

**Monolingual Spain? The Impact of the Co-Official Designation on Catalan  
and Asturian Language Policy and Education**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics**

Jacob Chan

Haverford College

### **Abstract**

The notion that Spain is a monolingual country united under the language of “Spanish” directly harms the linguistic diversity of the country and its speakers. While the official language of the nation is Spanish, it has numerous co-official languages. Additionally, there are multiple minority languages without co-official status. These languages enjoy different legal protections which affect their use in schools. This thesis looks at the importance and influence of this co-official label, particularly for Catalan and Asturian. I utilize a comparative method to better understand the diglossia situations of Catalan and Asturian in language policy and in education. In order to do so, I look at the laws related to official status, governmental and public attitudes towards this co-officiality label, and the laws and attitudes in relation to the use of these languages within public primary schools. Ultimately, I explore the question of, what factors related to “official status” of language in Spain contribute to the differential usage of Asturian and Catalan in their corresponding regions, specifically within the sector of public primary education since the dates of their legal protection?

### Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been made possible without the endless support of many people. I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Brook Lillehaugen, for her endless support, dedication, and encouragement from start to finish in the writing of this thesis. I would also like to thank Professor Nicté Fuller Medina and Professor Ana López-Sánchez for all of the resources and inspiration that they provided.

I would also like to thank many friends and peers who spent hours listening to me talk about this topic and providing emotional and academic support. In particular, I would like to thank my student reader and dear friend, Maya Antonio, for her endless comments and insights into the topic. Additionally, I would like to thank Juno Bartsch for assisting me with clarity in wording and for their unconditional support. Next, I would like to thank my thesis writing partner, Naomi Komatsu, for her endless encouragement and for providing her non-Linguistics perspective in ensuring that this thesis is accessible. Thank you all for giving me the confidence to pursue my interest in this topic and to continue writing.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for their support in sending me to Haverford and for always telling me that I am more capable than I realize. In particular, thank you to my mom for always believing in me, and to my *nenen* who taught me to always be proud of my culture and upbringing. This thesis would not have been possible without all of your support.

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Background</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 The Country of Spain and the History of Its Languages	7
2.1.1 History of The Romance Languages of Spain	8
2.1.2 History of the Basque Language in Spain	9
2.2 Diglossia & Minoritized Languages	10
2.2.1 Spain’s Minoritized Languages	11
<b>3. Co-Officiality</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1 Language Policy & Official Languages	11
3.1.1 Language Policy of Spain	12
3.1.1.1 Francisco Franco & Non-Castilian Languages: 1939-1975	13
3.2 Asturian Co-Officiality	13
3.2.1 Proposal and Rejection of Asturian as a Co-Official Language in 2022	13
3.2.2 Public Opposition to Asturian as a Co-Official Language	17
3.2.3 Public Support for Asturian as a Co-Official Language	19
3.3 Catalan Co-Officiality	22
3.3.1 Proposal and Acceptance of Catalan as a Co-Official Language in 1979	22
3.3.2 Public Opposition to Catalan in Catalonia	24
3.3.3 Public Support for Catalan in Catalonia	26
<b>4. Public Primary Education</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1 Spanish Public School System and Language Education	27
4.2 Asturian Language Policy in Public Primary Schools	28
4.2.1 Perception Towards Asturian Language Use in Public Primary Schools	29
4.3 Catalan Language Policy in Public Primary Schools	31
4.3.1 Perception Towards Catalan Language Use and Protection in Public Primary Schools	34
<b>5. Analysis &amp; Conclusion</b>	<b>35</b>
5.1 Key Takeaways	35
5.2 Limitations	38
5.3 Future Implications	38

## 1. Introduction

The notion that Spain is a monolingual country united under the language of “Spanish” directly harms the linguistic diversity of the country and its speakers. Although the official language of the nation is Spanish (also referred to as “Castilian”<sup>1</sup>), Catalan, Basque, Galician, and Aranaese are co-official languages in their respective regions (Tatutrad 2021: n.p.). “In Spain, more than 40% of the population lives in officially bilingual regions in which the minority language is used as a means of instruction at school and university” (Lasagabaster 2017, 583). Aside from the languages that do have this denotation of “co-official status”, there are multiple minoritized languages that are not considered co-official languages such as Asturian, Aragonese, and Extremaduran among others (Tatutrad 2021: n.p.). These non-Castilian languages enjoy different rights, protections, and privileges within the respective regions in which they are spoken. Notably, languages with co-official status generally have more protections for learning and use in public sectors as opposed to languages that do not have this status (Lasagabaster 2014, 27). For example, languages that have co-official status are typically required to appear in the school curriculum either as the language of instruction, or as a mandatory school subject, typically before the university level (Huguet 2007, 75-76). On the other hand, laws and requirements surrounding the use and teaching of languages that do not have this designation of “co-official” are generally much more vague and do not have set guidelines about how these languages are used and learned in various public sectors (Huguet 2006, 417-418). As a result, languages that lack co-official status, such as Asturian, are at risk of being classified as “endangered languages” (Quintana and Fernández-Viciana 2023, 138). As a result, comparing the language policies and attitudes towards two languages, one without co-official status, and one with co-official status, can provide key insights into whether or not this co-official designation is

---

<sup>1</sup> In this paper, I refer to “Spanish” and “Castilian” interchangeably and without distinction.

necessary for the survival and continued usage of these languages. This thesis examines the importance and influence of the co-official designation in educational sectors for Catalan, a co-official language, and Asturian, a language that does not have co-official status. Here, I explore what factors related to “official status” of language in Spain contribute to the differential usage of Asturian and Catalan in their respective regions, specifically within the sector of public primary education since the dates of their legal protection (i.e. since 1979 for Catalan and since 1998 for Asturian) and show that three main factors play a large role, namely: public perception, wording of the laws, as well as historical and economic influences of the language.

In order to understand the impact that the co-official label has on education in particular, it is essential to understand national and regional laws related to official status, governmental and public attitudes towards this co-officiality label, and the laws and attitudes in relation to the use of these languages within public primary schools. First, this thesis aims to establish an understanding of key historical context and definitions of terms related to the languages spoken in modern-day Spain and the concept of diglossia. This paper looks primarily at how the languages of Asturian and Catalan are used and policies that affect their use in their respective regions, Asturias and Catalonia. While I focus on the use and perceptions of Catalan in the region of Catalonia, it is important to note that, within Spain, Catalan is also spoken primarily in the regions of Valencia under the name of Valencian<sup>2</sup> and the Balearic Islands among a handful of smaller regions (Vila-i-Moreno 2008, 157). After establishing this background, I begin exploring the concept of an official language and its relation to language policy in the context of nation states. Then, I move into the Spanish context with Asturian and Catalan in relation to their proposals of co-official status as well as their respective rejection and acceptance in Asturias and

---

<sup>2</sup> There is debate about whether or not the language varieties referred to as “Valencian” and “Catalan” are two separate languages but this falls beyond the scope of the thesis (Archilés, Ferran, and Martí 2001, 780).

Catalonia. Building off of the denotation of the co-officiality label, I introduce public support and opposition for Asturian as a co-official language in Asturias and public support and opposition to the use of the Catalan language in Catalonia. Finally, moving into the realm of education, I look at and analyze the laws related to Asturian and Catalan language use and perception in public primary schools. In the conclusion, I present the key takeaways, limitations to the research, and future implications and directions.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1 The Country of Spain and the History of Its Languages**

The modern-day nation of the Kingdom of Spain is a country of approximately 46 million inhabitants located primarily within the southwestern region of the continent of Europe (Pierson 2019, 2). Spain comprises: the majority of the Iberian Peninsula in southwestern Europe, the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean Ocean, the Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean, and the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the coast of Morocco (Pierson 2019, 2). Similarly to its geographic diversity, Spain is linguistically diverse as well. Within the country, there are multiple languages that are currently spoken such as: Castilian, Catalan, Basque, Galician, Asturian, and Extremaduran among others. As it currently stands in the Spanish Constitution, “Castilian is the official language of the state. All Spaniards have the duty and right to know and use it” (Doppelbauer 2008, 22).<sup>3</sup> To understand the modern political and cultural influences of the Spanish language in relation to the minoritized languages of Spain, it is important to look at the development of the language that we call “Spanish” and its influence over the years.

---

<sup>3</sup> My translation of the original Spanish: “El castellano es la lengua española oficial del Estado. Todos los españoles tienen el deber de conocerla y el derecho a usarla”.

### 2.1.1 History of The Romance Languages of Spain

Spanish, Asturian, Catalan, and many other languages spoken within Spain, are part of the Italic branch of the Indo-European language family (Penny 2002, 2). One of the most prominent members of the Italic language family, Latin, had particular influence both within and beyond the Italian peninsula (Penny 2002, 3). Over the years, “as a result of varying development in different parts of this territory, Latin evolved into the family of related dialects (some of which achieved the status of standard languages) known as the Romance language family” (Penny 2002, 3). “All the other languages and dialects [apart from Basque] that are found today in the Iberian Peninsula derive from Latin, and form part of the Romance Language continuum that covers much of southwestern Europe” (Mar-Molinero 2002, 19).

While the lingua franca of the Roman Empire was Classical Latin, the form of communication that was used between common people in day-to-day affairs is known as Vulgar Latin (Mar-Molinero 2002, 19). Over time, these forms of Vulgar Latin took on different characteristics and became distinguishable as “different” from Latin (Mar-Molinero 2002, 19). On the Iberian Peninsula during the 8th century, apart from Basque, there were at least five distinct linguistic groups (Mar-Molinero 2002, 19). These groups had emerged from forms of Vulgar Latin and were known as: Galacio-Portuguese, Asturian-Leonese, Aragonese, Catalan, and Castilian (Mar-Molinero 2002, 19). These languages were generally associated with their respective kingdoms and speech communities of the Iberian peninsula (Mar-Molinero 2002, 19-20). During this time period, Christian kingdoms unified with each other and the Kingdom of Castile, with their “Castilian” language, became the most influential (Mar-Molinero 2002, 20). In 1230, the Kingdom of Leon where Asturian was spoken, permanently joined the Kingdom of Castile (Ortego Rico and Mugueta Moreno, 6). About 2 centuries later, the Kingdom of Aragon



where Catalan was spoken, and the Kingdom of Castile, unified under the union of the *Reyes Católicos* (Catholic Rulers) in 1479 (Pérez 1997, 75). As the Kingdom of Castile came to gain influence and dominate the peninsula politically and militaristically, the linguistic influence of this kingdom through its language, Castilian, also rose (Mar-Molinero 2002, 20). Notably, “with Castile as the dominant power, the language of this power [Castilian] was used increasingly in situations of prestige and influence, such as the Court, the Church, in legal documents, and in the administration of the Spanish state” (Mar-Molinero 2002, 21). Nevertheless, these “other” languages such as Catalan and Asturian were tolerated in informal, public aspects of life in their respective regions (Mar-Molinero 2002, 21). Throughout Spain’s history, we have seen different languages with varying levels of power and prestige interact with each other. This concept of languages interacting with each other will be re-visited.

### **2.1.2 History of the Basque Language in Spain**

While the majority of the languages spoken within Spain share a common Indo-European ancestor, the Basque language, spoken primarily in northern Spain, is not a descendant of Indo-European and is not related to the other languages spoken within the country (Artiagoitia 2015, 195). There is a wide array of theories about the origins and use of the Basque language throughout history, one of which states that Basque was the “ancient indigenous language of the entire Iberian peninsula.” (Trask 1995, 65). Nevertheless, linguists generally agree that Basque is a language isolate because they have not been able to establish a connection between Basque and any other living or dead language in the world (Trask 1995, 65-66). During the Medieval time period, the Basque language was spoken primarily in the Kingdom of Navarre before it was officially annexed by the Kingdom of Castile in the early 16th century (Woodacre 2011, 4). Although the Basque language is not the primary focus of this thesis, there are many important

questions that can arise surrounding its status as a language isolate, a co-official language of Spain, and its relationship to Castilian in educational sectors.

## **2.2 Diglossia & Minoritized Languages**

Ferguson's landmark proposal of diglossia defines it as a situation in which two languages or dialects are spoken in a given community with one being designated as a "high" variety (H) and the other being designated as a "low" variety (L) (Ferguson 1959, 327). He argues that the H language is utilized in some contexts (e.g. in public spaces such as schools), while the L language is utilized in others (e.g. in private sectors such as the home) where there is little overlap in use between the two (Ferguson 1959, 327-328). While the term "diglossia" has been associated with the linguistic situation of Catalonia between Spanish and Catalan, it is important to note that these languages are not used in exclusively distinct contexts (Smith and Smith 1996, 117). In that sense, there is no rigid distribution between when the two languages are used (Smith and Smith 1996, 117). Might this have to do with the fact that they are both co-official languages? Nevertheless, despite this difference in the Catalan context, diglossic situations are important to understand in the context of this thesis, especially as it is related to the situation with Asturian in Asturias that will be discussed in further detail.

Although referred to interchangeably, there is a difference between a "minority" language and a "minoritized language" (FundéuRAE 2011: n.p.). A minority language refers to a language in which there is a smaller number of speakers in relation to another language spoken in that same community where a minoritized language is a language in which its use has been restricted in some way by political or social factors (FundéuRAE 2011: n.p.). In this framework, minoritized languages are viewed in the context of systems of power between languages as opposed to the number of speakers. Although many sources utilize these terms interchangeably, I

will refer to the situation of Spain's non-Castilian languages as minoritized languages, as many of them have been restricted, either at the legal level, or for social reasons.

### **2.2.1 Spain's Minoritized Languages**

For the case of Spain's minoritized languages and official status, "...despite the minority languages' co-equal status in their regions, the only language the constitution requires citizens to know, and guarantees their rights to use, is Spanish. What we have, therefore, is a serious legal imbalance in the constitution that is prejudicial against minority language rights" (Ferrer 2000, 189). Even from the legal level alone, the protections and usage of minoritized languages of Spain are mentioned vaguely in the Constitution. This ambiguity in the Constitution leads to questions about the different power dynamics between Spanish and the minoritized languages, differential usage and protection in their regional diglossic situations, as well as the relevance of language loss.

## **3. Co-Officiality**

### **3.1 Language Policy & Official Languages**

Nation states have regularly sought to control and dictate the use of languages within their borders (Shohamy 2006, 17). In a broad sense, language policy can be thought of as "examining the decisions surrounding language use and emphasizing the effects of these decisions and potential constraints on different groups within society" (Shohamy 2006, 3) and "a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the society, group, or system" (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997, xi). While it is dependent upon the country, The general principles of language policy are useful in understanding factors that affect how and which languages are spoken in a given context.

This thesis focuses on language policy in multilingual communities in Spain. Multilingual communities are neither new nor limited geographically-- having existed throughout time and multiple parts of the globe (Bergenholtz, Henning, and Sven Tarp 2005, 1). For example, “Latin throughout the conquest of the Roman empire lived side-by-side with the languages of the conquered territories” (Bergenholtz, Henning, and Sven Tarp 2005, 1). In their conquered territories, there existed a *sine qua non* (“absolute necessity”) condition of learning Latin if one were to integrate into Roman society and culture (Bergenholtz, Henning, and Sven Tarp 2005, 1). This example demonstrates that with language policy, there are multiple factors apart from legality, such as societal factors, that can affect the actual usage and learning of those languages within communities.

### **3.1.1 Language Policy of Spain**

In terms of language policy and its effect on actual usage, the concept of official languages is also important to note. In the context of Spain, the Constitution of 1978 “establishes that Castilian is the official language of the State and requires all citizens to know it. In addition, it guarantees the officiality of other Spanish languages within their geographical territory and in accordance with their Statutes of Autonomy” (Webber and Strubell i Trueta 1991, 25). Even though Spain has one official language at the federal level, it is ultimately up to the regional governments to decide if they will have a co-official language in addition to Spanish. Notably, the Constitution also establishes that “the wealth of the different linguistic forms of Spain is a cultural heritage which shall be especially respected and protected” (Lasagabaster 2011, 109). Although it appears that the Spanish government attempts to recognize and protect the linguistic heritage of the country, this wording is vague and does not provide a framework into the specifics of how they will be protected.

### 3.1.1.1 Francisco Franco & Non-Castilian Languages: 1939-1975

Between 1939-1975, the Kingdom of Spain was under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, who attempted to erase regional identities to promote a national Spanish identity (Casademont 2020, 69). During his reign, Franco attempted to repress regional languages and cultures where the use of non-Castilian languages, such as Catalan and Basque, was prohibited in public spaces and was considered a sanctionable offense (Taylor 2022, 3). These arguments in support of these policies that decreased usage of regional languages were based around the notion that it would promote unity within the Spanish nation (Taylor 2022, 3). In order to do so, there was a steady influx of Castilian rhetoric that was spread through various mediums such as signs that read “*No ladres. Habla el idioma del Imperio*” (Don’t bark. Speak the language of the Empire) (Vann 1999, 192). Even though Franco’s stated intent was to promote pride in national identity, he did this by creating shame and stigma against regional identity. Similarly, language ideologies in schools revolved around the belief that Castilian was the more prestigious language which resulted in generations of children believing that Spanish unity and Castilian monolingualism were intertwined (Vann 1999, 192). This example demonstrates the language ideology of one nation, one language and the notion that a monolingual Spain would lead to greater Spanish unity is one that will be discussed later in this thesis. Understanding this rhetoric of the Franco regime provides insight into current language attitudes and policies in Spain.

## 3.2 Asturian Co-Officiality

### 3.2.1 Proposal and Rejection of Asturian as a Co-Official Language in 2022

In September of 2022, the three left-leaning political parties of FSA-PSOE (*Federación Socialista Asturiana-Partido Socialista Obrero Español*), Podemos, and IU (*Izquierda Xunida d'Asturies*), submitted a document to the *Gobierno del Principado* (Government of the

Principality) with a series of proposals to codify Asturian as a co-official language in the *Estatuto de Autonomía del Principado de Asturias* (Statute of Autonomy of the Principality of Asturias), as a starting point to initiate the dialogue with other political forces (COPE 2022: n.p.). In opposition, multiple right-leaning parties such as PP (*Partido Popular de Asturias*), Ciudadanos, and Vox, stated their opposition to such a move (COPE 2022: n.p.). One of the principal arguments of various right-leaning political parties against the codification of Asturian as a co-official language was based on concerns relevant to social demand for use of the language as well as arguments that previous laws set in place were sufficient protection for the language (COPE 2022: n.p.). “PP and Ciudadanos justified their rejection by highlighting that the community already had the 1998 Law of Use and Promotion for “Bable”/Asturian and considered that officiality would suppose an imposition of a language that lacks the necessary social demand” (COPE 2022: n.p.).<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that, while “Bable” and “Asturian” are often referred to interchangeably, “The term Bable is less popular today and at some point, it was used to refer to this language in a derogatory way which is why the majority of experts, as well as those who use it, refer to the language as ‘Asturian’” (Hernández 2022: n.p.).<sup>5</sup> In this paper, recognizing the history of the term “Bable,” I utilize the term “Asturian” for my own analysis but refer to those terms without distinction when utilizing quotes from other sources. The law of 1998 that PP and Ciudadanos were referring to states, “Bable”/Asturian, as an official language of Asturias, will enjoy protection. The Principality of Asturias will promote its

---

<sup>4</sup> My translation of the original Spanish: “PP y Ciudadanos justificaron su rechazo al subrayar que la comunidad ya cuenta desde 1998 con una Ley de Uso y Promoción del Bable/Asturiano y considerar que la oficialidad iba a suponer una imposición de una “lilingua” que carece de la necesaria demanda social”.

<sup>5</sup> My translation of the original Spanish: “El término bable es hoy menos popular y en algún momento se usó para referirse a esta lengua de modo despectivo, por lo que la mayoría de los expertos, así como quienes lo usan, se refieren al idioma como ‘asturiano’”.

use, diffusion, and teaching” (BOE 1998, 5).<sup>6</sup> While the articles of the law state on numerous occasions that Asturian is a language that will be “protected” in Asturias, there is little specificity in the implementation of these policies. This is similar to the situation observed with the ambiguity of the Spanish Constitution that recognizes that Spain’s linguistic heritage must be protected and it is possible that the ambiguity of the law of 1998 is related to the wording in the Constitution. Furthermore, the majority of these articles of the law state that it is up to the various regional institutions to decide what these “protections” would look like as it had not made any mention to the establishment or enforcement of a centralized standard for protections.

A reform to the *Estatuto de Autonomía* requires an enhanced majority of 27/45 seats of the *parlamento autonómico* (autonomous parliament) (COPE 2022: n.p.). At the time of the vote, the three leftist parties in support of the codification were one seat short of this majority (COPE 2022: n.p.). Both the government of the president of the region of Asturias, Adrián Barbón, and the FSA-PSOE, insisted that the objective of these proposals towards co-officiality was to implement a model of “*oficialidad amable*,” roughly translated as a “friendly legal act,” that would allow for the consolidation of the rights of speakers of Asturian in more specific ways than those that currently exist (COPE 2022: n.p.). This language of “friendly legal act” can be seen as a way to attempt to present the co-officiality of Asturian in a positive light for the benefit of citizens in an attempt to sway opposing groups to review what the proposals are specifically stating. In spite of this rhetoric, right-wing groups remained skeptical about the implementation of this “*oficialidad amable*” on the basis of feasibility arguing that, if these proposals were passed, the administration would be obligated to provide assistance in Asturian to any citizen who requested it (COPE 2022: n.p.). Nevertheless, 26/27 seats (1 less than the required 27),

---

<sup>6</sup> My translation of the original Spanish: “El bable/asturiano, como lengua tradicional de Asturias, gozará de protección. El Principado de Asturias promoverá su uso, difusión y enseñanza”.

occupied by PSOE (20), Podemos (4), and IU (2), had already been in agreement in regards to Asturian's co-official status (COPE 2022: n.p.).

Foro, a right-leaning group, which had not made a public stance on their support or opposition to the proposal, was the last seat to take a stance and was crucial to gaining the 27/45 majority to amend the Asturian Statute. Nevertheless, Foro had finally decided to initiate the conversation and take an official stance with reassurance that the 27/45 majority would be required and protected (COPE 2022: n.p.). PSOE, Podemos, and IU accepted this proposal and were put into conversation with Adrián Pumares, general secretary of Foro (Vega 2022: n.p.). However, “[Pumares] surprised them with a budget proposal that intended to complement the statutory reform with another of fiscal character, that included, among other measures, the practical suppression of the inheritance tax, to which *IU* responded with frontal opposition by question of political principles” (COPE 2022: n.p.).<sup>7</sup> This fiscal reform was not related to the proposition of codifying Asturian as a co-official language and it was possible that it was an attempt to gain approval for an economic change that Foro wanted to be passed. In either instance, it appears that Foro did not want to explicitly oppose co-officiality of Asturian and attempted to distract and separate themselves from their opposition by proposing a bill that was both irrelevant to the language but also knowingly opposed by left-leaning groups. Nevertheless, on the basis of opposition to Pumares’ “complementary proposal,” multiple left-leaning groups refused to give their support for all of these aforementioned changes to be collectively accepted into the Asturian Statute of Autonomy and were unable to reach the 27/45 consensus required for codification (COPE 2022: n.p.).

---

<sup>7</sup> My translation of the original Spanish: “Iniciadas las negociaciones con Pumares, éste sorprendió con una propuesta que pretendía complementar la reforma estatutaria con otra de carácter fiscal, que incluía, entre otras medidas, la práctica supresión del impuesto de sucesiones, a lo que IU respondió con su frontal oposición por una cuestión de principios políticos”.



The actions led by FSA-PSOE, Podemos, and IU in September 2022 has shown that there is both public support and opposition to the codification of Asturian as a co-official language.

The addition of a fiscal reform to the *Estatuto* can be seen as a purely political move to attempt to sway the votes from left-leaning parties in a way that does not involve the language of Asturian nor the politics regarding the language. Although the vote narrowly failed, Barbón, the President of the Principality of Asturias, has stated support of revisiting this case again during the regional elections of Asturias in 2023 in support of the Asturian people (COPE 2022: n.p.).<sup>8</sup>

### 3.2.2 Public Opposition to Asturian as a Co-Official Language

While the Asturian government has been unable to codify Asturian as a co-official language, it is important to consider public opinions on the matter. There are several movements against adding Asturian as a co-official language, one of the most notable being *The Platform against Co-officiality* (Rojo 2021a: n.p.). Beatriz Zapico, one of the principal representatives of this movement has stated that if Asturian were to become a co-official language,

It would force all or some subjects in education to be in Bable, us to address the Administration in Bable, and it would affect all of us to a personal level because once Bable becomes official, we will have to use it, to know how to write it, to know how to speak it, and also in Asturias, there isn't a single [form of] Bable, in each zone they speak differently, and it would impose on us an artificial Bable, because they don't speak the same in *el Eo*, *el Oriente*, or in *las Cuencas*.<sup>9</sup> (Rojo 2021a: n.p.)

As can be seen from Zapico's comments, one of the main concerns, or possible rhetorical devices used by the platform, is that the co-official status of Asturian would bring upon the citizens a

---

<sup>8</sup> Barbon's coalition on Asturian language co-official designation (FSA-PSOE, Podemos, and IU) had a net loss of three seats in the regional election. This means he would need the support of at least four other parliament members to pass the measure (Palicio and Arduro 2023: n.p.).

<sup>9</sup> My translation of the original Spanish: "Obligaría a que en la educación las asignaturas o parte de ellas fueran en bable, que nos dirigiésemos a la Administración en bable, y nos afectaría a nivel personal a todos porque en el momento en que el bable fuese oficial habría que utilizarlo, saber escribirlo, saber hablarlo, y además en Asturias no hay un único bable, en cada zona se habla de una manera diferente, y sería imponernos un bable artificial, porque no hablan igual en el Eo, en el Oriente o en las Cuencas".

“standard” form of the language that is not the language that is actually spoken by the Asturian people (Rojo 2021a: n.p.). It is possible that Zapico, among others, may be attempting to highlight the “differences” among the varieties within the Asturian language in order to work against a common Asturian-language identity. Besides from this, Zapico argues that the amendments to the Asturian Constitution would require this “artificial language” to be imposed on every aspect of life that transcends the reach of solely the classroom. Nevertheless, when asked about how she [Zapico] felt about the president of Asturias’ *oficialidad amable* “friendly legal act”, she responded with,

Friendliness in these topics do not exist. Why? Because say you are in a judicial proceeding and if a witness wants to speak “Bable”, then we would have to get an interpreter because we wouldn’t understand. Therefore, there wouldn’t be any [so-called] “friendly” legal act. If the Statute were to be reformed, it would be obligatory for everyone to use “Bable” in speech as well as in writing.<sup>10</sup> (Rojo 2021a: n.p.)

According to Zapico, “oficialidad amable” cannot exist because an interpreter for this “standard” Asturian would be required in many instances, especially for those situations of official nature (Rojo 2021a: n.p.). Similarly, she also states, “We don’t want to get to these situations that we are observing in other communities: confrontations because of language. When all of us know Spanish, why do we have to create a conflict when there’s never been one before?” (Rojo 2021a: n.p.).<sup>11</sup> A particular concern is regarding the linguistic situations that are being observed in “other communities” that were not specified in the interview. In this statement, Zapico is arguing that

---

<sup>10</sup> My translation of the original Spanish: “La amabilidad en estos temas no existe. ¿Por qué? Porque tú estás en un procedimiento judicial y si un testigo quiere hablar bable, pues tendríamos que poner un traductor, porque no lo entenderíamos. Por lo tanto, no hay cooficialidad amable. En el momento en que se reforme el Estatuto, va a ser obligatorio para todos el empleo del bable tanto oral como escrito”.

<sup>11</sup> My translation of the original Spanish: “No queremos llegar a estas situaciones que estamos observando en otras comunidades: enfrentamientos por un lenguaje. Cuando todos sabemos español, ¿por qué hay que crear un conflicto donde nunca lo ha habido?”.

Spanish suffices as the language of communication and that the addition of Asturian as a co-official language would create more harm than benefits (Rojo 2021a: n.p.). Similar studies such as one conducted in 2022 that interviewed various people in Oviedo, Asturias about the use and relationship between Asturian and Spanish have shown perceptions that are largely related to what Zapico has expressed (Gubitosi and Medina González, 48). In this study, they found that “the participants who denied the importance of the presence of Asturian generally argued that the regional language is spoken by few people (6), that it is not necessary (7), and that having signs in Spanish is enough (8)” (Gubitosi and Medina González, 48). The majority of these comments from these studies are based on the assumption that a sizable amount of the population cannot speak Asturian to the level that would be required for both Asturian and Spanish to be used on equal grounds. Nevertheless, Zapico’s responses lack exact numbers and percentages regarding the number of Asturian citizens who would likely be against the reforming of the Asturian Statute to include Asturian as co-official. It appears that the majority of these comments are based on the ideology that diglossia situations can cause more harm than good in the sense that if multiple languages are spoken, this can lead to further differences related to culture and identity, whereas if only one language were spoken, unity and peace through linguistic hegemony would be promoted. Despite this, the data does show that there is some opposition to Asturian co-officiality, especially in the interest of preserving Castilian as the primary language and preventing conflict between language communities.

### **3.2.3 Public Support for Asturian as a Co-Official Language**

While there is a noticeable amount of public opposition, there is also a sizable amount of public support for ratifying Asturian as a co-official language (Rojo 2021b: n.p.). For example, “In Oviedo, more than 30,000 people, according to the organizers, have responded to the call

from the *Xunta pola Defensa de la Llingua Asturiana* [Defense Board for the Asturian Language], the overturned association in this objective, to ‘demonstrate the massive support for officiality’” (Rojo 2021b: n.p.).<sup>12</sup> Oviedo, the capital of Asturias, with a population of more than 200,000 people out of the total approximate 1,00,000 people who live in the regions of Asturias, has had self-reported large support for the codification of Asturian as a co-official language in the region (Rojo 2021b: n.p.). While these demonstrations took place in 2021, these are not the only instances of public support (Forniès 2021: n.p.). For example,

A 2017 study by the Basque Country’s Euskobarómetro team noted that 8 out of 10 Asturians wanted their language to be treated in the same way as Catalan, Basque, or Galician, all of which enjoy official status in most territories where they are spoken. When asked specifically about the notion of official status, 53% were for, 20% were indifferent, and 25% opposed. (Forniès 2021: n.p.)

Although these aforementioned statistics do not include specific numbers about how many people were interviewed, from these surveys and data alone, it can be seen that the majority of the people who were interviewed do favorably view Asturian as a possible co-official language in a way that they believe should be treated similarly to other co-official languages of Spain in their respective regions.

With the seemingly large amount of public support for the codification of Asturian as a co-official language, it is important to consider larger questions of demographics and how they interact with support for (or resistance to) these movements. As stated by Xosé Candel and Inaciu Galán, spokespeople from Xunta, “‘Older people still have a certain self-hatred towards the language,’ Candel explains, ‘perhaps as a defence mechanism for all the mockery they suffered when they were young. But with youths now, this has changed.’ ‘It will be up to society

---

<sup>12</sup> My translation of the original Spanish: “En **Oviedo** más de 30.000 personas, según los organizadores, han respondido a la llamada de la **Xunta pola Defensa de la Llingua Asturiana**, asociación volcada en este objetivo, para ‘demostrar el apoyo masivo a la oficialidad’”. Bold removed in in-text translation.

to save the language,' Galán goes on, 'and official status is not the end of the road, but just the beginning'" (Forniès 2021: n.p.). Candel and Galán argue that people from the older generations, who grew up in a time period where Franco had banned the use of non-Castilian languages in public sectors, can view the establishment of Asturian as co-official as a negative which may stem from these perceptions of "inferiority" and "shame" which had been ingrained in them from a young age. On the other hand, they view younger generations as the possibility to gaining co-official status after decades of opposition to bringing up conversations of Asturian as a co-official language. Most notably, "The current Asturian president, socialist Adrián Barbón, 'is one of the youngest members in parliament. He is from a generation that has grown up in democracy, with Asturian in schools, even if it was an optional subject. They are more cultured about what it means to know Asturian, and they bring a bit of normality to it'" (Forniès 2021: n.p.). According to Candel and Galán, changes with the younger generations, the generations who grew up after the death of the dictator, Francisco Franco, in 1975, who had the opportunity to view Asturian offered as an optional subject in educational sectors, will be the generations that will hopefully allow for continued conversations and the push for Asturian to finally becoming a co-official language in Asturias. Particularly, the word "normality" in this context is important in beginning the dialogue of placing Asturian in situations that would be comparable to Castilian. It brings with it the possibility of becoming a language that is utilized in an everyday capacity as opposed to an isolated, optional object of study within schools.

All in all, it is important to recognize that this proposal of codifying Asturian as a co-official language within the Statute of Autonomy has split public support and opposition. Relatedly, further analysis of differing variables in the research such as the amount of people who are being interviewed, and the demographics of the people who participated and

demonstrated their support, may be beneficial for a separate study.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, while the decision of co-officiality ultimately lies in the hands of the Asturian government, it is worth noting that there is both opposition and support by the public for various reasons. Overall, the elections in late 2022 demonstrated the split in both governmental and public support, with the ratification falling just 1 seat shy of the necessary 27/45 majority necessary for change. For the time being, Asturian will not be one of Spain's new co-official languages.

### **3.3 Catalan Co-Officiality**

#### **3.3.1 Proposal and Acceptance of Catalan as a Co-Official Language in 1979**

After having viewed how Asturian came to be proposed and rejected as a co-official language, that brings us to the question of how did other regional languages of Spain such as Catalan come to be not only proposed, but ratified in their regional constitutions as co-official languages as well? It's important to note that although the modern day government has recognized and established legal protections for Catalan since 1979, the Catalan language was made compulsory<sup>14</sup> in primary education alongside Castilian Spanish in 1931 while being used at the university level and in media at this point in time as well (Fowler 2014, 106-107). Catalan was even approved by the Spanish Parliament to become an official language in 1932 where, in that time period, it had already been used in the region of Catalonia as a *de facto* language (Fowler 2014, 106). While I was not able to find direct links between the connection of Catalan having already been established as a co-official language and its process of regaining this status after the Franco regime, it may be worth noting the possible impact of streamlining this process and that it could be worth studying in the future.

---

<sup>13</sup> Although the specifics behind whether or not this public split in support is representative of governmental views lies beyond the scope of this thesis, it may very well be worth further study.

<sup>14</sup> The article did not specify beyond "compulsory" (e.g. whether it is a mandatory subject in school and/or mandatory language of instruction, etc.).

One of the principal opportunities for changes to Catalonia's Statute of Autonomy since the death of Franco came from the changes in 1978 to the Spanish Constitution. "Although Spanish is the only official language of Spain as a whole, the Constitution enacted in 1978 acknowledges that regional languages can become co-official languages if they are recognised as such by their specific regional Statutes" (Lasagabaster 2011, 109). For one of the first times in decades, it was now up to the regional governments to update their Statutes of Autonomy in order to decide the legality of their languages and whether or not they would have co-official status. For the case of Catalan, the aspect of it having once had legal and co-official protections within Catalonia previously may have helped in the process of regaining its co-official status in 1979.

The 1979 Reform to the Statute of Autonomy restored Catalan as a co-official language of Catalonia while providing, within the legal framework, more opportunities for specific and detailed protections to emerge (Webber and Strubell i Trueta 1991, 25). As stated in the Reform, "the Generalitat [Government of Catalonia] will guarantee the normal and official use of both languages, will adopt whatever measures are deemed necessary to ensure both languages are known, and will create suitable conditions so that full equality between the two can be achieved as far as the rights and duties of the citizens of Catalonia are concerned" (Webber and Strubell i Trueta 1991, 25). This aspect of full equality with Castilian Spanish is wording that we had not seen with the Law of 1998 for Asturias that also attempted to guarantee protections for the Asturian language and its speakers. As opposed to the more ambiguous nature of the Asturian Law of 1998 that states that Asturian "will enjoy protections," Catalonia's Statute of Autonomy placed Catalan's protection in comparison with Castilian Spanish which, "for the majority of Spaniards, *castellano* is the mother tongue and sole language of use, and *castellano* is the

language of Spain widely regarded as the one with the greatest political and economic weight” (Boyd-Barrett 2002, 206). By placing these languages in comparison in the Statute of Catalonia, it can be seen that the language used in the Reform of 1979 opened up the conversation to true equality and genuine “co-officiality” between the Catalan and Castilian Spanish languages within the Catalonia region. After analyzing the historical circumstances, I conclude that one of the principal reasons that Catalan was able to become a co-official language almost directly after the reformation of the Spanish Constitution in 1978, was that it had already enjoyed legal protections and co-official status before the Francoist dictatorship that forced Castilian Spanish and already had a legal framework to base itself upon.

### **3.3.2 Public Opposition to Catalan in Catalonia**

Moving away from the formal process within Catalonia’s government towards making Catalan a co-official language, it is beneficial to view public opposition to Catalan language use and the rationales behind it in seeing how it plays a role in affecting linguistic ideologies and policies. However, unlike the research and sources found for Asturian, the majority of sources that I had encountered for public opposition to Catalan were not against the protection of Catalan as a co-official language, rather on the increased usage of Catalan. One argument, in particular, argues against the increased usage of Catalan on the basis of language “deficiency” (Rees 1996, 315-316). They argue that if true bilingualism were to happen between Catalan and Castilian Spanish, this would lead to decreased performance in Spanish (Rees 1996, 315-316). One study in particular found that, “In spite of constitutional guarantees, parents worry that children immersed in 'minority' language instruction will become functional illiterates in Spanish, which might impede access to outside labor markets and universities” (Rees 1996, 315-316). Under the notion that both Catalan and Castilian Spanish would enjoy “equal” privileges through the laws



of Catalonia, a main point of contention and opposition was that this true equality would be unachievable. Notably, the concern came from the realm of education where parents were concerned that if their children were to receive education in the “minority” language (Catalan), that it would be harmful to them in the future as a result of less exposure to the “dominant” language, and therefore, decreased performance [Castilian] (Rees 1996, 315-316). In a similar manner, there were also concerns, in the field of law, about the influence of Catalan and the extent to which it would be equal to Castilian (Rees 1996, 316). One notable example related to the languages that judges would be required to know showed,

The Administration of Justice's Spanish Language Association applauded the Popular Party's suit against a law requiring judges to speak the language of the autonomous region in which they preside. The Party contends the law is unconstitutional because knowing a co-official language becomes an "obligation" rather than a "right." Its attorney argued that while it is meritorious for judges to know a co-official language, not all do and thus the rule restricts a monolingual Spanish-speaking judge's freedom to preside in an autonomous region. (Rees 1996, 316)

In this instance, the Popular Party argued that by requiring judges to speak the languages of the autonomous region that they would preside in, this would limit various judge's ability to work and preside in different regions of the country where Castilian is not the only official language (Rees 1996, 316). In both of the instances of opposition of laws regarding the use of the Catalan language in the sectors of education and law respectively, it can be seen that a major common aspect lies in the notion that the establishment of laws that are in favor of protection or increased usage of Catalan can and will directly harm those who utilize or wish to utilize Castilian as the dominant language. In this case, similar to the argument against the protection of the Asturian language in Asturias, these increased “protections” and “rights” of the citizens within those respective regions would lead to more harm than good with language being seen as a mandatory hindrance as opposed to a fundamental right.

### 3.3.3 Public Support for Catalan in Catalonia

After analyzing some of the various rationales to the opposition of increased use of Catalan in certain sectors, it is crucial to note that the majority of the primary and secondary sources that I had found showed public support for Catalan's use and protection within Catalonia. In the years leading up to the Reform of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy, "Repression during the Franco regime failed to alter this balance [with Castilian], and since the late 1960s there has been a steadily increasing pressure from many directions-public petitions, establishment of pressure groups, setting up of language courses for teachers and others-for the reintroduction of the language into the school programme" (McNair 1980, 36-37). Catalan, even throughout the Franco regime where it was banned in public sectors including education, not only survived against the odds but was promoted within private spheres and was gaining popularity and influence for its learning within educational spaces (Anguera 2003, 91). This popularity among the general public extended also to immigrants who did not speak Catalan where, in 1970, a survey was given to parents asking about the language(s) that they wanted their children to learn and utilize in schools (Anguera 2003, 91). As shown from this survey, "despite the fact that only 56% claimed it as their first language and 62.3% were natives of other sections of Spain. In fact, the interest in the language shown by immigrants to Catalonia constitutes the greatest proof of the failure of the state's plan for complete Castilianization" (Anguera 2003, 91).

Another interesting aspect to note is that immigrants who came to Catalonia were also interested in learning Catalan, not just Castilian Spanish (Anguera 2003, 91). Even though the Franco regime promoted the idea of the use of Castilian Spanish only, the demand for Catalan can be viewed as a counter movement to the linguistic assimilation that was forced upon them. This can be seen as an important detail in looking at the demand and support for learning and

using Catalan language in various sectors but most notably, in education as well. Similarly, “Catalan already was, since the 50’s, a language identified with economic power...; it was a symbol of socio-economic influence that was perceived and interpreted by the lower social classes who voluntarily and interestedly accepted its social permanence” (Soler Costa 2009, 124).<sup>15</sup> In addition to the demand for using Catalan in education, there was also a general perception, in economic and social terms, that Catalan was a language of importance and seen as a valuable resource for people from lower classes (Soler Costa, 2009, 124). Overall, the general perception of the use of the Catalan language from those who view it in a positive light, have based their opinions around the notions that it is a language that is useful as an economic and social tool, but also as a language that should be taught in the schools. These takeaways may be worth noting when looking at the case for Asturian with co-officiality as well.

#### **4. Public Primary Education**

##### **4.1 Spanish Public School System and Language Education**

In Spain, education is compulsory for all children ages 6-16 (*Educational Policies: Spain* 2014: n.p.). At the primary level, students around the ages of 6-12 enroll in Grade 1 through Grade 6 which is the rough US equivalent of Kindergarten through fifth grade (*Educational Policies: Spain* 2014: n.p.). In terms of language education in Spanish or a regional language, it can be thought of in three main contexts: as the language of instruction, as a compulsory subject, or as an optional subject. These frameworks are utilized based on the discretion of the legal framework of each language and are entirely dependent upon the language policies of each region (Huguet 2007, 75-76).

---

<sup>15</sup> My translation of the original Spanish: “Es decir, el catalán ya fue, a partir de la década de los 50, una lengua identificada con el poder económico y apetecida como tal; era un símbolo de influencia socio-económica así percibido e interpretado por las capas sociales más bajas que voluntaria e interesadamente aceptaban su preeminencia social”.

## 4.2 Asturian Language Policy in Public Primary Schools

Although Asturian has never been a co-official language, Article 4 of the Asturian Statute of Autonomy states, “Bable will enjoy protections. Its use, its dissemination in communicative outlets, and its teaching will be promoted, [respecting], in any case, local varieties and the voluntary nature of it to be learned” (Bleorțu 2018, 243).<sup>16</sup> This aspect of “voluntary nature” is crucial in understanding the types of curriculums and resources that are set up for learning Asturian, and their availability in public schools.

When looking at the outline for Asturian language teaching in schools, “as far as primary education is concerned, schools can include Asturian in their curricula, and students can have 2/3 hours per week. However, in order to be included in the school curriculum, it is first necessary to be approved in the school Council” (Bleorțu 2018, 243). Therefore, “In the stage of primary education Asturian is a full subject but, leaving aside specific situations and/or situations that form part of pilot experiments, it is not the language of instruction” (The Asturian Language in Education in Spain 2014, 19). Even though Asturian is not, under law, a mandatory subject for public primary education, this does not necessarily mean that students have not been taking an Asturian-language course when given the option. Between the years 1984 and 1995, the number of primary schools that offered Asturian increased from 6 to 202, and the number of students who took Asturian as an optional subject increased from 1,351 to 18,427 (Bleorțu 2018, 244). “In the last study presented by the Asturian Government, over 22,000 pupils study the Asturian language, which represents 55% of the primary education population” (Bleorțu 2018, 244). It is crucial to note that although Asturian is not compulsory in public primary education under Asturian law, over half of the primary education students did take an Asturian-language course.

---

<sup>16</sup>My translation of the original Spanish: “El bable gozará de protección. Se promoverá su uso, su difusión en los medios de comunicación y su enseñanza, [respetando], en todo caso, las variantes locales y voluntariedad en su aprendizaje”.

While it currently lies beyond the scope of the thesis, the question of why and how these numbers have been on the rise in spite of no additional protections for the language in public primary schools would be worth investigating.

#### **4.2.1 Perception Towards Asturian Language Use in Public Primary Schools**

After having viewed various language policies that affect how, if at all, Asturian will be used and/or taught in public primary schools, looking at how various groups of people view the use of Asturian in this type of educational setting can offer us a unique perspective into broader linguistic perceptions of the Asturian language. Admittedly, there was a relative lack of language attitude surveys and opinions towards the use of the Asturian language in public primary schools within Asturias. However, the majority of studies and investigations that were conducted demonstrated opinions and attitudes of primary school educators which is beneficial in highlighting the opinions of those who create and teach the curriculum. For example, in a study conducted towards prospective primary education teachers at a university in Asturias, it was concluded that “prospective teachers have an acceptable knowledge of the regional language and some very positive attitudes regarding the cultural and educational value of the teaching of Asturian in primary education; this holds in particular for students who were born in Asturias and who have learned Asturian when they were in primary education” (The Asturian Language in Education in Spain 2014, 32). From this study, positive attitudes towards the use of Asturian come from a place of personal experience with the language in a similar context to those in which they will be teaching soon. Further investigations would be beneficial in determining if there is a causal relationship between upbringing with the language and learning it in schools and positive attitudes towards continued use of its teaching.

Despite positive comments and rationales for the use of Asturian in public primary education, there have also been negative attitudes and arguments against the use of Asturian in these spaces. An example and rationales against the use of Asturian in education can be seen from a personal anecdote of an Asturian farmer in his 60's who spoke Asturian as a principal language while learning Castilian Spanish in school (Hermo del Teso 2017, 12). In this anecdote,

He [the farmer] was against Asturian being taught as an elective course in schools, because he did not think it was a good investment. He believes that Asturians do not know how to speak correctly, as their Spanish is far from the standard. He wants his children to speak Spanish in order to go further in life. Interestingly, he also believes that 'a good Asturian should speak [Asturian] well,' and he considers Asturian part of the Asturian identity. (Hermo del Teso 2017, 12)

In a similar manner to the argument against establishing Asturian as a co-official language, the main argument that can be seen from this argument is the belief that by teaching Asturian within schools, this can and will lead to a "deficit" in Castilian Spanish that will hinder students' abilities in the future. In another example, newspaper articles that talk about the use of the Asturian language have also shown various commentator's language attitudes towards the use of Asturian in general (Hermo del Teso 2017, 13). Newspaper articles that talk about how Asturian may be taught in schools soon, in particular, have been fairly useful in viewing attitudes towards educational sectors in particular. Nevertheless, the majority of these perceptions have been negative where,

The majority of commentators do not believe this [teaching Asturian in schools] is a good idea, as they do not think it is a good investment. Comments against having Asturian as a language in schools include worries about children not learning English, which according to commentators "has more future"; worries about other problems that Asturians face that should be tackled instead of imposing a language "that is not spoken"; worries about money invested in "garbage"; worries about making children learn a language that is not official, etc.. (Hermo del Teso 2017, 13)

In a similar manner with the previous example, common perceptions of Asturian's lack of "utility" through its lack of use and official status can and do directly contribute to the belief that

Asturian's teaching within schools would lead to more harm than good. It is important to view the parallels in arguments, rationales, and beliefs towards whether or not Asturian should be taught in public primary schools, and whether or not Asturian should be a co-official language, in order to view if these connections are causal as opposed to coincidental. While further inquiry into whether or not these parallels are caused by similar factors lies beyond the scope of this thesis, it may be interesting for future study to view the perceptions and protections that currently exist for the Asturian language.

#### **4.3 Catalan Language Policy in Public Primary Schools**

Although complex, the policies towards the use and teaching of the Catalan language in public primary schools within the region of Catalonia, have generally incorporated increased protection and use of Catalan within the decades following the signing of the Spanish Constitution in 1978 (Fowler 2014, 108). As a result of the royal decrees as well as the Education Ministry's decrees in 1978, at the elementary/primary level, Catalan language study was required at least for 3 hours per week (Shabad and Gunther 1982, 464-465). Nevertheless, the language of instruction (LOI) for elementary school students was left up to the parents to decide between Castilian Spanish and Catalan (Shabad and Gunther 1982, 466). In the first half of the 1980's, these protections were furthered through various means. For example,

The *Escolas Catalanas*, private language academies which had been maintained even under Franco, gradually became incorporated into public education during the 1980s, a crucial development in establishing education in Catalan. The 1983 law [of Linguistic Normalization], however, still allowed families to choose the LOI for their young children, but established that all students needed to be proficient in both languages by the end of their education and made it a requirement for teachers to know both languages. (Fowler 2014, 108)

Over this 5-year time period, there is a commonality in the laws in the sense that they are promoting the increased usage of Catalan in education, without explicitly stating a decrease in schooling in Castilian Spanish. It appears that the goals of these laws surrounding schooling is

that students are able to utilize both Catalan and Castilian Spanish in a “proficient” capacity where both languages are valued as opposed to prioritizing one language over the other.

In the decade following the 1983 Law of Linguistic Normalization, there appears to be a change in the rhetoric and structure of schooling for public primary school students.

From 1983 to 1993, there were three models of education available in Catalonia. The first model, “maximum Catalanization,” used Catalan as the LOI, with Castilian offered as a language course and used for instruction in one other course (the legal minimum). The second model, “medium Catalanization,” began elementary education in Castilian and gradually moved to equal use of the two languages among older students. The third model, “minimum Catalanization,” used Castilian as the LOI and only the minimum obligatory amount of three to four hours per week of Catalan. (Fowler 2014, 108-109)

The second model in particular does not seem to present the languages as being used equally. It appears that there is a supposed “preference” for Castilian by having students begin their primary education in Castilian while slowly incorporating more Catalan as they continue with their schooling. In spite of that, in 1993, it was decided that the first model would be utilized exclusively in public education for the region of Catalonia (Fowler 2014, 109). While there were protests from Castilian Spanish speakers, “in 1994 the Spanish Constitutional Court ruled that citizens had the duty to know Castilian, but they did not have the right to be schooled in it” (Fowler 2014, 109). This ruling is crucial in understanding not only subsequent policies and perceptions regarding Spain’s minoritized languages and education, but also the power dynamics within the diglossia situation that is taking place in Catalonia and other regions where there are protected languages.

In 1998, the Linguistic Policy Act passed which established that “Catalan would be the language of instruction ‘at all levels and types of schooling’ in Catalonia, but maintained that families could choose the LOI for their children until they reached the age of seven, at which point all public education continued in Catalan (Fowler 2014, 109). While concerns did arise for this “preference” towards the use of Catalan in education and students’ Castilian Spanish



language abilities, “The apparent goal in Catalonia is ‘balanced bilingualism,’ and indeed testing over the years has routinely shown that Catalonia’s students score just as well as – and sometimes even better than – their counterparts in the rest of the country on Castilian Spanish literacy tests” (Fowler 2014, 109). As a result, these tests show us that, while the concerns are still present that “balanced bilingualism” may or may not lead to a supposed “deficit” in one of the languages, that in the case of schooling within the bilingual Catalan-Castilian model, this system of a supposed “preference” for Catalan did not lead to a deficit-based model for Castilian-Spanish.

Despite these studies, there has been various push back from families and politicians towards the use of Catalan as the language of instruction in public education (Fowler 2014, 110-111). However, the Spanish Supreme Court has generally ruled in favor of the Education Ministry of Catalonia in that they do not need to change their curricular model (Fowler 2014, 110-111). It is important to note, however, that the Spanish Supreme Court did require the Catalan Government to review, on a case-by-case basis, families' petitions for Castilian as the language of instruction (Fowler 2014, 110). Nevertheless, “In the 2012-2013 school year, only 0.025 percent of new families (12 out of 50,000) requested that their children be taught in Castilian.” (Fowler 2014, 110). For the majority of cases, Catalan will be the language of instruction in public primary education, while there are exceptions that go into detail that fall beyond the scope of this thesis. While these legal protections for the use of Catalan within public primary education have increased over the years, it is important to note that there has been significant pushback and that it is likely that this will continue into the future.

### 4.3.1 Perception Towards Catalan Language Use and Protection in Public Primary Schools

After viewing the extensive policies and laws dedicated to the protection and use of Catalan within public primary schools in Catalonia, it could be useful to continue looking at both positive and negative attitudes towards the use of Catalan in schools as it is currently protected and used. Notably, as opposed to the resources and studies conducted for Asturian language perception in public primary schools, Catalan resources and studies discussed not only use but protection as well. There may be a possible correlation with a greater availability of studies towards the protections of Catalan in public primary schools and its status as a co-official language but this would require further study.

In terms of negative perceptions, one principal argument against the protections and laws that currently exist for Catalan-language use and instruction in public education is related to the wording of the laws. In particular, politicians have been a leading force in challenging the laws and its implementation. For example, in 2006, the *Partido Popular*, a conservative and nationalist party of Spain, attempted to take the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia to the Spanish Constitutional Court (Fowler 2014, 111).

The Court passed down its ruling in 2010, declaring 14 articles of the new Statute unconstitutional and reinterpreting 27 more (114 out of the 223 articles were originally appealed). Among the main items modified or struck down were... the naming of Catalan as the “preferred language” in administration, media, and public schooling. (Fowler 2014, 111)

This dialogue around the language of the laws towards Catalan’s protections within Catalonia may be a result of its co-official status. Nevertheless, it appears that the majority of the parties who are against the protections and use of Catalan in public primary education as it currently stands are primarily against the language and rhetoric that have established protections as the “preferred language.” In that regard, it is possible that they do not believe that “balanced bilingualism” is being attained with a preference for the regional language as opposed to the

national one. In these cases, politicians have not been arguing for the complete removal of Catalan in public primary schools rather than amendments to the curriculum and requirements towards its use.

Outside of the realm of politicians, there has been relatively little pushback from parents and other family members when it comes to the use of Catalan in public primary education (McNair 1980, 37). Even though there have been petitions to increase the use of Castilian Spanish in the classroom, “In the great majority of cases there has been no resistance from parents or teachers. Where pupils themselves have resisted, this appears to have been [an] objection not to the language itself, but to the addition of a fresh subject to their time-table, with consequent demands on them” (McNair 1980, 37). Notably, this source was written before Catalan became the language of instruction within the classroom, but it may still be worth mentioning as a comparison to the Asturian case. In these instances, the only pushback came from the fact that Catalan would demand extra time and resources from the students which had been the main source of pushback and not towards the language itself (McNair 1980, 37). This lack of pushback may stem from the fact that “It is Catalan which is the prestige language, widely used in social, business, and political life” (McNair 1980, 38). As opposed to Asturian, which had comparably less social prestige and economic power, Catalan’s perception as a status symbol may also contribute to the lack of opposition to its learning and use in schools.

## **5. Analysis & Conclusion**

### **5.1 Key Takeaways**

The belief that Spain is a monolingual country united under “Spanish” ignores the vast historical and present-day impact that many non-Castilian languages have on the culture and diversity of the nation. These languages are all utilized in different legal and social frameworks,

particularly in their associations with the presence (or lack of) a legal co-official designation.

This thesis sought to explore the question of “what factors related to ‘official status’ of language in Spain contribute to the differential usage of Asturian and Catalan in their respective regions, specifically within the sector of public primary education since the dates of their legal protection (i.e. since 1979 for Catalan and since 1998 for Asturian)?” Ultimately, the main three identifiable factors are related to: public perception of these languages in the context of the presence (or lack of) a co-official designation, the ambiguity of the wording of laws related to promotion and protection of minoritized languages, as well as the historical/current economic and social prestige of the language.

The first factor related to usage that I identified was towards public perception of the language’s co-official designation or lack thereof. As we have seen with public perception towards these languages in their respective communities, many arguments against establishing co-officiality around Asturian are based around a lack of practical need for the language and its view as a “hindrance” as opposed to a “right.” In a similar case with Catalan, arguments against increased usage of Catalan were similarly based on the argument that Spanish was sufficient in acting as a language of communication and that an increased presence of the Catalan language would interfere with this Castilian-centric dominance. Correspondingly, many arguments were made that teaching minoritized languages in school was not only unnecessary but harmful to Castilian-language fluency.

The second factor revolves around the ambiguity of the laws in relation to the protections and usage of minoritized languages. As was seen in the Spanish Constitution of 1978, and the Law of 1998 for the Use and Promotion of the Asturian language, their intended aim was to “protect” minoritized languages but both failed to offer any specific protections. A major

argument against the establishment of Asturian co-officiality was that the Law of 1998 provided sufficient protections. Nevertheless, while its use was promoted, it was never required. Likewise, the Spanish Constitution allowed regional governments the freedom to choose if they would have co-official languages. This appeared effective in theory, but lacked specificity which would ensure the languages' use in schools, the government, and daily life.

The final factor identified was the languages' positioning in systems of power, both historically and economically. Catalan in the region of Catalonia had a large historical presence because of its economic prosperity and was seen as a "prestige language." Therefore, when immigrants from other parts of the country arrived in Catalonia, they also believed that learning Catalan would allow them to gain social prestige. In this thesis, I make the claim that the perception of Catalan as an economic and social tool has greatly impacted its use and protections, especially in the realm of education.

After viewing all of these examples between Asturian and Catalan, I argue that their diglossic situations are different. From what I observed about the linguistic situation of Asturian, I argue that it follows Ferguson's traditional model of diglossia, where two language varieties that are spoken in the same community are utilized in different scenarios. The Spanish language appeared to be utilized in the H contexts of public spaces whereas Asturian seemed to be utilized in the L contexts where it was relegated to the home and other private sectors. However, Catalan's situation is more tricky where it is, alongside Spanish, utilized in both private and public sectors. Therefore, I conclude that Catalan is not in a diglossic situation and it would be beneficial to continue future research into more accurately describing the sociolinguistic situation in Catalonia.

## **5.2 Limitations**

There are a multitude of limitations that I encountered while working on this thesis. For example, I attempted to provide a parallel comparison between both Asturian and Catalan in terms of their language policy, and their use in education. However, by nature of this project where one language has co-official status while the other does not, this was not possible. There was an imbalance in the amount of sources and articles available towards Catalan as well as generally more positive attitudes towards its co-official status as opposed to Asturian. Furthermore, since I depended on the research and availability of other people's research and work, I was not able to conduct my surveys or acquire new research in that regard.

## **5.3 Future Implications**

This thesis has brought up multiple questions surrounding power dynamics in the context of language policy and education for the Asturian and Catalan languages. This thesis provides insights into recommendations about what proponents of Asturian co-officiality, as well as other non co-official languages in Spain, can analyze in order to support their protection and use in the future. Furthermore, questions surrounding the "diglossic" situation between Catalan and Spanish in Catalonia merits further research.

## Bibliography

- Anguera, Pere. "Denied Impositions: Harassment and Resistance of the Catalan Language 1." *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*. Accessed October 28, 2023. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1463620032000058695>.
- Archilés, Ferran, and Manuel Martí. "Ethnicity, region and nation: Valencian identity and the Spanish nation-state." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 5 (2001): 779-797.
- Artiagoitia, Xabier. "Basque." In *Edinburgh Handbook of Evaluative Morphology*, edited by Nicola Grandi and Livia Körtvélyessy, 195–204. Edinburgh University Press, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1g09zqx.21>.
- Bergenholtz, Henning, and Sven Tarp. "Política lingüística: Conceptos y definiciones." In *5TH Symposium on Translation, Terminology and Interpretation in Cuba and Canada*, pp. 1-19. 2005.
- Bleorțu, Cristina. "The Castilian and Asturian Languages in Schools." Accessed November 16, 2023. <https://www.zora.uzh.ch/id/eprint/161251/1/1098-3568-1-PB.pdf>.
- Boyd-Barrett, Oliver. "Education and the languages of Spain." In *Education Reform in Contemporary Spain*, pp. 214-235. Routledge, 2002.
- Casademont, Enric Pujol. "Culture, language and politics. The Catalan cultural resistance during the Franco regime (1939-1977)." *Catalan Historical Review* 13 (2020): 69-84.
- Cope. "El Asturiano No Será Lengua Oficial En Esta Legislatura." COPE, February 10, 2022. [https://www.cope.es/actualidad/espana/noticias/asturiano-sera-lengua-oficial-esta-legislatura-20220210\\_1779561](https://www.cope.es/actualidad/espana/noticias/asturiano-sera-lengua-oficial-esta-legislatura-20220210_1779561).
- Doppelbauer, Max. *La Constitución y las lenguas españolas*. na, 2008.

“Educational Policies: Spain.” Educational Policies: Spain (2014) | SPLASH DB, n.d.

<https://splash-db.eu/policydescription/educational-policies-spain-2014/>.

Ferguson, Charles A. "Diglossia." *word* 15, no. 2 (1959): 325-340.

Ferrer, Ferran. "Languages, minorities and education in Spain: the case of Catalonia."

*Comparative Education* 36, no. 2 (2000): 187-197.

Forniès, David. “ News Grassroots Movements Hope Official Status for Asturian Approved

Soon, Better Future for Language Brought About.” *Nationalia*. Accessed October 25, 2023.

<https://www.nationalia.info/new/11423/grassroots-movements-hope-official-status-for-asturian-approved-soon-better-future-for-lan>.

Fowler, Sara. “Catalan in the Classroom: A Language Under Fire” - Hawaii Pacific University.

Accessed October 27, 2023.

[https://www.hpu.edu/research-publications/tesol-working-papers/2014/TESOL\\_WPS\\_2014\\_Fowler.pdf](https://www.hpu.edu/research-publications/tesol-working-papers/2014/TESOL_WPS_2014_Fowler.pdf).

Gubitosi, Patricia, and Paola Medina González. "Language-power relationship, linguistic identity

and the struggle for survival: the case of Asturian in Oviedo, Spain." *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies* 19, no. 1 (2022): 34-54.f

Hermo del Teso, Lucia. "A preliminary study of language mixture between Asturian and Spanish." (2017).

Hernández, Alicia. “Dónde Se Habla El Bable y Por Qué Dicen Que Es Un Idioma ‘En

Peligro.’” *BBC News Mundo*. Accessed December 4, 2023.

<https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-59547573>.



- Huguet, Angel. "Attitudes and motivation versus language achievement in cross-linguistic settings. What is cause and what effect?." *Journal of multilingual and multicultural development* 27, no. 5 (2006): 413-429.
- Huguet, Angel. "Minority languages and curriculum: The case of Spain." *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 20, no. 1 (2007): 70-86.
- Kaplan, Robert B., and Richard B. Baldauf. *Language planning from practice to theory*. Vol. 108. *Multilingual Matters*, 1997.
- "Languages Spoken in Spain." *Tatutrad*, November 20, 2021.  
<https://tatutrad.net/en/languages-spoken-in-spain>.
- Lasagabaster, David. "El Español y Las Lenguas Cooficiales En El Estado Español: Actitudes Lingüísticas En Un Contexto Multilingüe." *Revista Internacional de Lingüística Iberoamericana* 12, no. 1 (23) (2014): 25–40. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24364795>.
- Lasagabaster, David. "Language learning motivation and language attitudes in multilingual Spain from an international perspective." *The Modern Language Journal* 101, no. 3 (2017): 583-596.
- Lasagabaster, David. "Language policy in Spain: The coexistence of small and big languages." *Uniformity and Diversity in Language Policy. Global Perspectives* (2011): 109-125.
- "Lenguas Minoritarias y Lenguas Minorizadas." *FundéuRAE*, n.d.  
<https://www.fundeu.es/recomendacion/lenguas-minoritarias-y-lenguas-minorizadas-52/>.
- Ley 1/1998, de 23 de marzo, de uso y promoción del bable/asturiano. Accessed October 6, 2023.  
<https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/1998/BOE-A-1998-10126-consolidado.pdf>.
- Mar-Molinero, Clare. *The politics of language in the Spanish-speaking world: from colonization to globalization*. Routledge, 2002.

McNair, John. "The Contribution of the Schools to the Restoration of Regional Autonomy in Spain." *Comparative Education* 16, no. 1 (1980): 33–44.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3098550>.

Miller, Henry, and Kate Miller. "Language policy and identity: The case of Catalonia."

*International Studies in Sociology of Education* 6, no. 1 (1996): 113-128.

Ortega Rico, Pablo, and Íñigo Mugueta Moreno. "Kingdoms of Castile and Navarre 1." Menjot, D.; Caesar, M.; Garnier, F.; Verdés Pijuan, P.(Eds.). *The Routledge handbook of public taxation in medieval Europe*. Londres: Routledge; 2022. p. 120-154 978-0-367-90336-7 (2022).

Palicio, M., and Ardura, J. A. (2023, July 19). *Barbón, Investido Presidente del Principado con los votos de la izquierda mientras "Acelera" la negociación para un gobierno con iu*. La Nueva España.

<https://www.lne.es/asturias/canal-parlamento/2023/07/19/barbon-investido-presidente-principado-votos-90065526.html>

Penny, Ralph John. *A history of the Spanish language*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Pérez, Joseph, and Fernando Santos Fontenla. *Isabel y Fernando: los reyes católicos*. Vol. 4. Editorial Nerea, 1997.

Pierson, Peter. *The history of Spain*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2019.

Quintana, Núria Sánchez, and Ana Fernández-Viciano. "Estudio comparativo entre Cataluña y Asturias de representaciones lingüísticas en Educación Primaria: autorretratos y plurilingüismo: A comparative study of linguistic representations between Catalonia and Asturias in Primary Education: self-portraits and plurilingualism." *ENSAYOS. Revista de la Facultad de Educación de Albacete* 38, no. 1 (2023): 134-154

- Rees, Earl L. "Spain's Linguistic Normalization Laws: The Catalan Controversy." *Hispania* 79, no. 2 (1996): 313–21. <https://doi.org/10.2307/344927>.
- Rojo, Iratxe. "La Oficialidad Del Asturiano Mide Su Apoyo En Las Calles." ELMUNDO, October 16, 2021. <https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2021/10/16/616ac8affdddf38878b45cb.html>.
- Rojo, Iratxe. "Plataforma Contra La Cooficialidad Del Asturiano: 'No Queremos Llegar a Los Enfrentamientos Que Vemos En Otras Comunidades.'" ELMUNDO, November 1, 2021. <https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2021/11/01/617e64c321efa0636d8b45de.html>.
- Shabad, Goldie and Richard Gunther. "Language, Nationalism, and Political Conflict in Spain." *Comparative politics* 14 (1982): 443.
- Shohamy, Elana. *Language policy: Hidden agendas and new approaches*. Routledge, 2006.
- Soler Costa, Rebeca. "La lengua catalana en la construcción de la identidad social de Cataluña: análisis de este nacionalismo lingüístico." *Revista electrónica interuniversitaria de formación del profesorado* (2009).
- Taylor, Molly L. "La Diversidad Lingüística Durante y Después del Franquismo en España." *The Review: A Journal of Undergraduate Student Research* 23, no. 1 (2022): 9.
- "The Asturian Language in Education in Spain." Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, n.d. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED565355.pdf>.
- Trask, Robert L. "Origins and relatives of the Basque language: Review of the evidence." *Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science Series* 4 (1995): 65-100.

Vann, Robert E. "Language exposure in Catalonia: An example of indoctrinating linguistic ideology." *Word* 50, no. 2 (1999): 191-209.

Vega Efe, Gorka. "La Oficialidad Del Asturiano Tendrá Que Esperar." *naiz*, February 10, 2022. <https://www.naiz.eus/en/info/noticia/20220210/la-oficialidad-del-asturiano-tendra-que-esperar>.

Vila-i-Moreno, F. Xavier. "Catalan in Spain." *Multilingual Europe: Facts and policies* (2008): 157-183.

Webber, Jude, and Miquel Strubell i Trueta. "The catalan language." *Progress towards normalisation. The Anglo-Catalan Society Occasional Publications* 7 (1991).

Woodacre, Elena. "The Queen and her consort: succession, politics and partnership in the kingdom of Navarre, 1274-1512." PhD diss., Bath Spa University, 2011.