

## JEZIČKE MANJINE: SLUČAJ ŠPANSKOG OBRAZOVNOG SISTEMA

### LANGUAGE MINORITIES: THE CASE OF SPAIN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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#### ABSTRACT

This paper explores the general structure of Spanish Education system and Spanish education on minority languages specially in Basque and Catalonia, and its relation to the concept of national identity especially in Europe. The paper shows the arrangements which occurred to assimilate the minority languages within European Identity.

Key Words: Spain, minority, Languages, Education and Identity

#### INTRODUCTION

The origin of the term “national minorities” can be traced to Europe, where it was applied to various national groups who were identified with particular territories by virtue of long residence in them but who had lost their sovereignty over these territories to some more numerous people of a different nationality. In some cases the minority groups ceased altogether to occupy their original territories and were dispersed throughout the nation of which they were now subjects.

A minority language is a language spoken by a minority of the population of a territory. Such people are termed linguistic minorities or language minorities. With a total number of 193 sovereign states recognized internationally (as of 2008) and an estimated number of roughly 5,000 to 7,000 languages spoken worldwide, it follows that the vast majority of languages are minority languages in every country in which they are spoken. Some minority languages are simultaneously also official languages, including the Irish

language in Ireland. Likewise, some national languages are often considered minority languages, insofar as they are the national language of a stateless nation.

Minority languages are occasionally marginalized within nations for a number of reasons. These include the small number of speakers, the decline in the number of speakers, and their occasional consideration as uncultured, primitive, or simple dialects when compared to the dominant language. Support for minority languages is sometimes viewed as supporting separatism, for example the ongoing revival of the Celtic languages (Irish, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Manx, Cornish and Breton). Immigrant minority languages are often also seen as a threat and as indicative of the non-integration of these communities. Both of these perceived threats are based on the notion of the exclusion of the majority language speakers. Often this is added to by political systems by not providing support (such as education and policing) in these languages.

Speakers of majority languages can and do learn minority languages, through the large number of courses available. It is not known whether most students of minority languages are members of the minority community re-connecting with the community's language, or others seeking to become familiar with it. We will try to show some advantages and disadvantages of language minorities and its relation to the concept of national identity especially in Europe. We refer to the risk of extinction of the language of minorities and how to protect the right of speakers to education. This purpose of the research lead us to establish the following question: What is the minority languages? What is the role

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of minority languages in the identification of European identity? How is the protection of minority language?

Over the centuries, language has always played a significant role in Spanish politics. The tensions between the minority languages spoken in regions on the peripheries, such as Catalan, Basque and Galician, and the language of the centre, Castilian, have illustrated the relentless drive to enforce a Castilian cultural and political hegemony on the emerging Spanish state, despite the undeniable fact that the Spanish territory is made up of various different nations. Franco died in 1975, and, somewhat to the amazement of many commentators, Spain flung itself into the transition towards a fully-fledged western-style democratic regime. An essential part of this process was the drawing up and public ratification of a new constitution in 1978.

Article 3 of Spain's 1978 constitution has been heralded as a radical new recognition of linguistic rights and cultural pluralism, and article 27 refers specially to education. It establishes the right of all to an education that will be guaranteed and based on respect for the democratic principles of coexistence and fundamental rights and Freedoms. The overall purpose of this paper is to explore the Spanish Education system on minority languages specially in Basque and Catalonia, and its relation to the concept of national identity especially in Europe. In order to fulfill the purpose of this study the following research question has been formulated: What is the position of language Minorities in Spanish education system and how it is assimilated within European Identity? to answer this question we should know the background of Spanish education system, structural education system including minority languages and The relationship between minority languages and European Identity: The case of Spain.

## **LANGUAGE**

The system of sounds, words, signs, grammar, and rules for (1) communication in a given speech community for spoken, written, or signed interaction; (2) storing, acting out, and developing cultural knowledge and values; and (3) displaying, analyzing, structuring, and creating the world and personal and social identity. Theoretically, language also can be seen as existing only in practice, when being used, created, and enacted. The existence of discrete languages (rather than continua of mutually intelligible dialects) has also been called a Western myth (e.g., Mühlhäusler, 2003).

## **MINORITIES**

Minorities defined similarly to ethnic groups (numbers, dominance, characteristics), and by a desire to maintain distinctive characteristics; there is often no common descent (e.g. women; gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons; Deaf persons). Ethnic minorities can have national/ autochthonous or immigrant origins. Few countries state how long an immigrated minority must reside in a country before becoming a "national" minority ((Hungary: 100 years); some countries are unwilling to accept that they have immigrants ("guest workers"). "Being" a minority in the sense of having less power than some other group(s) (i.e. being minoritised) is a relationship rather than a characteristic; it presupposes that (an)other group(s) has/have been majoritised. Human agency can transform these relations in a more equal direction. In international law, the existence of a minority does not depend on a decision by the state but must be established by objective criteria. Minorities have some rights in education that are not accorded in international law to children under other labels (e.g. "linguistically diverse students," "English language learners"). In international law, minorities do not have a right to self-determination (e.g., independence), whereas

Indigenous peoples do.

### **MINORITY LANGUAGE**

Language that is not the dominant language of a territorial unit such as a state, because the speakers of the language have less power (they have been minoritised), and the language is generally spoken by a smaller number of people. Power relations – not numbers – constitute the defining characteristic of “minority” languages (e.g., Navajo speakers are numerically dominant within the Navajo Nation yet their language is minoritised within and outside their lands; many African languages are minority languages from a power point of view although they have more speakers than those of official languages). In many countries, all groups are minorities.

### **THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY**

The European identity can be defined as a set of values shared by all the citizens of the European Union. Identity possesses a dynamic or procedural nature which, as Zdzisław Mach observed, “is formed during an interaction – by changing the transmitted, received or interpreted messages until we form a coherent individual or collective self-image” (Mungiu-Pippidi, 1999). The feeling of belonging to a community is subjective and it involves two interrelated mental processes: the definition of the self-image and, at the same time, the demarcation of other individuals or groups of individuals. Therefore, all identity theories insist on the need for “the other” to exist, in opposition to which actors build their own identities. In this sense, the European identity is better perceived when regarded in opposition to other continental identities such as the American, Asian or African. European identity is supported by European art, culture, citizenship, common education for all EU members, etc. Nevertheless, European identity is, sometimes, perceived as being in contradiction with certain older identities that member states’ citizens are

attached to, such as national, regional, religious, linguistic or ideological.

### **MINORITY LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY**

The principal policy arguments in favor of promoting minority language education are the need for multilingual workforces, intellectual and cultural benefits and greater inclusion in global information society (McPake, J (2008). P.76 . Access to education in a minority language is also seen as a human right as granted by the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms , the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the UN Human Rights Committee . Bilingual Education has been implemented in many countries including the United States, in order to promote both the use and appreciation of the minority language, as well as the majority language concerned ( Fernand , 2004 )

### **DEFINITIONS AND PURPOSES OF MINORITY LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

Minority language education is here defined as the schools use of a language spoken by students whose heritage language differs from that of the more powerful members of society who usually exercise the most control over state school. Although minority language education always includes the teaching of the minority language, its main purpose is to educate the minority group by using the heritage language as a cognitive and affective instrument to make sense of their world, and sometimes as a way to improve their mastery of the majority language. Minority language education is most often a component of an education that includes the majority language. Thus minority language education is more specific and focused than, but usually is a part of, what has been termed bilingual / multilingual education.

Minority language education is important for individuals and group, especially for

the language minority community, but also for the majority community. All quality education builds on strengths, and the greatest strength children entering school possess is the language that they bring from home, the instrument they have used to communicate with others, especially with members of their family, and to make sense of their world. For language minority children, therefore, an education which includes their heritage language has effective benefits, enabling them to find continuity between their first learning context, the home, and the school, and making it possible for them to identify with teachers in ways that build on relationships they have with caregivers and friends. A heritage language education also enables minority children to find themselves in school, in the voices of the books they read, the songs they learn, the stories they weave. In addition, minority language education has sociocognitive benefits, enabling children to use the understanding of cognitively complex academic material.

In society, minority language education is important for both the minority group and the majority group. It provides minority group with a way to understand their culture and their history.

### **ORGANIZATION OF MINORITY LANGUAGE EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD**

Minority languages education is not new, it was in the 20 country, and specifically after the UNESCO declaration of 1953 supporting the teaching of reading in the children's mother tongue that it was first considered a field of study. The organization of minority languages education responds to the different sociolinguistics and sociopolitical needs of different societies and language communities. At least seven different organizational models of minority languages education coexist in the world today, and examples of such models in different societies follow:

1. Heritage language education models,

specifically supplementary ( after school and weekend ) classes, are often run by the minority languages community itself to maintain and develop the heritage language in the language minority community. Instruction is most often solely in the minority languages . Programs of this type are found throughout the world.

2. Developmental maintenance bilingual education (DMBE) models are either private all-day schools organized and run by the language minority community itself or state-funded all-day schools. Instruction is in two languages , with some portion of the school curriculum or day taught in the majority languages and the other taught in the minority languages.
3. Heritage immersion bilingual education models have been developed in societal contexts where there has been a high degree of language shift.
4. Bilingual intercultural education models are prevalent in Latin American for indigenous groups who have traditionally received a poor Spanish medium education. The purpose of such minority language education is to provide basic literacy to the indigenous population, while giving them the intercultural skills that enable them to interact in the Spanish speaking world.
5. Transitional bilingual education models exist mostly in contexts with high degree of immigration such as the United States, or in countries of Africa and Asia where minority language education lasts only until the child acquires the majority language.
6. Two-way bilingual education models provide language minority children with an education in their heritage language, while making it possible for language majority children to learn the minority language. Although these models usually keep the two linguistic groups separate during the period of emerging bilingualism, especially for

literacy instruction, the recent programs developed in the United States insist on the linguistic integration of children at all times.

7. Language Awareness and Inclusive models are organized in contexts where the minority language speakers are interested throughout the school system and it is impossible to provide them with minority language education. It cannot be considered minority language education in its own right. Children in these models are encouraged to use the minority languages to read, find information, and write reports ( Garcia, 2000).

### **ACADEMIC DISADVANTAGES FOR MINORITY LANGUAGE GROUPS**

For minority language groups, a common axis of educational disadvantage lies in the concept of evaluation, whether for placement purposes, diagnostic purposes or for academic purposes. This is especially the case for 'new' languages. Placement practices (whether to decide the level of school entry for newly arrived immigrants or for access to academic-track courses) can result in uneven representation of language minority students in lower level courses and lack of access to academic content courses. Those students who are considered to have 'limited language proficiency' are frequently placed into lower level content courses that are intended for students with learning disabilities or placed in language courses during content course hours. Apart from placement, assessment of general academic progress can also lead to educational inequality for minority language students. Teachers generally use assessment practices designed for the majority language group to monitor overall language development. Furthermore, teachers track the quality of students' day-to-day development in other subject matter through competences directly related to language, such as vocabulary tests or reports . This issue of validity of testing becomes critical,

especially considering that test scores are used as part of the basis for minority language students' placement, selection, certification, and promotion; all of which have significant long-term consequences for these students ( Murphy, S. 2007).

These assessments are often accompanied by a lack of awareness of the multilingual resources of the minority language students. Underneath the assumption that there is a correlation between language competence and educational outcomes may lie a hidden agenda based on assimilationist beliefs that attribute school failure to linguistic and cultural mismatch (language deficiencies of the minority group) rather than recognizing that schools do not always build on children's "funds of knowledge (Melinda Dooley 2010) p3.

### **EDUCATION ADVANTAGES**

Research shows that there are important educational advantages in being bilingual particularly when bilingual learners also become biliterate, or literate in two languages. The more your bilingual learners can use both their languages in curriculum learning, the better. The two languages support each other and are interdependent, and bilingual speakers have some cognitive advantages over those who know only one language.

Students who learn English and continue to develop their native language have higher academic achievement in later years than do students who learn English at the expense of their first language. This maybe right because those who still link with their mother tongue community, have strong motivation, and desire of learning, and doing something to help their community to develop and progress.

Children's knowledge and skills transfer across languages from the mother tongue they have learned in the home to the school language. From the point of view of children's development of concepts and thinking skills, the two languages are interdependent. Transfer across languages



can be two-way: when the mother tongue is promoted in school, the concepts, language, and literacy skills that children are learning in the majority language can transfer to the home language. In short, both languages nurture each other when the educational environment permits children access to both languages.

Practically, Bilingual children perform better in school when the school effectively provides teaching-learning the mother tongue and, where appropriate, develops literacy in that language. By contrast, when children are encouraged to decline their mother tongue and, consequently, its development disintegrates, their personal and conceptual foundation for learning is impaired.

Research findings have validated that, while maintaining bilingualism, academic, literacy, concepts, and knowledge linguistic skills transfer rather easily across languages.

Recently, ample research has confirmed that mother tongue promotion in the school helps develop both the mother tongue and children's abilities in the majority school language even if languages use different alphabetic system. Actually, when bilinguals are learning and reach fluency in second or other languages, the knowledge and skills can easily transfer across languages. (Sapcham 2011).

## **LANGUAGES IN DANGER IN EUROPE**

Izsák 2013 states that according to the expert, historical factors such as colonialism have had a huge global impact on languages, resulting in the marginalization of and a rapid decline in the use of indigenous and minority languages, which were often seen as backwards, a barrier to colonial hegemony, or as slowing national development.

It can also be argued that today globalization, the growth of the Internet and web-based information is having a direct and detrimental impact on minority languages and linguistic diversity, as global communications and marketplaces require global understanding, said Ms. Izsák (UN News center 2013).

In the other report the number out of 255 languages currently spoken across Europe, 128 are listed as endangered languages and 90 are "severely endangered" according to Unesco's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger. In France, languages native to Burgundy, Picard and Lorraine are considered "severely endangered, while the Spanish dialect Gascon is "definitely endangered" and Dalmatian in Croatia is considered "extinct". The UN predicts that half of the world's 6,000 languages will become extinct by the end of the century.

The process, however, is neither inevitable nor irreversible, Unesco said, as policies can support the efforts of speaker communities to maintain or revitalize their native tongues. Cultivating endangered languages requires financial backing and strategies to help and fund training, education, media and research programmers throughout Europe, say the supporters of the report.

The internet presents a glimmer of hope for students of unusual languages, where despite the dominance of English, mandarin, Spanish, French and Japanese, rarer languages can remain in use and gain prominence, says Daniel Prado, a renowned linguist of Franco-Argentine origin. However, he warned: "If the internet can constitute an opportunity for languages, the first step is to ensure that everyone gets access to it, which is still far from being the case" (Online EurActive.Sep 13.2013).

## **HISTORY BACKGROUND OF SPANISH EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE**

Spain has a long tradition of linguistic diversity and outside influences. The rich linguistic history is a result of the occupation of the Iberian Peninsula by the Roman Empire, the Visigoths, and the Moors. These distinct groups of people brought their different languages to the peninsula, allowing for the evolution of many different language varieties. While Castilian is the standard language of Spain, other languages and dialects in Spain have been present in

the peninsula for as long, or even longer. Due to the great amount of linguistic diversity, the government of Spain has implemented different types of language policies and language planning to help alleviate the confusion and tensions caused by the number of language varieties in Spain. The policies have led to the creation of the Castilian standard, the suppression of minority languages, and the eventual resurgence of some of the minority languages. The language policy and planning implemented in Spain has influenced the various language varieties in Spain and has culminated in the creation of the linguistic situation in present-day Spain.

Spain has seen the development of an education system only in the last century and a half. It started falteringly, in response to a very limited demand, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its structure was formulated in the 1857 Act (One of the first pieces of legislation in any country prescribing compulsory education). Education attracted only moderate support, however, in a country torn by political and occasionally military strife. The institution of the First Republic in 1873 and its early collapse in the following year led to a greater interest: a democratic country needed informed citizens. The national disaster of 1898 provided a different, but supplementary, motive for developing better schools: the economy of Spain was backward because of the ignorance of its people. Foreign example was now taken more seriously, and some useful developments did occur. The poverty of the country, however, reinforced by slow industrialization, limited progress, while the bitter and prolonged struggle for control of education between Church and state meant that progress was further retarded. It was these, as so often happens in Spanish education, were quickly undone by the succeeding government, in this case that of the Franco dictatorship. The seesawing between democratic and authoritarian policies is the most characteristic feature of the system ( John M. McNair, 1984 ) p. 18 .

The Spanish Constitution, approved in Parliament and by a national referendum in 1978, marks a watershed in the development of education in Spain. Prior to this time, and in particular during the regime of General Franco, it is fair to say that education was not accorded a very high priority.

Article 27 of the Constitution refers specially to education. It establishes the right of all to an education that will be guaranteed and based on respect for the democratic principles of coexistence and fundamental rights and Freedoms and stipulates that basic education is to be compulsory and free of charge. Teachers, parents and even pupils, where appropriate, are given a say in the control and management of all publicly funded schools and colleges. Parents are guaranteed the right for their children to receive a religious and moral education in line with their own convictions and children are no longer, as before ( when the Catholicism was the official religion in Spain ) , to undergo compulsory instruction at school in the Catholic faith ( Michael T. Newton, 2001 ) p. 13 .

Until the early 1980, the Spanish education system had remained virtually unchanged since the General Education Act of 1970. This Act had, at least in theory, marked a major milestone in Spanish educational history, freeing it for the first time from the stranglehold of traditionalism, the quasi-Fascist National Movement.

The 1970 Law proposed a fundamental education and provided in mainly state run was to cover the 6-14 age-group ( previously it had catered for those aged 6-10 ) , while secondary education, known as middle-school education, was to comprise a choice between an academic and a Vocational or technical route. The former led to the bachillerato, a grammar school type of education provided in either state-run institutos nacionales or in private colegios. Most pupils successfully completing the bachillerato were expected to aspire to a university education; this was a three year course leading to an A-level equivalent examination in a wide range of subjects.

The bachillerato did not, however, provide a selection process for university; those wishing to enter university had to follow a one- year pre-university year known as the *Curso de Orientación Universitaria* ( COU ) ( *ibid* ) p. 15 .

The next major change in education had to wait until 1984 when the then Socialist government against considerable opposition from the combined might of the right and the Catholic Church, introduced its Right to Education Act , known popularly by its Spanish acronym, LODE ( *ibid* ) p. 15 .

The Constitution includes in the Article 3 : that Castilian is the official Spanish language of the state. All Spaniards have a duty to know it and the right to use it. The other languages of Spain will also be official in their respective autonomous communities, in accordance with their statutes. The richness of the distinct linguistic varieties of Spain is a cultural heritage which will be the object of special respect and protection ( Paolo Coluzzi , 2007 ) p. 32 .

The two judgments of the Constitutional court n. 312 and n. 289 stating that protection of minority languages did not fall within the exclusive jurisdiction of State law date back to , respectively, 1983 and 1987 ( *ibid* ) p. 51 .

## THEORIES AND CONCEPTS OF MINORITY LANGUAGES

### **Education rights of minority groups as determinant of an education system , adopted by Hennie Steyn , p. 75**

The rights of minority groups relate to the manner in which society should be organised in order to ensure a safe and sound community that provides maximum life space for all its members. Such an environment provides a space where the members of minority groups can prosper according to their own unique characteristics within the mutual support of all other individuals, (majority) groups and institutions in that society. Thus, it is clear that the rights of minority groups resort within the political domain of a particular

society (Steyn, Steyn, De Waal & Wolhuter, 2002: 132). The rights of minority groups can be categorised as an external determinant of the education system and are more precisely included under the external determinant of 'political and institutional tendencies'. The educational rights of minority groups will be the guiding aspect in this regard. The educational rights of minority groups include their right to (cf. par 2.4.3):

- quality education to develop their own identity according to their own religious, cultural and language needs;
- own (private) schools with standards not lower than those of public schools; and
- the active support of state in providing education according to the unique needs of the particular minority groups. It is the duty of all signatories of the international treaties and protocols on the rights of minority groups and educational rights to actively promote these rights: therefore, these rights will influence the education systems of the signatories with regard to several of its components and elements. The educational rights of minorities should influence the education system in a similar manner as human (individual) rights determine the structure and functioning of those education systems where the human rights are enshrined in the constitution of a particular country.

However, it is often experienced that majority groups do not automatically recognise the rights of minority groups and provide for the unique education needs of minority groups (cf. Jenne, 2004: 732, 734). It is the responsibility of the minority groups to promote their rights in the international and national arena; they should even go beyond that and provide their own education according to their unique education needs, if they are in a position to do it. Without it, learners from minority groups will always suffer from an underdeveloped identity and be 'sentenced' to inferior education achievement.



### **The influence of the education rights of minority groups on the education system**

The way in which the educational rights should determine the national education systems, of at least the signatories of the international treaties on the rights of minority groups, can be illustrated by referring to the components and elements of the national education system in the following paragraphs.

#### **EDUCATION SYSTEM POLICY**

The education system policy can be described as the statement of intent of the way in which the identified needs of the target group are to be solved. This component usually consists of the following elements, namely the mission, aims and objectives of the particular education system and the publicised education system policy in a particular format.

If the target group of a particular national education system is serious to promote the educational rights of the minority group(-s) included in the target group, it is obvious that:

- this intention should be clearly stated in the mission, the flag indicating the overall characteristics of that education system;
- the intention to provide in the unique education needs of the minority group(-s) should be included in the aims and objectives of that education system; and
- the way in which the unique education needs are going to be provided in, should be clearly stated in the relevant policy formats.

#### **EDUCATION SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION**

Through the education system administration, the education system policy is determined on the one hand, while on the other hand it is ensured that

the accepted policy is implemented. This component usually includes the following elements: the organisational structure of functionaries and agencies responsible for policy formulation and implementation, the financing of the education system, and the liaison arrangements (communication) in the particular education system and between the education system and the interest groups in the community. In the national education, particular provision should be made in the education system administration to assure the minority group(-s) of the credibility of the majority group to provide education according to the minority group's unique needs and expectation. Therefore:

- Members of the minority group should be appointed in the organisational structures of the national education system, without degrading these appointments to tokenism, and they must be provided with real power to look after the interests of the particular minority group(-s).
- The annual budget of the particular national education system should reflect the intension of the majority group to provide for the education needs of the minority group(-s).
- The liaison arrangements should particularly be planned to actively and positively communicate with the minority group(-s) and thus to support the development of informed members of the minority group(-s).

#### **SUMMARY**

The aim of this article was to indicate at a theoretical level how the international rights of minority groups should determine the educational needs of minority groups. It was demonstrated that according to the internationally accepted rights of minority groups, one of the most important rights of minority groups is education according to their own unique educational needs.

It was also pointed out that the educational rights of minority groups boil down to:

- The right of children from minority groups to receive education according to their unique religious, cultural and language needs.
- The protection of children's own identity should be actively supported by statutory institutions in a particular country.
- The rights of minority groups to establish and maintain their 'own' schools (private schools), subject to the minimum standards of the education authorities, are invaluable to the provision of quality education. Finally, it was explained at a theoretical level how the rights and educational rights of minority groups act as a determinant of a particular national education system. If statutory institutions are serious to recognise these rights, it should influence all the components and elements of a particular national education system. It was indicated that provision of education to minority groups should be a particular focus of statutory institutions and should at least be on the same level of that of the majority group.

## **SPANISH EDUCATION SYSTEM ON MINORITY LANGUAGES**

### **General structure of the education system**

In accordance with LOE , the education provides the following levels of education :pri-Primary Education , Primary Education, Compulsory Secondary Education (Education Secundaria obligatoria ESO), General Upper Secondary Education (Bachillerato), Vocational Training, Adult Education and University Education, which have been called General Regulation Education areas. Enseñanzas de Regimen General- to date as well as Language Education, Arts Education and Sports Education (which have been called special Regulation Education areas- Enseñanzas de Regimen Especial-to date) .

Basic Education is made up of primary Education and ESO . Secondary Education is divided into ESO and post-compulsory secondary Education, the latter comprising General Upper Secondary Education, intermediate Vocational Training, intermediate level Professional Plastic Arts and Design Education , intermediate level Professional Music and Dance Education and intermediate level Sports Education.

In addition, the Spanish education system covers Higher Education, which is made up of University Education, Advanced Arts Education, advanced Vocational Training advanced level professional Muslim and Dance Education and advanced level Sports Education.

It is also important to highlight the linguistic plurality which characterizes the Spanish education system. The Spanish Constitution establishes that the wealth of linguistic variety in Spain is part of a cultural heritage which shall be the object of special respect and attention. Based on this constitution provision, the statues of Autonomy of the Balearic Islands, Catalonia, the Valencian community, Galicia, Navarre and the Basque Country encompass the coexistence, within their respective administrations , of the Spanish language ( also known as Castilian) and the language of their community, which allows for different linguistic teaching models. As such, there are four different models: Spanish as the only language of instruction, Spanish as the language of instruction with the community language being taught as a single subject, the community language as the language of instruction with the Spanish language being taught as a single subject, and finally, bilingual education ( IFLLE's staff , 2009 ) p . 13 . In Catalonia and the Basque Country the education system has been a core part of the local governments' language planning and identity- building project. The experiences and results are different in the two, as would be expected given the important differences between the two communities culturally, linguistically and historically. The role of

language in the education system, and the role of the latter in local policies, however, is high profile in both. Insofar as these local education policies are potentially in conflict with the Spanish majority linguistic group, the politics of language education in the two communities take on a national focus. In both, especially in Catalonia, the teaching of the minority language has become symbolic of many of the tensions and frictions between the autonomous governments and the central government in Madrid. The successes and failures of these policies are read by many commentators as reflections on the success and failure in general of the new Spanish political system, a system which is also watched closely by many countries under pressure to accept their multicultural and Multilingual reality ( C. Mar-Molinero , 2000 ) p 149 .

#### **SPANISH EDUCATION ON THE BASQUE REGION**

At the time when the regional government of the BAC set out with its language education policy there were several important challenges. One of the most pressing problems was the lack of language proficiency of teachers. In 1976 less than 5 % of all teachers in primary and secondary education were able to teach through the medium of Basque ( D. Gorter , 2014 ) . Teachers were encouraged to learn Basque and they were given the opportunity for language study full time to obtain the qualification to teach through Basque, without teaching duties and while they kept their full salary . The effect of such measures has been that the percentage of qualified teachers has gone up to over 85 % today as can be seen in Fig . Another major challenge was the lack of teaching materials in Basque. Also a lot of progress has been made in this field and today there is a variety of up-to-date materials for all levels , including software and audiovisuals , from pre-school to university, although for some field at university the amount can be small due the specialized nature of the courses . The

materials used to teach Spanish or through the medium of Spanish are in many cases the same as those used in Spanish schools outside the BAC or Navarre.

A third challenge was the provision of adequate curricular models . The Basic Law of 1982 made Basque and Spanish compulsory subjects in all schools and the educational authorities devised three models of language schooling: Models A , B and D. These models differ with respect to their intended student population, their language aims and the languages of instruction.

Model A aims at Spanish mother tongue speakers , the original objective of Model A was to prepare students for participation in Basque speaking environment. In Model A all teaching is through Spanish, and Basque is taught as a subject for 4-5 h per week.

Model B is also intended for children from Spanish speaking homes, but the goal is to reach bilingualism with Basque. In this model subjects are taught through both languages for more or less equal amounts of time although there can be substantial variation between schools ( D . Gorter , 2014 ) pp . 210- 212.

#### **SPANISH EDUCATION SYSTEM ON CATALONIA REGION**

After the 1973 Education Act Catalan was allowed to be taught in the state sector , but only as a foreign language. There were, however, very few materials in Catalan, and even fewer trained teachers. This apparent softening by the regime, then, was little more than a gesture. From 1968 Catalan philology was offered at Barcelona university. However, with the death of Franco and transition to democracy there was an immediate such to bring Catalan fully into the education system as soon and as comprehensively as possible . In July 1978 a decree was issued that Catalan should from part of official state Curriculum in Catalonia. It was now compulsory subject in all Catalonia's state schools , to be taught at least three hours per week. Courses to train teachers of Catalan were set up at the time.

In October 1979 the Catalan Statute of Autonomy was approved. Article 3 of this Statute confirms the status of Catalan as the "llengua pròpia" of Catalonia and states in its third clause.

The Normalization Law was the most important part of Catalan language planning and formed the basis for the local government's language policies over the next fifteen years. Although it has recently been replaced by a new law, the 1983 one is the framework for much of the impetus for the development and promotion of Catalan in the years following the end of the Franco regime. The Normalization Law has a section dedicated to the role of the Catalan language in the education system (Articles 14-20). The underpinning principles of this role are expressed above all in Article 14, reproduced below in the English translation,

- Catalan, as Catalonia's own language [ llengua pròpia ], is also the language of education at all levels.
- Children have the right to receive their primary education in their usual language, whether this is Catalan or Castilian. The Administration must guarantee this right and put in place the necessary means to make this effective.
- The Catalan and Castilian languages must be taught as compulsory subjects at all levels and grades of non-university education.
- All Catalonia's children, whatever their usual language on beginning their education, must be able to use Catalan and Castilian in a normal and correct fashion when they finish their basic studies.
- The Administration must take appropriate measures so that a) (pupils should not be separated into different teaching centres for reasons of language, b) the Catalan language should be progressively used as pupils start to master it (D. Gorter, 2014) pp. 51-52.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MINORITY LANGUAGES AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY : THE CASE OF SPAIN

There are inherent tensions in the different European perceptions of minority language groups. (There are many differing definitions of language minority, including a separation between national and ethnic minority language groups. At the European (administrative) level, linguistic diversity is seen as a patrimony that must be protected, thus leading to the promotion of the teaching of European languages (the focus tends to be on the major European languages such as English, French, German, etc.), with specific policies and organizations established to promote them (eg European Council of Modern Languages). Concomitantly, the maintenance of minority languages is also seen as a priority on the European level although specific policy measures on how to accomplish this are not usually given; instead there is more emphasis on periodic project proposals (eg European Council's "Promoting Language Learning" (Melinda Dooley 2010) p 2.

This implies that inevitably policies and practices exist on different levels and with sometimes conflicting agendas. There are international policies (eg UNESCO Declaration of Linguistic Rights), European policies (eg European Charter of Regional Languages) and national policies (constitutions, education laws) relative to the education of minority language groups. Added to this, at national levels there may be varying power of legislation, for instance in Sweden the municipalities are in charge of legislating minority language policies. (ibid) Spain signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (referred to as "the Charter") on 5 November 1992 and ratified it on 9 April 2001. The Charter entered into force with regard to Spain on 1 August 2001. The instrument of ratification of Spain is set out in Appendix I of this report. Article 15.1 of the Charter requires States



Parties to submit three-yearly reports in a form prescribed by the Committee of Ministers<sup>1</sup>. The Spanish authorities presented their third periodical report to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 30 July 2010. The English translation was made available on 17 February 2011.

This third evaluation report is based on the information obtained by the Committee of Experts from the third periodical report of Spain and through meetings held with representatives of speakers of regional or minority languages in Spain and the Spanish authorities during the on-the-spot visit, which took place from 4 to 8 July 2011. The Committee of Experts received an extensive number of comments from bodies and associations legally established in Spain, submitted pursuant to Article 16.2 of the Charter. This information was very helpful in the course of evaluating the application of the Charter and the Committee of Experts. The present report contains detailed observations that the Spanish authorities are encouraged to take into account when developing their policy on regional or minority languages. On the basis of these detailed observations, the Committee of Experts has also established a list of general proposals for the preparation of a third set of recommendations to be addressed to Spain by the Committee of Ministers, as provided in Article 16.4 of the Charter (European Charter, 2012) p. 4.

In the minority nations, Europe took on a particular importance as a new framework in which their aspirations to self-government could be realized, without taking on the Spanish state head-on, a strategy which had led to such tragic results in the past. So Europe has become a key theme for Catalan and Basque moderate nationalism. Both *Convergència i Unió* (CiU) and the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV) are strongly pro-Europe while maintaining a studied ambivalence about their ultimate constitutional aspirations. The European Union, with its diluted and shared sovereignty and complex institutional arrangements,

provides the ideal counterpoint to this, enabling them to engage in complicated strategies and manoeuvres. More concretely, Europe is seen as a source of economic opportunities; as source of support for their cultural and linguistic promotion policies in the context of a hostile Spanish state; and as a source of support for their self-government aspirations, with its commitment to subsidiarity and the Europe of the Regions concept, and through the possibilities of alliances with other minority nations and regions. Europe is thus used as a resource for nation-building, but not necessarily for state-building in the classic sense. Of course, this project is always contentious, since the form and content of nationalism are matters of political debate. In particular, there are complaints that the dominant nationalist parties have sought to monopolize nationalism in the interest of maintaining their own power and social networks. This problem may be exacerbated within Europe, since in order to operate there, it is necessary to determine what the interest of the minority nation is and who speaks for it. Europe may thus be another forum within which competing conceptions of nationalism are fought out. Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia have never been nation-states in the modern sense, the theory of absolute sovereignty (which many consider a Spanish import from France) has never taken root there, and most nationalists are aware of the real limitations of sovereignty in a modern, complex and interdependent world. On the other hand, they are able to draw on their own historic traditions of shared sovereignty, complex authority and multiple spheres of government to forge and sustain strategies for maximizing their opportunities in the new Europe. While Catalans, Basques and Gallegos are all engaged in this exercise, however, there are differences in their orientations and strategies, reflecting the different characteristics and aspirations of the three movements (Michael Keating, 1999) pp. 6-7.

## CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the language of the minorities a big role in determining the identity and stability of any region, especially in Europe. Language advantages and disadvantages may affect the national identity of the state and several minorities it up to the formation of new states.

Minority languages are occasionally marginalized within nations for a number of reasons. These include the small number of speakers, the decline in the number of speakers, and their occasional consideration as uncultured, primitive, or simple dialects when compared to the dominant language. Support for minority languages is sometimes viewed as supporting separatism, for example the ongoing revival of the Celtic languages (Irish, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Manx, Cornish and Breton). Immigrant minority languages are often also seen as a threat and as indicative of the non-integration of these communities. Both of these perceived threats are based on the notion of the exclusion of the majority language speakers. Often this is added to by political systems by not providing support (such as education and policing) in these languages. All indications suggest the disappearance of a large number of these languages especially in Europe, and the reason is the evolution of the five living languages, especially English and French ones.

The Spanish Constitution establishes that the wealth of linguistic variety in Spain is part of a cultural heritage which shall be the object of special respect and attention. Based on this constitution provision, the statues of Autonomy of the Balearic Islands, Catalonia, the Valencian community, Galicia, Navarre and the Basque Country encompass the coexistence, within their respective administrations, of the Spanish language (also known as Castilian) and the language of their community, which allows for different linguistic teaching models.

In Catalonia and the Basque Country the education system has been a core part of the

local governments' language planning and identity- building project. The experiences and results are different in the two, as would be expected given the important differences between the two communities culturally, linguistically and historically. The role of language in the education system, and the role of the latter in local policies, however, is high profile in both. Insofar as these local education policies are potentially in conflict with the Spanish majority linguistic group, the politics of language education in the two communities take on a national focus. In both, especially in Catalonia, the teaching of the minority language has become symbolic of many of the tensions and frictions between the autonomous governments and the central government in Madrid. In the relationship between Spanish minority languages and European Identity, There are inherent tensions in the different European perceptions of minority language groups. (There are many differing definitions of language minority, including a separation between national and ethnic minority language groups. At the European (administrative) level, linguistic diversity is seen as a patrimony that must be protected, thus leading to the promotion of the teaching of European languages. The maintenance of minority languages is also seen as a priority on the European level although specific policy measures on how to accomplish this are not usually given; instead there is more emphasis on periodic project proposals (eg European Council's "Promoting Language Learning". This implies that inevitably policies and practices exist on different levels and with sometimes conflicting agendas. There are international policies (eg UNESCO Declaration of Linguistic Rights), European policies (eg European Charter of Regional Languages) and national policies (constitutions, education laws) relative to the education of minority language groups. Added to this, at national levels there may be varying power of legislation, for instance in Sweden the municipalities are in charge of legislating minority language policies. Spain

signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (referred to as "the Charter") on 5 November 1992 and ratified it on 9 April 2001. The Charter entered into force with regard to Spain on 1 August 2001.

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