



# 18 Spain

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## 18.1 Introduction: the Linguistic Situation in Spain

In the recent history of Spain the democratic constitution passed in 1978 marked the beginning of a new democratic regime that established 19 Autonomous Regions (including two cities) and granted them political and administrative power. In addition, in those autonomous regions with a different language, both Spanish and the minority language (Basque, Catalan, and Galician) were granted official status. As a result, minority languages started to make their way through the educational systems of the bilingual communities, further supported by the *Ley de Normalización Lingüística*, which in 1983 allowed those autonomous regions to regain control of linguistic policies concerning the educational system and the media.

The role that each minority language has in the schools of the different bilingual autonomous regions at present has been determined by both historical and political factors. In some, e.g. Catalonia, most teaching in state schools is carried out in Catalan, especially in primary education; in others, like in the Basque Country, different types of schools exist on the basis of their use of Basque or Spanish as the medium of instruction; in others, finally, use of the minority language as the language of instruction may be minimal and its use confined to the language subject itself.

In 1990, through the *Ley Orgánica General del Sistema Educativo* (LOGSE) widespread reform of the educational system was undertaken, in part motivated by the orientations in language matters of the European Union, which Spain joined in 1986. The regulations of this law were intended to bring about very significant changes in the teaching of languages at schools, both in extension and in methodology. To begin with, instruction concerning the first foreign language was to start at age 8 (a further change since then is moving it forward to age 6), which also implied a slight increase in the total number of instruction hours. An optional second foreign language was to be introduced, when possible in primary school. A general methodological innovation was the emphasis on a languages-across-the-curriculum approach, involving the native or first languages as well as foreign languages, and based on the hypothesis that procedures learnt in one language can be transferred to another. Particularly, in the area of foreign languages, content-based methodology based on projects and tasks was also emphasized, as was the importance of fostering students' metalinguistic knowledge and learning strategies. These methodological orientations have been the natural basis for implementation of the CLIL programmes that

have sprung up in the last decade. In what follows a brief account will be given of their main characteristics, which show great diversity, given the fact that the different autonomous regions have an important degree of autonomy in educational policies.

## 18.2 An Overall View

Support for CLIL, also known in Spain as AICLE (*Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lengua Extranjera*), has witnessed a dramatic increase in the last few years (for previous accounts see Navés and Muñoz, 1999; Pérez-Vidal, 2002. The extension and characteristics of its implementation, however, vary in the different autonomous regions. Three different scenarios in which large-scale CLIL programmes have strong political support and are implemented in state schools may illustrate the diversity of CLIL situations in Spain. Three emphases can be perceived in them: while in the first situation the emphasis lies in improving competence in the English language of school children, in the second one there is an emphasis in promoting multilingualism in a monolingual community, and in the third the emphasis is that of fostering multilingualism in an already bilingual community. The first emphasis, however, that of raising the English language levels of the young generation may be seen as permeating all the situations.

### 1 *The bilingual and bicultural project*

The first of these programmes had its origin in the agreement signed in 1996 by the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and the British Council, in which the teaching of a Spanish/British integrated curriculum was to be implemented. The project is known as *The Bilingual and Bicultural Project* and its main aim was to raise English language levels of children in state schools as well as to provide them with the opportunity of following an official bilingual and bicultural curriculum. British (135) and Spanish (620) teachers were to work together in 42 state infant and primary schools, with 10,580 children between the ages of 3 and 8, in a number of communities that were at the time dependent on the central Ministry of Education. Since then educational competencies have been transferred to these (now autonomous) regions, which are now in charge of the project and, in some cases, where new parallel or complementary projects have been set up. A case in point is the Comunidad de Madrid, which set up a programme in 2004, now without the intervention of the British Council, which added 26 new schools to the group of 13 that were already participating in *The Bilingual and Bicultural Project*, and 54 extra schools were added in 2005–2006. The number of students involved is now over 6,000, and the number of schools is expected to be 114 in 2007. While English is again the language chosen in this new project, other communities such as Extremadura have begun to implement a second programme for secondary education that involves French and Portuguese as well, and three secondary schools have been added to the two primary schools involved in the former project. This autonomous region has 400 students participating in CLIL programmes, and it constitutes an illustration of a small-scale official programme.

## 2 *Plan de Fomento del Plurilingüismo*

A different scenario is that of the Comunidad Autónoma de Andalucía, whose autonomous government recently approved the *Plan de Fomento del Plurilingüismo* (2005). Its origin can be traced back to 1998 when bilingual experiences began, first with French and then with German, involving a total of 27 schools (14 in primary education and 13 in secondary education). Following the *Plan de Fomento del Plurilingüismo*, bilingual sections were set up in 100 schools in 2005-2006, and there will be a total of 400 in schools by 2008. In addition, beginning in 2005-2006, all new schools are now bilingual from scratch (i.e. they will have at least one bilingual section). The languages involved will be English, Italian and Portuguese, in addition to French and German. The *Plan de Fomento del Plurilingüismo* also mandates an early start of the first foreign language in infant school and the introduction of a second foreign language in 5th grade.

## 3 *Comunidad Autónoma del País Vasco*

A third illustration of large-scale CLIL implementation is that of the Comunidad Autónoma del País Vasco, whose distinctive characteristic is that it pursues enhancement of multilingualism in a bilingual community while at the same time promoting the learning and use of the minority language. As in the previous scenario, the pressure of parents and teachers was crucial to achieve governmental support. In the Basque Country two different modalities of CLIL are followed at present. In one of them English is taught by English language teachers through content-based units related to curricular areas (Social Sciences, PE, Maths, etc.). This modality is followed in 90% of all infant and primary education schools, extending from the age of 4 up till 2nd grade (and involving some 30,000 pupils). The programme is continued from 3rd to 6th grade in 211 primary education schools, involving some 28,000 students, as well as in 32 (compulsory) secondary education schools with some 1,600 students. The second modality involves teaching content subjects in English (History, Natural Sciences, Computer Science). The programme is in its second experimental year (it began in 2003-04) and it involves 12 (compulsory and post-compulsory) secondary schools and some 400 students. In compulsory secondary grades, Basque and English must each be used as the language of instruction of content subjects for a minimum of 7 hours a week, while at post-compulsory secondary level it is required that a minimum of 25% of all subjects are taught in Basque and another 25% in English. Multilingualism is intensely fostered in these schools, since classes are taught in Basque, Spanish and English. In that respect, CLIL may be seen as a way to support the community's bilingual situation and its minority language, through its enhancement of multilingualism and multiculturalism.

## 18.3 Characteristics of CLIL-AICLE

### *Structure*

When CLIL has been implemented officially, that is, with political backing and support, as in the experiences above, it has started at infant or primary school levels, and has later extended to secondary levels as well. Usually two or three subjects are taught in the target language at the moment, and the aim of the Ministry of Education seems to be to involve one third of the primary curriculum subjects. Among those subjects that are most frequently taught through a CLIL approach are Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, PE, and Arts and Crafts.

Smaller-scale implementations may take a modular structure. An example is to be found in the Comunidad Autónoma de Navarra, where a series of science-related modules is in use by primary teachers. In bottom-up situations, when CLIL is mainly implemented as the result of one or a few individuals' effort and motivation, it may take a modular form usually involving an optional subject in secondary education, and extending for one or a maximum of two years.

### *Teachers: Training and Methodology*

Teachers' characteristics are different in the various programmes. In state schools, primary teachers are generally non-native language specialists, with the exception of the programme that is collaboratively run with the British Council, in which there is an important number of native English-speaking teachers. In secondary education, CLIL teachers are mainly non-native subject teachers. Although in general foreign language teachers in secondary education have not moved on to teach non-linguistic subjects, a significant number of teachers follow a task or project approach that may be content-based. Experiences of tandem teaching are not extensive in Spain.

Teachers' initial training at university does not include a CLIL specialization, or combined degrees in a content-subject and a foreign language. Therefore, most training is in-service at the moment. The large programmes mentioned above have been accompanied by teacher training schemes that may include both language and methodology courses in Spain and in the target language community, as well as exchange schemes.

In those communities where immersion programmes in the minority language have an established tradition (e.g. Catalonia, the Basque Country), CLIL teachers have been able to draw from their experiences to develop sound methodological procedures. Otherwise, situations may vary greatly in the different communities. Following the Spanish National Curriculum, an emphasis can be noticed in fostering pupils' cognitive strategies and cooperative learning.

### *Target Languages*

In general the target language of CLIL is English, which is the first foreign language in most schools and for most students. French, which used to be the first foreign language, is also present but to a lesser extent and generally as a result of a bilateral agreement between the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Education Departments of a few autonomous regions (Aragón, Andalucía, Murcia and, recently, Extremadura). German has a strong presence in the Comunidad Autónoma de Andalucía, and Italian and Portuguese will also now be offered in this community (and the latter language in Extremadura, with strong links with Portugal as a result of its vicinity). Generally, programmes involving languages other than English are the result of bilateral agreements.

### *Students: Selection and Evaluation*

In infant and primary schools, students are not selected, but some sort of selection is conducted in secondary schools. For example, in order to join one of the existing official programmes in secondary education, students must pass an exam in the target language and/or receive extra tuition. When CLIL is not implemented in all the forms of a given school, students are usually selected on the basis of their proficiency in the target language.

Students usually take exams in the target language in those subjects that have involved CLIL, but again the situation is different in different programmes and for different levels. For example, in the Basque Country students who have followed a CLIL programme may soon be given the possibility of answering exam questions of the CLIL subjects in the foreign language (English, in this case). In contrast, in primary education language skills are evaluated only sometimes (e.g. the Comunidad Autónoma de Navarra).

### *Research Findings*

Research projects are under way at some universities (e.g. UAM in Madrid, UB in Barcelona), but it is still too early to formulate conclusions about language and academic results. Preliminary findings derived from comparing the foreign language achievement of students in CLIL programmes (with many more hours of exposure to the target language and usually earlier beginning) and students in regular programmes have given estimates of the gains of the former, measured in school years. Gains of approximately two school years (i.e. 4th grade students attaining levels similar to 6th grade students in regular programmes) have been found in different studies. Results have also shown that the different language aspects may be affected to different degrees. Moreover, great variability seems to be the result of the influence of the school and the teachers.

### *Weaknesses and Controversies*

In some situations teachers voice their concern about the lack of adequate and systematic training as well as the lack of resources; they also express their fear of the linguistic and methodological challenges that CLIL represents; and the coordination

between primary and secondary schools is sometimes seen as difficult. Some voices have also raised concerns as to whether or not CLIL can be successfully extended to contexts in which children do not receive enough support on the part of their families. Finally, the need to foster multilingualism while at the same time preserving and promoting minority languages may be felt at times to be a big challenge.

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