

SOMOS, Spanish Opens More Opportunities

Overview of Studies, Programmes, and Projects on the Teaching and Learning of Spanish Barbados

I. 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 in **Barbados** 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 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. Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) in Barbados

1. Research studies and published articles:

- **Céspedes Suárez, C. (2023).** Increasing intercultural competence in the Anglophone Caribbean: Experiences and recommendations. In D. Mideros, N. Roberts, B.-A. Carter, & H. Reinders (Eds.), *Innovation in language learning and teaching: The case of the Southern Caribbean* (pp. 25–44). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-34182-3_2
- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PYJHPF9JDTaBt8MxnRCugm0zqBHqSy6/view?usp=sharing>
- This chapter looks at how students in the Anglophone Caribbean can build intercultural skills through learning languages like Spanish. It shares real experiences from schools and programmes in the region. The author explains some of the challenges and gives clear ideas to improve teaching and learning. The focus is on helping students connect with other cultures in meaningful ways. It's part of a wider book on new ways to teach languages in the Caribbean.
- **Céspedes Suárez, C. (2023).** Enseñanza del español en Barbados: Situación actual y consideraciones para el docente. In C. Bernales, J. Godoy, & C. Leiva (Eds.), *Lengua, traducción pedagógica y humanidades digitales en el Caribe hispano-anglófono* (pp. 89–108). <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379656400> *Enseñanza del español en Barbados s*
ituación actual y consideraciones para el docente

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19bmdi5rceg2u6WxLm-ntrCvkBNafPNEr/view?usp=sharing>

This chapter gives an overview of how Spanish is taught in Barbados, where English is the main language. It looks at how schools and teachers approach Spanish, and why the language is not widely used in everyday life. The author compares Barbados with other Caribbean countries and points out the main challenges for teachers. Practical suggestions are given to improve Spanish teaching, including ideas for making lessons more relevant and focused on cultural understanding.

- **Craig, I. (2018).** Student-centred second language study abroad for non-traditional sojourners: An Anglophone Caribbean example. In J. L. Plews & K. Misfeldt (Eds.), *Second language study abroad: Programming, pedagogy, and participant engagement* (pp. 83–121). Academia. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77134-2>
https://www.academia.edu/85390355/Second_Language_Study_Abroad

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UO2kOUAPnUZKVNAntXIC4B0F_n4hY95L/view?usp=sharing

This chapter discusses a study abroad programme developed for students at UWI Cave Hill, Barbados. It explores how student-centred design in non-traditional Anglophone Caribbean contexts facilitates Spanish language acquisition and intercultural competence among learners with limited access to immersive environments.

- **Craig, I. (2023).** Values-based innovation in the Caribbean context: Grounding a postcolonial pedagogy for the Cave Hill Spanish section of The University of the West Indies. In D. Mideros, N. Roberts, B.-A. Carter, & H. Reinders (Eds.), *Innovation in language learning and teaching: The case of the Southern Caribbean* (pp. 79–100). Palgrave Macmillan.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-34182-3_5

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PYJHPF9JDTaBt8MxnRCugm0zqBHqSy6/view?usp=sharing>

This chapter looks at how the Spanish programme at The UWI Cave Hill has grown and changed. It focuses on teaching that is based on local values and history, instead of only using European methods. The author shows how this approach helps students connect more with their own culture while learning Spanish. The chapter also shares ideas for making language classes more inclusive, relevant, and meaningful for Caribbean learners.

- **Fenigsen, J. (2003).** *Language ideologies in Barbados: Processes and paradigms. Pragmatics*, 13(2), 217–235. <https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.13.4.01fen>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BtPSvp8Ew3pRInd2T7gC1YIy6yhp2Kho/view?usp=sharing>

This article investigates language ideologies in postcolonial Barbados, focusing on how historical and social processes shape public perceptions of language. It examines the influence of Standard English, Bajan Creole, and foreign languages such as Spanish, within evolving notions of national identity, class mobility, and post-independence state formation.

- **Mideros, D., Roberts, N., Carter, B.-A., & Reinders, H. (Eds.). (2023).** *Innovation in language learning and teaching: The case of the Southern Caribbean*. Palgrave Macmillan.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PYJHPF9JDTaBt8MxnRCugm0zqBHqSy6/view?usp=sharing>
The book explores language education across English-speaking Caribbean territories, focusing on innovative practices, pedagogical challenges, and contextual realities. Edited by Mideros, Roberts, Carter, and Reinders, the volume highlights how regional educators adapt language teaching to postcolonial, multilingual, and resource-limited contexts. It includes case studies on Spanish, French, and English as second languages, with specific insights from Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana. The book offers practical and theoretical contributions for language policy makers, researchers, and educators.

2. Programmes and Initiatives - Barbados:

Category	Institution / Programme
Formal Spanish Language Training	○ <i>The University of the West Indies (The UWI), Cave Hill Campus</i>: B.A. in French and Spanish; Spanish minors and electives across faculties (ongoing). ○ <i>Barbados Community College (BCC)</i>: Spanish language courses as part of Associate Degrees in Modern Languages and Tourism (ongoing).

	○ <i>Erdiston Teachers' Training College</i>: Short language and cultural appreciation courses (ongoing).
Projects offered by some Spanish-speaking countries	○ <i>Embassy of Spain in Jamaica</i> (also serving Barbados): Support for DELE (Diplomas of Spanish as a Foreign Language) preparation (DELE exam dates 2025). ○ <i>Cuban Embassy in Barbados</i>: Bilateral Cultural Exchange. Support for language, music, and cultural programs (ongoing). ○ <i>Mexican Embassy in Barbados</i>: Cooperation – Scholarships for Spanish training and participation in international forums (2022) ○ <i>Venezuelan Embassy, Simón Bolívar Cultural Centre</i>: Teaching of Spanish & Cultural Exchange (2025) ○ <i>Colombian Embassy in Barbados</i>: Spanish as a Foreign Language Course for Civil Servants. 75 civil servants from various government departments completed a Spanish course hosted by the Republic of Colombia. This initiative aligns with the government's goal of achieving a fully bilingual society (January 2019 and 2024). Civil Servants Complete Spanish As A Foreign Language Course GIS Public Officers Encouraged To Learn Another Language GIS
Spanish Teacher Training & Policy Development	○ <i>The UWI, School of Education (Cave Hill)</i>: Pre-service and in-service teacher training modules with language methodology components (ongoing). ○ <i>Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training (METVT)</i>: Curriculum development for secondary schools; support for regional CXC Spanish exams (ongoing). ○ <i>Barbados Language Teachers Association (BLTA)</i>: Advocacy, training workshops, and community engagement (ongoing). ○ <i>Memorandum of Understanding with Cuba</i>: In February 2023, Barbados Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training signed an MOU with Cuba to facilitate the exchange of English and Spanish language teachers. This collaboration aims to enhance the teaching of Spanish as a modern language in Barbadian schools and to provide training for secondary-level teachers (https://gisbarbados.gov.bb/blog/ministry-of-education-signs-mou-with-cuba/)
Specialized Spanish Courses for Tourism & Business Process Outsourcing	○ <i>Hospitality Institute at the Barbados Community College, BCC</i>: Spanish for Hospitality short courses tailored to frontline service professionals (ongoing). ○ <i>Barbados Vocational Training Board (BVTB)</i>: Spanish for customer service and tourism (evening programme 2025). ○ <i>Tourism Development Corporation (TDC)</i>: Collaboration with language educators to improve Spanish skills in the sector (ongoing). ○ <i>Barbados Workers' Union (BWU)</i>: Online Spanish programme offered to employees by the Venezuelan Institute for Culture and Cooperation, IVCC (2023). https://barbadostoday.bb/2023/01/21/bwu-supports-initiative-to-tackle-language-barriers/

Spanish courses for Children	○ <i>Minister of Creative Economy, Culture and Sports through the National Library Service and the Embassy of Argentina:</i> Online Conversational Spanish for Children. A new initiative offering online Spanish classes for 70 children aged 7 to 11, aiming to foster early bilingualism (2020). https://gisbarbados.gov.bb/blog/youth-on-their-way-to-becoming-bilingual/
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