



Foreign language teaching methods

Comparing Wales and Catalonia

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ABSTRACT

En el meu treball de recerca he volgut investigar sobre els sistemes d'ensenyament de llengües estrangeres de Catalunya i Gal·les per tal de veure quin d'aquests té uns millors mètodes i millors resultats, i, com a conseqüència, mirar quins canvis es podrien aplicar al sistema amb pitjors resultats per tal de millorar-lo i millorar, així, els resultats obtinguts.

En mi trabajo de investigación he querido indagar sobre los sistemas de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras de Cataluña i Gales para poder ver cuál de estos tiene unos mejores métodos y mejores resultados, y, como consecuencia, ver qué cambios se podrían aplicar al sistema con peores resultados para mejorarlo y mejorar, así, los resultados obtenidos.

In my research project I wanted to investigate about the foreign language teaching methods in Catalonia and Wales to see which one has the best methods and the best results, and, consequently, see which changes could be applied in the system with the worst results to improve it and thus improve the obtained results.

In mein Forschungsprojekt wollte ich über die Fremdsprache Lehrmethoden in Katalonien und Wales zu untersuchen und sehen welche hat die besten methoden.



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1. INTRODUCTION

As everybody knows, English is a very important language nowadays. Apart from its importance, personally, I really enjoy learning it and I like its culture and everything related with its language.

Although being very important to travel around the world and to communicate with other people because of the globalization, I think that there are lots of people afraid of this language who do not have the sufficient level to be able to speak more or less fluently, from my experience as an English student.

The theme I have chosen for my research project is the foreign languages teaching methods. At first I wanted to focus my project in how English is taught in Catalonia and why people are, in some way, afraid of it, according to the marks students get at their exams. But, after thinking about it, I thought that that was not enough to get the mark I wanted, so, after thinking for a while, an idea came to my mind.

What I thought was to compare how two countries teach foreign languages in school. I talked about it with some people and after clearing up my mind I decided that this would be my project.

As I went to Wales the previous year to a summer course, I thought I could take advantage of this trip once again and invest my time there to look for some information. So, I decided that the country I would compare with Catalonia was going to be Wales.

At first I did not know anything about the Welsh foreign language teaching methods, but I liked the idea of trying to find out the differences between them and adding something new to an area that maybe could be improved (or maybe not) in any of the cases.

So, what I want to do in this project is find out how the foreign language subject is taught in Wales, how the English (the foreign language) subject is taught in Catalonia, what differences are there between both methods and what could one system pick from the other one so as to improve the quality of the results and the teaching methods.



2. WELSH TEACHING METHODS

2.1. LINK TO UK TEACHING SYSTEM

In the UK they have a devolved system in what education refers to. This means that each of the countries in the UK has their own education system under separate governments.¹

On the one hand, the **Scottish** system takes their GCSE (General certificate of secondary school) equivalent exams before the other parts of the UK, and they also have an extra year before they take the SQA (Scottish qualification authority) higher examinations, which are the equivalent to the A level exams. Students in Scotland need a minimum of 3 Highers, all above C level, which means a pass exam. However, a greater number of students take SQA specialist, vocational and higher education qualifications. All this education policy in Scotland is regulated exclusively by the Scottish Government.

On the other hand, in **Northern Ireland**, the education system policy differs from any other system used in the UK, although it is more similar to the Wales and England system. They have the GCSE exams at the end of KS4, Y11, and afterwards, at the end of Y13, they take their A level exams. This education policy is totally regulated by the Northern Ireland Government.

The education policy between **England and Wales** is very similar, despite the fact that each one is regulated by its own government. The Welsh educational system is regulated by the Welsh Government, and the England education is regulated by the UK government. These two systems have lots of things in common, for example, the GCSE and A level exams, although each region has its own exam model, because they're in charge of doing their own exam.

Since the granting of powers from the Parliament of the UK to each of the different Governments in the UK (Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England) happened, known as devolution, the education policy in each country has diverged. In each region the devolution happened in a different year.

Starting with Northern Ireland, it came into effect in 1921, under the Fourth Home Rule Act. After the devolution was approved by the Parliament of Northern Ireland lots of troubles started to happen and a sequence of violent disturbances took place, adding also the suppression of the civil rights. After that date, the devaluation was suppressed and re-established many

¹ Webgraphy point 1



times, for example, in 1998 in the Belfast Agreement, also known as the Good Friday Agreement, which resulted after the creation of a new Northern Ireland Assembly that tried to bring together the two communities to govern Northern Ireland.

In Scotland, the feeling of the devolution started in the 19th century, but it wasn't until 1997 when Scotland had their devolution recognized. In 1997 the Labour party was elected with the promise of creating devolved institutions in Scotland. In this same year a referendum was held, and it resulted in a 'yes' vote. They created a new Scottish parliament, as a result of the Scotland Act in 1998, and it had powers to make primary legislation in certain 'devolved' areas of policy, in addition to any limited tax varying powers. This devolution was justified on the basis that its government would be more responsive to the wishes of the people of Scotland.

In Wales the 'yes' vote of the citizens in the 1997 referendum (with a 50.3% of the votes) started the creation of the National Assembly of Wales, with the help of the Welsh Government Law in 1998. Its rights in the beginning were limited to establish the budget and the administration of the public funding. In 2006 this law was modified to create an autonomous government, and after another referendum in 2010 the Welsh Parliament had plenty power in health, education, public administration, justice and police body, economic and financial development, agriculture, environment, and more.

While England has focused its system on carrying out reforms based on school types and parents choice, Wales and Scotland have maintained their system more committed to comprehensive schools based on the community. Although sharing some features, they're every day more different in what systems of governance and regulation refers to.

So, each country has its own Department or Ministry looking after the best education they can offer.

But, despite being separated and having different systems, as mentioned before, they share some basic things; for example, in every system they use the same stages of education²: early years, primary, secondary, Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE). Education is compulsory from the age of 5 to 16 and beforehand children can be educated at nursery.³ After the compulsory ages, a student can take a non-compulsory education which is FE, and consists on a lately HE. Both of these stages can be taught in education colleges and HE institutions.

² Graph 1

³ Graph 2



2.2. THE WELSH SYSTEM⁴

The education in Wales differs in some aspects with the rest of the education system of the other countries in the UK. The students are taught the Welsh language from nursery until age 16, but at age 14 they can choose if they want to study it as a core subject or as a foundation subject. Also, they can choose if they want to study it in Y12 and Y13, when they have to take the A level exams, which would mean they want to take the Welsh A level exam.

It's not common for the Welsh language to be the vehicular language in schools, as most of them are taught in English, but there are some private schools where Welsh is the vehicular language for everything, and subjects such as English or Foreign language are also taught in Welsh. In the rest of the public schools, there's also a large amount of foreign pupils from different nationalities, like Muslim or Chinese. For these students lots of schools have a special classroom where they go to attend some lessons and they have more help as there are less students than in a normal class. They have special attention until they are capable of attending a normal English lesson with the rest of their classmates.

2.2.1. PRIMARY EDUCATION

The primary education in Wales is compulsory from the age five. It has a similar education system as in England, but Welsh is a compulsory subject, and moreover, the introduction of the Foundation Phase from age 3 to 7 is also increasing the differences between both systems.

The Foundation Phase is a statutory curriculum in Wales, for children from 3 to 7. What this system wants to do is to establish a base for future learning in the children. Students learn, at this phase, by themselves. They learn by doing, by practical exercises and more active activities, where children are 100% involved. They gain first hand experiences that can be profitable for them in a near future. Also, they have to be able to understand how things work and be able to solve problems by themselves.

In this phase, there are not curriculum subjects for the children to go through, but there are some assessments for the child when he/she is aged 2-3 and for when he/she is 5, at the end of the foundation phase. These are not tests and these assessments are based on observation. This information

⁴ Webgraphy point 1



is used for parents, practitioners and teachers to support the children's learning and development.

This early year development concentrates on 7 areas, split between prime and specific areas of learning. On the one hand, the prime areas are communication and language, physical development, and personal, social and emotional development. On the other hand, the specific learning areas are literacy, mathematics, understanding the world, and expressive arts and design.

Most of the teaching is often done by playing, where children learn about people and the subjects through games and practical moves.

Between the ages of 3 and 11 years old, the child's education is divided into three stages:

- Early Years (*explained before*)
- Key Stage 1 (from 5 to 7 years old)
- Key Stage 2 (from 7 to 11 years old)

Primary schools in Wales must teach the basic curriculum, which consists of religious education and social education plus the National Curriculum.

The National Curriculum is a set of subjects used by primary and secondary schools so that all the students learn the same things. It covers what every child should learn from each subject at every year.

Depending on the Key Stage, the National Curriculum has different core subjects.

In KS1 and KS2, the core subjects that a child should study are English, Welsh, maths, science, design and technology, history, geography, art and design, music, PE, and information and communication technology. Also, some schools offer civics, personal and health education, and Modern foreign languages.

2.2.2. SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Secondary education covers from 11 to 16 years old and includes Key Stages 3 and 4.

- Key Stage 3: Year 7, year 8 and year 9
- Key Stage 4: Year 10 and Year 11



Secondary schools must teach the Basic and the National Curriculum to their pupils. Pupils at this stage also take part in the compulsory GCSE and the non compulsory A-level exams.

The subjects that students study at KS3 are English, Welsh, maths, science, history, geography, design and technology, modern foreign languages, art and design, music, PE, citizenship and ICT (information and communication technology).

In KS4 students work towards the national qualifications (GCSE exams). The compulsory national curriculum subjects are the ‘core’ and the ‘foundation’ subjects. The core subjects are English, maths and science; and the foundation subjects are ICT, PE and citizenship. Students can choose in this stage if they want the Welsh language to be taught as a core subject or as a foundation subject.

Also, schools must offer at least one subject from arts, design and technology, modern foreign languages and humanities.

As each country in the UK evaluate and make their own education planning, they also make the GCSE exams, according to the level the students should get to, so each part of the UK has its own evaluation exams, but to make sure the level is the same in each region, there’s an organization that looks after the exams to make sure that the level is the same in each region. This organisation is called the Ofqual organ.

As to foreign languages this doesn’t influence neither in a positive nor in a negative way, because students study the same things in every place but in a different way. As we have said before, there’s an organization that revises every exam model, so there’s no easier or higher exam to make sure that the level is the same for everyone.

When a student finishes his or her exams, there is a performance indicator linked to the GCSE organization, the EBacc or English Baccalaureate, that measures the percentage of students in a school who achieve 5+ A*-C grades in English, Maths, two Science, Modern foreign language and history or geography. The reason why the government introduced this indicator was to combat the fall in the number of students studying foreign languages and science.

At the end of KS4, students can decide if they want to carry on studying or if they want to leave school. In the case that they want to keep studying they can go into further education.



2.2.3. FURTHER EDUCATION

Further education, also known as FE, is used to describe the education that follows the compulsory post-16 secondary education, and it's usually different from the one offered at universities (higher education). It includes many different types of levels, such as the A levels, which are the most common ones. For this type of exams, students have to prepare themselves for two years and they have to study exclusively the subjects they have to take exams on. Another type of exams are the National Diplomas. It is usually taught in the sixth-form college part of a school or in independent FE colleges, as well as in other learning institutions, and is basically designed to advance to Higher Education.

2.2.4. HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education (HE), on the other hand, describes the post-18 learning that takes place, usually, at Universities but also in other institutions and colleges that award academic degrees, professional qualifications and modules. Normally, lots of people after taking their A level exams, get into higher education and start a university degree, that can take from 4 to 6 years.

2.3. WHAT REFORMS, PLANS OR PROGRAMMES HAVE THERE BEEN? RESULTS?

During the years the government has been undertaking changes and new programs and reforms in order to change and improve the education system results.

These changes have provided new positive things. However there have also been some bad or negative aspects that they wanted to improve with more reforms and changes.

At first, as in all the other countries, English was taught and it was considered more important than Welsh. Due to this fact, and because of the low importance that it had, the Government decided that they wanted the Welsh language to get a higher importance.

This was about twenty years ago, and it was the result of the bad qualifications that students were getting from their exams and also because the low rate of Welsh speakers and the fact that the language was being progressively lost.



Welsh is the modern form of the Brythonic language, and it only remained in Great Britain in Wales. It can be noticed that the Wales region can be divided in two halves: the Welsh mid and the Anglowelsh mid. The second one has this name because the people who lived there were the descendants of English and Irish immigrant workers.

The most notable differences between these two parts of Wales are the way that the Welsh language is considered. In the Welsh mid the Welsh language has a greater importance. That's why most students there attend Welsh medium schools, where the vehicular language is Welsh, so every subject is taught in Welsh. Although this is also possible in the Anglowelsh mid, is not as common as in the Welsh mid, where over a quarter of Welsh children attend schools such as these.

To increase the number of Welsh speakers the Wales Government decided to create a plan that would make the Welsh language more common among people in Wales.

Also, over the years, they have seen the importance of the modern foreign languages in the world and the importance that learning them has. Due to that, and because of the low rate of success that their plans were having, they developed some other plans to improve students' skills in that aspect, i.e. the learning of modern foreign languages.

These new plans that have been applied and reformed over the years are the KS2 Pilot Project and the Compact project KS3 and KS4, for modern foreign languages. Also, there is a very important organ that had an important role in the development of foreign languages. It is called the Cilt Cymru, and its role was basically to help economically with the funding and to provide resources to help students in their study of languages (Welsh, English and modern foreign languages).

2.4. CILT CYMRU (NATIONAL CENTRE FOR LANGUAGES IN WALES)⁵

As we've said, over the years the Welsh government saw that the modern foreign languages weren't given as much importance as they needed, so they focused for a while on enhancing the quality and the number of hours that the students were taking this subject.

⁵ Webgraphy point 2



For this reason, the Cilt Cymru body was created, and during this year a lot of programs and plans trying to improve the learning of foreign languages and also the Welsh language have been carried out.

It was established in 2002 as part of the CILT network, and it has a key role for the Welsh Government in the implementation of Modern Foreign Languages. It receives its core funding via the International Education Programme.

Its main office is located in Cardiff, in Western Avenue, housed in WJEC, although it operates all over Wales in partnership with schools, colleges, universities, businesses and a wide range of other partners.

Its prime objectives are to promote a greater national capability in languages and to support the work of those schools teaching and learning languages within all sectors of education and business.

An example of some of these plans is the KS2 Pilot Project, from 2003 to 2006, and the Compact Project for KS3 and KS4, in 2012 and 2013. All of these plans have been supported by the Welsh Government, and they couldn't have been done without the funding the body receives from the Government every year.

The only problem in the last years is that this funding has been reduced significantly because of the crisis and the cutbacks. This funding was reduced from around £600,000 to £300,000 in this actual year, specifically in April, according to a BBC source since February 2014⁶.

Also, their sources are available to anyone involved with teaching languages, from primary and secondary schools, head teachers and parents, universities, researchers and students, public and private sector employees, to translators and interpreters and careers advisers.

Although their main focus is the learning of foreign languages, they also promote the development of links with the Welsh language in order to develop themes of common interest, for example literacy skills.

So, in a country where there have been some weaknesses or difficulties with the learning of languages, it's a very good initiative and a very useful programme to develop in a good measure the learning of languages and everything that this involves, and it's a very important resource source for the learning of languages around Wales.

⁶ Webgraphy point 3



2.5. KEY STAGE 2 (KS2) PILOT PROJECT (2003-2006)⁷

As we have already said before, the teaching of modern foreign languages didn't have a great importance before these plans to improve them were implemented. One of those plans or projects was the **KEY STAGE 2 MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (MFL) PILOT PROJECT**, that was created as a response to "Languages count", the National Languages Strategy for Wales, funded by the Welsh Government and coordinated by Cilt Cymru, the National Centre of Modern foreign languages in Wales. It provided training and staff support, advice and guidance, access to resources and management of the fund.

The pilot project involved 126 schools around Wales, and it implied an involvement of nineteen hours of Modern Foreign languages teaching during the whole year. It was structured to test a range of approaches to Modern foreign language teaching at KS2 and also to test the model where a secondary school and its feeder primary school work together on the curriculum and the delivery of teaching. Some of these schools that took part in the project were Ysgol gyfun gwynllyw, Fairwater Comprehensive, Tiryberth Primary, Whitchurch High school, Bryncelinnog comprehensive, Cowbridge comprehensive (all of these are examples of schools located on the south side of Wales), and Ysgol Bryn Elian, Ysgol John Bright, Ysgol Y Moelwyn (examples of some schools located in the northern side of Wales).

The main aims of it were to increase the number of people studying or taking modern foreign languages at all ages and also try to help the transition experience of pupils from KS2 to KS3. Also, they wanted to encourage and to make sure that the students understand the importance of learning foreign languages, which is not an easy thing to do in a country where they already have two main languages, English and Welsh.

They wanted to make students realize the importance that learning foreign languages has in the long term, for example, when someone has finished his studies and has to find a job, they will contract first a person who has studied some foreign language because he or she will be able to speak and contact with people from abroad and make international relations.

Another of its target was to support schools that wanted to teach modern foreign languages as part of the curriculum in KS2 and to provide an evidence base of how teaching and learning a foreign language in Key Stage 2 can benefit the curriculum and the pupils as they move on to secondary school.

⁷ Webgraphy point 4



Pilot schools could choose what language they wanted to teach. Most of them (19 of the 21) chose French, although 4 of these also taught either German or Spanish. One of the schools, for example, taught German and French in alternate years. Another one taught only Spanish, and another one only German. And there was also a school that taught some Italian.

Initially the project started as a three year pilot project to evaluate and develop the teaching of modern foreign languages in primary schools in Wales, but it was extended three more years to see the impact of the early start in learning Modern Foreign Language in Key Stage 3 and the uptake in Key Stage 4.

The project was divided in 2 phases: Phase 1, from 2003 to 2006 and Phase 2, from 2006 to 2009.

In phase 1 the project gathered an evidence base of how to introduce MFL in Key Stage 2 and also looked at the benefits that it provided to the primary curriculum. The response that everyone (teachers, parents, schools and students) had from their experience was highly positive. They agreed that the younger a child is, the easier it is for him to learn a language. As they are younger, they're also less inhibited to speak in public and to use new words. Also, it gave the students a new perspective of new cultures and people, and moreover, there was a positive effect on language skills in English and Welsh, and because pupils already spoke two languages, it was easier for them to associate and compare new words with the ones they already knew.

In phase 2 (2006-2009) they evaluated the effects and the consequences that learning Modern foreign languages had in KS3 and KS4, and the possible effects on the number of pupils carrying on the study of foreign languages in Key Stage 4. What most of the school staff said was that the average of the result rates had increased compared to the previous year, and also that the students who had taken Modern foreign languages in KS2 were taking them with more enthusiasm in KS3 and were being more participative orally in the lessons because they felt more confident.

The conclusions that could be taken from this project were that it had had a highly positive response in learning a foreign language in Key Stage 2 because, as mentioned before, it's easier for the pupils to start learning a new language and also it's easier because young students are more open and kind to learning a new language, and they are more confident to speak and to make mistakes. What could be also appreciated was that lots of the students that took a Modern foreign languages in KS2 carried on in KS3. The results were really good and as they already knew some of the



language the students were more confident and wanted to keep studying it. Students, parents, teachers and schools governments were happy because of the results and the success that the project had, and they said that the project could also help with the development of the skills of English and Welsh.

What was not so clear was that if this project had any repercussions at Key Stage 4, because the students were not as successful as in KS3 and the interest they showed in KS3 was not the same in KS4. That could be because the students were more attracted to the science branch, or because they just didn't like studying Modern foreign Languages.

Even so, it can be said that the project had a high success rate as lots of the students who started Modern foreign languages in KS3 kept studying them the following years, not only in secondary schools, but also in Further Education, and also because of the wider benefits of the project, because it helped in the development of a new language as well as in the strength and confidence in using them in everyday situations.

2.5.1. COMPACT PROJECT KS3 AND KS4⁸

In 2012 and 2013, the Welsh government, with the support of the Cilt Cymru, developed a new project with a similar aim as the KS2 Pilot Project, but this one was especially focused on Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, and it was called "Compact Project for KS3 and KS4".

As part of its International Education Project, the Welsh Government provided funding to Cilt Cymru to address issues in the uptake in Modern foreign languages at KS4.

In this project the Cilt Cymru worked in partnership with schools all over Wales on individual Compact Projects designed to raise pupils' awareness of the necessity and the importance of learning foreign languages for future professional situations.

The project was set up to involve schools in project work with Cilt Cymru. Over 32 schools around Wales took part in this project, whose main aim was to help students from KS3 to keep studying modern foreign languages beyond and to see the importance that they had in their future everyday life in possible professional situations.

⁸ Webgraphy point 5



Using a variety of strategies, all involving the commitment of the whole department and the support of a designated Cilt Cymru language teaching adviser, schools worked hard to impress upon pupils the value of continuing language studies for their future professional lives.

After a year of activity, over 62% of compact schools had succeeded in raising the number of students carrying modern foreign languages study into KS4.

These projects were useful to make the students realize the importance that foreign languages have, and also that the fact of knowing the English language doesn't mean that it's not important to speak another language for their future life situations.

2.6. CORE SUBJECTS AND FOUNDATION SUBJECTS⁹

I have previously mentioned this, but the following is a summary of what I have mentioned. We can also see the class hours dedicated to each subject.

In the Welsh National Curriculum the education is divided into 4 stages. In each of these stages there are some common subjects that are taught at every stage, but there are some others that are only taught in one or two of them.

These **common subjects** which students learn at every stage are known as Core Subjects. These are English, Maths, Science, that are taught 7 hours per fortnight, and History, Music, Art&Design, Design&Technology and Welsh that are taught 5 hours per fortnight.

On the other hand, there are some subjects that are only taught in specific key levels, which are the **Foundation Subjects**. These subjects are geography, that it's taught at KS1, KS2 and KS3; Modern Foreign Languages, which is taught at KS3 and KS4; Civics, taught at KS3 and KS4; and Work-Related learning, taught at KS4.

Modern foreign languages are introduced for the first time at Y7, age 11, until Y9, although there are some schools that introduce them before, in primary school, maybe as a response of the Modern foreign Languages Pilot Project. Then a student can choose whether to keep studying modern foreign languages in many ways. A student can choose:

- Pick a foreign language at Y7 and continue studying it until KS4.

⁹ Webgraphy point 6



- Pick a foreign language at Y7 and stop studying it at Y9.
- Pick a foreign language at Y7 and pick a triple science with another foreign language, and welsh; or pick a triple science with another foreign language and English.

To know the level of a student there's a foreign language competence level needed, so when a student gets to the GCSE exams in Y11, if he or she has picked Modern foreign language as an exam option, he/she has to get through a reading and listening exam only, because the school has to do a controlled assessment during the year evaluating the writing and the speaking, with the lowest mark being 1 and the highest being 8, and the usual mark being 6 or 7. When a student finishes his modern foreign language studies, he has his or her level evaluated by some teachers that measure the level during the time he or she has been studying the language and also with the help of practice, which in the end, show the particular features and level of the student.

The most popular language nowadays is Spanish, because students have seen the increase of the Hispanic culture and its language, and in the last 8-10 years it has reached the top of its popularity. After that German has had an increasing importance, although French has always been a very common language to study.

Also, it is not very common to attend foreign language academies after school, and there are not lots of options for that, but there are some clubs that don't teach the language in a formal way but as a hobby and normally it is just for one hour per week.

2.7. DIFFERENT TYPES OF SCHOOLS¹⁰

On the one hand, depending on how the school is funded, there are two types of schools: fee-paying schools or non-fee-paying schools funded by the government.

2.7.1. CLASSIFIED BY FUNDING

- **State schools:** these kind of schools are funded in whole or in part by public taxation and offer education to every child without charge.

¹⁰ Webgraphy point 7



- **Independent schools:** these types of schools are fee-paying private schools, governed by an elected board of governors and independent of many of the regulations and conditions that apply to state funded schools.
- **Public schools:** this term refers to a group of older, more expensive and exclusive fee-paying private independent schools in the UK. Originally, they were boys boarding schools, although nowadays they admit all types of pupils. The term “public” was used to indicate that access to them was not restricted in basis of the religion, the occupation or the home location.

2.7.2. CLASSIFIED BY AGE

Depending on the age of the pupil, there are five types or stages of schools: nursery schools, nursery classes, primary schools, secondary schools, and sixth form colleges.

- **Nursery schools:** this type of schools, is for children aged between three and four. It has its own head, teacher and staff. Some of them are state-funded and others are privately run.
- **Nursery classes:** this kind of schools is attached to a primary school. It normally has its own building and playground, separated from the main building, but it has the same head of school and staff.
- **Primary schools:** here we can find students from 4 to 11 years old. Children start with the Early years (Foundation) and continue entering in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 of the National Curriculum.
- **Secondary schools:** students from 11 to 16 years old attend these schools, or some of them, until 18 years old. Pupils in these schools go through Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, and in some cases, through the Sixth Form ages (A level exams).
- **Sixth Form colleges:** students in these schools are aged between 16 and 19 years old. The pupils study for their A level exams or other qualifications that can be done from the age of 16, for example, BTCE National Certificates.



2.7.3. CLASSIFIED BY MANAGEMENT

On the other hand, within the state school system depending on how they're managed, there are four types of schools, all of them state schools, run by local authorities. The difference among them is how they are managed.

- **Community schools:** are run by the local authorities, which employs school staff, owns the land and buildings and sets the entrance criteria.
- **Foundation and trust schools:** Foundation schools are run by a governing body which employs the staff and sets the entrance criteria. The buildings and the land are owned either by the governing body or by a charity foundation. Trust schools, on the other hand, are similar but are run together with an outside body which has formed an educational trust.
- **Voluntary-aided schools:** are religious or faith schools. The governing body sets the staff and the entrance criteria, but the building and the lands are usually property of a charitable organ, often a church.
- **Voluntary-controlled schools:** a mixture of community and voluntary-aided schools. The local authority sets the staff and the entrance criteria, but the school buildings and the lands are owned by a charity, which also appoints some members of the charitable body.

2.8. DIFERENCE IN LANGUAGE IMPLEMENTATION WHERE WELSH IS THE DOMINANT LANGUAGE

As we have said before, the Welsh language is not given the same importance all over Wales, and there are some differences between the north and the south parts of this country.

The Welsh language is the actual form of the Brythonic language, and the only place where it remains in the whole of the UK is in Wales.

The Welsh region can be divided in two halves, the Welsh mid (The northern half), and the Anglowelsh mid (the southern part).

As the southern part was in its origins occupied by Welsh people and Irish immigrant people, Welsh lost importance with the arrival of the English



language and that's why most of the people who live on the coast speaks English in their everyday life.

But this was not the case in the northern part of Wales. As the people who lived there were more traditional and conservative the language remained as it was and it was given much more importance. Schools and all the people are more dedicated and more careful about children learning their second official language because there are less people every day who can speak it, so if the children don't study it it will end up being lost. This is one of the reasons why they think that this language has to be given lots of importance at school in all stages. Their lessons are given in Welsh, everybody on the street speaks Welsh, and even some TV programmes are in Welsh. That would not be a bad thing if they gave the same importance to other subjects, such as foreign languages, because outside Wales, nobody speaks Welsh.

As one of the teachers that I ¹¹ interviewed ¹² said, Welsh is a language that is only spoken in Wales, so there's no point in giving it so much importance because it won't be useful to travel or to work outside Wales. Living in a globalized world where everybody speaks English gives them some advantage, but it doesn't mean that students shouldn't also learn some other language.

On the other hand, in the southern part of Wales, although Welsh is not given so much importance and attention, it is given to foreign languages. The problem is that students only learn them at KS3, and if they don't like it, they can choose whether to continue on or not. But if they do choose them, they can carry on studying them until the A Levels, which is a good thing.

So, we can truly say that there are lots of differences between the areas where Welsh is a dominant language and the areas that it isn't. For example, in the northern part children attend some of their lessons in Welsh, and they speak Welsh at home, meanwhile in the southern area children only study Welsh at school, and it's very hard to find someone who can speak this language fluently, even to be able to teach it at school.

¹¹ Photograph Laia in front of the school

¹² Annex 8.1



2.9. PROBLEMS WITH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

As we have seen before, the UK government gives a lot of autonomy to every country to be able to decide on what they think is the best for them. This means that they can decide almost everything about what affects them.

This is what happens in education, for example. As the UK government gives autonomy to Wales to decide, there are not a lot of problems about the way the education is given, because it's the Welsh Government who does the most appropriate thing for themselves, and they can't blame anybody for it and as a result, responsibility has to be taken for it.

There can be people who think this is not the best system because this way every country in the UK has different models in every field, but there are also people who think it is more effective and it works better.

So, personally, I think the UK model, which gives every country autonomy to decide for themselves what is better for them, is the best option, because otherwise, the Parliament in London could make decisions or changes and reforms that would be great for England, for example, but which may not be the best option for Wales.



3. CATALAN TEACHING METHODS

3.1. LINK TO SPANISH TEACHING SYSTEM

In Spain there is a division of the territory into seventeen autonomous regions. These regions are Catalonia, Aragon, the Basque country, Navarra, La Rioja, Cantabria, Asturias, Galicia, Castilla y León, the Community of Madrid, Castilla la Mancha, Valencian community, Murcia, Andalucía, Extremadura, the Canary Islands and the Balearic Islands.

It would be very complicated to investigate every region so I have decided to look at four regions in Spain. This will make it easier to compare to the Welsh system later on. I hope that in this way I will be able to explain how the education system works, what (if there are any) the differences are and how effective the system is.

So, what is the education system like in Spain?¹³

The Spanish Government has plenty of power in every region, although because of the approval of the constitution and consequently, the approval of the autonomous statute, some of these powers were established in different competences or powers. Depending on the political issue, the autonomous region has a different competence. They can be exclusive competence, shared competencies, concurrent competencies and indistinct competencies. The distribution of these competences has two functions: a normative function (laws and regulations) and an executive function (management).

In the first place, there are the mixed competences, which means that the Spanish Government or the Autonomous community has both functions, the normative and the executive functions.

There are also the shared competencies, that are those where the State has the normative function, but the executive function belongs to the autonomous community.

The third types are the concurrent competencies, in which the State establishes the bases, but the legislative development and the executive function belongs to the autonomous community too.

And in the last place, there are the indistinct competences, which are those in where the Government and the autonomous community can act in an indistinct manner.

¹³ Webgraphy point 8



Article 148 of the Spanish Constitution, establishes which competencies the Autonomous communities can assume, if it is recognized in the autonomous statute.

Education was established as a shared competence, which means that every region can decide some things if they want to, but some others are fixed by the Spanish Government.

As some of the different regions in Spain are very likely similar to each other, we are going to take four which have differences to try and explain the different situations that we can find in this territory.

We are going to explain the Community of Madrid's situation, the Community of Andalucía's situation, the Basque Country situation and obviously the Catalan situation.

3.1.1. THE COMMUNITY OF MADRID

The community of Madrid, is where the capital of the Spanish State is situated, and it is where the Spanish parliament and the government are located too. Madrid regulates its education through the counselling of the Community of Madrid, which assumes the educational competencies at a national level. As we have said, every community can decide their own education plans, but there are also some features established by the Government, which have to be complied with.

In Madrid, the Education counselling decided that they would take the shared competence and they decided some things, like the core subjects and optional subjects in Secondary schools. The core subjects that this community established were Natural Science; Social Science, geography and history; P.E; Spanish language and literature; foreign language, which is English; Maths; Art; Technology; and tutoring. On the other hand, the optional subjects they offer are French and the own optional subjects from each school; and one of the following ones: educational attention, history and culture of the religions or religion. In third of Secondary School some of the previous subjects change into Biology and Physics and Chemistry, and in fourth of ESO every student has to choose between some optional subjects depending on which university degree wants to study.



3.1.2. THE COMMUNITY OF ANDALUCIA¹⁴

The Community of Andalucía, on the other hand, also adopted the shared competence in what education refers to, so it has to fulfil the established education normative from the government but can also decide a bit about its own country. Andalucía has one of the lowest rates in education success in Spain, according to the Program for International Student Assessment or PISA¹⁵. It's located in the eleventh place, just before the Balearic Islands, Extremadura and Murcia. This also affects the foreign language competence and level, although they invest a quite large amount of hours in the teaching of language every year. In first of ESO the total number of lessons per week is a total of four, and in second of ESO a total of three. Also, they can choose as an optional subject French and English revision.

3.1.3. THE BASQUE COUNTRY¹⁶

The Basque Country has, unlike the previous two communities, their own language, the Basque language, but the same competence as the rest of the autonomous communities, which is a shared competence. The fact that they have their own language means that Basque people have an extra subject at school, as in Catalonia. This language, though, has a smaller extension than the official language, which is Spanish, and the foreign language, which is English. The co-official language, which in this case is Basque, is considered a specific subject, and it is obligatory in its own autonomous community.

The education in the Basque country has four types of education, and each school can decide which model they prefer to implement:

- All the subjects in Spanish except the Basque language one
- Some subjects in Spanish and some subjects in Basque
- All the subjects in Basque except for the Spanish subject
- All the subjects in Spanish with no Basque subject for students staying temporarily in the Basque Country

The fact of having a co-official language doesn't affect the foreign language at all because the Basque language has a minimum of 9 hours by adding up the hours per week in first, second and fourth of ESO, and a

¹⁴ Webgraphy point 9

¹⁵ Reference to Annex 4

¹⁶ Webgraphy point 10



minimum of 3 hours in fourth of ESO, which is the same as the Foreign language.

3.1.4. CATALONIA¹⁷

Catalonia is, as well as the Basque Country, a country with a co-official language, the Catalan language. It also has a shared competence model of education and this affects the decisions of the Catalan government in a big way. The Catalan language is the language used in everyday life, and also the language used for teaching in schools. Although students are taught in Catalan, they also have the subject of Spanish, where the students are taught in Spanish, and a foreign language subject, which is English, that is also taught in this language. The scholastic curriculum guarantees the knowledge of, at least, a foreign language, and moreover, in some schools they teach another foreign language.

The fact of having a co-official language doesn't affect the foreign language level. The number of hours for each subject is the same and if they are not, they only change from one hour a week more in the Catalan language. Since the enactment of the LOMCE law, every lesson, except for the Spanish and the English ones, were taught in Catalan, but since the enactment of this law, if a student demands it, the school will have to teach every subject in Spanish. This law was not very welcome in Catalonia, although it has been approved and it is currently in force.

So, although Spain has a central Government, we can see that every autonomous community has, to a specific measure, the power of controlling and changing things as they want them to be to make them as good as possible.

3.2. REFORMS, PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND RESULTS

The education in Spain has been through lots of changes and reforms. Some of them were more important than others, and some were really significant.

The first really important law that changed the Spanish educational system completely was the Moyano law, in 1857¹⁸. This law was established during the reign of Isabel II, and it intended to change the illiteracy of the

¹⁷ Webgraphy point 11

¹⁸ Document Sistema Educativo Spain, webgrpahy point 17



population. What this law's main change was, was to implement a general education system, because until then each school had its own system, not being regulated by anybody. It also divided the education in three stages; primary, elementary and higher education. As it might be expected, this educational system was controlled from Madrid, where the Government was established.

When the reign of Isabel II finished, Spain became a Republic, and this meant a series of reforms and changes too. The Second Republic came into effect, and it brought with it some changes that affected the education as well as some other political aspects.

3.2.1. MAIN CHANGES

- The bilingualism was supported, mainly from Catalonia. It was enacted in a Decree in 1931 in which the existence of two different languages (Catalan and Spanish) was recognized. This Decree says that a child's education will be in the mother language until the age of eight years old.
- Reorganization of the Public Instruction Council, whose president was Miguel de Unamuno.
- To try and solve the problem of the illiteracy and also the fact that lots of children couldn't go to school, the Government planned to build 27.000 schools, although they couldn't build as many as they planned to.
- They established the primary education as an essential function of the Government.
- The education has to be free, especially in the primary levels. When it comes to University, a 25% of the fee will be free.
- The mixed school was started to be defended, because until then, boys and girls went to different schools.
- A three level education system was established, all three of them communicated. These were primary education, which had two different levels, voluntary (from four to six years old) and obligatory (from six to twelve years old); secondary education, which was also divided in two cycles, the primary continuation (from twelve to fifteen years old) and preparation for university courses (from fifteen to eighteen years old); and finally the higher or university education.



3.2.2. HISTORICAL CHANGES

All these reforms and plans were affected when in 1933 the Government of the Republic changed, and a right WING party came into the Government. Spain suffered an important change in the political aspect, which affected also the education. This change was called the “Counterreform”, and all the progress in education moved back.

At the end of the second Republic, and after a series of troubles and confrontations, Francisco Franco imposed his power and took control of Spain from 1939 to 1975.

During his term a total of three educational reforms took place, renewing the previous one consequently.

3.2.2.1. PRIMARY INSTRUCTION LAW

The first major change under Franco was the Primary Instruction law, from 1939. It only affected primary education, and it had all the ideology of the Franco regime. It considered education as a family, religious and a State right. It had a confessional, patriotic, social, intellectual, physical and professional character; and its aim was linguistic unification. It also established this education stage as obligatory and free.

It covered from six to twelve years old, and it was divided into different types of schools: national, religious centres, and private centres. The educational curriculum was centralized and it organized the subjects into three types: instrumental, formative and complementaries.

3.2.2.2. “LEY DE ORDENACIÓN DE LA ENSEÑANZA MEDIA”¹⁹

The second reform was called “Ley de ordenación de la enseñanza media”, from 1953. This law, homologous to the previous one, regulated the secondary education, and it was reformed in 1967. To have access to the secondary education, a student had to take an access exam to prove his knowledge. This law divided the Baccalaureate into two types: the general plan one, and the special plan one. The first one consisted in a four year program, a special exam to have access to the upper baccalaureate, which consisted in two more years and another exam. On the other hand, the

¹⁹ Reference footnote 18



special baccalaureate plan consisted in a five year programme and another two exams.

3.2.2.3. GENERAL EDUCATION LAW²⁰

The final education reform was the General Education Law, which was enacted in 1970. Spain needed a change in the political, social and education aspects. It intended to make a more effective, and a fairer system, covering the Spanish population necessities.

The main changes were:

- The Nursery education, from two to four years old. It was voluntary and it was offered in private centers and nurseries.
- Preschool, from four to six years old. It was voluntary and it was offered in public and private centers, which introduced their pupils to the reading, writing and calculating.
- It established the Basic General Education (EGB), from six to fourteen years old. It was obligatory, but free. The eight courses were divided into two stages (First stage, which included the five first courses, and the Second stage, which included the three left courses) and three cycles.
 - The initial cycle, from six to eight years old, included the two first courses.
 - The Medium cycle, from eight to eleven years old, included third, fourth and fifth grade.
 - Higher cycle, from twelve to fourteen years old, included the three last courses.

At the end of the eight years a student could obtain the Scholarship Graduate, which meant that the students fulfilled the objectives of EGB, and this meant that the student could continue into the Baccalaureate or Professional Degrees. If a student didn't fulfill the objectives he got the Scholarship Certificate, which meant that he or she had gone through the eight courses, but not that he or she had gone through the objectives, and it only gave access to the Professional Degrees.

²⁰ Reference footnote 18



- Unified and polyvalent baccalaureate (BUP). It consisted of three courses, from fifteen to eighteen years old. There were common subjects in the first course, and a diversification in the following courses depending on the specialty a student wanted to do (science, letters or mixed). If a student got over the three years with success, he got the title. Then he or she had the chance to get into the Orientational University Course (COU), that was born with the intention of guiding the student in his university career choice, but it ended up being a fourth baccalaureate course, and after it, the Selectivity exam.
- The Professional Degrees were destined to all those students who hadn't got the Scholarship graduate title. It had two levels: First Grade Professional Degree (two years long) and Second Grade Professional Degree (with a duration of three years).
- To the Higher Education, which was taught in Universities, a student could only have access through the COU course.

It can be said that the General Education Law reforms were an important boost in the educational system.

3.2.3. CATALAN AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES 1939-1975²¹

In Catalonia, throughout its history this language has suffered the effects and the influence of Spain, but despite this, it has maintained its status in Catalonia, and nowadays it is spoken by lots of people.

During the second half of the XIX century the Catalan language was established as a non important language, which was just spoken in the rural parts of Catalonia, and in 1837 it was forbidden in schools.

During this period the Catalan language remained just in the rural society, while in the high class society the spoken language was Spanish. Also, with the enact of the Moyano Law, the Spanish language was established to be the teaching language in every school. Some other reforms that left the Catalan language aside were the Civil Registration law, which didn't let any inscription in Catalan, or the Code of Civil Procedure, which didn't let anyone call or send telegraphs in Catalan.

During this time, although, the Renaissance move and the restoration of the Floral Games made the Catalan language acquire a higher cultural level.

²¹ Webgraphy point 12



The Floral Games were literacy contests that became promoters and disseminators of a language.

In 1914 the Commonwealth of Catalonia was created, giving it a higher status, but it was lost very soon with the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in 1923.

In this period the use of the Catalan language was totally forbidden, and if some teacher used this language at school he or she was sanctioned.

The provisional Government of the Second Republic established that the teaching had to be done in the mother language, giving some recognition to this language.

The Constitution of the Spanish Republic of 1931 established the Spanish language as the national language for the first time. This made some Spanish politicians think in a very radical way, and they wanted to forbid the Floral Games and every language different from the national one.

Despite that, the recognition that this same Constitution made to the regional languages made the Statute of Nuriá possible, in which they were established as coofficial with the Spanish language in Catalonia.

In 1938, when the Francoism movement began, the Catalan language was abolished immediately when the army entered Catalonia, suppressing also the Autonomous Statute of Catalonia. This meant the abolishment of the Catalan Government (the Generalitat) and also of the Catalan language.

During this time everybody who spoke in Catalan was punished, and there were lots of reforms that attacked this language directly. Some of them were the prohibition of the cinema in the Catalan language; the primary education had to be in Spanish; the Floral Games were abolished; lots of newspapers and magazines were suppressed because of writing in Catalan; and the prisoners had to speak exclusively in Spanish.

The persecution of this language was total until 1951. During the second Francoism period, there were some very small changes, like the emission of the first Catalan programme in 1964 in the TVE channel.

In 1970 the last education reform made during the Francoism period the use of the coofficial languages in primary education was permitted, a law that was going to be established five years later.

Also, in 1975, not far from the death of Franco, another law which permitted the use of different languages in official institutions like the city hall was enacted.



Despite that, all the prohibitions and restrictions related to the Catalan languages had lots of consequences during the following years, like the illiteracy.

The Spanish Constitution of 1978 established the rest of the languages in Spain official, according to their Autonomous Statute. The Catalan Autonomous Statute of 1979 established this language as the language of Catalonia and as the official, together with the Spanish one.

The Autonomous Statute of Catalonia from 2006 established reaffirmed the legal status of the Catalan language, establishing it as the normal language in administration fields and in education.

3.3. POST FRANCO CHANGES

With the death of Franco, the education system suffered a change because the current education policy was not appropriate to the democratical system that Spain was entering into. The current education law, the LGE (General education law) was reformed by the arrival of the LODE law²², which wasn't a structural reform but an ideological reform.

After the LODE law, and with the entire arrival of the democratical move, the LOGSE law was established in 1990, substituting the General Education Law (LGE) of 1970. This was a successful law, but it was changed and reformed because of the criticism and the dissatisfaction that it generated.

After the application of the LOGSE law and its reforms, the LOCE law was enacted in 2003. This law meant to be a change and a positive move for the Spanish education, but it wasn't applied because a new government came to the power, and after three years, in 2006, it was repealed, giving continuity to the previous education system, which was the LOGSE.

This same year, the LOE law came into effect. It was enacted the 3rd of May, 2006, but partially modified in 2013 because of the approval of the LOMCE law, that will come into effect in the 2014/15 academic course.

The LOMCE law has begun to create lots of controversy since the day it was enacted because of the changes and cuts it wants to apply. The person in charge of this decision is the Prime Education Minister, José Ignacio Wert. Is also due to his surname, why this law is also called the Wert Law.

²² Reference footnote 18



Now I am going to describe in detail the changes which have been put into place since 1975.

3.3.1. LOGSE TO LOCE TO LOE AND NOW TO LOMCE

During years, the Spanish educational system, and by consequence the Catalan educational system, has undergone some changes trying to improve the system and also the students skills and results. Because of that, there have been some plans and reforms to change bad aspects throughout the years and improve previous plans.

As far as English is concerned its implantation was similar throughout all the Spanish territory.

3.3.1.1. LOGSE²³

The first reform the government enforced was the LOGSE plan. It was introduced on the 3rd of October of 1990, by the PSOE party and it substituted the LGE of 1970 (Ley General de Educación), existing from the Francoism dictatorship, with its subsequent reforms (LODE).

This plan started a new educational system based on the democratical management of the centres and also a decentralized teaching system in Spain, letting each region manage their own centres and the contents of the subjects. As I have previously mentioned, Catalonia has a shared competence model of education so authorisation has always to be given by the Spanish government, despite there being autonomy.

It also meant a change in the structural system, that was divided into three stages: Infant Education, Primary Obligatory Education, and Secondary Obligatory Education.

3.3.1.1.1. INFANT CORE SUBJECTS

The Infant Education was not obligatory and it was free during the Francoism period. Includes children between three and six years old and its assistance it's obligatory nowadays. During this period children start to learn how to write and read, and also some basic concepts in their language

²³ Webgraphy point 13



and also in foreign languages, which is English. Some maths practical exercises are also taught in year five, which is called P5.

3.3.1.1.2. PRIMARY CORE SUBJECTS

The Primary Obligatory Education, as its name suggests, is obligatory for every child and includes students from six to twelve years old. It is divided into three cycles: initial cycle (1st and 2nd of Primary), medium cycle (3rd and 4th of Primary) and superior cycle (5th and 6th of Primary).

The core subjects for all the primary education are Science, Geography, Maths, Spanish and literature, and foreign language, which in this case is English.

In addition to these ones, students also have to study Religion, Art, and physical education, and Catalonia having a second co-official language also has to teach this language.

3.3.1.1.3. SECONDARY CORE SUBJECTS

The Secondary Obligatory Education (ESO) is also obligatory and it is for students from twelve to sixteen years old. It is divided into two cycles, too.

The core subjects are different for each of the courses that a student goes through.

During the first year, that corresponds with **1st of ESO**, the core subjects that every student has to study are biology and geology, maths, geography, Spanish, Catalan, Foreign language (English), P.E, and religion. Moreover, the center has to choose whether to teach from one to four extra subjects, that are Art, Classic culture, Music, Second foreign language, or technology.

In **2ⁿ of ESO** (second year), the core subjects are the same as in first of ESO except for biology and instead the subjects are chemistry and physics. The school also has to choose between the extra subjects, and can teach from one to four.

In **3rd of ESO**, the core subjects are Biology and Geology, Chemistry and physics, Geography, History, Spanish, Catalan, Foreign Language, Maths, P.E and religion. As well as in the previous courses, the school has to choose between the extra subjects, from one to four.



And finally, in 4th of ESO, there are two options depending if the student wants to keep studying and get into Batxillerat, or want to study professional degrees. In both cases the core subjects are the same, the only thing that changes are the extra subjects that the school has to choose.

The core subjects are for both options Geography and History, Spanish, Catalan, Maths, Foreign language, P.E, and religion.

The ones who choose to study baccalaureate the next year, have to choose, moreover, two of these subjects: biology, chemistry and physics, economy or Latin; but the ones who chose to study a professional degree have to chose two of the following subjects: applied science in professional activities, technology, or introduction to business activity.

The schools, as well as in the previous courses, have to choose to teach from one to four of these subjects: scientific culture, classical culture, information technology, music, philosophy, art, dancing, or second foreign languages. These subjects are both valid for the two types of education.

When a student finishes this stage, it's considered that he has the basic knowledge and that he is prepared to go and do Batxillerat, Training cycles or go to the world of work.

After this level, there is an optional course that lets students prepare for entrance into University. This two-year stage is called Baccalaureate and it basically prepares students in the subjects they need to take exams to enter university. These exams are the *PAU* exams or *Selectivitat*.

Five different types of Baccalaureate were established depending on what the student wants to study at University. These are humanities, arts, technology, social science and health science.

Apart from these reforms we've said before, there were some other changes, like a new constructive teaching system and flexible with different levels of concretion (state or autonomous laws, center, class or even student), according to the needs of adapting to a new European model and some technological changes.

The economical, social and technological changes that took place since the implementation of the LOGSE law and also the criticism that it generated made the government to start thinking of a new law that would improve some things that were not good enough.



3.3.1.2. LOCE²⁴

After the LOGSE law, the LOCE law (Ley Orgánica de Calidad de la Educación) was introduced. It was enacted on the 23rd of December 2003, by José Maria Aznar's government party, the Popular Party, but it wasn't enforced because there was a change in the government party.

In 2004 there were general elections in the government, and the party who won was the PSOE, headed by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. Due to this change in the government the application of the LOCE law was frozen and abolished in 2006, giving continuity of the previous law, the LOGSE law, so this law meant no changes nor in a positive nor in a negative way.

3.3.1.3. LOE²⁵

The LOE law was established on the 3rd of May 2006, and enforced on the 2006/07 course. This law regulated the teaching into different stages according to the students age.

The objective of this law is to adapt the education system to the actual needs of the country, and to change some aspects of the non-university education (Primary, Secondary, Batxillerat, Profesional Degrees, etc.) under the bases for every student in what chances, transmission and effectiveness of the values of freedom, responsibility, equality, respect, tolerance, etc.

This law was only rejected by the Popular Party, and any other parties like the IU and the BNG abstained from voting.

Moreover, what the law wanted to put into practice was to establish two subjects to course them in two of the years of the ESO (1st and 3rd or 2nd and 4th of ESO) while putting other subjects in their place.

Also, this law had important consequences in the Spanish legal order and it made some changes in some of the established laws, for example, modifying some of the articles from the Organic Law 8/1958, but also proclaiming a new law establishing free Baccalureate and Professional Degree education in public centres.

Also, some polemical aspects of this law were, for example, the subject of Religion, that was considered as optional in non-religion schools in primary. If a school chose not to teach religion education to their students

²⁴ Webgraphy point 14

²⁵ Webgraphy point 15



at a primary level the core subjects at all levels are science, history and geography, Art, P.E, Spanish and Catalan, Maths and foreign languages.

But the most polemical and bad aspects about this law, was the low level demanded of the student by the system because a student could pass to the next course with two failed subjects, and in some cases three, if the school considered it acceptable and positive for the correct development of the student.

This and some other bad points, plus the fact that the Spanish economy was going from bad to worse made the government establish a new education law, combining funding and budget cuts with some other educational reforms.

3.3.1.4. LOMCE²⁶

This is the last reform that has been put in place in the Spanish education system up to now. The law is called the Organic Law for the Improvement of the Education Quality, abbreviated LOMCE.

It came into effect the 17th of May 2013 and it was approved by the Prime Education Minister, member of the Popular Party, the actual governor of the Country. Since its first apparition until it was enacted by the Spanish Parliament it has been highly criticized and there has been lots of controversy around it. In fact, it was only supported by the Popular Party and two other small parties.

The main objectives of this law were to reduce the abandoning of school percentage, improve the students' results, and motivate them too. These objectives are meant to be done by giving enough autonomy to the schools to be able to decide and to manage the school by themselves, in all that this implies.

To comply with these objectives the education system needed some changes because otherwise it would be impossible to accomplish them.

The main changes that the education system has undergone or is going to undergo, are:

- **Evaluation test at the end of the ESO and Baccalaureate:** with the objective of proving that the students have reached the level that they should have at the end of the course, the government wants to make

²⁶ Webgraphy point 16



students get through an extra test at the end of the ESO and the Baccalaureate. These tests are going to be prepared by the Education Ministry and are going to be corrected by teachers from another school. At the end of the Baccalaureate, apart from the *PAU* exams or the *Selectivity*, if the University requests it, they will have to pass another exclusive exam.

- **Two options in 4th of ESO:** when the students get to this course, they will have to choose, whether they want to continue studying and do the Baccalaureate or go to Professional Degrees. In the first case, the students will do a different type of subjects than the ones who want to go to Professional Degrees.
- **More importance to the core subjects, designed by the government:** the LOMCE law distinct between the core subjects and the foundation subjects, and includes the second official language in this second group. It says that is the responsibility of the government to establish the contents of every core subject and the educative administration can complement the contents.
- **It's obligatory to offer the education in Spanish in every autonomous community:** during the LOE law, every autonomous community had the chance to offer the subjects in their second official language (if they had one) and also give some subjects in Spanish, which usually was the Spanish and literature subject, but the new LOMCE law established that every school has to offer the education in Spanish if one of its students' request to.

This new reform has created lots of controversy in some autonomous communities such as Catalonia, where every day the feeling of the Catalan identity is becoming stronger and stronger.

- **Multilingual education:** One of the most notable lacks that the Spanish education system shows is in the language field. The government is aware of this and in this new reform has established that they want to provide the necessary resources to get the students to speak fluently at least one foreign language.

It also says that if there are not sufficient foreign language teachers, it's acceptable to contract a native teacher or someone specialized in that language to teach the students.

These are only some of the most important changes that the government has done with the enact of the new law, but since the first day, lots of people are against this law and all that it comes with it.



Most of the people that are against these reforms are the ones from the autonomous communities, because with the application of the new law their second official language, since then considered as a core subject, is going to be, with these reforms, an optional subject. This is the case, for example, of Catalonia, where the autonomous government considers this law to be an attack on their statute and competences. The Basque Country has had the same response.

3.4. CORE SUBJECTS AND FOUNDATION SUBJECTS

As the students grow up and their understanding capability increase, the subjects they have to attend change along with them. A seven year old child does not have the same mature level and the same understanding level as a fifteen year old. That's the reason why the subjects and the knowledge they acquire change along the years.

At **infancy** (from 3 to 5 years old), as the children are very little and they don't have much knowledge yet, teachers show them how to read, speak and write. They teach them the basic skills every child needs to know, and they also learn some basic things about maths, foreign language, and some other subjects through games and by watching and listening.

At **Primary** (from 6 to 11 years old), students at the first primary year start with the basic knowledges of every subject, for example, in maths, teachers show them how to add and subtract, and the multiplication tables.

The core subjects are the same every year, the only thing that changes are the contents and the capacity of the children to learn. These are Maths, Spanish and Spanish literature, Catalan and Catalan literature, Science of the World (Science), Social Science (History and Geogrpahy) and first Foreign language.

The foundation subjects are Physical Education and Religion or social and civic values, and, moreover, there are three more foundation subjects from which every school can choose from teaching one of them to teach the three of them. These are Art, second Foreign language and Social and civic values or Religion.



3.4.1. MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

As we can see the foreign language in Catalonia is introduced very early, in the infancy education, although in a very basic level. During the primary school years the students learn more vocabulary and the basic grammar constructions so that every year they are more confident and have more knowledge to develop correctly in the language.

In Secondary school (that goes from age 12 until age 16) students have to attend school for four years where at all times English is a core subject.

If the students decide that he wants to continue studying and go to University, he will have to take two more years studying in the Baccalaureate, which are the two years of preparation before the University. In these two years, the students are supposed to study those subjects that he will have to study at University. For example, if a student wants to study Maths at University, in the Baccalaureate, he or she will have to take the scientific modality, because the subjects that he or she needs to enter University are the ones in this modality.

Depending on what a student wants to study at University, there are four modalities: Scientific modality, Humanities modality, Artistic modality and Technological modality. Also, in each modality, there are some core subjects and some foundation subjects. The core subjects are, for every modality Spanish language, Catalan language, Foreign language, P.E, History, and philosophy. Then, depending on which modality the student has chosen, there are different foundation subjects.

For the humanities modality, the foundation subject is Geography, Latin language, Greek language, Art history, Spanish literature, or Catalan literature.

For the Scientific modality the foundation subjects are chemistry, Physics, Maths and Biology.

For the Technological modality the foundation subjects are Technical drawing, Maths, Physics, Technology and electrical engineering.

In the last place, for the Social science modality the foundation subjects are Social Science applied maths, Organization and Economy, Economy, and geography.

From this the conclusion is that if a student finished all of the possible years at school at primary, secondary and at Baccalaureate level, the Modern Foreign Language (in most cases, English) will have been taught as a core subject to all students for 12 years.



3.5. DIFFERENT TYPES OF SCHOOL²⁷

In Catalonia there is a huge diversity of schools, colleges and Universities.

The most common education centres are the public ones, which are supported from public funds and managed in every city by the Education Consortium. In this school, there are usually lots of students, so the school needs to have lots of teachers to teach every subject.

Among the private schools there are two types. On the one hand, there is a network of schools that receive public funds and are called “charter schools”. On the other hand, there are other schools that have no agreement with the Administration, which are called “private centres”.

The compulsory basic education is free in every public school, and normally there is always a public school in every town, even if it is very small. This school is known as the village school, and it can have, sometimes, students from different courses in the same class.

Also, though it’s free, the schools can charge the parents when it comes to extra activities, school material and books, the school meal service, or kid’s camps.

For those families who don’t have the sufficient resources to pay for all these things the Catalan Government offers some grants, so they get help whether cover textbooks or access to services such as school meals.

In the case of the charter schools, they are allowed to charge a fee to families for activities up to one hour of school time per day also.

So, it’s relatively easy to have access to a public education in Catalonia, but sometimes, it is not so easy to have access to a quality education, because in some areas, although the education is free, the quality is not in the same grade as in some other schools; that’s why every year or every established time, an education inspector goes around every school to guarantee that the education is imparted in a good way.

²⁷ Webgraphy point 17



3.6. DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE IMPLEMENTATION WHERE CATALAN IS DOMINANT LANGUAGE

In Spain there are no differences within the regions about how the foreign language is taught.

It is true, although, that not every region has the same success rate as some others.

To take conclusions of how the Spanish education is in the LOE reform the Government established this exams, so students in each region take a basic competences exam at the end of 4th of ESO (Year 11) which test the students competence in the maths, language and science subjects.

Andalucía, for example, according to the PISA²⁸, is situated in every competence under the Spanish average grade, just before Ceuta, Melilla and the Canary Islands. So this shows that if the basic competences like maths or the Spanish language is not very successful neither will be the English language.

It was approved and enacted, but this assessment of Basic Competences is one of the aspects where there are fewer consensuses between the different authorities and governments.

In Catalonia, unlike in the rest of Spain there is an English exam, which is done at the end of fourth of ESO, as the Catalan, Spanish and maths exam. This exam is not taken in the rest of Spain, and it would be a decision of the Catalan Government, established so as to improve the English language knowledge among students. When it comes to comprehension and Maths, it is situated over the average grade, but it is not the same in the science exam, which is not taken at Year 11.

Madrid, on the other hand, is situated in the top of the chart in reading comprehension, and in a very good position in maths and science, overcoming the average grade of the exam.

The Basque country is also situated in every competence over the average grade, but it has not a foreign language exam so as to measure their competence.

²⁸ Reference footnote 14 and annex 4



3.7. PROBLEMS WITH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The education system in Spain is, as in every other political aspect, a centralized system, so all the political issues have to go through the Spanish Government.

In education, the Spanish Government has plenty of power in every region, but due to the approval of the Constitution and the autonomous statutes, this was established as a shared competence, which means that the State has the normative function, but the executive function belongs to the own region.

This means that every region can decide to apply some reforms if they are approved by the Government, but also that this Government can apply some changes or reforms even if the region does not accept them.

This is something that has been causing lots of polemic in the last year, because of the approval of the Ley Wert, which has its name because of the Education Minister. What this law said was, among many other things, that if any student in Catalonia asks to be taught in Spanish, the school will have to do it, and if this school does not have the necessary sources, the students will have to be taken from this school to another one where he can be taught in Spanish.

As we've said, this has been a very polemical reform of the Government, and it is just an example of the shared competences that every region has.

So, to sum up, we can say that this could be a good system if every region had the same conditions, but because of the Catalan region has its own language and some other political issues, it has been more affected by the last reforms of the Government.



4. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOTH METHODS

Along this project I've gone through lots of characteristics from both of the methods which I've been analyzing separately, but now it's time to compare them.

In Spain, as in the UK, the territory is divided into regions, but unlike in the UK where there are only four countries, in Spain there are seventeen autonomic regions, and this makes Spain very diverse. It's not different in the education field.

4.1. HISTORICAL DIFFERENCES

Starting with the educational background, the education history in Spain began in 1857 with Moyano law, whereas in the UK started in 1870 with the Forster act of 1870, when the first state-funded schools were created to provide free education to poor children. In Spain the objective with the Moyano law was to establish a general education system, but in Wales the objective of the Forster act was to create schools so that children could go there and be taught the basic knowledge to combat illiteracy among the population.

It was in 1880 when the assistance in school was compulsory from 5 to 13 years old with the Elementary education act, whereas in Spain this was established in 1870 by the Moyano Law. Later in 1900 the Higher elementary schools were recognized, offering education from 10 to 15 years old children. It wasn't until the Fisher Act of 1918, though, when this education was considered compulsory up to age 14, and with the Education Act of 1944 when primary and secondary schools were split into two different stages.

It was in 1931 when the bilingualism was recognized in Spain, establishing the Catalan language as an official language, but it wasn't at the same time in Wales. It had place in 1967, when the Welsh language act was passed, establishing this language as an official language.

While in Spain the General Education Law had place in 1970, establishing the EGB and the BUP levels, it took place in 1988 in Wales, with the enact of the Education Reform Act, which main reform were the National Curriculum introduction, which established the same subjects for every school and also controlled assessments at the end of KS4, called GCSE exams.



In Spain, after the death of Franco the LOGSE reform took place, and foreign languages were introduced for the first time in 1990 with the enact of this law. In Wales, the introduction of the National Curriculum, which took place at the same time, meant the introduction of foreign languages. The difference between both systems were that while Spain introduced foreign languages from the beginning at an infant level, whereas in Wales this subject was only introduced in KS3 and KS4.

Since the enact of the LOGSE law in 1990 Spain has suffered a series of educational reforms. In Wales, in 1997 the Labor party was elected with a promise of creating devolved institutions in Scotland and Wales. In this same year a referendum was held on the issue which resulted a “yes” vote, but it wasn’t until 1999 when the Welsh Assembly was set up, possessing the power of determining how their country is organized and administered. In Spain there’s no devolution, but the 1978 established some shared powers, which is the case of the education.

4.2. REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Apart from all the mentioned changes, when it comes to education policy there are lots of differences too between the UK and Spain.

On the one hand, the UK has a devolved education model, so Wales has the autonomy to decide on his own about the best education policy for them, although the UK Government can impose some conditions to make the education system fairer. In Spain, Unlike in the UK, all the political aspects and all the decisions about any field have to go through the Spanish parliament, which decides if it’s viable or not and if it would be positive or not to enact it. If the parliament approves the law or the decision, the autonomous community can apply the reform, but if the Spanish parliament doesn’t support it, the law is cancelled and it’s not applied. As the education is a shared competence, the Spanish Government can implement changes and reforms even tough the autonomous community doesn’t agree with it.

As happens in the UK with Wales, where depending on the area it is considered a first or second language, there are some regions in Spain, where there is a co-official language, which is the case of Catalonia or the Basque Country, for example. In these cases their second language is their own, but in the rest of the autonomous community in Spain the second language is, most of the time, English.



As a consequence of the bad results that students were taking on their exams a new organ called Cilt Cymru was born, and since then, they've been working on improving the students welsh results as well as the foreign language results. In Spain, although the bad results in English, which is the foreign language, the Government is not taking any actions to try an get to a solution or a change, and every day this language is becoming more and more important in every day life though this importance seems to not be reflected among our society.

Another important difference between these two countries is the consideration they have when it comes to teaching them. On the one hand, in Wales foreign languages are just considered core subjects in KS3, from Y7 to Y9, and in the case that a student wants to keep studying it, this can be taken to KS4 and this would mean taking the GCSE exam at the end of this stage. This is, clearly, not enough for the right development of the language, but if the school offers it, it can be taught at a primary level, although it is not very common. On the other hand, in Spain, foreign language is taught from age six to age sixteen, and in every course it is considered as a core subject. Moreover, in Spain, foreign language bases are taught in a small measure in the Foundation Phase, through games and development of the language. This is clearly one of the main negative points that the UK teaching system has, because it's obvious that the implementation of the foreign language age is too late, and lots of people agree with that.

Related to this, in the UK as the English language is their official language, their most popular foreign languages are French, Spanish and German. Although French was the most traditional language picked by the students to study, Spanish is taking its place and it's becoming more and more popular every day. In Spain, unlike in the UK, as we have said the foreign language is English, but the advantages that this has is that lots of schools offer another foreign language as a foundation subject, because English is considered a core subject. The decision of which language is taught in Wales is responsibility of the school, and some of them are limited to just one or two, so students have to fit in those languages, as happens in Spain.

Another important difference is the fact that in the UK people speak English, as we've said, as their first language. This is possibly one of the reasons why students don't take as many foreign language studies as in other countries. Living in a globalized world where English is spoken everywhere makes students have no motivation in learning other languages because they can already speak English. This does not happen in Spain,



where English is necessary for lots of things, for example to have access to university.

To access to University in the UK a student does not require a foreign language minimum level, whereas to access a university career in Spain it does. Before the enact of the Wert Law the minimum level was the PET (B1 at Common European Framework Level) exam from Cambridge University. From the enact of this new law on, the minimum English level has changed from the PET to the First Certificate (B2 at Common European Framework Level). If a student does not have the First Certificate at the end of his degree, his or her Career Degree will not be given to him or her.

A very popular thing in Spain is the language academies which children usually attend from a very young age. These can teach any language, but, again, the most popular language lessons to attend are the English ones, because it's a core subject and it's one of the most important languages to know to be able to communicate nowadays. This is not the same in the UK, where attending a language academy is very strange and there are not many, as well. But despite not being any academies there are some school language clubs which children can attend at the end of their lessons, but the level in them is very low.

Exams like GCSE have been mentioned before. These exams are taken by students at age 16, which means at the end of KS4. In Spain there are no compulsory exams at the end of the ESO, but a series of tests implemented by the government to see how the students' level is at the end of the stage. These exams are Spanish, Catalan, Maths and English. In Wales, the GCSE would not be equivalent to the Spanish ones, because the last ones do not count in the student curriculum. (*Exams comparative*) The main difference between the two exams models (GCSE and the Spanish one) is that in the English subject curriculum in Spain and Catalonia, all the exam has to be done in English, including the answers for every question. This is not this way in Wales. The exam questions in MFL are done in English, which is the students' first language, and so are the questions. The only thing students are asked for is to understand a reading and a listening so they can interpret the answers and write them in English. Also, the foreign language exams are not real because the questions students are asked to understand are constructed in a way so that they can literally translate them.

If this system were in force in Catalonia, it would mean that an English exam would have all the questions in Catalan and the student would answer an English exam in their own language, i.e. Catalan.



The final exams that count for the students' curriculum are the ones they take at the end of the two years of Baccalaureate, which would be the equivalent to the A-level exams in Wales. These exams are the same in England and Wales but not in Scotland. Something similar happens in Spain. These exams are taken all over Spain, but depending on the autonomous community, they have different levels and formats.



5. PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THE SYSTEM WITH THE WORST RESULTS BY USING IMPLEMENTED IDEAS (OR MY OWN CONCLUSIONS)

After working on this project for a while, I've come up with the conclusion that both of the methods could be improved, because none of them are totally perfect.

Despite this, I am now going to try and implement some of the good points that the best system has to the other one.

From what I have seen during the time that I have been doing the project, Spain has a better foreign language system than Wales. This can be proven by the results that this country has been having in foreign languages in the last years, comparing it to the Welsh results. Despite that, this system has also some good aspects, that could be implemented in the Spanish system, too.

In the first place, it is a reality that the Welsh system implements the foreign language subject too late. This is not good for the child's correct development of the language, because it is proven that the sooner a student starts learning a language, the better capacity it has to understand it and to learn it, and also they are less worried about making mistakes. So, as it is done in Spain, the Welsh system could try and implement the foreign language subject at an earlier stage, so that the students take profit of it.

Also, what the system could also do is try to implement the language in a way so that it is taught for a longer time. What I want to say with that is that if a school starts teaching a foreign language at age 11, they will not be able to get the sufficient language knowledge in just three years. So if the Welsh Government does not want to implement foreign languages at a younger age, they could implement this subject from age 11 to age 16 and further, which would mean that the students have a wider knowledge of the language. In Spain, the foreign language is introduced for the first time at Infant level in a very basic level, but if the Welsh government did that, or started at Y7 Welsh people would be much more fluent in foreign languages.

In Spain foreign language is considered a core subject from Y7 to Y13, so it is impossible that a student finishes school without having done any foreign language. Although it is the same in Wales, foreign language are considered as a foundation subject, and are just taught in KS3, from Y7 to Y9. This could be solved by establishing the foreign language subject as a core subject and, as said before, from a younger age.



There's also another good point in the Spanish education system, which is that the whole State knows how important English is, and that's why there are so many reforms and changes so as to make it better and better every time, despite they don't reach their goals, sometimes.

There have also been some plans and new reforms in Wales to improve the learning of foreign language, but because of the unawareness, these plans do not succeed.

In Wales, unlike in Catalonia, there is not a strong awareness of how important doing foreign languages is, not only the English one, but every foreign language. Having a knowledge of any foreign language is a synonym of culture and intelligence, so this should be important to pick them at school in Wales (where is optional from Y9) and keep studying them further.

I know that in Wales there is a coofficial language like in Catalonia, but unlike Spain, Wales focus their curriculum on the learning of the Welsh and the English languages more than on foreign languages. This could be solved by reducing the number of hours that these two languages are taught and make them equal to the ones that the foreign languages are taught. This would be a good way to give the same importance to every language.

When a Welsh student takes a foreign language lesson in Wales, he is taught this language in English, but in Spain teachers try and speak in English all the time. Obviously, this can be a bit difficult to fulfil because probably not all the students in a class will understand what the teacher is saying.

It is the same in their exams. Welsh people take their foreign language exams in English, so they do not prove enough their knowledge in an exam and they are not asked to be able to express themselves in the language either.

In the Spanish foreign language exams students are asked to understand the statement of an activity and to answer it in this language. Sometimes, although, if a student does not understand the meaning of a word, he or she can ask the teacher the meaning of it.

A good point that one of the reforms for trying and implementing the foreign languages in Welsh had was that the primary schools tried to work with their feeder secondary schools, so that the children could attend individually in a better way. This is something that is not usual to happen in Spain, unless a school offers the primary and the secondary education for their students.



Living in a globalized world where everybody speaks English does also affect the foreign languages in Wales, because students sometimes think that studying them is not worth it because they already speak English, the language that most of the people in the world knows. This is not a problem in Spain, because as we do not speak English as our mother language most of the people have an interest towards the language, because there is an awareness of how important it is. So, what the Government could do is to make campaigns to make students aware of the importance of learning foreign languages.

Another good point that Spain has because of what we have just said is the foreign languages academies. It is not common in Wales to study languages outside school, because it is not considered as something essential. It is, thus, in Spain. A student can attend academies in most of the languages that are spoken in our everyday life.

A very important thing that is not done in any of these regions but it is a very successful and easy way to learn is offering media content in the original version in Spain, and in the foreign language version in Wales. If a student grows up listening to music, watching films, and hearing more often this language, it won't be so difficult in the future for this student to learn it.

This is what is implemented in Portugal, where the films are always offered in the original version and subtitles in their language.

All these proposals could be good ways to make people aware of how important and how easy is to try and come up with some solutions, but how difficult it is to make them work. I am sure, although, that if both Governments decide to do something to improve their foreign languages systems, they will be able because both of them have the sources and the methods.



6. CONCLUSIONS

Before starting my project I thought, for what I had seen during my student life, that the Spanish education system in what foreign language learning referred to was very bad, and that any other country could have better systems and more effective methods, and their results were, consequently, better.

After working during all this months on the project, and being able to compare both of the systems, I have seen that, even though I thought the Spanish system was very ineffective, it is better than other systems.

Comparing these two education systems, both of them having their respective second official language, has given me the chance to realise that that some people think that learning languages is not worth it; specially in the countries where English is present in every day life, and where people have a perfect level of English. This is what happens in Wales.

If we stop and have a look at both systems, we can certainly say that none of them are perfect, because they have lots of things that could be improved a lot, but, if I had to say which one is the best in what foreign language refers to I would definitively say Spain.

Coming up with this conclusion has surprised me, because from the inside I can see that the system has lots of imperfections, and that it is very difficult to solve them. So, if in Spain it is difficult, I think that it would be even more difficult in Wales.

Despite that, I am totally convinced that if the Governments want to solve this situation, they will be able to do it, even though it won't be in the short term.



7. MY TRIP EXPERIENCES

7.1. Wales trip experience

This summer I went to spend two weeks in Swansea, in an English course at Swansea University, as I did last summer, but there was something different this year, because the aim of it wasn't to just learn more English but also to look up for information for my research project.

I arrived in Swansea on the 29th of June, and I was there until the 13th of July. During these days I attended some Advance lessons in the morning with English teachers at the University Campus, and in the afternoons we did some activities.

But the main purpose of this trip, as I've said, was to find out some information to my research project that I need it to carry on with it.

As I wanted to do a comparison between the foreign languages teaching methods in Catalonia and Wales there was some information that I needed to find out there, that's why I emailed some schools from Swansea and asked them if I could meet them and ask them some questions, so as to have enough information to fulfil my research questions.

After a week of sending the letter none of the schools had replied to my emails, so I wasn't expecting any of them to answer, but two or three days later an email arrived. It was from Ms. Bonet from Bishop Gore school, who, very kindly, offered me to go to the school where she was teaching. A couple of days after another email arrived, but this time it was from another school, Olchfa School, writing in name of Mrs. Nicola Smart. She also offered to meet me during my stay in Swansea so she could help me with the questions I had.

I finally arranged two meetings so I could spend the necessary time with them and as both of them were Spanish teachers, but also taught French in their schools they could help me with most of the questions I had.

My first meeting was on the 15th of July with Mrs. Bonet, head of the department of modern foreign languages in Bishop Gore School. I met her at 9:15 am in the school hall, and after introducing ourselves she brought me to her classroom, where she taught her lessons, where we had the interview until 10 am, because she had a Spanish lesson with students from year 8 after that. During the time of the interview she answered all my questions and she also showed me what books they were using to teach Spanish in the lower level, so as to compare the level. We talked about the



GCSE and A level exams, so she gave me three samples of the Spanish exam for GCSE, in its higher and lower levels.

Before leaving, she introduced me to two students of the school, from the same age as me, and I had the opportunity to chat with them while showing me the school until 11 am. They were really nice and they also explained me how their lessons and their timetables were in their school, and I explained them how my timetable was and what I was studying at the moment.

I left school with lots of useful information to add to my project and also some material to compare to the education models from Spain, so I was very happy with the first interview.

The next day, on Wednesday the 16th, I had another meeting at Olchfa School with Mrs. Smart, head of modern foreign languages and also Spanish and French teacher in the school.

I also met her in the school hall, and after introducing ourselves, she took me to her class and we had a little talk. When the time of the interview arrived, she introduced me a bit the Welsh system and how the students had to work in school. Afterwards, the interview started and she answered the questions that I had, but also she explained me a bit more of the things that I didn't understand about the UK and Welsh system when it was necessary. At 10 am she had a Spanish class with students of my same age, so I met them and I spent a whole hour talking with them and asking them some questions about their studies and their work in school. As they had finished their exams they were relaxed and could spend that time talking with me.

I could witness their Spanish abilities, and even though some of them were better than others, all of them could speak the language quite well.

I made a new friend whose name was Frankie, who was a Spanish, but also a Catalan student, and she told me that I could ask her if I needed some information during this summer to finish my project.

I was a bit surprised they studied Catalan in Wales, so I asked how was that possible and the teacher explained me that only a couple of students were doing that and it was because of their interest in learning the language. The lessons they were taking were only a couple of days a week and at lunch time, just for forty five minutes.

After that meeting I felt like I had enough information to keep forward with my project.



Also, on Friday the 11th of July, thanks to our group leader we met Àngel Rangel, football player for the Swansea Football team, born in Sant Carles de la Ràpita, who invited us to a little tour around the Liberty stadium and also to know him.

He was born and grew up in Catalunya, but when he was 25 years old, he moved to the UK because he was offered a contract with the Swansea football team. Since then he has lived in the UK, and now he's the father of three children, all of them grown up there.

I had the chance to talk to him for a small time and I asked him if he could notice any difference between the way he learned foreign languages in Catalunya when he was young and how his children were learning foreign languages, so he answered to my question and offered me his email to help me if I had any question during the summer.

Unfortunately, I have lost the recording take with the small interview and he has not answered any of the emails I sent him, maybe because he's too busy.

Anyway, I can say that this trip was very helpful to complete the information I was missing and thanks to it I could finish my Welsh system part of the project.

7.2. MY EXPERIENCE AS AN ENGLISH STUDENT

I have been studying in the same school where I am studying now since I was three years old, and now I am going to share my experience as an English student with you.

I have been studying English since I was four or five years old, at Foundation Level, because in my school the interest for the English language has been always notable.

When I started Primary School things were not very different; we had English lessons every week, I cannot remember the exact amount of hours but I remember I enjoyed them a lot. We used to play games in English and to sing some songs, and it was quite funny and enjoyable.

During the Primary years I remember that I learned a lot, and in the different courses we split the classes into three groups with three different teachers, according to the level of the language each student had. In my case I always was at the higher group, and although there were some funnier and some boring lessons, I enjoyed learning this language.



When we got to Secondary School I was very afraid because I thought and I felt very small to be in there, but after some time I got used to it.

During these four years instead of attending normal English lessons, my school offered an advanced English program, which was called BSD (Basic Swiss Diploma) and it consisted of an agreement between our school and a Swiss centre, which offered the school a very good opportunity to the students to, at third of ESO, travel to Switzerland and present orally a project that we had been preparing during a year. This, added to the knowledge of the BSD program, offered to the students a very good experience, because we had to express orally in front of English speakers and to present a project that we did. During these three years I certainly learned a lot and I think they were very useful. When we got to fourth of ESO we had to prepare another project, but this time we had to present it in our School, but again in front of Swiss people.

During these four years, in addition to all the things I learned I also had the opportunity to take the KET, PET and FIRST Certificate exams, and I got them all at the end of fourth of ESO.

With this I am not trying to impress anyone, but to explain how I have lived the English language learning during these years.

But, things changed when I arrived at the first year of Baccalaureate. In my classroom we were more or less thirty students, all of us with a different English level, and this made it very difficult to do a proper class, because not everybody could follow the teacher.

This was a thing that I didn't understand, and one of my motivations for my research project, because I wanted to try and see the faults that the system had and also what could have been done to improve it.

I know that my experience as an English student has been useful to realise that something was wrong, and thanks to that I chose this theme, which I am very happy with.



8. ANNEXES

ANNEXES INDEX

- Annex 1: Graph 1
- Annex 2: Graph 2
- Annex 3: PISA graph

Following these four annexes there are two interviews that correspond to

8.1. Bishop Gore Interview

8.2. Olchfa School Interview

There are other annexes attached at the end of the project which correspond to three samples of the GCSE Welsh exams, which students take at the end of KS4.

This exams correspond to the Higher and Foundation tier of the Spanish language in the Listening and Reading tier.



Annex 1

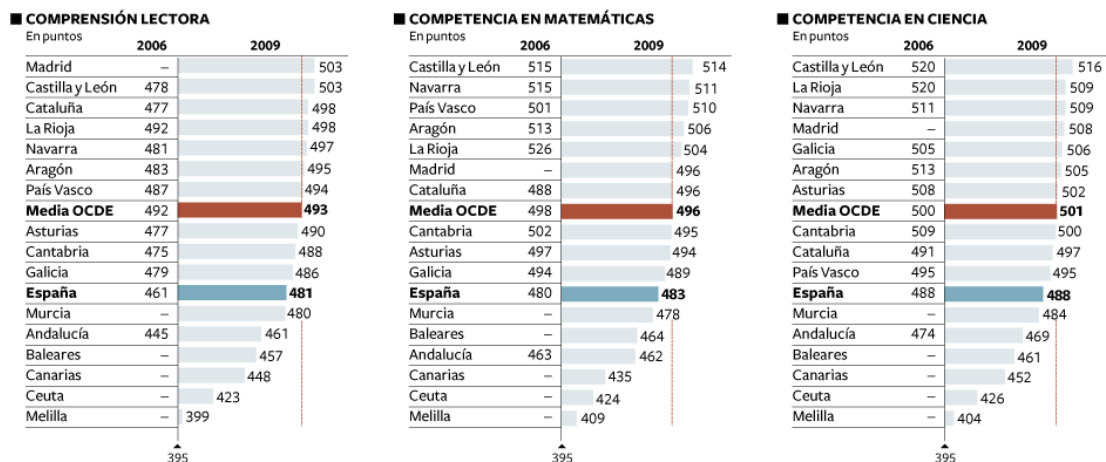
Age		Key Stage	Year	Phase	
18+	Post-compulsory			Further Education	
17-18			Y13 (A-levels)		
16-17			Y12 (AS-level)		
15-16	Compulsory Education	KS4	Y11 (GCSE)	Secondary schools	
14-15			Y10		
13-14		Y9			
12-13		KS3	Y8		
11-12			Y7		
10-11		KS2	Y6 (SATs)		Primary schools
9-10			Y5		
8-9			Y4		
7-8			Y3		
6-7			KS1		
5-6	Y1				
4-5	EYFS	R	Pre-school		
0-4					

Annex 2

Child's Age on 31st Aug	School Year Group	Curriculum Stage	School Type	
3	Nursery	Foundation Stage	Nursery school	
4	Reception			
5	Year 1	Key Stage 1	Infant school	Primary school
6	Year 2			
7	Year 3	Key Stage 2	Junior school	
8	Year 4			
9	Year 5			
10	Year 6			
11	Year 7	Key Stage 3	Secondary school	Secondary school
12	Year 8			
13	Year 9	Key Stage 4 / GCSE	Sixth form college	
14	Year 10			
15	Year 11			
16	Year 12 (Lower Sixth Form)	Sixth form / A' level	Sixth form college	
	Year 13 (Upper Sixth Form)			



Annex 3



Fuente: PISA 2009. Programa para la Evaluación Internacional de los Alumnos OCDE. Informe español. Ministerio de Educación. EL PAÍS

8.1. BISHOP GORE SCHOOL INTERVIEW (8th July)

Mrs. Bonet: Good Morning, my name is Mrs. Bonet and I'll try and help you with everything you need, so you can ask me your doubts and I'll try to answer them.

X: Good morning, my name is Laia, and thank you for your attention, before starting with the questions or the interview I'd like to know which is the language that most of the students go for at school.

M.B: Well the main language that is taught in schools in Wales is French, and some schools teach French and German or French and Spanish. Twenty years ago, it was French and German, but now fewer and fewer people are studying German and more and more are taking Spanish because it's more "à la mode" as it is said in French, and it's also easier to learn because of the spelling and also because lots of students go on their holidays to Spain, to Benidorm, where they don't speak Spanish, they speak English, but it's more motivational for them to learn Spanish.

X: Well, let's start with the questions now. You can have a paper to read the questions if you want to. So, I know that each region in the UK has its own education system. Are they similar or different and in what way?

M.B: Well, England and Wales are exactly the same, but Scotland has a different education system, and Northern Ireland I don't know. So, for



example, in Scotland they have different exams when they are 16, they have the GCSE but they are called in a different name.

X: Okay, next one, are there differences within wales?

M.B: No, they are all the same. England and Wales are all the same.

X: Perfect. Is there coordination at a national (UK) level?

M.B: Well, both really. London coordinates the administration of the education system in England and Wales, but the Welsh government is in charge of the funding.

X: So it's similar to Spain, isn't it?

M.B: Yes, it is.

X: Okay, so, can the national government impose conditions, for example, in the Welsh system?

M.B: yes, they can.

X: And can the Welsh government refuse these conditions if they don't like them?

M.B: I don't think so.

X: Okay. From what I've been founding I know that the Welsh language hadn't had a high importance and they wanted to improve this. In what level did they start to impose the language?

M.B: They started to teach welsh from age 2, 3 or 4 but it's only little words, for example, sit down, stand up, thank you, ...

X: So it hasn't lot of importance in a young age in schools?

M.B: Not when they are very young. When they go to primary school they may do one or two lessons in welsh but the problem is there is a shortage of welsh teachers. In some primary schools you may not find a person that speaks Welsh fluently.

X: Okay, so when did the Welsh government decide that welsh needed a higher importance?



M.B: I can't tell you specifically, but maybe about twenty years ago.

X: And was it the result of something specific?

M.B: I don't know. I'm not Welsh, I'm English so I wasn't here when they decided it.

X: Okay, so, do you know what the Cilt Cymru is?

M.B: Yes, it's a body that it's placed in Cardiff and they provide us with resources, courses, advises, ...

X: In welsh or in all languages?

M.B: In all languages.

X: Okay, so it has an important role?

M.B: In the languages yes. But actually, is not Welsh, is foreign languages, not Welsh.

X: And why is its funding being reduced?

M.B: Because of the recession, the crisis.

X: Right, so I understand that at Foundation level, there is a lot of emphasis on the development and autonomy of the child. Do they have curriculum subjects at the Foundation Stage?

M.B: By Foundation Stage do you mean Primary, don't you? Well, they do, they are English, Welsh, Maths, Science, Music, Physical Education.

X: So are this the core subjects?

M.B: No, the core subjects are English, Maths and Science at all levels.

X: And the quantity of hours per week, per subject and per key stage for welsh?

M.B: I have to check it because I'm not a welsh teacher. In KS3, that goes from age 11 to 14 and I think they have two lessons a week, and then in KS4 that goes from age 14 to 16 they can choose if they want to continue with Welsh. If they continue with Welsh and they take the exam, they have two and a half lesson because we have two week timetable, so they have



five lessons in two weeks. If they choose not to take the exam then they have one lesson per week, so it's compulsory to continue.

X: And for foreign languages? Is it the same?

M.B: It is the same except for that foreign language is not compulsory after age 13.

X: So if they don't take the exam in foreign languages do they still do one hour a week?

M.B: No, if they don't choose it, that's it, which is the big problem with the British, that they don't learn languages.

X: Okay, next one, does a foreign language have the same importance in all the education systems?

M.B: Yes, they have the same importance.

X: Right. How important is the learning of a foreign language in the Welsh system?

M.B: Well, I think it is very important, because I think it helps their English, I mean sometimes it's easier to understand some words because they are similar in French or in Spanish and they can see the links and also I think learning more than one language helps you learn another language.

X: But do students prefer to study a foreign language or they prefer studying other subjects?

M.B: They prefer other subjects.

X: Okay. When is the foreign language introduced in schools?

M.B: Most of the time, age eleven, which is too late, but in some primary schools they'll teach a little bit of French or a little bit of Spanish.

X: Right. What are the most popular languages to learn?

M.B: Well, French is the most common language that is taught, but I'd say that the most popular language is Spanish.

X: And how does a student decide what language to learn?



M.B: They don't decide, we tell them. It depends on the group. In this school the most able people take French and Spanish.

X: So they take both?

M.B: Yes, they take both and also Welsh. But the less able people take only Spanish.

X: And nobody takes German?

M.B: We used to teach German, but now it's gone.

X: So is the learning of foreign languages compulsory?

M.B: It is until age 14.

X: Can a pupil learn foreign language at primary level?

M.B: Depends on the primary school, but that is a problem for us because we have pupils from twenty-three primary schools and some have learned a little bit of French, some have learned a little bit of Spanish, most have nothing, so they come to school some of them with some Spanish but we have to start from the beginning for everybody.

X: So do you think that's a problem?

M.B: It's not a problem, but a waste of time.

X: And do you think it would be better if all the primary schools taught the same level for everybody?

M.B: Yes.

X: Right. In Catalonia, a pupil will start learning a foreign language (English) at infant level. Is it possible in Wales?

M.B: Again, it depends on the school, but there are not many foreign language teachers, so probably not.

X: So, can a student finish secondary school without having studied a foreign language?

M.B: No, because it's compulsory at KS3.



X: Okay. So, as we've said the learning of Welsh and foreign languages are compatible?

M.B: Yes, I think so. And it also helps.

X: When a student finishes secondary education, how does his competence in foreign language compare with a student in England and Scotland?

M.B: I would say it's the same level. I think it depends more on the school and the area rather than the country.

X: And do you think that the learning of a foreign language is given secondary importance because "we can already speak English"?

M.B: I think that they think that everybody else speaks English, so they don't need to learn foreign languages.

X: Right. And how does Wales compare to other countries in the European Community as far as the learning of a foreign language is concerned?

M.B: Not very good, but I don't think that Wales is different to England, I'd say that all the UK is the same.

X: Okay. Does the Welsh education system have students from many different nationalities?

M.B: It depends on the school and in the area, but this school for example it has lots of different nationalities. We have "%% Muslim people, that they are Welsh but their parents aren't; but you can also find schools that they don't.

X: We've mentioned the GCSE exams before. Are they similar all over the UK, because if systems are different they should also be different?

M.B: Yes, they are similar.

X: And what does this mean for foreign languages?

M.B: Well the GCSE exams, there are three or four different exam boards, that they are the people who decide or make the exams, but there's somebody that looks after the exams and make sure that the level is the same, so technically the level is the same all over the UK.



X: Okay, and how is the competence in foreign languages measured?

M.B: At GCSE level they do two exams, two controlled assessments that I can show you. They have a reading exam and a listening exam and they have a control assessment in the school that test their speaking and writing.

X: So this exam is during all the year?

M.B: Yes, and at the end of the year we mark them and we send the results to the examiners. But the reading and writing are at the end of the year, when they are sixteen.

X: Is it normal in here to attend extra foreign language lessons or academies?

M.B: I know in Spain it is really common, but here it is not.

X: Do students need any level of foreign languages to enter to University or they have enough with English?

M.B: It depends what they are going to study at university. Obviously, if they are going to study languages they need to have a level of that language.

X: And do you know which is that level?

M.B: They need the A level exams, which are the ones they take at age 18, but if they are not doing languages they don't need it.

X: And does the government show any interest on students learning foreign languages?

M.B: Yes, it does, I think the government recognizes that there's a problem which is that there's not enough people studying foreign languages.

X: And are they giving any solution or any help?

M.B: No, not really. They talk about making a better system for people to take foreign languages in primary schools, but they talk and talk and talk and do nothing.

X: So what they want to do is to implement foreign languages in primary schools?



M.B: Yes, I'm sure you've realized that if they started learning when they're five years old they would be much better. I think the best way to teach a language is when they are three or four because their mind is open.

X: Okay, thank you that's everything. Thanks for your attention and your time.

M.B: Thank you for coming, I hope it helps you with your project.

8.2. OLCHFA SCHOOL INTERVIEW (9th July)

Mrs. Nicola: Good morning, Laia. My name is Nicola, nice to meet you. I will try and answer all you questions and be helpful to your project.

X: Good morning, my name is Laia, and I'd like to thank your attention and your kindness for attending me.

M.N: No problem.

X: So, you are a Spanish teacher, aren't you? Do the students find the Spanish language easy or difficult to learn?

M.N: the students that attend my lessons study Spanish, but they can also choose French. My students think the Spanish language is really difficult because of the verbs, the grammar, all the changes in the verbal forms, and they don't get when they have to change the verb according to the person, because unlike in the English language there are lots of changes. But they have to learn it and every week they have small verb tests so they can practice and learn them slowly.

X: Okay. About the GCSE exams, do they choose the exams they take or do they take exams of all the subjects?

M.N: They take their exams of all the subjects they course. They end the Secondary school with more or less nine or ten GCSE titles, which are English language, English literature, Welsh, Mathematics, some optional subjects and some other that they choose depending on their preferences.



X: Right, now I have some questions that may be useful for my project. So, I know that each region in the UK has its own education system. Are they similar or different and in what way?

M.N: there are lots of differences, but I don't really know much about the Scottish and Irish system; but I know that in Scotland they take their GCSE exams sooner and they have and an extra year of Baccalaureate.

X: Alright. Next one, are there differences within Wales?

M.N: the system within Wales is the same; the only difference is that depending on the school you can take different exams, the ones made by a Welsh organ or the ones made by an English organ. So in this school for example, we take the GCSE exams from the Welsh organ but if I decided they could take the English GCSE Spanish exam, although it would be in Welsh.

X: So, are the England GCSE exams easier than the Welsh ones?

M.N: Well, I don't know if they are easier or not, but they use a different format, a different percentage, so it would be difficult to say if they are easier or not.

X: Okay. Is there coordination at a national (UK) level?

M.N: Yes, there is an organ called OFQUAL that regulates and makes sure that the level is the same in all the exams organizations, and also there is coordination from London.

X: Can the national government impose conditions, for example, in the Welsh system?

M.N: yes. There is some autonomy, but they have to be similar.

X: are there any differences within Wales about how the Welsh language is taught?

M.N: yes, because there are two options. There is some people who speak Welsh currently, but some others have learn it as if it was a foreign language, so there are two different exams, one to the native Welsh speakers and another one to those who have learned the Welsh as a second language.



X: Okay. From what I found I know that the Welsh language hadn't had a high importance and they wanted to improve this. In what level did they start to impose the language?

M.N: Well, in order to improve and give a higher status to the language they established it as core subject, so all the students at GCSE have to take the Welsh exam.

X: and have the results been good?

M.N: more or less. It depends, if a student speaks Welsh at home has more ability in learning it.

X: Do you know what the Cilt Cymru is?

M.N: Yes, of course. It had a very important role until 6 months ago, but then the Government decided that it was too expensive. They visited the schools, gave funding, and sources, but six months ago the Government abolished this organ.

X: So it had an important role?

M.N: Yes, they had a very important role.

X: so I understand that at Foundation level, there is a lot of emphasis on the development and autonomy of the child. Do they have curriculum subjects at the Foundation Stage?

M.N: they have curriculum subjects, which are English, Welsh, Mathematics, Science, Music and P.E.

X: Do you know the quantity of hours per week, per subject and per key stage for welsh?

M.N: They take five hours per fortnight. If they study both French and Spanish they have to attend ten hours per week in total.

X: How do they choose which language to study?

M.N: As they are optional subjects they can choose whether to study just French, just Spanish, both of them or none of them.



X: Does a foreign language have the same importance in all the education systems?

M.N: yes, the only difference is that in England a foreign language is considered a core subject. What makes it complicated in Wales is that we already have another language which is Welsh, but I'm sure that if we didn't have this language we would have a foreign language as a core subject.

X: Okay. So as they are already speaking another language they give less importance to the study of some other languages, don't they?

M.N: Yes, I think that some students and parents think that as they are already studying a language they have to give more importance to other subjects like geography, because they are already studying a language.

X: at what age do students start to learn foreign languages?

M.N: In Y9.

X: And which one is the language that most of the students choose?

M.N: Depends on what the school offers, but in the last years most of the students want to learn Spanish because of the high influence it is having nowadays.

X: How does a student decides which language to learn?

M.N: they choose it according to their interests.

X: Is it compulsory?

M.N: No it is not.

X: Can a pupil learn foreign language at primary level?

M.N: yes they can, but no formally. They don't have in the curriculum, so they do it in clubs after the school, and the parents have to pay.

X: is it possible for students to start learning a foreign language from an infancy level in Wales?

M.N: Just the Welsh language.



X: Can a student finish secondary school without having studied a foreign language?

M.N: No, it's compulsory from Year 7 to Year 9.

X: Okay. So, as we've said the learning of Welsh and foreign languages are compatible?

M.N: Yes it is if they want to because there are different combinations.

X: When a student finishes secondary education, how does his competence in foreign language compare with a student in England and Scotland?

M.N: They take some continue assessment in the school, and after that they take the GCSE which is a national assessment.

X: Do you think that the learning of a foreign language is given secondary importance because "we can already speak English"?

M.N: Well, I think that this is something that all the students say, but I always say that they have to speak foreign languages, because although the English language is a universal language there are more Hispanic language speakers than English speakers.

X: And how does Wales compare to other countries in the European Community as far as the learning of a foreign language is concerned?

M.N: Well, compared to countries like the Netherlands for example, there is no chance of comparing, but I think that it is easier for the non English country speakers because it is easier to find songs, films, and programs in English, whilst is more difficult for us to find material in Spanish for example.

X: Does the Welsh education system have students from many different nationalities?

M.N: yes, in this school for example there are lots of Chinese and Muslim students.

X: We've mentioned the GCSE exams before. Are they similar all over the UK, because if systems are different they should also be different?

M.N: Yes because there is an organ that regulates them.



X: how is the competence in foreign languages measured?

M.N: they take an exam at Y9 but at Y11 they have an extra school test.

X: Do you think students taking foreign languages is increasing or not?

M.N: Well, I don't really know but the fact of having studied a foreign language it is very useful when it comes to looking for a job. And it also depends on the career.

X: Is it normal in here to attend extra foreign language lessons or academies?

M.N: It is not normal in here. I know in Spain it is, but in Wales it is not common, but they sometimes can have tutors to give them extra classes.

X: Do students need any level of foreign languages to enter to University or they have enough with English?

M.N: There are some Universities that consider the knowledge of foreign language as something useful when they want to apply for some careers.

X: And does the government show any interest on students learning foreign languages?

M.N: They do show some interest but the only problem in Wales is that they have the Welsh language as a second language, but in England for example the situation is better.

X: Okay, thank you for your attention; I am sure it is going to be very useful.



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10. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Doing a research project during a long period of time is not easy.

Sometimes you may feel stressed, depressed, tired, nervous, or sad, although sometimes you can be happy.

In my case, I have enjoyed doing my project, but I know and that this would not have been possible without the help of some people that has been all this time behind me, encouraging me and trying to keep me up, so as to do the best of me and of the project.

I know that sometimes, when I am not in a good mood I can be very unfriendly and unkind, but I really appreciate the people who support me in this bad moments and situations.

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To all of you, thank you.