), the other national language (Swedish or Finnish), and foreign languages, along with a course in science, history, mathematics and more (Nuolijärvi, 2011). According to Statistics Finland (2010), almost every graduate of the upper secondary school program had studied English along with Finnish or Swedish, with German having been studied by 26 percent of all graduates (Nuolijärvi, 2011).
Foreign language immersion learning is another legacy of Finland’s rich foreign language tradition. Swedish language immersion for children who speak Finnish was introduced in 1987 and was rolled out in other bilingual speaking regions, including the Helsinki region in 1991 (Nuolijärvi, 2011). In total, 17 regions/municipalities make Swedish immersion learning available in kindergarten, preschool and comprehensive school (three municipalities offer immersion in Sami, and there is a Karelian immersion program in eastern Finland). Recently, Chinese and Korean immersion learning programs have been added. Immersion generally begins between 3 and 6 and continues from kindergarten through grade 9. One of the keys to effective immersion learning is to begin early, which is something of a tradition in Finland, where nearly 4,000 students from preschool through grade 9 were enrolled as of 2009 (Kangasvieri et al., 2011). Interest in the immersion program has continued to grow, although there have been problems meeting demand for those wanting to learn Swedish due to a decreasing number of individuals capable of teaching the language (Nuolijärvi, 2011). In general, Finland’s immersion learning program has been an unqualified success thanks to the language-in-action methodology.

Other foreign language learning opportunities include the International School of Helsinki, where English is taught, and at the European School of Helsinki, which offers programs in English, French and Finnish (Nuolijärvi, 2011). The Basic Education Act also provides for language education instruction in the native language of an immigrant pupil or pupils who come from backgrounds other than Swedish or Finnish. Some examples include Russian, Estonian, Vietnamese, Somali and Arabic (Nuolijärvi, 2011). There have been other examples of foreign language education innovation in Finland in recent years that expand opportunities beyond the classroom. These programs have been designed to meet Finns’ desire to learn a foreign tongue and focus on foreign languages other than English. The Kielitivoli (Language Amusement Park) supports people who desire to learn Russian, German or French, while Svenska Nu (Swedish Now) seeks to encourage students to select the Swedish language at an earlier age than most do today (Nuolijärvi, 2011). One of the objectives of Svenska Nu is to bolster Swedish language abilities among Finnish speakers by introducing Swedish culture to Finnish youths (Nuolijärvi, 2011). The Finnish government has provided
financial support for municipalities that have been involved in diversifying language education programs.

6.3. FL Teacher Education in Finland

Legislation passed in 1995 established the principles of teacher training in Finland. It also divides the job of training classroom, subject, kindergarten, and special teachers, as well as study counselors, among the country’s universities. All teacher training has been based in Finland’s universities since 1973 (Marsh, 1997). The training and education of subject teachers in the foreign languages is the combined duty of language departments and teacher education departments, which also oversee supervised practice teaching in designated practice schools. Classroom and subject teachers must achieve a Master’s degree in education and, after two to three years of study, they may apply for admission to teacher education and may begin teaching studies if accepted (Marsh, 1997).

Students’ pedagogical studies cover 35 weeks, including 15 study weeks, 19 weeks of teaching practice and one week of school administration. The initial training of language teachers involves language as well as subject teachers, with an emphasis on the latter. At the university level, Finland has 13 teacher training schools that are overseen by its university’s education faculty, and are located in Helsinki, Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Hämeenlinna, Oulu, Kajaani, Rauma, Savonlinna, Rovaniemi, Tampere, Vaasa, and Turku (Marsh, 1997). Abo Akademi offers theory and practical training in which half of all class time is taught in English. Two other universities supplied a variation on this, which is aimed at preparing teachers to work in English. Courses are five years in length and are conducted in English as much as 70 percent of the time (Marsh, 1997).

The introductory curriculum includes communicative-interactive methodology, foreign language methodology, communication competence and performance, immersion, grammar, content-based foreign language curricula, teaching materials and assessment (Marsh, 1997).
EU programs are designed to encourage and facilitate mobility and are aimed at encouraging what the EU calls “internationalization” (Marsh, 1997). This essentially refers to an orientation toward teaching and learning content via a foreign language is a necessity for mobility throughout the EU and beyond. It should be noted that because all teacher training, from kindergarten teachers and up, takes place exclusively in Finland’s universities. Teacher education is demanding and is aimed at producing highly competent instructors able to meet the foreign language requirements as outlined in the country’s laws and administered through the Ministry of Education. It is intended to encourage and aid the spread of multilingualism throughout the country, in accordance with the country’s mandate to serve the linguistic needs of everyone, regardless of mother tongue, cultural background, linguistic attainment level, or social standing.

For example, the children of a couple speaking English (the father) and Finnish (the mother) are able to speak fluently in both tongues because while they take classes in Finnish, their local school in Helsinki, in accordance with Finnish school system policy, offers children of immigrant (or mixed) linguistic background may take instruction in any languages spoken at home in addition to Finnish (Weaver, 2013). The children also take advantage of additional English-language instruction in another nearby school for 90 minutes every Thursday after completion of their day’s coursework. The girls have enjoyed attending additional English language instruction, in which they do grammar, writing and reading exercises and play word games (Weaver, 2013). Their English-language instruction coincided with their learning to refine their reading and writing abilities. They have also learned cultural lessons, including about food, literature and English traditions.

Support of the “immigrant” language program in Finland is part of an overall effort to create a truly multilingual society in recognition of the fact that the country will need its citizens to be able to speak a language other than Finnish and Swedish, the country’s two “official” languages. The program provides instruction in more than 50 languages including Russian, Estonian, Arabic, Chinese, English, Spanish, Kurdish, Somali, Vietnamese and Albanian (Weaver, 2013). The Finnish educational system has invested very heavily in technology to further its aims and to
give teachers all of the tools necessary to achieve classroom excellence. A distance learning program (Distance Inset for European Second Language Learning) has been in place since the 1990s. It offers distance instruction in English, German and French (Marsh et al., 1994). ROMEO (Resourcing on-site modules for educational orientations) is a program allowing foreign language teacher educators within a university to improve their knowledge of content language instruction as they improve their linguistic skills in the language in which they teach. ROMEO is intended to bridge the gap between knowledge of the field and teacher training practice (Marsh et al., 1994).

Partnerships among different agencies are another innovation aimed at providing support for language teacher education. Students involved in teaching practice are jointly supervised by higher education tutors and school-based mentors. Another partnership, between the University of Helsinki and the Finnish Ministry of Education, has produced a program called Teacher-line, which makes it possible for students to gain admittance directly to teacher training courses while they are engaged in undergraduate studies (Grenfell, 2002). Teacher-line aims to improve the status of foreign language teachers by bolstering their sense of “vocational identity” (Grenfell, 2002).
7. Results and discussion

7.1 Education Results Between Finland and Spain

The training and social recognition of teachers are key to the success of Finland's educational model. Specific testing for access to the university, the duration of studies, the link between teaching and research, and teaching practices throughout teacher careers are strengths.

By contrast, in Spain, the recognition of teaching work does not enjoy the same status as in Finland because it is not considered comparable to other university degrees such as medicine or science. Therefore, teaching work is not recognized as a fundamental pillar of Spanish society.

Access and requirements

Access to initial training in the EU usually requires prior accreditation that applicants have passed the secondary or similar high school, although some countries incorporate selective and specific tests for teaching studies.

In Spain, access to primary school achieved through selectivity tests, as in other careers, aspiring teachers must obtain at least an average mark for the degree, in some cases around the minimum required to access the university, so "you can find students in the Faculties of Education with a lack of motivation, who are forced to study the teaching profession because they have not achieved enough to undertake other degrees," cites the report.

In Finland, the high number of applicants makes access to teaching a very, and institutions of higher education can select the most motivated applicants through selection criteria that include access exams or personal interviews.
7.2. Language Teacher Training

In the European Union, no overall, homogenous organization proves a person is qualified to teach. In an EU country like Spain, primary school foreign language instructors may not have sufficient communicative competence to be able to impart the material at a high enough rate of fluency, while secondary school instructors may be very effective in the foreign language but have little or no training in any other content subjects (Naves and Munoz, 1999). Few content subject secondary school teachers have a native-caliber command of the language, while, generally speaking, none of them have had enough training in content language integrated learning (CLIL). Until recently, only private and partially private schools have been able to afford native speaking teachers with a degree in a content subject or teachers with degrees in the content subject area and the other in a foreign language, while none have been trained in CLIL (Naves and Munoz, 1999). And Spain, like Denmark, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Poland, cite the prohibitive cost of integrating CLIL (Eurydice, 2006). Spain’s teacher training system has not offered dual qualification, making it hard to find instructors who can integrate CLIL. Consequently, instructors develop lessons according to common sense and intuition (Naves and Munoz, 1999). And no reason for instituting CLIL is missing from the Curriculum Reform Guidelines, as it is from most undergrad and graduate teacher training courses (Naves and Munoz, 1999). So teachers simply aren’t familiar with CLIL, meaning that many instructors indicate that they don’t understand the rationale for it and so most of the new teaching strategies associated with CLIL and evaluation protocols go overlooked. In fact, Spain is the only country outside of central and Eastern Europe offering benefits to teachers working in CLIL (Eurydice, 2006). Extra time for preparing lessons is given to teachers in sections of the Autonomous Communities of Galicia, the Balearic Islands and bilingual portions of Navarra (Naves and Munoz, 1999).

In line with its 1990s reform initiative, the training of primary teachers in Spain has increased from three to four years, to which the Secondary school training adds one more year to the specific subject, corresponding to a master's degree. In Finland, teacher training lasts for five years, both for Primary and Secondary school, although the latter may have a somewhat longer
duration due to specialization. First, a three-year bachelor's degree is completed, which is complemented by a two-year master's degree. Teacher education at Finnish universities instills students with the capability to act independently as an instructor and educator (cite). The aim of such training is to endow the student with skills and to help them guide the learning capabilities of different students. All teacher education includes pedagogical studies and guided teaching practice, which students practice in the universities as teaching practice (cite). This guidance includes practice in delivering lessons, guidance and familiarization with tasks and responsibilities about issues that crop up in the everyday business of teaching. Finnish primary school teachers and upper secondary school teachers undergo five years of rigorous training as well as academic work, part of the fulfillment of their master’s degree, the aim being to give elementary and secondary school teachers a common, unified pedagogical core (Teacher Education in Finland, 2018). Finnish teachers receive high-level training because young teachers have a lot of autonomy in selecting the methods they will use in the classroom. Teachers are not subject to the external requirements that teachers in other countries face, such as standardized testing, inspection and government control (Crouch, 2015). Teacher education in Finland is strongly rooted in research, with all students in primary school master’s programs involved in research, the objective being to tie teaching interventions with solid evidence (Crouch, 2015). Teachers are encouraged to adopt a didactical approach to their profession and to question conventional modes of thinking about education. In other words, standardized approaches to teaching are discouraged in favor of independent thinking.

7.3. Differences in Curricular content

In most countries, initial teacher training consists of compulsory and core subjects, general education studies, and a period of internships to which are added specific programs in information and communication technologies; management and administration of educational centers; integration of students with special educational needs; and skills to face the management of school coexistence.
The training of primary teachers in Spain is oriented toward an integrative model of scientific, didactic and professional content "although with obvious gaps in the interaction between science and practice." (Doval and Rial, 2002) In the course of their studies, students must select a specialty between Physical Education, Music Education, Special Education and specialization in English Language instruction. For Secondary teaching staff, training is conditioned by the scientific specialty of the origin education, "which usually has little preparation in didactic training," so that the contents for strictly teaching training are developed in mandatory postgraduate programs.

In Spain, earning a bachelor’s degree in English philology is a five-year program through which students are expected to become familiar with the scientific aspect of language and literature for becoming a secondary school instructor (Doval and Rial, 2002). The aim is to give prospective teachers a broad-based understanding of and fluency in native and foreign languages. During the first year of the program, students take:

· Spanish Language I
· Spanish Literature I
· Latin I
· Spanish History I
· English Language I

These core subjects are intended to provide an analysis of linguistic, grammatical and syntactical aspects of the English and Spanish languages. Latin focuses on the translation of classical texts with an emphasis on practical exercises (cite). The grammatical aspects of English are taught and exercises administered. A native English speaker leads the practice spoken English and the acquisition of fluency in both speaking and writing English.

The second year is a continuation of the first, with students moving onto the next level of each core subject, including:

· Spanish language II
· Spanish literature II
The second year is essentially a continuation of the first year, with its emphasis on both the practical and the theoretical. However, English language II is concerned with more complex grammatical instruction and a more in-depth consideration of both theory and practice.

Third-year instruction features an increase in the time spent learning English, with the opportunity to attend language laboratory as a means of improving their English speaking and writing abilities. Third-year courses include:

- Spanish literature III
- Linguistics and literary criticism
- English language IV (English phonetics)
- English language III
- English literature I

The fourth year significantly increases the degree to which students are involved in learning English language and literature; as well, there is a higher degree of difficulty. As before, students learn both theory and practical knowledge. Fourth-year courses include:

- English language VI
- English literature III
- American literature II
- Middle English
· Optional subjects (must choose one) include: German, Danish, French, and Analysis of Old Literary Texts (Doval and Rial, 2002).

Fifth-year studies are entirely involved with English language and literature.

Doval and Rial (2002) contend that there is a lack of practical educational experience and specialized training and a too-great emphasis on theoretical knowledge at the university/B.A. level. Consequently, students lack actual skills that could help them meet challenges they will face in the classroom (cite). Doval and Rial (2002) also note that there are compulsory subjects that often have little to do with studies the student has selected. And there is also a lack of pedagogical training throughout the curriculum:

“A prospective secondary school teacher needs to master different methodological strategies in order to adjust the acquired knowledge to the diversity of students in mixed-ability groups. Therefore the adoption of an open, flexible curriculum is essential for dealing with diversity” (Doval and Rial, 2002, p. 295).

Once the academic phase is completed, the student enrolls in the Curso de Aptitud Pedagogica, in order to achieve the status of secondary school teacher. The CAP instills a psycho-pedagogical/didactic basis for becoming a secondary school foreign language instructor. The CAP has two phases, the first featuring four distinct seminars, including:

· Theory and sociology of education – A theoretical and comprehensive examination of the social and institutional aspects of the educational system, aimed at enhancing the competency of new teachers.

· Psychological bases of educational intervention – Fosters students’ intellectual and cognitive capabilities.

· Curricular design and planning – This seminar serves general educational needs and aids in various stages and areas of learning.
Analysis of didactic approaches – This seminar, covering a total of 42 hours, involves learning to make decisions concerning the proper teaching methodology (Doval and Rial, 2002).

The historically low standing of Spain’s foreign language education among its EU counterparts has encouraged considerable criticism of foreign language teacher curricula, along with suggestions for improvement. One particularly important aspect of Spanish foreign language instruction, and one which is reflected in curricula, is that teachers must have a full grasp of their own culture, so teacher training curricula must incorporate courses accordingly, classes that extend beyond language, semantics or morphosyntax and incorporate general cultural content so that the prospective educator may learn national history, religious history, regional diversity and even culinary history (Gomez and Raigon, 2009).

In Finland, initial teacher training curricula feature courses emphasizing foreign language methodology, communicative-interactive methodology, communication competence and performance, immersion, content-based foreign language curricula, grammar, foreign-language teacher talk, CLIL teaching materials, and assessment (Marsh et al., 1994). CLIL instruction is carried out in every foreign language subject, with the exception of Finnish. Curricula is the same as in mother tongue instruction, and students are also assessed based on their competency in English. Between 25 and 50 percent of teaching is conducted in the target instructional language (Marsh et al., 1994).

Foreign language instruction curricula is aimed at instilling transversal competence, which focuses on helping students think and “learn to learn”; cultural competence; multiliteracy; and participation and involvement (Mattila, 2016). The objective of the Finnish educational system is to give students the knowledge and personal skills that foster language education with the idea that proficiency in a mother tongue facilitates effective second language learning (Mattila, 2016).

Higher education institutions in Finland independently decide the content of teacher education. Teaching and research are also very close since it is understood that teachers must be able to solve problems and take into account recent research in the field of education and apply this knowledge to the subjects taught. With pedagogy at the center of the curriculum, these
universities work in small groups to promote evaluation, research, and active learning, while teachers must master several languages (i.e., Finnish, Swedish and English).

Practical training

Practical training in Spain is part of the initial program and appears as one more subject in the curriculum. It is usually done while the student is taking the final courses and students are supervised by university teachers, who evaluate their achievement of objectives, as well as by a professional tutor in the school, who also evaluates their learning process. The practice is considered essential in Finland as part of the initial training. The students carry out internship periods in schools intermittently throughout the degree, from five to six weeks a year.

In Finland, the initial teacher development portion of reported CLIL is minimal. Even children with 30 to 80 hours of instruction in the target language per year, a teacher trainee may teach as few as 2 hours in the target language (Marsh et al., 1994). Teaching-oriented pedagogical studies are taken as part of the student’s major program, or within a separate program (Marsh et al., 1994). Studies in two language subjects, as taught in school, are mandatory, as are pedagogical studies – after two to three years of study, students can apply to be admitted to teacher education and may begin pedagogical studies upon completion of their subject study (Marsh et al., 1994). Pedagogical studies are didactical in nature and include teaching practice, over a period of 35 weeks, with didactic studies and teaching practice lasting 19 weeks (Marsh et al., 1994).

In Finland, some schools are designated as “training schools” and are closely tied to teacher training colleges/universities (Grenfell, 2002). “Mentors” play a key role in Finland, as they do in other countries. These experienced teachers closely supervise teacher trainees, acting as advisors and assessors of their charges’ classroom practice and technique. The mentor/trainee relationship is a particularly close one in Finland, and mentors frequently help plan ITT programs (Grenfell, 2002). Finland is one of several EU countries in which the mentor role is growing in importance as a means of supporting the practical training of teacher candidates. The practical, hands-on experience trainees receive is assessed through a process of evaluation by observation (Grenfell, 2002).
In-Service Teacher Training (Inset) has been offered at Finnish universities since the early 1990s, ranging from small seminars to more wide-ranging programs that last for a full year. The University of Vaasa has been active in this area since 1991 and today offers a program on multilingualism and didactics, including content on minority language issues and CLIL (Grenfell, 2002). There is also an Inset program known as a Professional Development course, called “Multilingual Educators,” which began in 1994 (Grenfell, 2002).

7.4 Improving Foreign Language Learning

There are varying historical and socio-cultural factors at work in Finland and Spain, which impact the two EU countries’ capacity for effective English foreign language instruction. Though English is recognized as an important foreign language by students, it is regarded as little more than a necessary subject for which students have little genuine, personal interest in. With relatively few opportunities for English language students to use it in daily life, many Spanish students appear to approach the subject as a requirement to be checked off, just as they might any other necessary subject that arouses little in the way of abiding interest or passion. Though today Spain has a vibrant foreign language instruction initiative in place, the country’s legacy as a former imperial power with a widely spoken language of its own has long made it difficult to encourage Spaniards to embrace foreign language learning. And with a dynamic culture of its own, English does not, perhaps, occupy as prominent a place in the country as it does in other parts of Europe. Given the global predominance of English and its widely accepted status as the new “lingua franca,” it is somewhat surprising to find that such is the case. Yet today, most Spaniards speak little or no English at all. A recent study revealed that nearly 65 percent speak no English and few of the 35 percent that do speak it well or well enough to engage in conversation (Seriously Spain, 2018).

While the number of foreign teachers of English has grown, it’s traditionally been taught by a Spaniard who understands the grammar forms but struggles to speak English fluently. And, in Spain, movies and television programs are dubbed into Spanish, which eliminates a potential
means of exposure to English. Based on public opinion, Spaniards do not feel that they are missing out on much by not mastering English or another second language: in a recent poll, 67 percent of Spaniards polled said they do not believe they have been negatively impacted by being unable to speak a second language (Montero, 2017). Interestingly, more than 90 percent of those polled said that it is important to speak a foreign language and that, after mathematics, foreign language learning is most important (Montero, 2017). Yet despite recent efforts by Spain to improve the foreign language learning situation, in a poll taken in 2017, almost 40 percent of those polled said Spain does not place enough emphasis on second-language education. The majority of elderly Spaniards speak Spanish only, and 90 percent of those responding to the survey indicated that their parents cannot speak a second language. Among those that do, more speak French than speak English.

Culture and history (ancient as well as recent) are contributing factors but there may be a more relevant and impactful factor at work among Spaniards who try to learn English. The longstanding tendency among native Spaniard English teachers to focus on getting grammar down to a science may have done a disservice to the teaching of English. British teachers who work in Madrid for the British Council have noted that there is an innate predilection for grammar among Spanish learners, who consequently seek direct “yes” or “no” answers to questions even when there is no perfect answer, reflecting an inability to think adaptively and flexibly when learning. “People here are crazy about grammar, so you have this idea that a language is a closed and perfect system” (Peiro, 2017). There is a decided need to deemphasize grammar and instead focus on learning words and their meanings within the larger context of the conversation. It has to do with the subtle difference in meaning between saying someone has arrived “in time” rather than “on time” (Peiro, 2017). Other native British English teachers find that young Spaniards just beginning to learn English have an impossibly high standard for themselves and tend to be very self-critical and impatient with themselves. Sometimes, native English speakers have nearly as difficult a time explaining nuances of speech as the children have in learning it. One example is why James Bond’s designation is not double zero 7 instead of double O 7 (Peiro, 2017).
It can be very difficult for a native Spanish teacher of English, grammatically fluent though they may be, to internalize and fully comprehend the subtleties of meaning that make English a difficult language to learn and teach. So when parents of students learning English find that their children are receiving good grades but can’t converse in the language, there is a crisis of confidence in teachers’ ability to be effective. Nearly 90 percent of Spanish parents indicated in the 2017 poll that their children are learning English, and fully half of those parents indicated that they have a positive feeling about foreign language learning in Spanish schools, however, more than 38 percent of them said they have enrolled their children in private language classes (Montero, 2017).

Spain’s historic and sociocultural past appears to have helped problematize the acquisition of and inclination toward foreign languages, however, Finland is a country with a long history of multilingualism and a willingness to accept non-native populations and minorities. Finnish has shared mother-tongue status alongside Swedish for 100 years and embraced considerable Swedish Russian and Romany communities, as well as an indigenous Sami population (21 of Finland’s 452 municipalities are monolingually Swedish-speaking.) It’s a country with a rich and culturally varied ethnic composition, in which foreign language learning has long been so familiar as to be second nature. This progressive and welcoming nature has also helped ease the transition of many Indians, Koreans, Chinese, Somali and Vietnamese to life in Finland. Consequently, foreign language acquisition comes naturally, and the Finnish government has over the past 30 years enacted reforms that have made it an international leader in the instruction of foreign languages, and a pioneer in the field of education.

It is not surprising, then, to find that more than 70 percent of Finns are considered skilled at foreign languages, compared to 44 percent, which is the European average (Korhonen, 2006). In addition to the country’s long history of multilingualism and multiculturalism, Finland has a history of catering to foreign languages in the media, offering subtitled television programming in a wide array of languages. Consequently, programming in English (spoken by more than 60 percent of Finns), Swedish, German, French and more appears to have helped Finns acquire many of the languages that are spoken in Finland today (Korhonen, 2006). In fact, English has,
as it has in many European countries, become a very popular choice among Finnish foreign language learners. Successful language acquisition is comprised of many factors. One of the most important is the target language and the amount of exposure to it, which determines the pace of acquisition and effects of spoken language acquisition as well (Vuori, 2013). Studies have shown that the more people are in regular contact with a language, the faster they were able to acquire it orally (Camlibel, 2005). This important research shows that intentional and unintentional and period (but regular) exposure to English leads to oral language acquisition. This indicates that TV impacts the ability to speak a language as much as it affects grammar and vocabulary acquisition (Vuori, 2013). Furthermore, the linguistic difficulty of the content being presented doesn’t seem to present a learning obstacle. Contact with a language at any level on an ongoing basis is meaningful for the learner, offering as it does new and intriguing content for beginning learners (and for more advanced learners) (Vuori, 2013). The situations in which acquisition takes place represents another important factor. Vuori (2013) notes that acquisition is, by definition, subconscious, whereas learning is a conscious act. Thus, receptivity is an important factor in language acquisition, whether learning or acquiring a language in a passive setting. Receptivity in a passive setting has been an important factor in the ability of Finnish people to learn foreign languages, particularly English. The vibrancy and dynamism of Western culture – specifically American culture – is key. People throughout the world are exposed to American movies and other media on such a widespread level that they aren’t even aware of the impact that English has on their daily lives. In Finland, learning English at an active, educational level is made easier by the fact that young people play American video games and watch Hollywood movies, which are not dubbed as in Spain, but are subtitled, allowing viewers to experience the language orally and interpretively at the same time. Consequently, Finns have a one-on-one experience with the English language in their daily lives, which means young people grow up exposed to it on a regular basis while older people also have the opportunity to pick it up in a passive manner.
An isolating language

The sheer complexity and difficulty of the Finnish language is another factor contributing to the importance of English and the ability of Finns to absorb and learn the language. Finnish, which belongs to the Uralic family of languages (i.e. Sami and Estonian), is a somewhat obscure and lesser-known language not only among EU countries but in Scandinavia itself, where Swedish and Danish have been predominant for centuries. It is distantly related to Hungarian (an Ugaric tongue) and Nenets, a language spoken in distant Siberia. The language that inspired the British fantasy novelist J.R.R. Tolkien, author of the Lord of the Rings saga, has 15 grammar cases and an international reputation for being “notoriously challenging” (Roux, 2017). Finnish is the majority language, spoken by approximately 91 percent of the population (Statistics Finland, 2008). A great many Finnish words have no English equivalent (“sauna” being one of the few). For example, sisu describes a state of mind indicating determination and tenacity, while paukku pakkanen means “bang frost,” describing the physical sound that happens in log cabins in very cold weather (Roux, 2017). In fact, the language considered modern standardized Finnish, called kirjakieli (“book language”) is a form not linked to any specific dialect. It is used in literature, education and a majority of printed/digital publications, including advertisements, manuals and business communication, yet most Finns only begin learning the standardized version of their mother tongue when they begin their formal schooling, some native Finnish dialect being their “hearth language” to that point (Roux, 2017). Interestingly, foreigners who learn Finnish are taught the standardized, classroom version of the language, which often does them little good when interacting with native speakers and their different puhekieli, or spoken language.

The language’s 15 grammar cases can be a nightmare for learners, both native and foreign. A simple sentence may include nouns, modifiers, and adjectives that are all inflected. For example, Mina pidan sinun uudesta talosasi, which translates into English as “I like your new house,” has four inflected words, meaning the learner/speaker has to know the correct forms of each inflected word in every sentence. Furthermore, in Finnish a single word can be created by juxtaposing inflected nouns, adjectives, and verbs based on each one’s function within the sentence (Roux,
Prepositions may become suffixes affixed to nouns, while other prepositions may be inserted to indicate some form of nuance. So essentially, a single Finnish word can be used to express what would take an entire sentence to communicate in English (Roux, 2017). The Finnish verb system poses a challenge uniquely its own. Finnish has six verb groups and each verb can be conjugated based on number, tense, person and mood, and there are passive structures, five infinitive forms and various particle forms. Ultimately, this means there are more than 200 possible endings for each individual verb (Roux, 2017). This is often a problem for learners, who find to their consternation that they cannot simply look up a verb form in the dictionary – they must first know the basic form (as with Latin) before even beginning to look in the dictionary. Another difficulty for learners is consonant gradation, a kind of mutation not unlike that in Welsh (another challenging language) in which the letters t, p and k may be altered or even disappear altogether when the stem is inflected and has a suffix attached (Roux, 2017). For example, the word/sentence Tarkenenkohan?, meaning “I wonder if I’ll be warm enough?”, comes from the verb form tarjeta, meaning, “To stand the cold” (Roux, 2017). Similar to Latin, word order is quite fluid in Finnish, with a sentence’s meaning being subtly changed by moving words around within it. For example, Poydalla on kirja, and Kirja on poydalla, the first response answering the question “What is on the table?,,” while the second one corrects an incorrect statement by saying “There’s a magazine on the table.”

In general, words are pronounced in Finnish as they appear. Each letter constitutes a distinctive sound, there are no silent letters and few consonant clusters, unlike English (often a challenge to Finns trying to learn English). Loan words are usually modified to suit Finnish pronunciation, thus “opera” becomes ooppera and “giraffe” is kirahvi (Roux, 2017). The difficulty of Finnish is reflected in the comparative number of Spanish and Finnish speakers worldwide; there being about 512 million speakers of Spanish in countries throughout the world, with about 5 million speakers of Finnish in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Russia and Estonia, with emigrant populations speaking a remnant of the language in Brazil, Canada and the United States. Thus, with Finnish, with its hundreds of verb endings and consonant gradations, not spoken in the EU anywhere near as frequently as English, German or French, native speakers are somewhat isolated linguistically.
Thus, English is more than a *lingua franca* for the people of Finland, it becomes a linguistic bridge to the rest of the world and a means of personal and economic growth for native speakers of Finnish, as well as for the nation itself.

Today, Google Translate is the world’s best-known and most widely used tool for machine language translation (Greene, 2016). And yet even Google’s robust service is limited in coping with such massive amounts of data, and the thousands of possible language pairings across the dozens of tongues Google Translate makes available. Finnish is one of several languages that makes pairings difficult, and is sometimes mistakenly identified as Portuguese or Spanish. When Google Translate is unable to pair Finnish with other languages, there is often insufficient text available, so a user attempting to translate Finnish into another language goes through a “bridging” language, which is usually English (Greene, 2016). Thus, the influence of English on the Finnish language and those who speak it reaches even into the deep recesses of Google Translate’s linguistic data.

*English and globalization – A bridge to the world*

Globalization and its ever-widening cultural and economic processes mandates that citizens of countries in every part of the world be able to communicate rapidly and fluently. That is particularly true of countries like Spain, which has the world’s 14th-largest economy but suffers from 16 percent unemployment, and Finland, which has a progressive history *vis a vis* multilingualism and multiculturalism, but whose obscure and complex native language has had an isolating effect on its ability to engage on a widespread global level. Today, the lives and well-being of individuals, businesses, governments, international social organizations and institutions are marked more than ever by the need for diversity, interconnectedness and mobility (Kauhanen, 2011). Thus, there is an omnipresent need for a bridging, vehicular language that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers, an international language capable of facilitating commerce and aiding communication among governments that would otherwise be locked in a
cycle of violence exacerbated and perpetuated by a lack of communication. To that end, English has become the international language of business, science and technology, and much more. There are countless niche “subcultures” (i.e. film, music and sports) that could not bridge international differences without the influence of English (Kauhanen, 2011). Thus, English becomes an indispensable resource for the kind of international commercial and cultural participation that can empower populations, such as Spain and Finland, which might otherwise be left disenfranchised, unempowered and isolated.

The other side of global Anglicization is the fear and resentment that often results from the pervasive cultural influence that English wields on populations all over the world. Today, English is seen as a destructive cultural/linguistic force nearly as much as it is regarded a unifying and galvanizing influence. Languages are dying off at a higher rate than ever before according to UNESCO. At present, UNESCO has identified 10 languages nearing extinction, pushed to the brink by the leveling effect of international English. Aboriginal languages in Northern Australia, native American languages in the American Northwest and Southwest, and Gaelic, one of Europe’s most ancient languages, are all nearing extinction under direct pressure from the influence of English (Kennedy, 2013). According to the Living Institute for Endangered Languages, a language is lost forever every two weeks when its last surviving speaker passes away (Kennedy, 2013). Much that is worth preserving and important to our understanding of the world around us is lost when a language dies off. For example, the knowledge of indigenous people who have lived among native plants that can cure illness and disease is lost when their language goes extinct, which represents a significant loss to science and medicine (Kennedy, 2013). Finland offers a good example of what often happens in places where English is taught as a foreign language and threatens to overwhelm native languages because its presence is required as a medium for communication and as a semiotic resource (Kauhanen, 2011). Often in such circumstances, native populations express discontent over the marginalization that often occurs, pushing a native language and the culture it expresses to the brink of irrelevance and even extinction (Kauhanen, 2011). In this, the Finns’ native facility for learning foreign languages could be seen as working against their deep-seated desire for cultural preservation – yet recent
surveys have shown that Finns are confident in the stability of their national identity and those features that distinguish it. However, they fear that cultural preservation will be rendered problematic in other European countries. Such has been the case in Ireland, where despite the requirement that the native Gaelic language be taught in school as the Republic’s first language, very few Irish families speak Gaelic at home in informal settings. Rather, English has supplanted it in everyday use (Kennedy, 2013).

Finns have traditionally been confident that their native language is the best protection against foreign threats to their cultural stability, and that confidence remains high, according to the results of a recent survey concerning English and its relationship to the Finnish language. Asked to rate the importance of English in their personal lives, nearly 60 percent indicated that English either played a very or moderately important role in their lives (Kauhanen, 2011). Only 11 percent said it was not important at all. Only 4 percent of respondents said they did not recognize English; the vast majority recognized it, even if some were not able to speak or write it (nearly 80 percent of those who could identify it said they heard it spoken “in the street” most of all) (Kauhanen, 2011).

The survey appears to indicate that the vast majority of respondents have significant confidence in the stability and vitality of both national languages (Finland and Swedish), as well as the strength of Finnish culture and its ability to stand against the potential impact of English and the infiltration of Western culture. While attitudes in other EU countries, such as Spain and France, where Provençal is endangered and the French government has taken official steps to protect its language, range from alarmed to resigned, the Finns have adopted a much more accepting and relaxed attitude toward the teaching/learning and spread of English to their culture (Kauhanen, 2011). While on the surface this may seem remarkable, it is actually in keeping with Finland’s historically accepting attitude toward foreign influences and its willingness to absorb those aspects of other languages and cultures from it stands to benefit. As Kauhanen (2011) points out, “Finns still see language as a cornerstone of Finnish national identity” (p. 1).
Spain: A response to crisis

In Spain, educational reforms have had a noticeably positive effect on foreign language instruction and acquisition, particularly where English language learning is concerned. In 2011, Spain ranked near the bottom or European countries in English proficiency. In just four years, the country had risen to near the top of EU countries showing “moderate proficiency” (Jones, 2015). The reason stems from a quite practical approach to the need for English proficiency among Spaniards, particularly the young: Chronic unemployment at home has made English a priority language for students who intend to seek opportunities in other parts of the EU and elsewhere (Jones, 2015). Indeed, the country’s economic crisis has given rise to unprecedented numbers of Spaniards, young and old, taking English examinations so they can add it to their C.V.s (Jones, 2015). Not just taking English instruction, but learning the language well enough to use it has become a priority among young Spaniards, who know only too well the impact of cripplingly high youth unemployment (50.7 percent) in their native land, second-highest in the EU. A 2015 Cambridge University Press study found that more than 80 percent of Spanish students intend to leave home for work elsewhere, regardless of their academic achievement levels as learners of English. It has increasingly become what the young consider to be their best hope for guarantee of employment in the future. Not surprisingly, the United Kingdom has become the leading destination for young Spaniards seeking gainful and secure employment abroad (Jones, 2015). In fact, 70 percent consider learning English to be more important than earning a university degree. Spain’s historically closed attitude to outside influences, linguistic, cultural and political, has undergone a forced change in recent years as the harsh economic realities of Spanish life have hit home. Where once Spanish students took an ambivalent attitude toward acquiring English, which they found to be an inconvenient necessity, many now see it as indispensable to their future and so worthwhile that the young increasingly believe that Spain’s politicians and leading citizens should show their support by learning English themselves (Jones, 2015). Spanish companies have in recent years emphasized the importance of English within their organizations, in recognition of the significant international role it plays within the business landscape. Consequently, Spanish employers are asking for proof of candidates’
English-language proficiency, which helps explain why Spain’s Ministry of Education has placed renewed emphasis on English language instruction. It is in high demand, and the MOE has been pressed to keep pace. John Pare, an English-language instructor with the British Council in Spain, commented that his students used to begin learning English at around age 5. Today, he and his fellow instructors hold story time sessions for children as young as two (Jones, 2015).

Thus, Spaniards have adopted an attitude rooted in expediency, occasioned by economic necessity.

English-language teaching in Spain and Finland, and the importance placed upon it, is reflective of the historic, cultural, and economic factors that have characterized both countries’ attitudes toward foreign languages and the relative benefits of learning English in the era of globalization. Finland is a country deeply rooted in its cultural traditions and secure in the stability and vibrancy of its language, even in direct comparison to English, with its tendency to overwhelm other languages and cultures. The Finns’ historical aptitude for foreign language learning, in part an outgrowth of their welcoming attitude toward other languages and ethnic groups, has contributed to the development of an educational establishment that is unequaled in the EU and a source of worldwide admiration. In Spain, a country with a linguistic tradition embraced throughout the world, English has gone from being a largely disregarded foreign intrusion to an inconvenient educational necessity to the very means of economic opportunity among the youth of Spain, who face dizzying unemployment at home.

The comparative experiences of foreign language instruction in Spain and Finland would seem to indicate that a country with a historical and cultural predisposition toward multilingualism and multiculturalism is better-positioned to succeed with English language instruction than one that has only recently embraced English as a national asset - and only at the urging of young people whose prospects have been most directly impacted. Finland’s well-conceived foreign language instruction strategy emphasizes the academic growth of the student as much as it does the learner’s future socio economic needs. To that end, Finnish primary and secondary school
language instructors are trained with the same gravity and importance accorded to college professors. Training takes place on multiple levels, with considerable importance given to the mentor/trainee relationship and ample opportunities made available for ongoing training throughout the country. Spanish educational reforms have led to improvements in English-language proficiency among students, as has the addition of more non-native English instructors and the influence of the British Council on English language instruction in Spain. English-language instruction there has undergone a gradual philosophical shift away from an overemphasis on grammar and the “mechanical” aspects of language learning, a longstanding tradition among native Spanish instructors. British teachers have worked to encourage students to spend less time on grammar and more time learning vocabulary and contextual nuances of expression in English. A philosophical change in language instruction can be a slow and difficult process. In Spain, where students have a tendency to be harshly critical of themselves, learning to be more flexible and less technically dogmatic in how they go about learning English has been a definite challenge. And yet English proficiency scores in recent years have reflected the success of this approach. Where once Spanish students stood near the very bottom among EU countries in English-proficiency, recent results indicate that a more conversational and open-minded approach to the task has produced considerably higher test scores, and left Spain near the top in English language achievement. A remarkable accomplishment given the country’s historically ambivalent attitude toward foreign language learning. Ultimately, the objective of learning a language is the ability to converse freely and fluently in it and, in the case of young Spaniards, to parlay their knowledge of it into economic opportunities abroad that are unavailable to them at home. Finnish students of English have similar opportunities, but English-language instruction has been conscientiously approached as a bridge to deeper involvement in global economic, scientific and political affairs. English has attained a sufficiently strong position in the minds of the Finnish people that the possibility of English as a new “official” language, alongside Finnish and Swedish, has come under consideration, if only informally at this point. While there has been talk of such a scenario, the 2011 survey found that a majority of Finns find such a situation to be “rather unlikely,” though a somewhat surprising 25 percent responded that such a thing could come to pass and would be beneficial to the country,
given the apparent likelihood that English will supplant Finnish and Swedish as the country’s chief language in the fields of trade and science (Kauhanen, 2011). In any event, the contemplation of unfolding scenarios is an important feature of language policy planning, is valuable as such and would benefit other EU countries in considering the ongoing impact of English as they plan for an increasingly globalized future – which is why Finnish survey respondents were asked whether they believe English will have increased in general importance; and whether it will increase in importance in the country’s urban environment (respondents answered yes to both), and whether all Finns will need to know English they believe (no).

8. Conclusion

Foreign language instruction in Finland and Spain manifests widely different approaches rooted in the two countries’ widely different orientation and attitudes toward the learning of foreign languages, particularly English. Finland has a longstanding and deeply rooted tradition of receptivity to foreign languages, a predilection demonstrated by the subtitling of foreign language movies and television programs. Spain, on the other hand, is a country with an imperial past and a rather chauvinistic attitude toward foreign language and cultures; consequently, second and third language instruction hasn’t required the level of expertise and fluency that teachers in Finland must possess.

Typically, student performance in English as a second language has been at or near the top of the European Union, a true success story compared to an EU member state like Spain, where the instruction has historically stressed the mechanics of language rather than the conversational aspect. Consequently, students have historically underperformed when it comes to conversational fluency. Finnish foreign language instructors, unlike those in Spain, are required to possess a master’s degree and certification in hands-on instruction. Contrastingly, Spain’s education ministry has focused on hiring native English speakers from Britain to provide classroom instruction.
This approach should be amended and native Spanish instructors be better prepared to teach conversational ability by being required to achieve the same level of college and post-graduate academic attainment as Finnish instructors. While steps have been taken to improve this situation, it will likely take time for the desired change to take hold, and for native Spanish foreign language teachers to emerge who can stimulate students’ interest in English and other languages and cultures. Finnish English language teachers typically understand the importance of their students becoming fluent in English and are successful in conveying a genuine interest in the language to their students. The story has been rather different in Spain, where young people have historically shown an ambivalence toward English and the cultures from which it springs. Spain dubs foreign language movies and programming and there are few opportunities in Spain for students to interact culturally with English because it is not deemed necessary.

**Research question 1 - Why are language education results better in Finland than Spain? What are the main reasons? Are there any external, non-educational/cultural factors at play (e.g., the dubbing of English-language films in Spain vs. subtitling in Finland)?**

There are several reasons language education results are better in Finland than in Spain, some of them result from Finland’s emphasis on language education, where foreign language instructors are required to complete a rigorous secondary education program and gain experience in on-site teacher training opportunities. In this system, the education of language instructors in Finland involves the same level of priority, and are required to achieve certification, much as physician trainees receive in the United States. Finnish students, in general, receive the same level of education, regardless of their economic or social background. The difference between the strongest and weakest students is smaller in Finland than in any other national educational system in the world, equality being the ultimate objective. Finnish teachers typically spend fewer hours in the classroom than in other EU countries, using the extra time to develop and fine-tune curricula and assess individual student performance.

Foreign language acquisition in Finland is aided by the nation’s historic orientation toward foreign language learning; Swedish has been considered a national language along with Finnish
for more than 100 years, and English language learning has been considered essential for decades. Finland’s predilection for foreign languages has been aided by the subtitling of all foreign language television programming, which accustoms Finns to the interpretation of non-native languages whereas, in Spain, English-language programs are simply dubbed into English. Furthermore, Spanish foreign language instructors have traditionally been trained to focus on the form rather than the substances, of the languages they teach, leaving them ill-prepared to understand and impart to their students many of the nuances of English.

**Research question 2 - What are the main differences in the curricula provided for by educational laws in Spain vs. Finland regarding foreign language teacher training?**

In 2002, Spain introduced reforms concerning the teaching of foreign languages, with young Spaniards learning English as one of two languages in addition to their native languages beginning at age 6. As a result of recent reforms, Spain incorporates English language instruction at an earlier stage in the educational process than any other European country. As such, Spain has made a deep commitment to the foreign language instruction policies instituted to foster multilingualism throughout the European Union. As such, Spain has sought to overcome decades of ineffective language instruction policy, becoming one of the leaders in the development of content and language-integrated learning. Spain, in contrast to Finland’s traditional orientation toward multilingualism, has a cultural diversity that emphasizes 16 distinctly autonomous regions with their own languages and dialects, with distinctively different standards for language education in place in each region. Consequently, there is a decisive lack of cohesion when it comes to foreign language education throughout Spain.

Finland’s investment in early language instruction gives students an advantage when it comes to acquiring English and other EU languages from an early age. Student’s language proficiency is gauged at an early age and helps place students in language learning situations based on their achievement level.
Research question 3: How are language teachers trained in Spain vs. Finland, and how do they meet qualification requirements?

In Finland, teacher education has been university-based since 1973, a significant point of differentiation between Finland and other EU countries. Teacher education is largely the responsibility of university faculties of education. The education of foreign language teachers is the responsibility of language departments and teacher education departments, which have practice schools where the majority of supervised teaching practice takes place. Teachers earn a Master’s degree, which requires studies worth 120 ECTS Studies, as are pedagogical studies. After two to three years of study, students can apply for admission to teacher education and can begin their pedagogical studies if accepted. Teacher pedagogical studies take place within Education are didactically oriented, including teaching practice methodologies.

In Spain, foreign language teachers have not historically needed a master’s degree, as is required in Finland. Consequently, it is common for education authorities in Spain to seek out native English speakers as English language instructors. Historically, foreign language instructors in Spain have been native Spanish speakers, who sought to teach a foreign language based on a rudimentary understanding of its mechanics rather than the true meaning of the spoken language, which left students at a disadvantage when it came to developing oral fluency. This remains a problem today, though there are initiatives in place aimed at emphasizing conversational English over and above things like grammar and syntax, which native Spanish teachers have traditionally emphasized.

Research question 4: What has the European Union and its bodies done to improve and assure a high quality of foreign language learning in the EU? How well have the regional governments adopted these measures in Spain and Finland?

In recent years, the European Union has moved to emphasize foreign language learning in EU countries, a move aimed at helping the EU maintain a strong economic position in the
international community. Consequently, children in many EU countries have learned two foreign languages before the age of 10. Nearly every EU country mandates that students as young as 6 learn a foreign language, with more than 20 EU countries requiring their students to learn two foreign languages in school over the course of at least a single school year.

In most EU countries students begin acquiring a first foreign language beginning at age 6 – EU law 53/2003 provided for compulsory teaching of English as a second language beginning in the first year of primary school. However, the study of a second foreign language is not compulsory in all EU countries. Using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, most EU countries require at minimum a B2-level proficiency in their first foreign language. The EU’s legislative initiatives in the area of foreign language instruction are intended to boost the union’s ability to compete in an increasingly globalized economy and in a world dominated by the English language, the “lingua franca” of business, technology, and science.

Findings and existing knowledge

The findings of this study revealed a close relationship between the historical attitudes toward foreign language learning in Finland and Spain, and the emphasis upon which they have placed foreign language acquisition in primary and secondary education. Finland, a country with a long and favorable approach to multilingualism, requires its instructors to obtain a Master’s level education and considerable practical experience before becoming fully certified. Spain, on the other hand, a country with a rich cultural background and an imperial history, has typically placed less emphasis on foreign language learning, even as it pertains to the learning of English, which is a priority among European Union countries. Consequently, foreign language instruction in Spain has long been placed in the hands of native Spanish instructors who possess a less than fluent understanding of spoken English, and which has placed their students at a disadvantage from a strictly practical (conversational) standpoint.
The media also appears to play a role in the relative importance of foreign language acquisition. In Finland, foreign language movies and TV programs are subtitled, which allows viewers to experience a foreign language both visually and aurally, whereas in Spain foreign programming is dubbed into Spanish. Spanish learners, even those learning English as a second language, consider it little more than a necessary inconvenience since a knowledge of it is not considered necessary to thrive in Spanish culture.

**Research process**

The information compiled for this research project was gathered largely from statistics reflecting student achievement levels in Finland and Spain, with the aim of better understanding the difference between the two countries and how their starkly different approaches to foreign language instruction have contributed to their relative achievements in this particular area of educational pursuit. An analysis of the two countries’ investment in foreign language instruction and the preparation of language teachers (post-graduate level requirement in Finland, a recently upgraded language teaching requirement in Spain) has also proven instructive, as has their attitude toward the importance of teaching English as a second (or third) language. This qualitative approach helped establish a well-rounded comparison, in which both historical/cultural and contemporary/political factors could be incorporated.
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Notes. Retrieved from https://literariness.org/2017/05/14/noam-chomskys-approach-to-linguistics/


Learn all about the formal education system in Spain, from primary education to advanced higher learning degrees, including government learning requirements. First foreign language (English, French, German or Italian; usually English): 2 Years. Philosophy: 2 years. Physical Education: 1 year only. The most popular courses of study at the public universities demand the highest cut-off grade for admission, while at private universities cost is typically the only determining factor; in other words, the most popular courses cost the most money. The structure of higher education in Spain is now aligned with the provisions laid out in the Bologna Process—an educational reform act that aims to facilitate student transfer at universities throughout the European Union. This study relates to the implementation of a procedure designed to assess higher education public employees in France and Finland, based on the observation of two institutions. It focuses in particular on the role of trade unions in this reform. The behaviour of the different players is analysed in relation to several traditional sociological approaches.