



SOMOS

Spanish Opens More Opportunities

SOMOS

Spanish Opens More Opportunities

Overview of Studies, Programmes, and Projects on the Teaching and Learning of Spanish Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago

i. General Trends, Key Findings, and Initiatives in Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago

This section summarises key trends, challenges, and initiatives in Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) education, drawing on the research, policies, and international collaborations outlined in the coming sections. It highlights the growing demand for Spanish and innovative strategies to enhance language learning, supporting its role in professional and economic development.

1. Trends in Spanish Language Learning

Growing demand for Spanish: Regional trade, tourism, and diplomatic relations are driving an increased need for Spanish proficiency, particularly in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

Expansion of Spanish in education: Spanish is being integrated into primary, secondary, and higher education, with new curricula, policies, and teacher training initiatives.

Technology and innovation in teaching: The use of flipped classrooms, gamification, virtual exchanges, and digital tools is gaining traction, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Focus on employability: Spanish training is being tailored to business, tourism, and government sectors, improving workforce skills and competitiveness.

2. Key Findings from Research Studies

Need for structured teacher training: Studies highlight gaps in formal training, curriculum development, and assessment frameworks for Spanish teachers.

Challenges in policy implementation: Initiatives like Trinidad and Tobago's "Spanish as the First Foreign Language" policy faced setbacks due to lack of resources and administrative continuity.

SOMOS

Spanish Opens More Opportunities

Importance of cultural integration: Effective Spanish education should incorporate Hispanic cultural elements and align with international standards like the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Successful student engagement strategies: Research points to task-based learning, intercultural competence development, and immersive experiences as effective ways to improve Spanish language acquisition.

3. Notable Initiatives and Programmes

Diplomatic efforts: Countries like Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Mexico, Spain, and Venezuela, have provided scholarships, teacher training, and immersive programmes.

Higher education and teacher training: Institutions like The University of the West Indies-UWI, Instituto Cervantes, and regional colleges offer formal Spanish degree programmes and DELE certifications.

Specialised Spanish courses: Training for tourism professionals, business process outsourcing (BPO) employees, and public sector officials is expanding.

Conclusion

Spanish is increasingly recognised as a key skill for employability, economic development, and cultural exchange in the Caribbean. However, challenges persist in teacher training, language policy sustainability, and curriculum adaptation. Continued investment in education, technology, and regional cooperation is essential to strengthening Spanish learning and its role in the region's future. In this context CAF's Spanish Programme (SOMOS – Spanish Opens More Opportunities) seeks to enhance Spanish education for employability and regional integration in the English-speaking Caribbean.

A recognised body of well-documented initiatives exists, ranging from *research studies and articles to Spanish courses and programmes* for employees, government officials, and in-service Spanish language teachers within the regular school system. Some of these strategies have been further developed and published primarily by universities, academics, and language scholars in the Caribbean context.

In this overview, we seek to highlight key efforts made in **Barbados** over the past decade by government entities, educational institutions, national and international organisations, diplomatic

SOMOS

Spanish Opens More Opportunities

missions, and the private sector to promote the teaching and learning of Spanish as a Foreign Language through various initiatives that share a common objective. Additionally, we present key findings from research studies, particularly those published in Barbados.

We invite you to review the findings presented here, which CAF recognises as valuable insights and a starting point for our current initiative. This is not intended to be a final or exhaustive review but rather a work in progress that we will expand on through upcoming workshops and activities. Building on this foundation, our initiative *SOMOS, Spanish Opens More Opportunities*, aims to promote Spanish as a tool for expanded business opportunities and regional integration in the English-speaking Caribbean.

II. Introduction

Over the past six decades, the strengthening of trade relations among Latin American and Caribbean countries—such as the Latin American Free Trade Association (ALALC) [1960-1980], the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) [1973], the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) [1980], the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) [1991], the Association of Caribbean States (AEC) [1994], the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (OTCA) [1995; Amazon Cooperation Treaty, 1998], the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) [2008], and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) [2010]—has heightened interest in learning Spanish in Hispanic America and the English-speaking Caribbean.

Latin America has become a key cultural and commercial destination for the United States, Europe, and Asia, driving demand for Spanish as a Foreign Language (ELE) courses, programmes, and projects. This, in turn, has led to a growing need for teacher training, the development of locally produced teaching materials, research in this field, and the establishment of assessment and certification systems for Spanish language proficiency levels.

A recognised body of well-documented initiatives exists, ranging from *research studies and articles to Spanish courses and programmes* for employees, government officials, and in-service Spanish language teachers within the regular school system. Some of these strategies have been further developed and published primarily by universities, academics, and language scholars in the Caribbean context.

In this overview, we seek to highlight key efforts made over the past decade by government entities, educational institutions, national and international organisations, diplomatic missions, and the private sector to promote the teaching and learning of Spanish as a Foreign Language through various initiatives that share a common objective. Additionally, we present key findings from research studies, particularly those published in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

SOMOS

Spanish Opens More Opportunities

We invite you to review the findings presented here, which CAF recognises as valuable insights and a starting point for our current initiative. This is not intended to be a final or exhaustive review but rather a work in progress that we will expand on through upcoming workshops and activities. Building on this foundation, our initiative *SOMOS – Spanish Opens More Opportunities* aims to promote Spanish as a tool for expanded business opportunities and regional integration in the English-speaking Caribbean.

III. Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) in Jamaica

1. Research studies and published articles:

- **Aranda Ruiz-Morris, M.** (2024). *Didactic Proposal for Developing Intercultural Competence in A1-Level Students in Jamaica* (Master's thesis, University of Jaén). <https://hdl.handle.net/10953.1/24633>
The didactic proposal emphasizes integrating Hispanic cultural content into Spanish as a foreign language instruction, connecting it to communicative competence, and employing methodologies to foster intercultural competence, all within the Caribbean context. This approach is grounded in a cultural curriculum and task-based methodology, aligned with the Common European Framework for Languages.
- **Barnett, N., & Henry, A.** (2020). *Foreign language acquisition: The teaching/learning of Spanish in the Jamaican context*. UWI Quality Education Forum, 24, 100–115. <https://journals.sta.uwi.edu/ojs/index.php/qef/article/view/7834>
This conceptual/theoretical paper highlights the teaching/learning of Spanish as a foreign language (FL) in an English-based creole-speaking country, Jamaica, and the challenges and relevant theories that arise in such a context. Attention is paid to the teaching/learning of Spanish in all four skills among students at the tertiary level.
- **Corbett-Baugh, M. L.** (2024). *The Teaching of Spanish in Jamaica in an English-Speaking Context* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Jaén). <https://ruja.ujaen.es/handle/10953/3381>
The study analyses the teaching of Spanish in Jamaica's primary and secondary education using a mixed-methods approach. The findings led to the development of instructional resources, including a Spanish Lesson Plan Manual and a virtual classroom for teachers, which can be used in Jamaica and across the English-speaking Caribbean.
- **Villoria Nolla, M.** (2021). *Approaches and initiatives for navigating the teaching and learning of Spanish as a foreign language in the context of COVID-19*. UWI Quality Education Forum, 25, 162–195. <https://journals.sta.uwi.edu/ojs/index.php/qef/article/view/8134/6927>
The article explores the use of new technologies in foreign language learning, focusing on innovative pedagogical strategies adopted by Spanish Majors during the COVID-19 pandemic. It

SOMOS

Spanish Opens More Opportunities

explores methodologies such as the flipped classroom, collaborative writing, gamification, and Virtual Intercultural Exchange.

1. Programmes and Initiatives:

Category	Institution / Programme
Formal Spanish Language Training in Jamaica	Higher Education Programmes: ○ University of the West Indies (UWI): Bachelor's in Spanish & French; Master's in Languages, Literatures, Translation & Film Studies (French/Spanish); MPhil and PhD degrees in French and Spanish ○ Teachers' Colleges: Bachelor's in Modern Languages (Spanish & French) ○ UTECH & Sam Sharpe Teachers' College: Diploma of Spanish as Foreign Language (DELE) Examination Centres.
Projects offered by some Spanish speaking countries	○ Spanish Jamaican Foundation (SJF) - Spanish Embassy Initiatives: Spanish Carol Concerts, Annual bursaries, International Literacy Day – <i>Read Across Jamaica in Spanish</i>, Spanish Immersion Days for CSEC oral examinations, weekly Spanish lessons in the <i>Jamaica Observer</i> newspaper learning corner, and the <i>Lectorado</i> Programme in collaboration with AECID. ○ Cuba-Jamaica Binational Programme (since 1997): Allocation of over 530 Cuban teachers in Jamaica. ○ Mexico's Pilot Programme: 2019 Diploma Programme in the Teaching of Spanish as a Foreign Language; Spanish language course for Jamaican foreign diplomats; Diploma in Methodologies of Teaching Spanish as a Second Language for Teachers of Spanish in the English-speaking Caribbean. ○ Venezuela's Simón Bolívar Cultural Centre (since 2015): Offers Spanish language courses, Latin dance classes, and cultural exhibitions. ○ Colombian Embassy Initiatives (2013-2015): Promoted Colombian culture in Jamaica through Spanish-language programmes and scholarships via ICETEX (Colombia). Target population: over 300 officials from various ministries and public entities, including the Ministries of Agriculture, Tourism, Youth and Culture, Education, Labour and Social Security, and the Armed Forces and Police. Chilean Embassy: Provided an annual scholarship for a month-long immersion in Chile to enhance Spanish-speaking skills.

SOMOS

Spanish Opens More Opportunities

Spanish Teacher Training & Policy Development	○ Instituto Cervantes Training Programmes -Spanish Embassy ○ 2012: AVE-DELE training for 120 Spanish teachers in Jamaica. ○ 2018: National training for 100 primary and secondary teachers. ○ 2020,2022,2024: Virtual training for 400 teachers of Spanish from Jamaica & Caribbean ○ Language Policy & Curriculum Development - Ministry of Education, University of the West Indies-UWI & Stakeholders. • 2018: Establishment of a research committee to develop Jamaica's first Language Policy Concept Paper ○ 2018-2019: Publication of national Spanish curricula for Primary & Secondary levels.
Specialized Spanish Courses for Tourism & BPO	○ An initiative led by Jamaica's Ministry of Tourism (2013-2019): Training for 300 tourism workers (drivers, tour guides, airport staff, travel agents) in Spanish and Russian through intensive 12-week program focused on oral communication skills at different stages and various providers (The University of the West Indies, Tourism Product Development Company -TPDCO, Ministry of Education).

IV. Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) in Trinidad and Tobago

1. Research studies and published articles

- **Wilson, D.** (2016). *The teaching of Spanish as a modern foreign language in Trinidad: A case study of the Spanish initiative implementation in the primary classroom* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Leicester). <https://hdl.handle.net/2381/37612>

The article examines the implementation of Spanish language education in Trinidad's primary schools through qualitative case studies of two institutions. The research identifies key success factors: availability of qualified teachers, administrative support, resource readiness, and clear policy direction. Notably, students displayed enthusiasm for learning Spanish, indicating potential for a sustainable program.

- **Grau Perejoan, M., & Gea Monera, M. P.** (2006). *Spanish in Trinidad and Tobago*. In Encyclopaedia of Spanish in the World: Instituto Cervantes Yearbook 2006-2007 (pp. 209–211). Instituto Cervantes; Círculo de Lectores; Plaza & Janés. https://cvc.cervantes.es/lengua/anuario/anuario_06-07/pdf/paises_41.pdf

SOMOS

Spanish Opens More Opportunities

The article explores the country's multicultural makeup, Spanish colonial legacy, and cultural elements like "Parang" music. They discuss governmental efforts to promote Spanish as the primary foreign language through educational programs and initiatives by institutions such as the University of the West Indies.

- **Hoyte-West, A.** (2021). *A return to the past? The Spanish as the First Foreign Language policy in Trinidad & Tobago*. Open Linguistics, 7(1), 235–243. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opli-2021-0018>

The article examines the nation's 2005 initiative to designate Spanish as the primary foreign language. This policy aimed to strengthen trade relations with Latin America by integrating Spanish into the education system, civil service, and broader society. The study provides a historical and sociocultural overview of Trinidad and Tobago's Spanish heritage, analyses the policy's implementation, and evaluates its overall effectiveness.

- **Molina Morales, G.** (2013). *The expansion of Spanish in Trinidad and Tobago*. In M. P. Celma Valero, M. J. Gómez del Castillo, & S. Heikel (Eds.), Proceedings of the XLVII International Congress of the AEPE (pp. 141–150). European Association of Teachers of Spanish. https://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/aepe/pdf/congreso_47/congreso_47_15.pdf

Trinidad and Tobago, despite three centuries of Spanish colonial rule, has limited Spanish language influence, primarily seen in place names. In 2005, the government mandated Spanish in schools to strengthen Latin American ties but faced challenges like resource shortages and unclear objectives. Interest in Spanish has grown, with institutions like the University of the West Indies offering programs. Strategic planning and resources are essential for sustainable Spanish expansion in the country.